

# INSPIRED

55+ lifestyle magazine

SEPTEMBER 2020

CHILDREN'S  
AUTHOR  
LINDA  
BAILEY

GO FARTHER ON  
YOUR CYLCING  
ADVENTURES  
WITH E-BIKES

LEARNING  
LONGEVITY FROM  
ELDERS AROUND  
THE WORLD

THE FUTURE  
OF TRAVEL IN  
A WORLD WITH  
COVID-19

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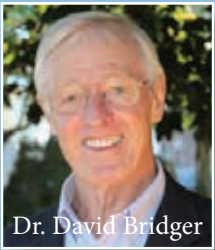
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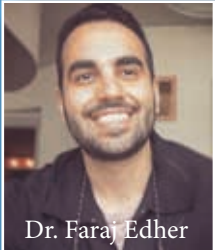
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Cover LINDA BAILEY  
Celebrated Vancouver author  
and prolific reader, Linda Bailey,  
says the things kids love are fun  
for her to explore in her work.

Photo by Tom Gould



## INSPIRED

55+ lifestyle magazine

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## resources

### 55+ TRAVEL CLUB

Club events in Victoria, Vancouver & Nanaimo are postponed until 2021. Join our monthly newsletter and stay informed. [www.seniorlivingmag.com/travelclub](http://www.seniorlivingmag.com/travelclub)

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### SENIOR HOUSING DIRECTORY OF BC

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### “TO MOVE OR NOT TO MOVE?”

A 128-page guide for BC seniors considering their residential options. Whether you decide to stay in your home or move, this book will help you navigate to where you want to be. Published by *INSPIRED Magazine*. \$19.85 includes GST and shipping & handling. Call 250-479-4705 to order.

# THRIVE BEYOND 55

by BARBARA RISTO, PUBLISHER



After months of relying on our computers and personal devices to keep us connected, bring us the latest news, or entertain us, we're starting to realize flat screens, while necessary for many things including staying in touch during these COVID-19 times, are poor substitutes for the real thing.

Physical connection – in all its forms – is an experience that screen time cannot replace.

Many of us are just plain tired of screens being an extension of our hands or in front of our faces all the time. This phenomenon is being coined “internet fatigue.”

When we emerge from our COVID-induced cocoons, we're going to appreciate, like never before, how much physical contact is part of our DNA. How our connection to each other is what puts the “kind” in humankind.

When grateful readers contacted me about how happy they were to have our magazine in their hands again after we shut down for two months due to the pandemic, I was reminded of how much *INSPIRED Magazine* has become part of the fabric of our communities.

Print magazines, like people, offer a tangible presence. We can flip through the physical pages, smell the ink, earmark a page; we can put the magazine aside for a day, month or year, and it doesn't move or disappear on us, or change, like digitized material.

When various modes of social media started to take off years ago, some speculators said magazines would die. That has not been the case. In fact, the number of magazine titles has increased.

Yes, there have been casualties among the large, generic brands – some were too broad and impersonal to keep

their audience when the lure of the internet came calling. But boutique magazines, with specialized audiences, have continued to grow and thrive. The more niche the market, the stronger and more loyal its supporters.

When I started this magazine just over 16 years ago, I knew in my heart that I wanted to do something uplifting and fulfilling. I was not yet part of the 55+ demographic, but I was eager to tell the stories of people who had reached that age marker and were living life to its fullest. That, to me, was inspiring!

*INSPIRED Magazine's* largest audience is women, but last week I had calls from two men, both of whom began our conversation by saying how much they love the magazine. Inspiration appeals to everyone!

One of my first indicators of this was a call I received soon after I launched the magazine in 2004. It was a woman who described picking up our new magazine and bringing it home to her husband. She said he turned his nose up at every “senior” type publication she brought home. Hours after thumbing through our magazine, though, he pronounced, “Finally, this is a magazine I will read!”

I cherished that compliment for months. It confirmed to me that I was on the right track.

Your response to the magazine's return after being away for a couple months is continuing proof that if there's such a thing as a magazine soul, it resides in this little publication.

Thank you for your continued support of *INSPIRED Magazine*. Happy September reading. |



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Children's author Linda Bailey  
at Spanish Banks Beach.  
*Photo: Tom Gould*

# LINDA BAILEY: A TWINKLE IN HER EYE

by JOHN THOMSON

“I was very curious about reading and writing,” recalls celebrated author Linda Bailey about her Winnipeg childhood. “I knew all my nursery rhymes and fairy tales, but there weren’t a lot of books in the family home.” Dad favoured cowboy stories and Mom liked magazines.

Enter Winnipeg’s Public Library. When the library’s bookmobile made its rounds and showed up on her street two hours a week, well, it changed Linda’s world. She devoured whatever crossed her path. Her favourite was a series of books featuring Freddie the Pig, “the smartest and cleverest” of the pigs on an upstate New York farm. Freddie assumed a host of personas: detective, magician, pilot, and other identities while pursuing his various adventures.

“I didn’t really know how much I would love to read until I discovered Freddie,” she says. “At the age of seven or eight, I just ripped through those books.”

Today, as a best-selling children’s author, Linda has created her own stable of characters, Eddie the bug, Lizzy the figure skater, and Stanley the dog among others and, oh yes, Frankenstein’s monster. Well, not the monster, exactly, but the person responsible for creating the character in the first place, 19th century author Mary Shelley. *Mary Who Wrote Frankenstein* is the latest in a long list of Linda’s titles, 37 to date with more on the way.

“She was a reader and a dreamer, which is absolutely the two things I was,” says Linda about the author.

As she researched her subject, Linda uncovered a trove of fascinating material: adolescent banishment to Scotland; a teenage elopement with Percy Bysshe Shelley; and a late-night discussion between the Shelleys and Lord Byron at which they challenged each other to write a ghost story. Mary’s contribution was Frankenstein. And the rest, they say, is history.

“The middle of the night thing resonated with me. It sang out to me,” says Linda. Delicious fodder for an

in-depth biography, all part of the story, but Linda wanted to focus on the key question, what drove Mary Shelley to write a horror story?

“She was 18 years old, hadn’t written a thing and manages to write a book that becomes enormously influential. I just thought that was such a triumphant story arc for the life of a young girl who’s a dreamy reader.”

The result is a 50-page picture book that celebrates the power of imagination.

It’s easy to see Linda’s fascination with her subject. She, too, is an introvert, living inside her head.

“I have a very dull outer life, but I have a very rich inner life,” she admits. “An introvert? For sure. You have to be willing to spend a lot of time alone, and a lot of extroverts do not.”

Not that she shies away from adventure. Fresh out of high school in the 1960s, Linda took a secretarial course, did odd jobs, and financed a trip to London and then Melbourne, where she stayed for a couple of years. She travelled across the Australian Outback, “where we had to report to the police before we got on the track.” Years later, she travelled by ship to Mexico and then hopped on a bus up the west coast of California towards home.

“For whatever reason, I was dreaming of the BC forests while I was in Australia,” she admits. “I’d wake up and think WHAT? I came back to Canada, lived in Winnipeg for a few months and moved to Vancouver.”

She later enrolled in the English program at UBC.

“I knew I wanted to be a writer, but I didn’t have the nerve to write. I thought only important people in New York and London were writers, which certainly wasn’t me. It just seemed like an impossible dream.”

Inspired by her children, Linda started to create while supporting herself editing educational materials for the Open Learning Agency.

# Snapshot

with Linda Bailey

If you were to meet your 20-year-old self, what advice would you give to her?

"I think I would tell her to do it earlier, just go for it and risk failing. At least try."

Who or what has influenced you the most and why?

"Libraries and particularly the Winnipeg bookmobile of my childhood. It was parked two hours a week on the corner near my house and gave me my first experience of the joy of reading."

What are you most grateful for?

"I'm grateful that I get to do the thing I love to do. I'm grateful that I'm still here. It's been 28 years since I first got published, and I've had a steady career the whole time."

What does success mean to you?

"It feels like success in my life when I have managed to figure out how to do what I love to do and earn a living at it. It's wonderful to be recognized and valued." |



"Reading to my kids was huge," she says. "There was nothing better in my children's childhood than to have a giant stack of books and just cuddle up together reading. There was a period of six or seven years when I was writing picture books and they weren't selling," she continues. "I was writing. I was sending things out. I was getting nice feedback. It seemed like I should hang in and keep trying, but I wasn't being published. I did other stuff. I took classes, I went to workshops and I was still working. I was doing both."

And then the breakthrough.

"There was a point where I realized, wait a minute, there's a hole in the Canadian market here," says Linda. "Nobody was doing mysteries with a girl. Girl, mystery, humour. There was nothing like that. The first publisher I sent it to, snapped it up."

The Stevie Diamond series – girl, mystery, humour – was tremendously successful when it first launched in 1992. A flood of delightful characters followed: the Binkerstons, who live near the Good Times Travel Agency and time travel to foreign lands; *The Tiny Hero of Ferny Creek Library* in which a tiny bug foils a plan to close a school library; and let's not forget her first novel for older children, *Seven Dead Pirates*.

"She's very prolific and she's written in so many genres," says Phyllis Simon, founder and co-owner of Kidsbooks, a major Vancouver retailer. "She's excelled in fiction, non-fiction, graphic novels, and she's done picture books. For someone to jump over into different fields like that is very, very impressive. She's just a unique and very, very special person for our community."

The two met when Linda's first publisher released the inaugural Stevie Diamond book and asked the bookstore to host a little party for her.

"So, I said sure, why not? We had a party on a Saturday afternoon, served refreshments and had a very nice turnout," says Phyllis. "That's how I became familiar with Linda's earliest work. She came into

the store frequently, and we became good friends."

Linda publishes one or two books a year. A self-declared insomniac, she often gets her ideas in the middle of the night.

"When I'm in a half doze, trying to fall asleep, something will start to come up," she says. "I write a little something. It might have a few lines of dialogue. It might have a setting."

She writes it down in a file she affectionately calls her Vault, ready to embellish it months or even years down the road. When she couldn't find a market for a manuscript she wrote in 2008, she set it aside, waiting for an opportunity. Nine years later her publisher asked her if she had something about Canada to celebrate the sesquicentennial.

"I said, as a matter of fact I do. They accepted it immediately and [*Carson Crosses Canada*] was a very big book in 2017. That's another rule of writing, timing is everything."

Travel still inspires Linda. In 2019, she embarked on a literary pilgrimage with friend, Ellen McGinn, to walk in the footsteps of English writers "who are really meaningful to me." Their travels took them to Bronte country, Jane Austen's house and, as a rare treat, Linda received special permission to view Mary Shelley's original *Frankenstein* manuscript, which is usually kept under lock and key.

Mostly, though, she takes her cue from children.

"I find dinosaurs fun. I wrote a book about pirates. I love trying to imagine ghosts. The things that kids love are really fun for me to explore."

Linda says writing is an evolutionary process involving many drafts and re-writes. She'll often let a manuscript sit for weeks or months before looking at it again and sprucing it up.

PHOTOS | (Top to Bottom): Linda outside Jane Austen's house in Chawton, England. Linda with Mary Shelley's original *Frankenstein* manuscript. Photos: Courtesy of Linda Bailey



"I'm not happy at the end of the day if I haven't done something," she continues. "Sometimes, it's writing, sometimes, it's research, sometimes, it's dealing with the business end, but every day I go to my computer. Because I live by myself, my home is really my office. It's all quiet and calm."

Disciplined? Definitely. Focused? For sure. She has no problem finding the time to write – even when her children were still living at home.

"I never really cared that much about housekeeping. Fortunately, the rest of my family didn't either," she laughs. Her older daughter, Lia, is a freelance journalist and a flamenco dancer with the dance troupe, Fin de Fiesta.

"She has enormous energy," says Linda. "She can do that dance thing all day long. She's lived big chunks of her life in Spain in Seville, the heart of flamenco country. My other daughter, Tess, is doing a post-doc in biology at Princeton. I have a granddaughter there, too."

If Linda's critical of anything, it's with wannabe writers who think kidlit is an easy route to fame and fortune.

"A lot of people think you don't have to do much of anything, just sit down and write and send it off, but boy, there's a lot to learn. If somebody wanted advice, I would say learn your craft. Immerse yourself. Learn everything you can about the writing community and the publishing industry. It took me six or seven years before it led to publication and, over that period, I learned a huge amount. I ended up aware of the market, aware of how publishing works, aware of writing skills and word counts. Most of all," she says, "immerse yourself in the great books of childhood, the classics, as well as the new ones."

Children's literature has staying power.

"If you ask people to name the most important book in their lives, they'll often go back to *Anne of Green Gables* or something like that. For adults, reading a book is a passing experience. It doesn't stick in the same way that an earlier book does."

A children's book, Linda maintains, has the power to shape attitudes and influence behaviour.

"Parents still want their children to read books and they'd prefer their children to read a book rather than a screen. People still see that as very valuable."

Linda's happy to continue writing children's books; she says she's not interested in adult genres. When asked about the Bailey appeal, she says her books are warm-hearted. Add the word "gentle" to the mix. With *Princess versus Dinosaurs*, a new title her publisher is releasing this fall, two combatants are fighting over the same turf. When the action escalates, a giant rubber ducky enters the scene. Marvellous.

"She has a twinkle in her style of writing and in her eye," says her friend Phyllis Simon. "She's mastered the ability to write formally but in a casual way. Kids can easily get into her stories. There's no problem understanding where they're headed and, at the same time, she really does have a strong literary capability, as well."

"I have a certain confidence in the kind of things that I know how to do now," says Linda. "I believe you get better and better at this and I think my skills are getting sharper." |



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55+ lifestyle magazine

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# TRANSITION TO E-BIKING: TAKE CHARGE!

by JOAN BOXALL

Ready for a makeover? From a COVID 19-chrysalis into an e-bike butterfly?

E-bikes (electrically-assisted) resemble person-powered bicycles except for a small battery-run motor that allows riders to overcome the resistance of weather (especially wind), terrain (specifically hills) or physical limitations.

## STAGES OF METAMORPHOSIS:

### In Our Heads

E-bikers are the tortoises, not the hares, of the cycling world. By getting an e-assist, we're not cheating; we're unseating ourselves (from the couch) and leaving guilt at the fridge door. We've researched the right e-bike fit, type and price range for us. Mountain bikes, cruisers, road commuters, cargo bikes (for grandkids or pets) and fat-tires all come with e-assist. Call us a couple of cruisers.



### In Our Bodies

COVIDly-cooped up with nowhere to go but downhill (and back up again), we live on the side of a mountain. Our recreational biking pattern has been to go elsewhere (a car ride with bikes on a rack to somewhere flatter). Now that we have e-bikes, we arrive at our destination less sweaty and more energized. We go faster (Olympic-tortoise tempo) with momentum on our side.

A 2019 Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives journal report compared electric bicycle users to conventional bicycle users in seven EU cities. Purportedly, 10,000 adult e-bikers edged out pedal-bikers in taking longer trips. The e-bikers were older with a slightly higher BMI (body mass index).



They sized us up (frame size and gearing familiarity).  
“The right hand clicks the 10 gears the same as a conventional bike.”

“Check,” I say.

“The left is your boost button.”

“How many do I get?”

“Three, plus a walk mode.”

“Walk mode?”

“In case you're walking up a ramp (off a BC ferry) with pannier-bags-full.”

ABOVE | Converted rail trail between Duncan and Lake Cowichan, BC.

RIGHT | (Top) Unloading panniers at the end of the e-ride. Still fresh! (Bottom) The Kinsol Trestle Treasure awaits, along The Trans Canada Trail (renamed the Great Trail in 2016).

PAGE 10 | The author and her husband, Ken, on a daytrip near Kitsilano Point, Vancouver. Photos: Joan Boxall



Ours are pedal-assists, which means we pedal. We've been pedal-pushers since childhood. E-bikes allow for less strain on joints, and on the body as a whole. The weight of our battery and motor are in the mid-frame, which distributes the 50-pound load, and eases back-wheel adjustments.

If you haven't ridden in a decade or more, the expression, "it's-as-easy-as-riding-a-bike" may no longer apply. Practice on a stationary bike at your local gym to ready your pedalling muscles and raise your fitness level. Remind yourself how to gear shift on a traditional bike, before graduating to an electric's heavier (yet sturdier) frame. Technology has changed, as have our bodies.

We scoot along the flat without any boost (this fifth level of power is our own). Uphill, we anticipate terrain changes and graduate clicks "low, medium, high." Maintaining cadence, we gear down before we power up (in revolutions per minute) to minimize fatigue. With that slight surge, we're in control. We apply assist when needed. The computer display shows the range of the battery's power (over 100 km) is well within our own. We re-charge when we get home. It all depends on the outing's outage.



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## In Our Neighbourhood

Find an e-bike provider locally who can advise you pre-sale, then help maintain your bike post-sale. Our service-support is OHM Electric Bikes in North Vancouver. With 15 years of industry-leading experience, OHM designs their own frames and outfits them with high-quality components.

According to CEO and co-founder Michael DeVisser, “OHM e-bikes allow riders to climb steep hills, keep pace with stronger riders and reduce commute time.” (For retirees, commute-time = regular travel-time.)

I fill a pannier with groceries, step through my frame, and ride home uphill, humming right along.



## In E-Branching Out

A robust bicycle rack and U-locks (and cables for security) get us ready to roll. Leaving the car at Tsawwassen, we ride across the Saanich Peninsula (to



Mt. Newton Cross Road, off Lochside Trail), and take the Brentwood Bay-Mill Bay ferry to the Cowichan Valley.

Cowichan Bay is North America’s first slow-food town. At the mouth of the Cowichan River, we pace ourselves past winning wineries into Cittaslow’s space at Oceanfront Suites and breakfast on café-croissants at True Grain Breads. We take in the wharf, its fishing boats and sustainable fishery, all-the-while viewing Mount Tzouhalem, named after a 19th-century Quamichan (warm place or Cowichan) chief.

Following rotary routes to the Sherman Road access to the Trans Canada Trail north of Duncan, we welcome 28 kilometres of shaded rail trail to Lake Cowichan. Between the lake and the river, we cross a rusty rail bridge to our B&B. We retrace our path to Cowichan Lake Road and cruise downhill to Duncan and its totem tour.

One pole, The Transformation in Life, depicts Eagle spirit supporting an adventurer in a wing-enfolded embrace. We are an e-gal with her e-guy. We have been carried away. As two seniors look-

ing to embrace change in the best way we can, our vision quest is ongoing.

Our Cowichan expedition culminates at the Kinsol Trestle. Transformed, as one poster heralds, from “working railway trestle to resurrected treasure,” the Kinsol Trestle provides active transport over the Koksilah River for hikers, horse-back riders, and cyclists like us.

Our counter-clockwise route circles ’round. To cap off, a circum-road-navigation of the lake ends in a refreshing dip at West Shawnigan Lake Park. Home via the Merridale Cidery and Distillery, more refreshment is at hand. We tuck some scrumpy into our pannier... for the e-lectrolytes.

Transitioning to e-bikes has been an e-volving and e-lating transformation. |

*For IF YOU GO information, visit [www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/e-biking-transition](http://www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/e-biking-transition)*

Joan Boxall is a regular contributor to *INSPIRED Magazine* and author of *DrawBridge: Drawing Alongside My Brother's Schizophrenia*, Caitlin Press, 2019



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# FOREVER FIT

by EVE LEES



## HEALTHY HABITS: THE BEST VIRUS DEFENCE

The best guarantee to increase your defence against any virus – including influenza and COVID-19 – is to take care of yourself. The general diet/lifestyle recommendations to keep your immune system strong are wise preventive practices:

1. Most important is to eat plenty of high-quality foods. Reduce or omit the junk, like refined sugars and other highly refined/processed foods. These lack the nutrients vital for a strong immune system. Research continually links poor health to processed/refined foods.

2. Increase the amount of vegetables and fruit you eat to ensure you get more nutrients, like antioxidants, as well as the protective benefits of fibre. Some studies show fibre feeds gut bacteria, which produces T cells that can kill viruses. Although it is not known if fibre will have the same effect on the COVID-19 virus, increasing your dietary fibre certainly won't hurt. Be extra diligent washing unwrapped produce, particularly those you will be eating raw.

3. Opt for more variety in your food choices. This automatically widens the variety of nutrients you are getting to help your body fight a virus. Try to avoid always eating the same things: If you usually have oatmeal for breakfast, have quinoa or buckwheat sometimes. Instead of always eating potatoes, try black rice, jicama, squash or sweet potatoes occasionally.

4. There is no special diet (other than a well-balanced one) that will fight a virus, so there is no need to go low-carb, Keto or Paleo. In any case, this is not the time to restrict your diet to a limited variety of foods. To fight a virus, your body needs as many nutrients from foods as possible. Omitting foods or food groups will limit nutrients.

5. Drink plenty of water. This is also very important. A well-hydrated body can work much more efficiently, allowing your immune system to do its job.

6. Despite what many sources say, it is not known if any specific herb, vitamin or mineral can fight this particular virus. We are all individual in our genetics and our nutrition needs: What may work for one person may not work for another. However, if traditional remedies worked in the past for you with the cold and flu, it's possible their (sensible) use may also protect you from COVID-19 or lessen its severity. But whether you decide to supplement your diet, your focus should always be on eating a wide variety of high-quality, unrefined whole foods.

7. Research continues to prove that regular activity of gentle to moderate intensity can strengthen the immune system. Get up and move around.

8. Other important immune strengtheners: Get sufficient sleep (seven hours minimum for adults). Also, learn to control your reaction to stressful situations. And that means not stressing out about COVID-19.

There is much misinformation circulating about COVID-19. Here are just a few credible internet sources to help you separate fact from fiction: Canada Fact Check, Snopes, Hoax Alert, That's Nonsense, Lead Stories, Associated Press, NewsGuard, and Truth or Fiction. |

**Eve Lees** has been active in the health & fitness industry since 1979. Currently, she is a Freelance Health Writer for several publications and speaks to business and private groups on various health topics. [www.artnews-health-news.com](http://www.artnews-health-news.com)



# INSPIRED BY BEETHOVEN

by MYLES SHANE

The cloudless sky is just the right hue of blue as sunlight shines down from the heavens on to Dr. Carl Ivey, 74, playing Beethoven's 4th concerto on a grand piano. With a backdrop of the Pacific Ocean, water dances as waves crash to the crescendo of the music, creating a supremely majestic sound. Carl smiles at the small audience forming near the water. He is relaxed and loving life, but this wasn't always the case.

In 1978, Carl, a pediatrician, felt the timing was right to start a private practice in Chicago. Covering the cost of a new office and a growing family, however, meant working a lot of overtime.

"I was on staff at five different hospitals, always on call, skipping meals, not getting enough sleep and my marriage, understandably, was stressed."

Eventually, Carl collapsed and found himself fighting for his life.

"I briefly considered releasing out of my body... but quickly realized that death was permanent, and I couldn't imagine leaving my wife and two daughters."

Statistically, the odds of surviving severe tuberculosis were stacked against him, but Carl didn't care about odds. He was committed to live.

"During the second week in hospital, I had a vision."

He saw himself sitting at a magnificent grand piano

in front of his hospital bed playing the first measures of Beethoven Piano Concerto #4.

"I knew this was my soul-level stuff reminding me that I had unfinished business with the piano."

A month later, Carl was discharged, and remarkably made a full recovery. At 35, he began taking piano lessons for the second time in his life. Ironically, it was his failure to win a music scholarship that forced him to switch gears and decide on becoming a doctor.

"I was first exposed to piano lessons at the age of nine. But I found the piano boring and was far more interested in sports," he recalls.

At 15, Carl was introduced to classical music for the first time.

"I heard Beethoven's Eroica Symphony (3rd Symphony)

ABOVE | Dr. Carl Ivey at the piano in Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria, where he can entertain and inspire patients, visitors and frontline workers any time of the day or night. Photo: Daniel Ferguson

and I was stopped in my tracks,” he says. “This piece of music changed the entire trajectory of my life. After hearing Beethoven’s third symphony, rock ‘n’ roll didn’t stand a chance. Playing in the high school band gave me a sense of belonging and helped shape my personality. Receiving applause from the audience after great band concerts were highlights of my high school experience.”

His interest shifted to the clarinet in high school and he had visions of playing in a symphony orchestra but, as time wore on, he realized the piano was his true calling. He felt the piano was the complete, ‘holistic’ instrument.

His musical preference is classical, but he always keeps a few popular tunes available when he performs. When it’s too cold to play outdoors, Carl performs at retirement homes across Victoria.

“Whenever I play the piano at a nursing home or retirement home, I am consciously aware that I am sharing far more than musical notes on the piano. I am sharing the deepest part of who I am – my heart, soul, humanity, passion, joy and love.”

“Seniors routinely share with me how the music gives them a deep sense of calmness, serenity and peace. These feelings result from the raising of their spiritual/energy vibration levels,” says Carl. “There are lots of studies that show music has a very positive effect on seniors in terms of improving memory, recall, motor function and physical coordination.

However, it is not just the music but, more importantly, it’s the person playing the music that makes a difference. Therefore, live music has greater positive effects than recorded music.”

Carl reflects on how a small-town kid from Alabama, besieged by racism during the 1950s ended up in Victoria. In 1994, he met his second wife at the Norfolk, Virginia airport. She resided in Campbell River and Carl was still living in Chicago. They started a long-distance relationship and were eventually married in a chapel on the campus of the University of Chicago, on December 16, Beethoven’s birthday!

When the couple was in sync, they spent many long getaway weekends in Victoria but, over time, the marriage broke down. Regardless, Carl had no doubt one day he would move to Victoria, which he calls “a miniature Chicago, but on a much smaller scale. Like Chicago, Victoria has a symphony orchestra, opera, ballet, theatre, bookstores, museums, art galleries and restaurants featuring international cuisine. The weather is wonderful, and Victoria has a natural beauty.”

Carl retired to Victoria, where he’s always on vacation in paradise. And each year, when spring is in the air, he looks forward to playing the outdoor pianos that start to appear during the first or second week of June.

“Playing great music outdoors, hearing the sounds of the waves and seagulls and feeling the warmth of the sun on my skin while breathing in such clean air is heaven on earth.” |

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Photo: Sebastian Sammer/Unsplash

# NATURAL RELIEF FOR JOINT PAIN

by NANCY J. SCHAAP

Many different conditions can lead to painful joints, including osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. According to the *Status of Arthritis in Canada Report*, published in August 2019, arthritis is the most prevalent long-term health condition in Canada with six million (one in five adults) diagnosed.

Pain, stiffness, redness and swelling caused by inflammation of a joint interfere with both physical and mental health and bring a diminishing quality of life as these symptoms lead to significant and irreparable damage to the affected areas often resulting in loss of function.

Normally, inflammation is a defence mechanism in the body that helps prevent the growth of abnormal cells, stimulates healing of damaged tissues, and directs cells to fight viral and bacterial infections. But research indicates that persistent inflammation is the source of many diseases, including arthritis. Chronic inflammation requires the body to activate certain mediators to protect cells. However, when present for long periods of time, they can destroy healthy tissue and activate disease.

Obesity, stress and genetics raise the levels of inflammatory compounds. Individuals with arthritis can manage joint pain and swelling with several natural therapies. One scientifically proven method to treat joint diseases naturally is to add anti-inflammatory foods to our diet.

According to the Arthritis Society, research suggests that the kinds of food eaten may help manage arthritic symptoms. The key to reducing inflammation through diet includes eliminating foods with too much sugar, preservatives and additives, and consuming more whole foods, such as fruits and vegetables, seeds, nuts and oily fish.

In addition, spices like turmeric and cayenne pepper possess anti-inflammatory properties. Capsaicin, found in pepper, is a compound that reduces a pro-inflammatory protein that is found at the site of swollen tissues and abnormal cells. Reducing this protein can decrease pain, swelling, and even joint and tissue damage. Multiple studies indicate that curcumin found in turmeric can also reduce joint pain and swelling.

Consider adding the following foods into the diet to decrease inflammation:



**White and Green Tea:** White and green teas are full of polyphenols, which are chemicals found in foods and spices that fight off inflammation and reduce oxidative stress, relieving symptoms of arthritis.

**Olive Oil:** Using extra-virgin olive oil in cooking and in dressings and sauces adds omega-3 fatty acids, which are known to lessen inflammation. Olive oil also contains oleocanthal, which is a natural, powerful antioxidant that acts like ibuprofen, easing inflamed joints and lessening stiffness.

**Whole-Grains:** Grains such as brown rice, oats and quinoa can lower inflammatory compounds that spark flare ups.

Whole grains contain levels of fibre, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals beneficial for those with arthritis.

**Fruits and Veggies:** Brightly coloured vegetables like bell peppers, carrots and dark, leafy greens, such as arugula, romaine, spinach and kale contain powerful nutrients. Cruciferous veggies such as cauliflower, broccoli and Brussel sprouts are good additions to the diet as their antioxidants help reduce joint damage caused by inflammation.

Fruits such as blueberries are touted for their anti-inflammatory properties. These tiny fruits are packed with delphinidin, malvidin and kaempferol, which are compounds that Canadian researchers say reduce inflammation and encourage tissue healing.

Citrus fruits, such as grapefruit and oranges contain high quantities of antioxidants like vitamin C to help soothe burning joints. For a tasty snack, try a clementine or add grapefruit to salads.

Another excellent fruit is pineapple, which contains bromelain, recognized as an anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving agent in both rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritic patients since 1964. Bromelain appears to possibly decrease joint swelling and improve joint mobility.

Clinical studies found that bromelain's anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties make it an effective treatment for the pain, swelling and joint stiffness associated with osteoarthritis.

Additionally, legumes like lentils and beans are full of protein, vitamins and minerals and are a great source of fibre, which lowers the levels of C-reactive protein (CRP), a substance that is a sign of inflammation in our body.

**Nuts and Seeds:** Almonds, pecans and walnuts are rich in healthy fats and contain antioxidants that fight inflammation. Research shows that consuming nuts daily reduces levels of the C-reactive protein, a marker of inflammation. Also, flax,



Photo: Jonathan Ybema/Unsplash

pumpkin, sesame and sunflower seeds are rich in healthy fats and are healthy choices.

**Seafood and omega-3s:** Salmon, mackerel, sardines and tuna contain healthy omega-3 fatty acids that lessen aches by lubricating the joints. These fats not only prevent the formation of inflammatory compounds but also help destroy them. Fish is high in vitamin D, a bone-building nutrient. Just 85 grams of salmon can provide more than the daily recommended vitamin D.

**Red Wine and Cocoa:** Red wine contains resveratrol, which is a natural anti-inflammatory. Cocoa, particularly dark chocolate, contains flavanols that help eliminate toxins and are known to reduce the production and effect of pro-inflammatory substances.

Diet can play a vital role in promoting overall wellness and curtailing the onset or progression of diseases that are negatively affected by inflammation. More people are becoming aware of the effects of inflammation on the body and are using natural remedies to relieve joint discomfort. |

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# THE FUTURE OF TRAVEL

by KATE ROBERTSON

It's no accident that I became a travel writer. Travel has always been my passion. So, I've been watching with anticipation this year to see how a global pandemic will affect future travel trends.

Like everything, travel has evolved over time. Technology especially has made its mark. People now have the option of booking their trips online as opposed to using a travel agent, emails have replaced postcards and travellers' cheques have become obsolete.

Over the last decade, travel tourism has also significantly grown. But this travel boom isn't all positive. It has resulted in over tourism in certain destinations, increased cost of living and crowding for locals, and problems with pollution. Air travel has also been implicated as a culprit in climate change.

Despite the steady increase in the travel industry, it hasn't been impervious to short-term setbacks from disasters like terrorist attacks, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions. And then along came COVID-19.

To be clear, COVID-19 isn't the first health crisis that has affected travel. The MERS, Ebola and Zika viruses all caused concerns over the last 10 years. But the effects of COVID-19 have been the most global and dramatic. To get a sense of the future of travel, post-pandemic, I asked four BC tour operator experts to weigh in.

Most tour companies are seeing new bookings coming in for fall 2020. With "staying local" being encouraged, people are using the opportunity to get out and explore the beauty of BC.

"In the short-term, I think we'll see a reduction in international travel and a focus on more regional trips," says David Rose, general manager for Mile Zero Tours. "We are seeing a lot of demand for our tours to Tofino and the Okanagan. I think as BC seems to have handled the pandemic well, these types of trips are seen as safe and a lot of people are itching to get out."

Teresa Marshall, co-owner of Pitmar Tours, says that now is one of the best times to book travel for 2021.

"Many of the suppliers are offering amazing deals to get their businesses back up and running," says Marshall. "There are new cancellation incentives to entice you to travel with peace of mind, so if COVID-19 hits a second wave, you are protected."

Before you travel, you will want to learn what regulations are in place for flying, cruising or coaching. Many airlines are

ABOVE | Vernazza, Italy. Photo: Noah Mayer/Unsplash

RIGHT & TOC | Cruise ship leaving Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Photo: Alonso Reyes/Unsplash

now requiring that passengers wear a mask for the entire flight, which will change in-flight service.

“Short-haul flights will likely have water-only service, and boxed meals for longer flights. Some of the airlines have also given up their prime positions at various airports along with the frequency of some flights to cut costs,” says Marshall.

At least in the short-term, coach travel will have a different feel. Drivers will be wearing masks, and probably guests, too. There will be hand sanitizers on board, as well as frequent disinfecting during the day. Buses will be at half capacity giving passengers more comfort and protection.

Tour companies, like Ageless Adventures, are working with every component of their tours (coach lines, trains, airlines, hotels, restaurants, etc.) to ensure health and safety.

“We have discussed what each company’s protocols will be and have worked with them to tweak their protocols to suit our tour group,” says Melinda Burns, owner and operator.

Cruise lines are stepping up their cleaning protocols and having to re-invent the cruising experience.

“For those that have future cruise credits, you will not be disappointed with the offerings: free gratuities, free drinks, free excursions and on-board credits are yours for the taking,” adds Marshall.

“But all of these perks will come at a price,” she continues. “The days of ‘cheap’ travel are gone. Some suppliers will not be returning and have closed their doors. If you booked with a BC registered travel agent, your money is protected. Some credit cards will have protected you, as well.”

Due to the pandemic, insurance companies have paid out millions, and premiums for future travel will likely increase. Some insurance policies have frozen the premium price if you did not cancel the policy when you accepted a future travel credit instead of the refund.

“That is going to be a big issue now,” says Gery Valtiner, owner/program director with Special Travel International. “Will insurance companies come up with an insurance package that is sort of affordable and allows people to get most of their money back? If there is no security for travellers, then they will not be willing to commit their monies a year in advance to a tour. In that case, how will operators/specialty operators be able to plan projects for two years down the line?”

Since short-notice lockdowns and quarantines can’t be predicted, Valtiner warns that tours based on special events, like concerts that only happen at a specific time, can be affected.

As for the long-term future of travel, some operators, like Burns, believe travel will go back to normal in a year or two, with new cleanliness protocols permanently in place.

“Health checks for international travel (and possibly all air travel) could be here to stay,” says Rose. “With air fares likely to increase substantially and new additional checks at airports, I think less air travel and longer trips will be the popular trend.”

Valtiner agrees there is no doubt travel will return, the question remains, “in what format?”

“It will be 100 per cent crucial to see what airlines, hotels, etc. will implement in terms of rules/procedures to make people



feel safe and confident, and how these suppliers will be able to sustain themselves and still make money. As a traveller, I would not want to spend three hours every day in line-ups from breakfast to bathrooms to all kinds of sites – I would rather not travel... or pick places off the beaten path.”

Valtiner is unsure of how people 65 and older will be impacted.

“They want to travel because many know there will be a time when they are physically not able to do certain tours anymore,” he says. “On the other hand, they are also the most fragile in terms of health and the extra stress of having to stand in lines, etc., so I am sure they will change their travel habits, stay away from packed cities, mega events and maybe cultural travel.”

COVID-19 has forever changed travel as we know it in the short-term – and in future ways that are still difficult to predict. But with a large portion of the world population relying on the tourism industry for their living, and the benefits to humankind of being able to experience new and different sights, sounds, cultures and people, I truly hope it’s possible to piece this important industry back together in a sustainable way.

Time will tell. |

For more info on these tour operators, visit their websites:

Ageless Adventures: [agelessadventures.com](http://agelessadventures.com)

Mile Zero Tours: [milezerotours.com](http://milezerotours.com)

Pitmar Tours: [pitmartours.com](http://pitmartours.com)

Special Travel International: [sticanada.com](http://sticanada.com)

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# ELIXIRS OF LIFE: SOME SECRETS TO LONGEVITY

by J. KATHLEEN THOMPSON

A propensity to live long and to live well may not just be a matter of genes and your attempts to eat more sprouted lentils and wheatgrass. Rather, according to researcher Daniel Buettner, it may have something to do with regular healthy practices derived from the healthy communities in which one lives. In *The Blue Zones; Nine Lessons for Living Longer* (National Geographic, 2012), Buettner reveals the secrets to five long-living communities around the world. He begins with a story to illustrate the power of these life-giving communities.

After World War II, Stamatis Moraitis, a man from the Greek island of Ikaria, seeks medical help in the States to repair a hand mangled from a munition accident. He ends up staying, eventually finding work as a house painter. At the age of 60, after a lifetime of smoking and breathing paint fumes, he is diagnosed with lung cancer and given six months to live. He decides to return to his homeland, so he can spend his final days breathing thyme-scented air and be buried in the family plot.

Life during Stamatis's final "assigned" days suited him. He is doted upon by his wife and sister, and, when news of his homecoming gets out, the entire village. Neighbour visits are often accompanied by a bottle of locally produced red wine. The six months come and go and, rather than weakening, his body steadily gains energy. He begins to make weekly trips to his old church, walking a kilometre up a hillside and back, and growing his own vegetables. Encouraged by the success of his garden (and the fact that he is still around to harvest



it!), he plunges into viticulture, reviving the family vineyard to where it was, soon producing more than 1,500 litres a year. Evenings are spent with friends, at home, or at the local taverna, playing a few games of dominoes. He doesn't die as expected; he thwarts cancer and thrives for more than 40 years beyond his diagnosis.

Finding Stamatis cancer-free at 100, and noting that his neighbours were likewise as robust, led Buettner to add Ikaria to the "Blue Zones" in the world. Along with the Barbagia region in Sardinia, the Okinawa archipelago in Japan, the Nicoya Peninsula in Costa Rica, and 7th Day Adventists living in Loma Linda, California, remote Ikaria is a place where people are three times more likely to live into their 90s, and experience 50 per cent less cancer, cardiovascular disease, depression, dementia and osteoporosis.

Each area has its own idiosyncratic elixir: for the Sardinians, it is fava beans and the flavonoid-rich Cannonau wine; for the Ikarians, an afternoon nap, diuretic herbal teas and a spoonful of honey a day; for the Okinawans, mugwort, fermented tofu and moai (a scheduled daily meeting of one's "inner circle"); for the Costa Ricans, hard water and fresh fruit; for the Loma Lindans, one unscheduled day of the week – the Sabbath. But the people in all these communities shared the following life-sustaining practices:

1. They eat in moderation (like the Okinawans who follow the principle of *hara hachi bu*; eating until they are 80 per cent full, which amounts to about 2,000 calories a day). Their diet is primarily plant-based and sourced fresh from their own gardens. They eat very little processed food, sugar/salty

snacks, and meat is saved for special occasions.

2. They are active, integrating low-intensity “exercise” in their daily regime; prepping meals and doing chores around their home, walking to shops, church or to see friends and working manually in their gardens on a regular basis.

3. They are living independently or in the home of one of their daughters.

4. They treat themselves to a happy hour or linger over dinner with a glass of good red wine.

5. They are social, making family, friends, and community connectedness a priority.

6. They have a plan de vida or ikigai (a reason to get up in the morning). Feeling involved in meaningful, purposeful work gives them a sense of feeling needed.

7. They are prone to sunny, likeable dispositions. Maintaining a positive outlook attracts not only years to your life but also a caring circle of people.

8. Like Raffael, a 107-year-old from the Sardinia Blue Zone, who says, “Life is short, don’t run so fast you miss it,” they create “sanctuaries in time” where they slow down and smell the roses.

9. They have faith, often belonging to an established church. Being part of a strong religious community fosters healthful behaviours, a higher sense of self-worth and a supportive social network.

Given that Buettner’s study was precipitated by scientific studies that suggest only 25 per cent of how long we live is dictated by genes, the other 75 per cent determined by our lifestyle and everyday choices, it behoves us to consider the impact healthy practices make on the continued vibrancy of our lives. The way we “break bread together,” interact with others, shed stress, heal ourselves, avoid disease and view our world can determine the quality and longevity of our lives.

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# MITIGATING THE RISK

by MYLES SHANE

The first case of COVID-19 was reported in North America in January 2020. This worldwide pandemic has infected more than 20 million people and killed more than 800,000. The virus is indiscriminate, and it seems there has been no escaping it.

While countries, cities and institutions have been unable to stop the virus, some have been able to mitigate the spread by taking cautionary measures and working with public health officials.

Since seniors are among the most vulnerable population, accounting for nearly 80 per cent of all deaths in Canada, seniors' residences and long-term care homes are working diligently to keep their residents safe.

## LYNN VALLEY CARE CENTRE

Provincial health officer Dr. Bonnie Henry was visibly shaken when she announced the first COVID-19 outbreak in a long-term care home in Canada in March.

The Lynn Valley Care Centre in North Vancouver had the worst seniors' home outbreak in BC and recorded Canada's first COVID-19 death, a male resident who succumbed to the virus on March 8.

While the outbreak was taking place, other seniors' residences and long-term care homes began developing safety strategies. Their efforts, combined with those of the province, meant many residences were able to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 with a range of success.

## BRIA COMMUNITIES

Bria Communities is a seniors' community consisting of four residences: Magnolia Gardens, Sunridge Gardens in Langley, The Waterford and The Wexford in Tsawwassen. As well, Magnolia Gardens and The Waterford also have long-term care centres. Altogether, Bria has a little over 500 residents.

Bria is one of the lucky senior communities as they have been COVID-19-free. Janice Miller, a Marketing Partner for Bria, explains the precautions they've taken to mitigate the virus.

"We are eager to ensure the safety and health of our residents and staff and are working hard towards that end, says Miller. "In our long-term care centres, we continue to meticulously follow the provincial government's guidelines with regards to single-site staffing, PPE, cleaning protocols, visit-

ing guidelines, active monitoring of employees and residents, regular communication with staff about community transmission, on-site hand hygiene audits and staff safety huddles throughout the day. Before COVID-19, we were in compliance with the provincial licensing board and will continue to do everything necessary to remain so.”

In early March, the Bria leadership team sent the first communications to their staff, residents and family members regarding COVID-19. That same week, they began a health screening process for guests, increased cleaning protocols in their buildings and limited large gatherings of residents. Staff were prepared, as during any flu season, with outbreak protocols should the need arise.

Less than a week later, Bria cancelled all recreation activities, and their dining rooms were closed. Many residents were cautiously self-isolating. At this time, Bria began serving all meals through room service and were screening guests and services in the buildings.

By mid-March, Bria Care Centres were closed to all visitors. At the same time, their independent living communities were only welcoming essential visitors who passed the screening process.

“Even as we’ve been able to welcome guests into our long-term care centres this summer, we have remained on high alert,” says Miller. “Our staff are ready to return to the highest safety protocols the moment it is necessary. The same is true in our independent living communities; many safety practices have remained in place – practising safe social distancing, limiting the size of gatherings; and ensuring good hand hygiene.”

“We have restocked PPE, installed digital health assessment tools at reception desks, and increased hand sanitization stations throughout our buildings. Like everyone else, we are watching the daily case counts and waiting to see what happens next. Our staff, residents and their family members have worked hard over the past six months to keep each other safe, and I think we are not just capable of surviving a second wave, but also thriving as we weather the storm.”

### BERWICK RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

Berwick, with seven residences in BC (Campbell River, Comox/Courtenay, Kamloops, Nanaimo, Qualicum Beach and two in Victoria) has been vigilant in implementing the necessary policies and procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of residents and employees. Near the end of March, Berwick by the Sea in Campbell River was quarantined after a resident fell ill with COVID-19. Immediately, all residents were isolated in their suites, including the infected senior.

Berwick spokesperson Lesley Sikorski explained how Berwick treated its one and only COVID-19 case.

“Residents had already been practising social-distancing protocols and were not congregating in common areas, like dining rooms, to prevent COVID-19 clusters, such as those occurring in seniors care homes elsewhere in BC,” says Sikorski. “That put us in a very good position to help mitigate the

further spread of this virus. An isolation team with personal protective equipment is now solely responsible for delivering food and responding to the residents to limit any crossover in staff and stem transmission of the virus.”

“We don’t rotate workers across sites, so transmission from staff moving from one residence to another is not an issue. We take every step possible to ensure the virus is contained. The health and safety of our residents and staff is a top priority for Berwick. We are working rigorously around the clock with Island Health to control and contain the virus and are communicating daily with the Communicable Disease Nurse.”

In terms of letting friends, family and entertainment into the facility Sikorski described how they have utilized technology.

“We have done whatever we can to help facilitate virtual visits utilizing technology. We have built infrastructure pieces to help facilitate patio visits (for example, moveable plexi-glass barriers) and have reserved a hospitality suite in every one of our communities to allow for person-to-person visits where we have the ability to disinfect after every visit.”

“Our active living teams have been adding additional daily activities to the calendar and creating activities that people can do in their suites. We have also started streaming exercise classes. We’ve started hosting zoom resident meetings (as well as family meetings) and virtually hosting our entertainment and speakers to keep our residents engaged. We have also introduced cohort dining to enable our residents to be able to dine in the dining room, but with the same people daily in the bubble size as directed by our PHO.”

Can retirement residences and long-term care facilities stop a potential second wave from affecting senior communities as hard as the first wave? It would seem Bria and Berwick are both in great shape, and as other residences across the province follow similar protocols, perhaps a second wave can be minimized.

*Berwick by the Sea in Campbell River, where Berwick’s one case of COVID-19 was discovered and isolated, has been all clear since late April. |*

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# BHUTAN: HAPPINESS IS A PLACE

by J. KATHLEEN THOMPSON

“This is a dance about the stag and the hunter,” explains the young man beside me on the grounds of the Talo goemba (monastery), as spectacularly costumed dancers make their entrance at the monastery gates. “The deer will be making an appearance soon.”

Indeed, a pair of antlers distinguishes the next dancer that emerges onto the field, his body taut, his antlers darting nervously. With drums and cymbals marking his movement, he begins to unwind, nimbly balancing, twirling and leaping, layers of his costume creating a kaleidoscope of colour with each turn. The hunt broadens as the stag takes flight down the field with hunter and accompanying atsaras (masked clowns) in pursuit. The hunter’s dog appears, and the ensemble moves towards the ‘profound temple’ at the end of the field, their graceful stylized ‘chase’ pixels of swirling colours from a distance.

“Each dance performed at these tsechus (festivals) tells a story,” my self-appointed guide tells me. “A story that means something to us, that tells us something about our history. Sometimes, they are about our gods, sometimes, our heroes, or demons.”

Tsechus, held annually to honour their Buddhist heritage

and founder of their country, Guru Rinpoche, are integral to the religious and social calendars of the Bhutanese. While the grandest are held in the large cities – Paro, Thimpu, and Punakha – each district dzong (fort-monasteries) or goemba hosts its own annual tsetchu. We are witnessing the homespun Talo tsetchu, in a village set high in the mountains above the Punakha valley.

Falling in step with the thousands who have made the pilgrimage up the mountain, we gamely hoist ourselves up trails through hayfields and farmyards to reach the goemba’s sacred perch. The atmosphere is festive, with grounds festooned in colourful flags and banners, and Bhutanese adorned in their elaborate finery; special handwoven embroidered ghos and kiras (national dress) and white kabneys (scarves for the men) and colourful rachus (sashes for the women).

ABOVE | Young boys in ‘ghos’ gathering kindling at Lobesa School, Punakha.

RIGHT | Stag and hunter dance at the Talo Tsechu.

PAGE 24 | (left) Bridge to Punakha Dzong (Buddhist temple). (right) Rice farm above Punakha valley. Photos: J. Kathleen Thompson



Bhutan's tsechus, like the Takshang Monastery outside of Paro (established by Guru Rinpoche when he flew to the site on the back of a tigress), have visitors lining up to see Bhutan. But, to protect its ancient practices and heritage and to avoid capitulation to the tourist industry, Bhutan has been shrewd about its marketing strategies and goals.

This is the not-colonized, not-changed-for-centuries 'Shangri-La' where Buddhist belief determines political action, and where Gross National Happiness (GNH) is considered the country's measure of success and prosperity. It is, of course, the latter peculiarity – and possibly the best tagline in the history of the universe – that has attracted worldwide interest in Bhutan.

So, what does it mean when all decisions prioritize citizens' happiness? Officially, this means that paramount to the country's progress is whether development contributes to the country's four pillars of GNH: sustainable development, preservation and conservation of culture, conservation of environment, and good governance. Achieving this in a country conscious of its need to modernize (both its life expectancy – 70 years – and GDP – \$2,612US – are low by Western standards), while still honouring a highly developed cultural identity is a challenge that faces Bhutanese policy makers daily.

Yes, the country is open for business, be it in the resource industry, the tourist industry, or the IT industry. But, wisely, to ensure that indiscriminate development and outside influence do not overwhelm the small sovereign kingdom, every innovation comes with an 'enough' button.

For example, tourists are permitted in the country on a strict quota system, and only with licensed Bhutan travel operators. Low impact, high value practice in tourism has not only been immensely effective in preserving the culture and landscape that tourists have paid to experience but has given the country a certain cachet amongst 'rare-gem-seeking' travellers.

Management of tourist, health and education facilities, once overseen by foreigners, are now increasingly staffed by Bhutanese graduates. With English instruction embedded in the school curriculum, Bhutanese students easily transfer to Western universities, and training acquired overseas becomes a valuable commodity when they return home. While cable, cell and wifi service are available, streaming is selective, as are the more questionable influences from the west. Provocative dress, smoking, drinking, pornography and guns may not be officially forbidden, but are clearly socially outlawed.

So, given this careful mixology of the new with the old, one lands in Paro valley wondering how this will all play out. No doubt, through my experiences as a visiting teacher, I will see first-hand where happiness lies in the modern equation. It does not take long to discover it lies in the depth of joy and emotion the Bhutanese bring to each task. Like when I attempt to teach English to five-year olds and the Canadian national anthem to 12-year olds. Or when I bring the school staff to their feet – to learn African and Hebrew circle dances – or



An advertisement for Wisteria Place. On the left, there is a logo for 'wisteria PLACE' with the tagline 'Life in harmony'. On the right, a woman is sitting on a sofa, looking at a laptop. Below the image, there is a dark blue banner with the text 'Vibrant independent senior living - opening late 2020'.

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teach an entire school body a song. Or the warmth my formal farewell speech receives, and the cards of farewell that begin: “Alas, it is time for us to say save journey, mam. You have been the biggest teacher ever.”

Did my experiences make evident I was in a country that values citizens’ well-being over productivity and prosperity? Was their environment conducive to happiness, with green spaces, clean air, pedestrian-friendly streets, etc.? Could employees count on a decent working wage? Could women count on childcare, child support and protection from domestic and sexual abuse?

At first glance, Bhutan falls short on these goals. Rampant development in the capital city and around Punakha threaten to overwhelm these areas and degrade the landscape. Tin shacks that house itinerant labourers line the sides of the National highway. Clogged roads and lack of green corridors or parks make the cities less than stroller-friendly. Employees endure long hours, difficult working conditions, and earn

wages that just cover the basics and prohibit such things as owning one’s own car or home.

But, on second glance, despite the hardships and the growing pains, there is a prevailing sense of order and Buddha-like calm to life in Bhutan. In the streets of Thimphu, people quietly, contemplatively walk down the street as if strolling across a leafy green university campus. In a town hosting a tsetchu, thousands can pour down the streets without a single horn being honked. Road rage, petulant children, incensed customers, and disenfranchised youth are uncommon here. The voices are soft, the handshakes gentle, and demeanours self-contained.

Kindness is rewarded in Buddhist culture; good deeds, virtue, prayer, and pilgrimages are all ‘merit-making’ practices that accumulate good karma. Perhaps, indeed, the traditions of mehta (loving kindness) and pu (simplicity) are what underlie the country’s most coveted commodity. And while the modus operandi cannot be exported, it can most assuredly be a lesson to us all! |

# MAKEOVER: BEFORE & AFTER

by *INSPIRED* STAFF

A little over a year ago, Jean Myers decided to adopt a healthier lifestyle when she started to suffer from joint pain in her knees and hips. Since then, she has lost over 80 pounds and is living pain free.

With such a dramatic transformation in her appearance, she learned about and was open to the *INSPIRED* Makeover Contest when a friend suggested she apply.

“The experience was fantastic from start to finish,” she says. “It was fun going to the appointments and being pampered.”

The retired Victoria resident keeps busy teaching papercraft classes and serving as President of the Royal Oak Women’s Institute, an organization that raises money for local charities. She is also a mother and proud grandmother to three “beautiful young ladies.”

“I have been married to the love of my life and best friend, John, (who never stops making me laugh) for 52 years.”

Jean’s family came to cheer her on during her makeover reveal and fashion show at *INSPIRED Magazine’s* annual 55+ Lifestyle Show in Victoria.

“I felt a little nervous but also very excited,” she says. “I was very lucky to have full support of family and friends and it was great to see them in the front row of the audience. My husband was especially proud of me.”

Of the makeover experience, Jean says she would highly recommend it to others.

“Initially, I was out of my comfort zone but that went away, and excitement took over,” she says. “I felt wonderful and confident. Everyone made me feel very special!”

## WHAT THE STYLIST DID:

**HAIR:** It was a pleasure working with Jean; she has such a great attitude! Since her hair was fairly short already, I did not feel I needed to go shorter. Instead, I decided to rework the shape of her hair to suit her bone structure. Jean’s hair was flat on top with more body around her ears, so I switched it up by bringing the body to the top of her head to help frame her face. I also gave her a fringe and some softness around her face.

For Jean’s colour, we went with a very gentle product called Redken Shades EQ gloss. Her hair had picked up a yellow tone, so I wanted to cancel that out and revive her natural hair colour with a shiny polished and steely grey look. The front of Jean’s hair had quite a bit of white, so I added grey low lights for a more consistent colour throughout. This gave her hair such a beautiful shiny, healthy look, which is sometimes necessary because grey hair can look dull.

The Shades EQ colour will grow out nicely and won’t create a stark re-growth line. It’s a great “no-commitment colour.” For



those wanting minimal upkeep at a lower cost, I suggest using Redken’s Graydient shampoo and conditioner. The shampoo has a mild temporary colour of purple that cancels out the yellow, and the conditioner deposits a little steely grey colour to help maintain the look.

**MAKEUP:** For Jean’s makeup, we kept it quite simple using a primer to smooth her skin’s surface before applying the foundation. For the foundation, I chose a BB cream foundation for hydration, and because it does not settle into fine lines.

I shaped Jean’s eyebrows and used a little brow powder to give them some definition because the colour had lightened over the years. Shaping the brows helped frame her eyes and open them up. I used a matte shadow in a lighter colour to even out the skin tone on her eyelid and then I used a slight bit of a burnt orange, which is a contrasting colour to her beautiful blue eyes. We finished off her look with a bit of mascara and a nude pink gloss. |

**SPECIAL THANKS** to the Victoria businesses that contributed to the makeover and fashion show:

Akai Hair Salon – 101, 2559 Quadra Street, 250-383-3227.

Shimmer Body and Nail Spa – 4050 Santa Maria Ave., 250-881-3787.

Suzanne’s & Jenny’s – 777, 190 Royal Oak Drive, at Broadmead Village Shopping Centre, 250-658-3618.

Photographer: Regina Akhankina from Couture Photography. [www.couture.photography](http://www.couture.photography) 204-823-3870.

# BALANCING WORK AND CAREGIVING

By WENDY JOHNSTONE

You have a past-due deadline at work and your mother keeps calling because she is confused about what day it is and where you are. You are notified by your dad's long-term care home that he's fallen again and needs an x-ray as soon as possible. You are late for work after taking your spouse, who was recently diagnosed with cancer, to a medical appointment that ran late, and your supervisor calls you into their office.

Sound familiar?

Over one third of Canadian adults combine paid work and caregiving. The majority of caregivers experience the wonderful benefits of giving back to the person they are caring for and enjoy strengthened family relations. The strains of caregiving, however, can take their toll: A quarter of caregivers report a change in employment, including refusing training opportunities, promotions, taking a loss of income or simply having to quit their jobs altogether. Almost 15 per cent report health and sleep problems, and over a third report emotional difficulties due to caregiving. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, caregivers are now faced with a host of unique challenges, on top of an already full plate.

Plans for balancing caregiving and work vary tremendously, and no single blueprint works for everyone. Here are a few strategies to lighten your load and reduce stress.

Check in with yourself regularly by asking:

- How is my current self-care?
- How resilient do I feel?
- What do I need for support?
- Where can I find extra support?

Be honest and proactive. Describe the situation to your employer before it becomes a problem and let them know you are committed to your job. Be honest with yourself. Don't sugar-coat the situation; it won't help you in the long run and can cause additional stress.

Learn what support is available. Can you work flexible hours? Do you have someone who can cover for you if you need to leave the office? Does your employer know about your eldercare situation? Are you comfortable talking to your direct superior or colleagues about your eldercare situation? What policies does your company have in place to support working caregivers?

Document, Document, Document. Create a file to keep track of information about your current caregiving situation. Good documentation serves as a valuable reference when dealing with your employer, colleagues, doctors, and others involved with the person you are caring for.

Put on your own oxygen mask first. Taking on a caregiver role often happens when life is already full. Many caregivers try to squeeze it into a busy life without letting anything else go. Try identifying what comfort or activity can help meet your needs. Self-care is about finding ways to meet your needs, and to feel better, cared for, and more grounded.

*Wendy Johnstone is a Gerontologist & a consultant with Family Caregivers of British Columbia in Victoria, BC*



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# THE BEST-LAID PLANS

## COURAGEOUS & OUTRAGEOUS

by PAT NICHOL

On a beautiful Friday evening in the middle of summer, I was invited to listen to live music from a friend's front porch, with the promise of sparkling wine to accompany this delightful affair. What a wonderful idea! I dressed in my best informal black outfit as I understood the music would be classical.

Ready to quaff and listen with good friends, I arrived at the top of the stairs. As I turned to retrieve something from my bag, I turned too far and ended up tumbling down six stairs to the walkway below. Evidently, I bounced a couple of times as there was rich, red blood pouring from the back of my head upon my landing.

I did not partake in sparkling wine or fine music that evening. Instead, I was treated to a ride in the back of an ambulance and a wait in the emergency ward of my local hospital (no music or wine!). Worst part, my glasses went flying (still missing in action), so I was unable to

see the screen on my phone properly.

My text messages were strange, to say the least!

Friday evening is not the time to hang out in an emergency ward. Especially during a pandemic. My excellent EMTs tagged me and settled me into a wheelchair. From there, I watched as person after person came into the hospital. I went to the desk to suggest that maybe I could go home as there seemed to be others who were worse off than me. The nurse checked my name and advised me to sit down as there were stitches in my future.

Final tally, seven stitches in my scalp, a sore (but not broken) rib, bruised and bloody knees, and possibly a broken little toe. Sounds worse than it was. Happy I was wearing black; the blood did not show.

Ten days later, my stitches have come out, and I'm feeling fine. My knees look like they did when I was 10; I always had bandages on my knees as a kid. Does this mean I am reverting to childhood?

In the end, the experience has made me so grateful for loving friends, awesome EMTs, superb nurses and docs. I am fortunate to live where I live with the medical system we have.

As for the concert, I have been promised a front-row seat for the next one. At the foot of the stairs.

Stay well, everyone. |

Pat Nichol is a speaker and published author. You can reach her by email at [mpatnichol@gmail.com](mailto:mpatnichol@gmail.com)

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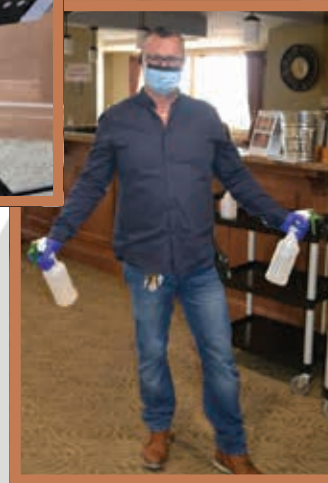
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