

# INSPIRED

55+ lifestyle magazine

NOVEMBER 2020



AUTHOR/ACTIVIST  
MAUDE BARLOW

CYCLING  
ACROSS CANADA  
FOR CANCER

MENTOR TO A  
NEW GENERATION  
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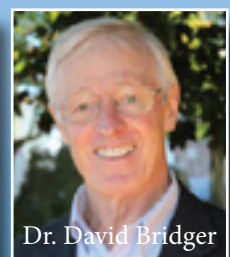
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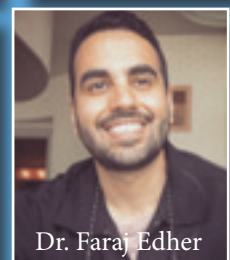
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Cover MAUDE BARLOW

An undeniable force, Maude Barlow is the recipient of 14 honorary degrees, multiple awards and the author of 19 books – she's a real-life superheroine for causes.

Photo: Courtesy of Maude Barlow



## INSPIRED

55+ lifestyle magazine

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## resources

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## THRIVE BEYOND 55

by BARBARA RISTO, PUBLISHER



Last month, several *INSPIRED* readers reached out with a response to this column, offering their reflections and thoughts. Although I had never met these people, each message felt like a gift. Thank you.

So much of our day-to-day life is one of sameness. Whether it is our daily routine, our circle of friends, or our thoughts and beliefs, often we simply retrace the same pattern. We get in a rut and stay there, feeling it is the safer alternative. But is it?

Someone has said the only difference between a rut and a grave is the depth.

Don't misunderstand me. Habits, routines, beliefs and steady friends can be tremendously helpful. They give us stability and grounding. They give us comfort. But sometimes they can cause stagnation and even paralysis.

Life is about growth and moving forward. I doubt there are many of us who couldn't benefit from improvement in some area of our life.

As humans, we often have a resistance to change. We prefer things to stay the same, even as we yearn for better circumstances. Improvement, unfortunately, only comes through a shift in some aspect of our life.

Opening up to new ideas, meeting new people, or trying out a new activity – all require the acceptance of change.

COVID-19 turned many of our routines, plans and habits upside down. Suddenly, our weekly activities were curtailed. Without our usual pattern of activity, we struggled to orient ourselves.

As previous options become unavailable or limited, one of the ways I learned to cope was by asking myself the question: "What is the next best thing I can do? If I can't do this, is there something else I can do that will give me a result that is similar, or maybe even better?"

When you start asking yourself this question, it is remarkable how creative you can be. Not every idea is actionable – but just opening yourself to the possibility of something new provides a crack through which inspiration can emerge.

If I can't go to the gym, is there

something else I can do? Can I go for a long, energetic walk every day? Can I get the same workout by learning the moves of some popular dance routine from a YouTube video?

This month, I am starting two new activities. I'm excited about both prospects. While these are not physical activities, they are opportunities to expand my intellectual understanding and engage safely with interesting people.

One is a monthly book club with the neighbours in my cul-de-sac. If the weather is too chilly to meet safely in our backyards, we will come together using technology. We've also agreed to erect a tiny book exchange. Both are the result of realizing through our neighbourly interactions during COVID-19 that many of us are avid readers.

The second is a weekly one-hour book discussion at my home with three friends in my social bubble. We have chosen *The Way to Love*, by Anthony de Mello; a book about overcoming emotional suffering by releasing attachments in order to experience greater personal freedom and become open to more possibilities.

By now, some of you may have explored alternatives of your own. You may have pivoted to other activities, engaged in learning a new skill, explored online groups, adopted new habits for staying in touch with friends via phone, social media or Zoom.

Being able to change and reinvent ourselves is part of the thriving process. Examining our beliefs and habits leads to new awareness. Getting out of our ruts allows us to grow and expand.

What is the "next best thing" you have done recently? I'd love to hear about your experiences.

I'd also be interested to hear from anyone who has read *The Way to Love* – what are your thoughts on this book?

Are there any other books that have changed your perspective of life in a significant way? Let me know at [publisher@seniorlivingmag.com](mailto:publisher@seniorlivingmag.com)

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Author and activist Maude Barlow is passionate about access to clean water and its designation as a basic human right.  
*Photo: Michelle Valberg*



# MAUDE BARLOW: A PASSIONATE FIGHTER FOR JUSTICE

by HANS TAMMAMAGI

At 73, Maude Barlow, an outspoken advocate on issues including democratic and social rights, trade sovereignty, environmental justice and, especially, water rights, summed up her philosophy in one powerful statement: “I have no intention of retiring!”

She has every right to step back, for her career has been full of accomplishments. She is a co-founder of the Council of Canadians, one of Canada’s top advocacy groups, and was the chairperson for 32 years. She chairs the board of Washington-based Food and Water Watch. She has served on the executive of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature and is a councillor with the Hamburg-based World Future Council.

Maude’s drive has been recognized with 14 honorary doctorate degrees. Furthermore, she has authored 19 books, including her latest, *Boiling Point: Government Neglect, Corporate Abuse and Canada’s Water Crisis*; and *Whose Water is it Anyway? Taking Water Protection into Public Hands*.

Her awards are numerous, and include the Right Livelihood (known as the “Alternative Nobel”), the Lannan Foundation Cultural Freedom Fellowship, the Citation of Lifetime Achievement at the Canadian Environment Awards, the Earth Day Canada Outstanding Environmental Achievement, the Planet in Focus Eco Hero, and the EarthCare, the highest international honour of the (US) Sierra Club. She served as senior advisor on Water to the 63rd President of the United Nations General Assembly.

Born in Toronto, she spent many years in the Maritimes before settling in Ottawa. Married at 19, she dropped out of university, later finishing her degree at Carleton University.

With two grown sons, Charles and Bill, Maude is happily married to Andrew Davis, a retired lawyer.

Maude became involved in the women’s movement early in her career. She worked with the firm, Women Associate’s Consulting Inc., teaching assertiveness and leadership to women in many organizations, including the CBC and the RCMP. At the latter, she worked with

the men to sensitize them to the issues of sexual and physical abuse of women. She became director of the Office of Equal Opportunity for Women for the City of Ottawa, where she dealt with sexual harassment and gender equality, setting up the first task force in Canada on wife assault. A major upward move came in 1983 when she was selected by Pierre Trudeau as senior advisor on women’s issues.

The Council of Canadians, a formidable non-profit social-action organization that advocates for clean water, fair trade, green energy, public health care and a vibrant democracy, has been an important part of her career. In 1986, she met Mel Hurtig who was forming the Council with early members Margaret Atwood, Pierre Berton and Farley Mowat. After two years, she became the chairperson thanks to her drive and passion. Maude is proud that since that time the Council has grown and today has 150,000 supporters and conducts major campaigns for a new NAFTA, climate justice, health care and water justice.

Although she champions many causes, since 1985, water has headed the agenda. “The global water crisis is undeniable,” says Maude. The problems started with the privatization of municipal water services and became a major corporate interest when water was declared a commodity: a good in trade agreements instead of a right, a vital requirement for all living creatures. The selling of water in plastic bottles is a particular thorn.

In the mid-1990s, Maude was writing about a movement to establish an international water cartel, much like an oil cartel, “so that one day, every single drop of water will be owned by a corporation.” Canadian governments have not fought this movement as it would contradict the North American Free Trade Agreement, which names water as a good.

Maude is also concerned about contamination, another serious threat to water. Seventy-five per cent of India’s surface water, 80 per cent of China’s and many lakes and rivers in Latin America and Africa are contaminated.

In Maude’s opinion, water – “the most precious commodity on earth” – should be ensured as a basic human right. She believes water belongs to the Earth and all species, that it’s a

# Snapshot

with Maude Barlow

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

*"I would tell her change is the only constant and not to fear it."*

Who or what has influenced you the most, and why?

*"I have been influenced by many people. Marion Dewar [mayor of Ottawa, member of parliament, president of the New Democratic Party], Stephen Lewis, Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann [Nicaraguan diplomat, politician, Catholic priest, President of the United Nations General Assembly], Eleanor Roosevelt, my father W.T. McGrath (he led the fight in Canada against capital punishment) are five that come to mind. All are loved for ideas and values outside themselves and they were dedicated to making the world a better place."*

What are you most grateful for?

*"Good health is huge. Loving family and friends. Living in Canada. Medicare. The gorgeous tree in my backyard that I have written all my books to."*

What has been your greatest success?

*"I'm proud of making a difference, in particular, seeing a new law come into effect that I had a hand in. The biggest 'success' was the United Nations General Assembly recognizing the human right to water and sanitation in a resolution 10 years ago. It took years to get this breakthrough. Essentially, the nations of the world agreed that it is not okay to watch your children die of waterborne disease because you cannot afford to buy them clean water. It was an evolutionary step in human development, in my opinion. I worked tirelessly on this campaign and am delighted the resolution was adopted."* |



public trust and a human right, which should not be denied anyone for lack of ability to pay, and further should not be appropriated for profit.

Maude's crusade on behalf of the world's water is a part of her position against economic globalization. Little wonder that Naomi Klein's quote, "Maude Barlow is one of our planet's greatest water defenders" graces the cover of her recent book *Whose Water is it Anyway?*

On July 28, 2010, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution explicitly recognizing the human right to water and sanitation and acknowledging that clean drinking water and sanitation are essential to the realization of all human rights. Maude had worked tirelessly for this resolution and was in the UN balcony for the vote. She was ecstatic when it passed. Many credit Maude as a leader in getting the resolution accepted.

Despite her long, hectic and active career, today she is in good health physically, exercising a lot and enjoying her marriage. She is also mentally healthy and is driven and passionate about continuing to fight for water and environmental justice. Her passion in recent years has turned to Blue Communities.

In her latest book, *Whose Water Is It Anyway?*, Maude says she has a dream of "a world going blue, one community at a time." The "blue" refers to taking action to conserve, protect and maintain public control of fresh waters. Her concern is justified as, unlike oil, for example, there are no green substitutes. Water is irreplaceable and vital, with all living things, humans included, relying on water to survive. Yet water is under enormous attack by corporations. Maude lays out a prescription for how to fight this threat, calling for communities to become blue by having "everyday people defending their water resources."

To be a "blue community," she says, means adopting three basic principles:

A promise to protect and promote water and sanitation as human rights; to protect water as a public trust and keep it out of the control of for-profit companies; and to phase out bottled water in municipal facilities.

To date, Maude says, 27 Canadian municipalities "have taken the Blue Communities pledge," and the movement has started to take root internationally with Paris, France, and Bern, Switzerland signing on. Maude is actively fighting to create more Blue Communities.

"While I deeply believe we need good and strong laws at all levels of government to protect both ecosystems and humans from the coming global water crisis," she says, "the most powerful actions we can take personally are at the local level." Maude feels it is in the hands of the individual, the small group, and the community to wrest power from the corporate giants and regain control over our lives.

Maude sees a vibrant, long future ahead of her. "I am in great health and take good care of myself," she says. "I have recently stepped down from any official capacity with the Council of Canadians and will concentrate on my international water justice work. I am working on a new book on activism and hope. I am also on a number of boards and am the Chancellor of Brescia University College, the only all women's university left in Canada."

She reads a lot, jogs every day, and loves theatre and music. Best of all, she is surrounded by a loving family, all living in Ottawa including four grandchildren, who she and her husband adore and spend a lot of time with.

Maude has a strong, almost Buddhist, personal philosophy where she strives to stay positive. "Hope is a moral imperative," she says. "We live in a beautiful country, so we owe it a positive vision. We can't just be negative; we have to have something to do and be practical. I take great joy in work and enjoy contributing to something larger."

Retirement is but a remote signpost, almost imperceptible on the distant horizon. |





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Visitors are spellbound by the sightings of the Northern Lights from the Blachford Lake Lodge.  
Photo: Jean Philippe

# THE UNFORGETTABLE NORTHERN LIGHTS, NWT

by **BRUCE SACH**

Why head north, above the 60th parallel, to Yellowknife in the winter? If you haven't seen the Northern Lights in person, then you need not ask!

We have the best view in the house, er, lodge, at the Blachford Lake Lodge, considered one of the prime spots for viewing the Northern Lights in the world.

But don't take it from me. Visitors from Hong Kong, New Zealand and Germany have flown in, hell bent on experiencing the Aurora (as locals call the Northern Lights) at its best.

The atmosphere at the lodge has a laissez-faire sort of feel – doors are left unlocked, food is served buffet-style and is plentiful and delicious, there are hundreds of reference books to be consulted and there are artefacts galore.

Residents share shower, sink and water closets and retire to large, simple rooms. It's a curious mixture of the practical with the beautiful. I'm seated in a red leather chesterfield, enjoying a second sunrise, while staff slowly prepare breakfast service behind me.

It's always buffet-style here and guests sit at long, unassuming tables geared for four to six diners.

The staff is mostly volunteer. Like guests, they have come from around the world. They work for room and board, in exchange for having the privilege of living here and getting a taste of a real frontier lodge experience.

Another bonus – the area's considered one of the last pristine forested areas in the world and is located only 200km from the tree line.

The current volunteers (some of whom had never lit a

fire before their arrival), hail from France, Spain, England, Poland, Scotland, Holland, Japan, Australia, the Czech Republic, and the odd Canadian. They all live in tents.

Back in the lodge, there is a blackboard indicating the activities planned for the day. Visitors want to take full advantage of their stay here, which is typically two or three nights. The many activities include ice fishing, cross-country skiing, fat bike excursions, Dene drumming, igloo building, walking the trails in the virgin forest, spruce salve making, maple syrup toffee pulls and a workshop on setting your camera to capture the Northern Lights.

Or, they can chill out (sorry for the pun) in the lodge and its environs, enjoying the spectacular view or the deafening quiet of the Boreal/Taiga forest.

The main attraction is, of course, the most natural one, the Northern Lights at their very best. A visitor from Hong Kong, who had been to Finland one Christmas confirmed that the viewing was more spectacular in the area buffered by Yellowknife and the Blachford Lake Lodge than in Scandinavia.

Interestingly, your camera will capture more colour than your eye. Therefore, taking photos is a must. Taking photos, however, in the freezing cold when there is very little light is challenging. Don't skip those free workshops, which include many tips on capturing the Aurora on your digital camera.

Visitors take no chance in missing the Aurora, going to sleep in their outdoors clothes, awaiting the call from a volunteer that the display has begun. Each visitor has a pager, the kind you see in restaurants, and man, when it sounds, it's like a fire drill! People stream out of their rooms, cameras



in hand, hoping to catch the full show. One tip from the workshops was on camera settings, and mentioned that one should bring many batteries as they will freeze and discharge quickly in the cold.

Visitors tend to be well travelled, heck even the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (our future King William) came here in the summer, soon after their wedding in 2011. For some reason, they did not stay for the Northern Lights, but the area was no doubt chosen for its isolation and beauty.

A German couple came just to fish, spending a week; two couples from Hong Kong, who were easily the most active, spent hours outside, searching for the perfect photo op. They stayed in a cabin away from the lodge, with an outhouse that includes a glass sky roof for viewing!

Even for Canadian visitors, getting to the lodge can be quite an adventure. After arriving in Yellowknife, we flew in a short, but beautiful trip with a Twin Otter ski plane, a 30-minute ride. The odd visitor (generally locals) came in via cross-country ski or snowmobile. When we were there, one guest arrived late, his planned five-hour Ski-Doo trip unexpectedly lasting over seven hours. Another group arrived even later, having skied 50km, half the distance from Yellowknife.



Among the many Nordic activities at the Lodge, ice fishing, igloo making and hockey are included.  
Photo: Martina Gebarovska

Needless-to-say, the star attraction is the Northern Lights. Words fail to describe them adequately, but you will never forget them. Or as Canadian film director Alison McAlpine said, when referring to star gazing in the Chile's Atacama Desert, "No one who looks at the immensity of the skies here remains indifferent."

I would be inclined to say the same thing about the Northern Lights. And as a Westerner who grew up in Northern Alberta, I'd wager that the best place to see the Aurora is in, or near Yellowknife, NWT. |

For IF YOU GO information, including COVID-19 updates at the Blachford Lake Lodge, visit [www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/northern-lights-nwt](http://www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/northern-lights-nwt)

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# EACH DAY IS A GIFT

## A Sister's Story: Cycling Across Canada for Cancer

by J. KATHLEEN THOMPSON

When I stooped by the shores of the Pacific Ocean to fill a bottle with water that will be released into the Atlantic, the image of Terry Fox doing the same – in reverse – loomed large. Showing us what could be done with a spark of an idea, and oceans of determination, Terry's Marathon of Hope ignited a tradition that has now become a rite of passage for any of us crusading for cancer – a cross-Canada tour.

Joining the long line of leaflet waving, pedal pumping Canadians who brave wind, sleet and punishing mountain ascents to shine a light on cancer had never been on my bucket list, but I needed to show up for my younger sister, who, at 59, lost her battle to a disease that so few of us know and understand, but should: ovarian cancer.

It is considered the deadliest cancer for women as only 44 per cent survive beyond five years with the disease. When the five-year survivorship rate for breast cancer is now 87 per cent, I felt it was time that women with ovarian cancer became part of a good news story. And, as I quickly learned, so did Ovarian Cancer Canada, the Canadian charity dedicated to championing the well-being of women with ovarian cancer. With their help and blessing, The Ride for Sheila Rae was born.

My sister, Sheila, had been a formidable athlete in her youth, and had led many a team to championship status. From captain to coach, she inspired her own children to excel in sports, leading her daughter and teammates to positions on the Canadian women's field hockey team. As a coach, mother, and educational assistant, she celebrated every step people took in the right direction. To her, everyone had the ability to be a champion, and to use that ability to help others.

It was that spirit that had put me on a bike seat, at the tender age of 63, with the blazing intention to ride coast-to-coast from Vancouver to Halifax to heighten our understanding of ovarian cancer. I was prepared to do the trip alone. I had cycled a few thousand kilometres in my lifetime, so was counting on the same stamina to get me and my megaphone to the other side of the country.

Realizing, however, how much more of an impact I could make with a highly visible mobile billboard – a.k.a. a van wrapped in graphics about our cause – and unlimited space for educational supplies – a.k.a. vehicle storage areas – it did not take much arm-twisting to welcome my partner



as support driver, quartermaster, techie and publicist to the support team.

Our work began months in advance of the first day's ride. Scouring websites, medical journals and attending conferences to source up-to-date information on ovarian cancer, we parsed together a handbook of need-to know information to dispense en route.

Due to having three strikes against it: a lack of a reliable screening test, difficulty of detection in its early stages and chronic underfunding for research and treatment, becoming informed of symptoms and best preventative strategies was particularly critical for ovarian cancer. Behind every premature death is a lack of knowledge, and I was painfully aware that this had been the case with my sister.

Two bikes tuned, van camperized, bike rack installed, route and itinerary mapped, it was time to dip my toes into the water of the Pacific and begin our Ride for Sheila Rae.

ABOVE | (Top) The author and her support team and vehicle. (Bottom) Reflecting on the shores of Lake Superior.

RIGHT | A soggy Launch Day in Vancouver didn't dampen Joan's determination to show up for her sister or the cause she was raising funds and awareness around: ovarian cancer.



After the launch from rain-soaked English Bay in Vancouver, the ride through BC on Highway #3 was predictably tough (five mountain summits!) and exhilarating. Stopping at those sites you zip past when driving – Westminster Abbey in Mission, Othello Tunnels in Hope, farmer's markets in Penticton and Grand Forks, and artisan's studios in Crawford Bay – reveal the depth of BC's history and attractions. Beyond the Rockies, things get a little less predictable.

For someone who grew up in BC, cycling through country scrupulously ironed of tectonic rumples was a daily marvel. I cycle-sailed through this flattened version of Canada on one of its lesser known roads – The Red Coat Trail – from Pincher Creek, Alberta to Winnipeg, Manitoba.

It was haunting to cycle along this path once blazed by the Northwest Mounted Police. Abandoned garages, boarded towns (except for a post office, grocery store and beauty salon), suggest that this was a route that had been crushed by the changing fortunes of time. But proud French, Dutch and Belgian heritages remain. Catholic nuns peer from shuttered windows of former schools, signage on the highway is in French, and razor-edged gardens announce each lovingly maintained town and village.

On shoulderless roads, I approached the city of Winnipeg in winds that had overturned rail cars that day, and realized how understated the title of "Windypeg" is. It is truly the last swirl of prairie wind and dust before the boreal forest takes over to the east. Wipe away its modern veneer of endless traffic and muffler shops, and its prairie heart beats strong. The quilt of Canadiana in the Prairies is thick with histories, from

the T-Rex Discovery Centre in Eastend, Saskatchewan, to the most recent wave of immigrants that are proudly calling this country home.

Within hours of leaving Winnipeg, we were back to forests and lakelands that reminded us of BC, minus the mountain vistas. Northwestern Ontario is all about wilderness and family run lodges and urban resistance. We loved it, and discovered that stereotypes you have long subscribed to about long-hauling through Ontario are completely shattered when you bike the province.

We felt the sociability and kindness of the people. From Nipigon to Wawa to Vankleek Hill, in libraries and campgrounds, visitor centres and newspaper offices, cafés and farmers' markets, people reached out to us.

My sister's story elicited their own, and the hardship and heartbreak they had endured never diminished their capacity to help others. Perhaps not surprisingly it was Thunder Bay, the town that knows the cruelty of cancer the best (where Terry Fox had to abandon his Marathon of Hope), where we felt embraced the most.

Concluding the Ontario section of my ride with Canada Day fireworks in Ottawa was just a harbinger of the "highs" experienced cycling in neighbouring Quebec. Every pedal along the St. Lawrence River was picturesquely pleasant. Those European landscapes we dream about – farmlands, villages and storybook roads – are right here in our very own country! Not to mention the Olde World charms of Montreal and Quebec City.

Quebec's beautifully maintained bike paths gradually yield to the forests of northern New Brunswick. But not to English; New Brunswick is Acadian French in the north. By Freder-



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icton, we were again conversing in full sentences and, in Moncton, TV reporters had seized our story for both the CTV and Global News broadcast that night. I was thrilled for the continuing coverage of our cause.

Frenetic traffic enters the outskirts of Halifax and no bike lane. The highway eases into the downtown, and, through the leafy arbour of the Dalhousie University district, I approach my final destination – Black Rock Beach in Halifax harbour. I am filled with a multitude of conflicting emotions – relief, disbelief, gratitude, and sorrow – for my sister and every woman who has had ovarian cancer.

A small welcoming group gathers with us at the beach, and my bottle of the Pacific Ocean meets the Atlantic, the bubbly is poured, and the rain begins. It seems so right that my journey is humbled by weather at the end, just as it was at the beginning. I may have been the first person to cycle across Canada for ovarian cancer, but the heroes are the people living with cancer, and the mountains they climb each day.

As I look back at our coast-to-coast ride for cancer, I am struck by how overwhelmingly positive the experience was. It brings to mind one of my sister's favourite mantras: "Each day is a gift." While I had begun the trip grateful for a way to transform grief into action, I finished it with a radically reformed appreciation of our country. Experiencing it one pedal and conversation at a time allowed me to see it not only as an endless rerun of forests, lakes and Tim Hortons, but as a dynamic, ever-changing tapestry. Crusty assumptions that Canada is boring, Canadians dull, our economy stagnant and our history uneventful, were all overturned. Vibrant and diverse cultures, thoughtful and open-hearted people – these characterized the communities we came to know on our journey.

And perhaps the most surprising revelation of them all, from someone who gained these insights from the saddle of a push-bike, was that the idea of propelling oneself across our "vast" country, no matter one's age, is not as far-fetched as it seems! |

*To learn more about ovarian cancer, visit [ovariancancer.org](http://ovariancancer.org)*



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Upon bringing her out here, she was extremely nervous, and I must say, the entire staff has been absolutely

fabulous at making Mom feel so comfortable and welcome.

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# MAUREEN SHAW: CONNECTING THE DOTS

by KATE ROBERTSON

One of the many wonderful things about the passage of time is being able to look back on the years and reflect upon how events and people have influenced our lives. For Maureen Shaw, who has worked passionately her whole life to improve occupational health and safety, it's easy to look back at her life journey and connect the dots.

Growing up in Chemainus, Maureen's childhood memories are filled with experiences of strikes for unsafe working conditions and fair pay by the IWA Forest Industry workers at the mill.

"It seemed to my young self this was a constant in our lives," says Maureen. "The feelings of being exploited and not heard caused social unrest, violence on the streets, and at home. Critical injuries in the mill were just a part of our lives. When there was a critical injury, the screeching siren at the mill would sound and everyone sat still wondering who it was. I recall feeling sick, hated the violence and was determined to leave it behind."

When Maureen became an adult with children of her own, she began to advocate for the rights of learning-disabled children and for students who were labelled for the future by the policy of vocational streaming.

"Research showed that kids were streamed into 'shop' and then to the workplace, where they could be at higher risk of injury," she says.

At that time, Maureen was appointed to the Tripartite Occupational Health & Safety Council of Alberta (the first woman on the board and the first woman Chair), where she spent six years advising the Minister responsible for Occupational Health & Safety and Workers' Compensation.

Subsequently, she was appointed by the federal government as the first woman to Chair the Council of Governors of the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, before moving on to become CEO of the Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA) in Toronto.

Maureen continues to passionately believe in the framework she helped develop during her time with the IAPA, which acknowledged that a siloed approach to safety was not making the difference in deaths, injuries and the well-being of people, and an integrated approach was needed.

"My definition and belief is simple: Change and success are only going to happen when we have positive relationships in our workplaces," says Maureen. "The workplace is about people. We hire the whole person, not just their skills."

She also helped to form Threads of Life, a support organization for people who had lost a loved one in workplace



Maureen Shaw with former PM Stephen Harper and former GG David Johnston at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal award presentation in Ottawa.

incidents. She didn't just approach this work with her professional hat on – she also had the personal experience of her son being critically injured in a workplace injury, resulting in the loss of his leg.

"I more than understand and share the emotional pain of the thousands of injury survivors and families every year. We need to stop the pain and the incredible losses to our communities and our economy," says Maureen.

Through her extensive career, Maureen has received national and international recognition and was the recipient of several esteemed awards, including the Canada 125 Medal and the Inaugural Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal.

"I am grateful for all the opportunities life has given me," she says. "A few years ago, I was lecturing at Vatican University in Vatican City. I got a cold chill as I looked around at the audience, in this amazing holy place. What was a little girl from Chemainus doing in a place like this? I was there because of all the people who helped me, who inspired me, who believed in me, who loved me."

Now living back in Victoria, Maureen sees her current role as an adviser, mentor and supporter to the new generation of leaders and professionals and is a member and advisor on several boards for health and safety organizations.

"I enjoy mentoring others and watching them grow," she says. "I feel very fulfilled when I see ideas I have helped nurture come to life through others. If sharing my stories and engaging people in conversation is inspiring others, I am very happy to do that and thankful if it makes a difference."

Maureen is also passionate about the arts – a lover of music, especially jazz, Broadway musicals and the classics. She loves books, especially local and Canadian history, and political intrigue, both fiction and non-fiction.

"I very much enjoy Turner Classic Movies, the Victoria Symphony, the Canadian College of Performing Arts (CCPA)



and local theatre. Most of my art is from places that bring memories; I can walk around my home and remember places and people,” she says.

So it would follow that Maureen is also a member of the board for the Canadian Heritage Arts Society (which owns CCPA).

“I love and am passionate about the college and its students who inspire me constantly with their work ethic, creativity and sensitivity to each other and commitment to excellence. It gives me joy each day,” she says.

During these extraordinary times, with coronavirus, political unrest and economic uncertainty, for Maureen, the best way through is to have a purpose for the day – even if it’s making sourdough bread.

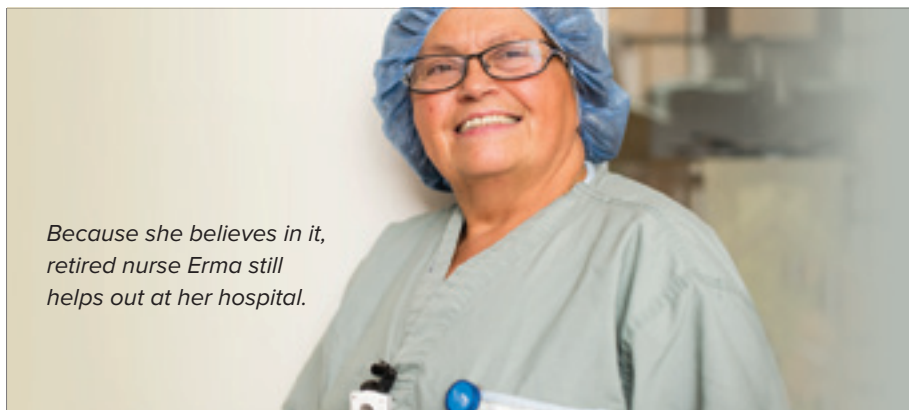
“I stay positive, as I see this as a time of opportunity for change and transformation in our society,” she says. “Throughout history, following every major global event – 1918-20 Spanish flu, world wars – profound changes occur in society. I am hopeful we will use this opportunity to be kinder and to support each other. And we see this happening each day.”

“I see this as an opportunity to have a recovery that has meaningful focus on the environment, building on our strengths as a country, a province and a city,” Maureen continues. “I can recall, in my life, times of protest and noise. These were periods of profound change. Some of the things we hold dear, such as our medical health system, with all its warts, is one example. I have hope that the generation we are mentoring will be the ones who ensure this change is positive. I have hope for the future. We need to listen intently and mentor and support them all the way.”

Maureen also believes that workplace health and safety, including mental health and wellbeing, has never been higher on the public agenda and hopes we will not backslide as businesses slowly reopen through the next year.

“This is one change that must be maintained for us to reduce and hopefully eliminate the death, disease and life-altering injuries in our workplaces and communities,” she says.

With Maureen’s continuing mentorship, it’s likely it will. |



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# SHELAGH BELL: STILL HAVING FUN!

by MARTIN DONNER

Shelagh Bell is a shining example that volunteerism is alive and well in Canada. Many people may not realize the extent of the positive impact we, as a society, receive from the approximate 18 million Canadians who volunteer their time, energy, skills and knowledge to help other people, animals and our environment. To express it another way, collectively, these volunteers give us two billion hours of their time *every year* to make our community, indeed the world, a better place.

At 92, Shelagh is still doing what she has always loved to do – help others. A BC resident since 1960 (she's originally from Calgary), Shelagh volunteers at Saanich Peninsula Hospital, something she started doing almost 40 years ago. Over the years, she has alternated between being a member of the Saanich Peninsula Hospital Foundation and the Saanich Peninsula Hospital Auxiliary (of which she is a Past President).

An easy conversationalist, Shelagh says she volunteers “because I find people so interesting, and I love talking with people. Volunteering enables me to continue to meet new people from all walks of life, and to be of help to our community at the same time. What could be better than that?”

Shelagh certainly enjoys staying busy. She sews, loves walking with her Nordic poles, bakes, reads, uses her computer, but most of all, she loves being with people because “having a good conversation is so interesting. I am learning new things all the time.”

While COVID-19 is still with us, Shelagh cannot visit the Saanich Peninsula Hospital. Staying safe at home, she



Volunteer Shelagh Bell (right) with Lesley Webb (retired) from the Saanich Peninsula Hospital Foundation admin team.

misses the hospital staff, patients and her fellow volunteers. She will return as soon as circumstances permit, and she can hardly wait. “I swear I am gaining much more from volunteering than I am giving of myself,” she says.

Even without her hospital friends, Shelagh still has plenty of friends and loves being a resident at Summergate Village, a modular home park near Sidney-by-the-Sea. Today, she is driving to the grocery store, and then popping in on a neighbour to share a glass of wine together.

People’s reasons for volunteering are as varied as the organizations for which they give their time. “I always feel good going home after volunteering,” says Shelagh. “I have the feeling that I have done something worthwhile today, and that feeling is priceless.”

Undeniably, volunteering has a host of benefits for those who take up the mantle. Volunteers report how volunteering helps reduce stress and combats depression. It provides a sense of purpose and the opportunity to learn new skills and meet new people.

Helpguide.org reports that “studies have found that those who volunteer have a lower mortality rate than those who do not. Older volunteers tend to walk more, find it easier to cope with everyday tasks, are less likely to develop high

blood pressure and have better thinking skills.” If that wasn’t sufficient motivation, it also reports that “volunteering can also lessen symptoms of chronic pain and reduce the risk of heart disease.”

Most organizations allow people to volunteer once they are 15 (and some even younger). But the good news for seniors is there is no upper age limit on volunteering. Shelagh is living proof of the benefits of volunteering. Not only is she helping others, she says, “at 92, I’m still having fun!” |

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# A FAMILY'S AFFAIR WITH VOLUNTEERISM

by JASON HOWE

The thread that connects Kandys Merola to her decades of volunteer work with the Royal Canadian Legion is clear: it's an affiliation that runs strongly through her family.

Kandys's grandfather served with the Canadian Army in France at Vimy Ridge, and her mother, Catherine (nee-Wilkinson) Schaff, one of Canada's "bomb girls," joined the Canadian Women's Army Corp during the Second World War.

Catherine set the example for Kandys by making volunteering a part of her life. She found time to do so in addition to her regular work requirements (including 17 years in a full-time position at Inglewood Nursing Home in West Vancouver) and while raising a family with her husband, John Schaff, a decorated WWII veteran, who passed away in 2005 after almost 60 years of marriage.

Catherine has given her time to several groups over the years, including the North Vancouver Recreation Centre, Riverview Hospital, the Silk Purse Art Gallery, and St. Christopher's Anglican Church.

"I love people and giving back to my community," she says. "It has helped keep me young as I near the grand age of 95."

The family's approach to volunteerism is strongest with the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 44, where both mother and daughter have been active since 1985, tirelessly volunteering for 35 years each. In fact, all six of Catherine's children are members of Branch 44.

Catherine started attending meetings with her husband in the early 1960s before increasingly taking on diverse roles with Branch 44, including many positions on the executive. She has been involved in planning and organizing social events, attending conventions, poppy tagging, and visiting the sick. She has distinguished herself by always being ready to lend a helping hand with her warm and cheerful personality.

Kandys, also the CEO of the TB Vets Charitable Foundation, has been tremendously active with the Legion's Tuberculous Veterans Section (TVS) during her time with Branch 44. First as President of the TVS Branch 44 and then as TVS National President, Kandys has worked to ensure the organization remains relevant and successful.



Kandys volunteering for the legion.



Kandys with her mom, Catherine.

"Legion TVS Branch 44 created the TB Vets Charitable Foundation as a way to give back to the community," says Kandys. "I am a member of both organizations as were my veteran parents. They were quietly humble and proud of the work they did with the Legion and with TB Vets. I saw them work tirelessly to help TB Vets become a success, and I am proud to carry on their legacy of giving back to the community."

Like her mother, Kandys has shared her time with a number of other groups, including the Anglican Church, the Harmony Arts Festival, the Coho Salmon Festival, and with children's little league.

"I watched my mother lovingly spend time listening to people, and that is her secret to lifelong volunteering," says Kandys. "Mom is a good listener, and people love her for it. I've copied Mom's compassionate ways with volunteering, and she has been a great influence on me and my children."

While the COVID-19 pandemic has prevented Catherine from being as actively involved as in past years, a lifetime of volunteering carries on in the efforts of Kandys.

"Of course, I am very proud of my daughter," says Catherine. "She is an accomplished business woman and constant volunteer. I have watched her give generously of her time, and I know she loves it because she makes it look effortless." |

Jason Howe writes and oversees communications in the charitable sector and is a former broadcast journalist.



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# LIVING LONGER

by SUSIE KEARLEY

If you've reached the age of 60, you have a 50 per cent chance of living to 90 or longer, reported Professors Andrew Scott and Lynda Gratton, from the London Business School, in 2016. Together, they wrote a book on the topic called, *The 100 Year Life: Living and Working in an Age of Longevity*. It looked at lifespans across generations and what we can expect from work and retirement in the future.

People are typically living longer than ever before, making planning for the future important. But it's also possible to increase your chances of living to a ripe old age, so you can grow old with your family, while enjoying good health.

Advancements in healthcare, with medicines to treat almost every disease, are largely responsible for people living longer because they're able to manage conditions that might have been fatal in the past.

Regular health checks help us detect some diseases early enough to cure or manage them, and the availability of nutritious produce year-round enables us to stay fit and healthy well into old age. So, how can we live the healthiest life possible? An active lifestyle and nutritious diet are great ways to start. Healthy living will help you stave off many diseases.

Cancer is the leading cause of death in Canada, responsible for 30 per cent of all deaths. A person's risk of cancer is increased by poor diet and a sedentary lifestyle. Reduce your risk by eating lots of fruits and vegetables, and regularly exercising. Being active helps your body detoxify impurities, boost immunity, and reduce your risk of infections.

Red and processed meats have been associated with both cancer and cardiovascular disease, so it's worth reducing your consumption of these foods, or eliminating them altogether. In contrast, increased consumption of fruits and vegetables has long been associated with a reduced risk of cancer.

The second biggest killer in Canada is cardiovascular disease, which causes heart attacks, stroke, angina, and other serious conditions. To reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease, choose fresh produce and wholefoods, rather than processed or convenience foods, every time you shop. Regular exercise is important, too, even if it's just a daily walk.

Avoiding foods that contribute to blocked arteries, such as damaged oils and saturated fats, also makes sense. Most oils are damaged by heat, so when you eat fried foods,



including chips, the oils cause oxidative damage to your body, which increases your risk of cardiovascular disease. You need a lot of antioxidants, found in fresh fruits and vegetables, to counterbalance that effect. While it might not scratch the same itch, it's better for your heart to eat an apple, than a bag of chips. Sugary foods and sweets suppress your immune system and increase your risk of most diseases.

"Poor diet is responsible for more deaths than any other risk factor in the world," said Dr Christopher Murray, from the University of Washington, last April. His study, published in *The Lancet Medical Journal*, showed that 20 per cent of deaths are associated with poor diet. The biggest factor affecting the results was insufficient intake of healthy foods, including wholegrains and fresh produce.

Dr Murray's project, The Global Burden of Disease Study, looked at 195 countries, analysing each nation's food intake between 1990 and 2017. The researchers focussed on 15 types of food and nutrients, and discovered that eating healthy foods like wholegrains, fruits, vegetables, seeds, and nuts, was more important than avoiding unhealthy foods like trans fats, sugary drinks, red meat and processed meats.

## WHAT SHOULD WE EAT?

Wholemeal bread and other wholegrain products provide much more nutrition than white flour products and can help prevent diseases and prolong your life. Wholemeal bread provides fibre, iron, magnesium, and selenium – all important for muscles, immunity, and digestive health.

Fruits and vegetables are important because they're nutrient-dense and full of antioxidants, which protect against cardiovascular disease and cancer, and they slow down the aging process. Fruits and vegetables are the best sources of vitamin C, an antioxidant and a potent immune booster. Other nutrients in fresh produce include beta-carotene, found in red and orange foods and some greens. Magnesium is important for muscles, and chlorophyll, a green pigment, is thought to support healing and good overall health.

Nuts and seeds are important because they're good sources of protein, immune-boosting zinc, and essential vitamins and minerals. It's easy to add more nuts and seeds to meals. Add a handful to your oatmeal in the morning or have mixed nuts with your lunch.

Beans and lentils are among the world's healthiest foods,



but they're often overlooked, or even avoided because they're associated with flatulence. Beans and lentils are great sources of protein, fibre, and minerals – essential nutrients for strong immunity, healing, cardiovascular health and digestion.

The best source of calcium is dairy produce, but if you're concerned about adverse reactions to dairy, climate change, or animal welfare, it's good to know there are many other great sources of calcium. Try nuts and seeds, especially almonds and sesame seeds, soya products, figs, baked beans, and broccoli.

Omega 3 offers huge health benefits, including better cognitive skills and cardiovascular health. Ground flaxseed on your breakfast cereal is an easy way to include omega 3 in your diet. Alternative sources are walnuts, oily fish and soya.

#### THINK HEALTHY, LIVE HEALTHY

So, what can we do to get out of the "sick" model and into the "wellness"

model of thinking? Thinking positively, laughing, connecting with others, meditating, or praying, and feeling empowered by the opportunity to take control of your health all contribute to one's wellbeing.

Experiment with cooking, try some vegetarian dishes, and enjoy your favourite healthy foods. Plan activities into your day that mean you're getting exercise doing something you enjoy. It shouldn't be a chore. Take gentle dance classes, walk in nature, do some gardening, or go for a swim. Swimming is particularly beneficial for the aging body as it offers a good workout, while taking pressure off the joints.

Simple everyday habits to improve the functionality of your body include gentle stretching, local walks, singing (it can cheer you up and improve lung function), and simply moving, whether it's tidying your home, cooking, or something organized in your community.

Stay active, eat healthily, and improve your chances of staying well, far into your old age. |

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# JOIN THE “IN THE SNOW” GROUP AND STAY HEALTHY ALL WINTER

by AILEEN STALKER

“Put your front foot down before you pick your back one up” was the humorous advice my English friend, Peter, gave to a person new to snowshoeing who had joined our outdoor group. With all group members over 65, and several in their early eighties, we were already defying statistics in terms of activity level, flexibility and strength on our weekly snowshoe adventures. Picking our feet up was not a problem, whether hiking in summer or snowshoeing in winter, and the lack of major physical illnesses, few falls, and pretty good memory skills among the group showed that embracing the “use it or you will lose it” dictum of weekly vigorous activity does have impressive results.

## SNOWSHOEING IS REAL EXERCISE

Snowshoeing is the fastest growing winter sport in North America and it is easy to see why. Seniors, athletes, children and adolescents can all enjoy the activity at their own level of fitness and speed. Snowshoeing can help you gradually increase your fitness level and is an excellent cross-training activity. Some activity statistics related to snowshoeing credit 298 calories burned by an average 70kg (155lb) adult doing snowshoeing for 30 minutes – similar to rock-climbing or ice skating for the same amount of time.

A study completed by the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse demonstrated that snowshoeing at an average speed of 4.8km per hour is similar to running at 9.7kph and cross-country skiing at 13kph. It burns up twice the number of calories as walking for the same time. The health benefits of snowshoeing are so positive that the American Heart Association approves it as a heart-strengthening aerobic activity.

## SNOWSHOEING IS FOR EVERYONE

For many seniors, snowshoeing is a transition from downhill or cross-country skiing to an alternate winter activity where they feel less anxious about a fall and broken bones. It is low impact and, with the use of poles, provides the same upper and lower body workout as Nordic walking. There is time to talk to companions, take photographs, eat a gourmet picnic lunch, and identify birds and animal tracks in the snow. Staying warm is easy and the cost of equipment fits with reduced retirement incomes.



ABOVE | (Top) Aileen, 75, on the long trail home from the Ancient Cedars, Whistler. (Bottom) Sue, 81, overlooks The Lions from Black Mountain.  
Photos: Tony Keen



Snowshoeing is an activity that provides opportunities for that precious and elusive family quality time. It can be a multi-generational adventure with fun for everyone, all the while participating in a healthy outdoor activity. Babies in a backpack carrier can be easily included in warm spring outings, while toddlers can be transported in a toboggan. Even reluctant teenagers can be encouraged to go on a family expedition if their friends can come along and lots of food is provided at all stages of the trip.

But what about the senior downhill skiers who may still be adrenalin junkies – will they ever snowshoe? For those who seek speed, there are snowshoe races and even world snowshoe competitions. Snowshoe Canada hopes to have snowshoe races as an Olympic event at some time in the future. And perhaps even those who spend most of their time seeking the next speed thrill may listen to experts who suggest that spending quiet and contemplative time in nature helps improve every aspect of one's life.

So, why wait? Health benefits and social connections, plus the enjoyment gained from snowshoeing are evident. Rent a pair of snowshoes and be the first to take your friends on a new adventure every weekend. Remember – there is no time like snow time! |

**Aileen Stalker** (with Tony Keen, maps and photographs) is the author of *Snowshoe Trails in Southwestern British Columbia*, Rocky Mountain Books, 2016, and an active senior.



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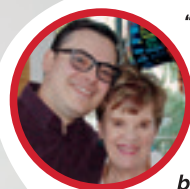


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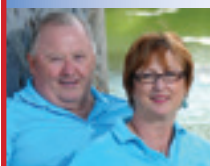
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# THE CALM OF STORMY SEAS

by KATE ROBERTSON

The ocean waves roll and crash all around me, like cracks of thunder. It's mind-boggling that something so clamorous and violent could feel so peaceful. And not just for me: hundreds of sleep apps would agree, the sound of crashing waves is as calming as it gets.

My quest to find the best knock-em-down, drag-em-out storm waves in Canada has brought me to Tofino, the tiny village of roughly 2,000 people on Clayoquot Sound, as far west as you can drive on Vancouver Island. Tofino has been able to make a success of celebrating a season called "storm watching," a period between November and March where the rainy winter weather gets particularly wild.

There are a couple of reasons for this meteorological phenomenon. The storms usually originate in the Aleutian Low, a semi-permanent low-pressure system near the Aleutian Islands in the Bering Sea, off the coast of Alaska. As one of the largest atmospheric weather patterns in the Northern Hemisphere, the low intensifies here, developing rapidly falling pressures and strengthening winds that result in howling gales by the time they reach Tofino. Secondly, there's no land mass between Tofino and Japan to break the waves, which can roll in up to six metres in height.

To make the most of my storm-watching experience, I'm staying at the Wickaninnish Inn. A family-owned property, the Inn's lovely cedar buildings are miraculously perched on a rocky point, with each of the 75 rooms facing towards the ocean or the beach.

The stormy weather is certainly cooperating. It's raining hard, and the wind is howling. Determined to feel the salty sea spray on my face, I've donned a bright yellow rain jacket, pants and boots. An umbrella won't help much

with the blowing wind; it's "raining sideways," as the locals like to say.

Chesterman Beach is Tofino's longest. This beach is a driftwood graveyard and several driftwood sculptures and shelters built by industrious beach lovers are scattered along the 2.5km white sand paradise, like bony epitaphs. The tide is going out, and I aimlessly wander, exploring the tide pools to find seaside treasures – mussels covered with white knobby barnacles, purple starfish, pin-cushiony sea urchins.

A favoured winter activity is hunting for elusive Japanese floats, hollow glass balls once used by fishermen to keep their nets afloat. It's rare for these floats to wash ashore and usually only with certain tides, like the "blue tide," when the tiny gelatinous sea creatures, called by-the-wind sailors, wash up after particularly strong winds. That's not the case today, but that doesn't stop me from keeping an eye out.

In the relative dryness under a cedar canopy, I stop to sit on a log and watch as two women expertly tote their surf boards into the water and quickly paddle out. These daring souls have one objective in mind: catch the perfect wave. Even though there's only a two-degree ocean temperature change between winter and summer in this part of the Pacific Ocean, they have on full-body wetsuits, including peaked hoods.

Really, it's hard not to see surfers in Tofino. In the '60s, Tofino became a hippie haven, which sowed the seeds for the surf culture that has now put it on the map as Canada's biggest and most popular surf hangout. World surf competitions like the Rip

ABOVE | Checking out tidal pools during storm season on Chesterman Beach, Tofino, BC. TOC | Secret Cove under the author's room. Photos: Kate Robertson



Curl Pro or the Surf Canada Pro Nationals are regularly hosted here.

The Rainforest Beach trail loops back to the Inn, through moss-covered undergrowth, waist-high lacy ferns and hundreds-of-years'-old western cedars, Sitka spruce and hemlock. The Wick was built with as much environmental consciousness as possible, from trees on the property, recycled wood and blow downs.

The wood in Tofino is also revered and celebrated by the region's woodcarvers and artists, like Henry Nolla, who had a carving shed on the Wick's property. Nolla, a mentor for generations of West Coast woodcarvers, completed much of the adze work in the Inn, including the remarkable yellow cedar entrance doors that depict two ravens holding the door handles in their talons. Even though Nolla died in 2004, his carving shed has continued as studio space and gallery, where visitors can view carvers at work and some stunning art.

The next morning, I'm scheduled with Jamie's Whaling Station for a boat trip to nearby Hot Springs Cove. A trip to soak in this natural geothermal hot springs pool in nearby Maquinna Marine Provincial Park has been on my radar for years. But unfortunately, great storm-watching doesn't make for great boating, and Jamie has decided to call off the trip due to turbulent waters. On a less rough day and when the rain and low-hanging clouds don't obscure visibility, you are likely to see copious wildlife from the boat, like bears eating on shore, and sea animals like otters, seals, and even humpback whales and orcas.

Instead, I can head to the Tofino town centre to wander the gift shops and art galleries, like that of Roy Henry Vickers, the world-renowned Canadian First Nations artist. Or maybe I'll just flip on the gas fireplace in my room and curl up on the settee, which is positioned for maximum viewing pleasure, with balcony doors cracked open, to watch the waves smashing into the rocks in the cove below. I'll keep the binoculars close by to follow the seabirds diving and dancing into the stormy winds. |

For IF YOU GO information, visit [www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/tofino-storm-watching](http://www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/tofino-storm-watching)



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# MONITORING AND TREATING DIABETES

by NANCY J. SCHAAF

Diabetes is a lifelong condition where either the body does not produce enough insulin or cannot use the insulin it does produce. Our bodies require insulin to change the sugar from food into energy. Of the two main types of diabetes, Type 1 produces little or no insulin. In Type 2, the body makes insulin, but does not use it properly.

Health Canada reports that nine out of 10 people with diabetes have Type 2, which can usually be managed with medication and/or insulin. Additionally, Type 2 diabetes can be prevented by making healthy lifestyle choices.

Diabetes care has improved with many technological advances, such as quicker and extended-acting insulin, blood glucose meters, oral diabetic medications, and insulin pumps.

Diabetes rates are rising at a rate of 40 per cent per decade. Due to this continuing increase of diabetes cases, the blood glucose monitoring market has surged because monitoring systems are critical for people with diabetes. Blood glucose monitoring gives people with diabetes a more comprehensive picture of their blood sugar control, which leads to better treatment and health outcomes.

Today's glucose meters are more sensitive, requiring less blood, meaning less pain from finger-pricks. A continuous glucose monitor (CGM) is a wearable device that tracks blood glucose. An Integrated CGM system utilizes a CGM, an insulin pump, and software that permits the two to communicate. These newer systems automatically adjust insulin delivery based on CGM readings.

Diabetes Canada says that CGM systems can be used to help people with diabetes stay within their target blood sugar range and prevent hypoglycemia, a dangerous complication.

Although blood sugar meters have advanced tremendously, many improvements can still be made to make meters even more useful. New methods in non-invasive and subcutaneous measuring of blood glucose are being explored.

The trend is to make blood glucose monitors communicate with more technology, including smart phones and computers. Because of the increase in diabetes cases caused by aging baby boomers, the obesity epidemic, and sedentary lifestyles, the demand will increase for blood glucose monitors with new features and technology.

Accuracy, convenience, and cost are the main points to focus on when shopping for a blood glucose meter. A certified diabetes educator can provide advice.



Including turmeric or curcumin in the diet may help people with prediabetes slow down or reverse the development of this condition.

The treatment for Type 2 diabetes, a worldwide health threat, is limited by the availability of effective medications. New medications are released regularly and are hyped for their ability to reduce A1c levels, which indicate the average blood sugar level from the past two to three months. Elevated blood sugar levels are a characteristic of diabetes and can identify people who are at high risk for the disease. Ongoing development of drugs for treating diabetes promises to improve quality of life for those with the disease.

Recent clinical studies indicate that berberine, a powerful plant extract found in roots and bark of goldenseal, blocks blood-sugar spikes, and helps lower A1c. A study published in the *Journal of Endocrinology* reported that berberine lowers blood sugar levels as effectively as the diabetes drug Metformin and is more effective in reducing cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Additional research indicates that a combination of berberine and glucose lowering medications is more effective than the drugs alone.

Some research suggests that turmeric might protect the body from developing diabetes. Curcumin, the main ingredient in turmeric, can have a considerable effect on some of the symptoms and complications of diabetes due to its powerful anti-inflammatory properties. A study in *Diabetes Care* found that including turmeric or curcumin in the diet may help people with prediabetes slow down or reverse the development of this condition.

Canada launched Diabetes 360° in 2018 as a newly developed framework created by and for the diabetes community. The goals are to educate Canadians on their risks of developing diabetes and how to prevent the disease and its complica-



tions. One preventative measure recommended focusses on diet, which plays a major role in the development of Type 2 diabetes.

Researchers know that being overweight, a lack of exercise, and genetic predisposition all contribute to the condition. The findings of a recent study published in August 2020 in *Science Daily* indicates that “Body Mass Index (BMI) is a much more powerful risk factor for diabetes than genetic predisposition.”

Obesity is a major modifiable cause of Type 2 diabetes. It may also be possible to reverse diabetes or even prevent the disease by losing weight in the early phases before permanent damage occurs. Additional research confirms that people who consume mostly a plant-based diet lower their risk of developing diabetes.

Diabetes treatment varies depending on the type and severity of disease. Personal diabetes management includes communicating with one’s health-care team to determine the medications, devices, and supplies that best support personal needs.

Scientists are working to develop new diabetes treatment approaches or a cure, including stem cell therapy and an artificial pancreas. The Diabetes 360° project stresses that prevention with lifestyle changes in diet and exercise remains the best way to confront this growing health care problem. |

Nancy J. Schaaf is a retired Registered Nurse and health writer.

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Photo: Laura Hynel/Oxfam

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# WHERE DREAMS MEET REALITY

by JANET MCMASTER

Many people spend their lives trying to figure out who they are and what they should be doing. A fortunate few, like author Eleanor Deckert, have a definite sense of purpose from a young age and a clear vision of how and where they want to live their lives.

In her *10 Days in December: Where Dreams Meet Reality*, a teenage Eleanor describes her dream life to Kevin, the man who would become her husband and soulmate: “In a perfect world, where there were no obstacles, I would get married, go out west, build a log cabin, live off the land, have a bunch of kids, teach them about the Lord, volunteer in my community and then write a book about it.”

In 1978, newlyweds Eleanor and Kevin packed up their van, said goodbye to their friends and family in Ontario, and headed west to start their life together. They eventually settled in the Cariboo area in the interior of BC and built a log cabin in a river valley. Forty-two years and four kids later, the couple is still enjoying their rural lifestyle in the same community, doing all of the things – and more – that Eleanor described in her dream life.

Several authors have influenced Eleanor’s writing career. She read *Little House in the Big Woods* by Laura Ingalls Wilder when she was eight, and this book helped her realize the importance of remembering her own adventures from an early age, so she would be able to describe them later. E.B. White is another favourite writer, and she especially liked *Charlotte’s Web*. Eleanor admires both Annie Sullivan and Helen Keller for their courage and strength. And Scott and Helen Nearing also had a strong influence on Eleanor with their well-loved books about the back-to-the-land movement.

Eleanor was very happy to present the finished manuscript of *10 Days in December* to her mother on her 80th birthday. The book was published the following year (2015) by Friesen Press. This enjoyable memoir weaves stories of Eleanor’s early life with the story of Eleanor and Kevin’s first 10 days in their hand-built cabin. Their first Christmas as husband and wife was filled with adventures ranging from moving into their cabin, having their first visitors – friends, as well as pesky critters! – and dealing with bone-chilling temperatures.

Religion has always been a big part of Eleanor’s life.



Author Eleanor Deckert  
Photo: Kevin Deckert

She was raised in a church community for 10 years in Ontario, and when she moved west with Kevin as a newlywed, “it was a deliberate move... and also an experiment,” she says. “I wanted to know one thing: If God is real, then is He only found within books? Is learning from the clergy of any specific church the only way to find God? Is God only found through specific prayers and ritual? I wondered: If God is real, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, and all loving... then could He be found when I am alone in the wilderness?”

“When the northern darkness, bitter cold, poverty and crushing isolation of that first winter of 1978 became unendurable, I discovered something that was there all the time... many of the familiar characters from the Bible had experienced this long stretch of time when they were alone. They had heard a message. They believed. Then they had to wait and keep up their courage through difficulty... all alone. And then came the ‘happy ending.’”

A strong believer in the importance of family, Eleanor credits her husband for being a daily cornerstone of strength for her and is thankful for his ongoing support and encouragement. She also enjoys spending time with her children and grandchildren.

Eleanor’s guiding philosophy of life is “Be Who You Are” and this philosophy has been particularly important to her when raising her children. “Although I believe we are each born with a purpose (and it may take a lifetime to discover our own path), when each of our children were born, I realized that I would be making footprints on someone else’s clear, smooth white field of snow. When each child was born, I wondered: Who are you? Are you already who you are? Am I to fill an empty vessel? Do I sculpt or form you? Do I even know what you need? As a parent, instead of being an authority or boss, I felt more like a Tour Guide.”

Many years ago, when the local school closed, Eleanor started home schooling her children, which led to an ongoing



interest in the model. She offers seminars in home schooling for parents, volunteers and educators based on the Seven Predictable Patterns® framework that she developed. She enjoys coaching other home schoolers and has published home schooling articles in magazines.

An active volunteer for over 40 years, Eleanor has been involved in volunteering for everything from the Brownies, Cubs, and various libraries, to music, drama, and tutoring. She believes volunteering has helped to “sharpen her skills, strengthen her confidence, and expand her horizons.”

Eleanor’s intention is to write a memoir for each month throughout their first year in BC. In addition to *10 Days in December*, the following books have been published: *10 Days*



The cabin Eleanor and Kevin built in 1978.

*in January: 1 Husband, 2 Brothers, 3 Sons, 4 Dads* (family dynamics); *10 Days in February: Limitations & 10 Days in March: Possibilities* (one volume; depression and volunteering); and *10 Days in April: A Detour Through Breast Cancer* (first-person account).

Eleanor’s experience with breast cancer had a profound impact on her life. While she had strong support from her husband, mother, friends, counsellor, and telephone-cancer buddy, it was still a difficult journey.

“The hard part about the cancer journey, for me, was struggling to fit my ‘faith’ with ‘science.’ I know it sounds simple, but it was agonizing.

On almost the last day of the radiation treatments, I went to mass and I heard two things that were there all the time: ‘Creator of all things, visible and invisible’ and ‘fruit of the earth and work of human hands.’ Suddenly, I could be at peace. Radiation is invisible. The scientific inventions are the work of human hands. It was all okay.”

Retirement is not a word in Eleanor’s vocabulary. She admires people who remain active and interested in the world as they get older. For her part, she is looking forward to creating more memories with her family, more writing, more coaching, more gardening, and more volunteering. On the writing front, she will be continuing to write the rest of her memoirs, which will eventually go all the way to November. |

To learn more, visit [www.eleanordeckert.com](http://www.eleanordeckert.com)

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### Eva HABIB

Eva works on the front-lines of the COVID-19 pandemic and coordinates projects at Island Health’s Emergency Operations Centre. In 2019 she was awarded the **James and Phillippa Kerr Scholarship in Public Health** just as she was beginning a 12-week unpaid practicum placement. It validated all her hard work.

“There’s been so many positive take-aways from my university experience. Receiving this scholarship is one of many things for which I’m grateful,” says Eva.

Although James and Phillippa never met Eva, they most certainly touched her life in a profound way.



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# HANSEATIC HAPPINESS

by ALAN G. LUKE & JACQUIE D. DURAND

What better place to initiate a tour of the Baltic region than in Lübeck, Germany, the founder and main base of the Hanseatic League and where a delectable confection was created.

When a confederation of German merchants trading in the west joined the association trading in the Baltic in 1280, it established the Hanseatic League. Founded in 1143, Lübeck is home to five great Gothic-style churches with their seven superb spires. Combined with the attractive alleys, courtyards, shops and residences in the old city centre makes for a charming local atmosphere. It is no wonder Lübeck, an island city surrounded by two rivers, translates into “Lovely One.”

As we strolled through the historic streets, I could imagine the medieval merchants mingling in this town, which grew to become a commercial and political hub, second only to Cologne as a trading centre. The archaic alleyways, built during the 14th to 16th centuries, were not even wide enough for horse-drawn carriages. “There was a rule to build the passageways as wide and high as a coffin,” said Doris Schütz of Lübeck Tourism Public Relations. Since they were inhabited in the Middle-Ages, the curse of the plague seemed to dictate this regulation. Today, of the more than 180 passageways that existed at the end of the 17th century, only half remain, most of which continue to be inhabited.

Almost 25 per cent of the city was destroyed during a nighttime raid by the British on March 29, 1942. However, none of the churches were totally demolished, possibly due to the good karma generated by the city council, who denied Adolf Hitler the right to make a campaign speech in town during his election tour (1932), a decade earlier. Instead, Hitler espoused his rhetoric in a small town outside of the city. Remnants of the church bell are fenced in at St. Mary’s in mute testament to that fateful night. Outside St. Mary’s church is a bronze figure of a devil on the “devils’ stone.”

Evidently, when the first stones were laid, the devil believed a wine bar would be constructed. He liked the idea and assisted the workers to expedite the building process.



However, when he discovered that it was to be a church, he attempted to heave a boulder at it. A fellow dissuaded him, saying there would be a wine bar in the neighbourhood. This pleased the devil and he dropped the boulder beside the wall where it lies today. One can still see the devil’s claws on the stone.

We decided, respectfully, that we should satiate my devilish curiosity and visit a neighbourhood wine bar. Since one does not want to vex the devil, we descended into the Rats Keller (Town Cellar). This is in the Rathaus (Town Hall) on the Markt Platz (Market Square), where one can enjoy a regional meal followed by a local dessert. What should it be? Lübecker Rote Grütze (red fruit pudding with whipped cream or vanilla sauce) or Lübecker Marzipan Apfelstrudel (layered apple strudel with marzipan), I vied for the latter.

After all, who am I to disrupt tradition since the first mention of marzipan in Lübeck dates to 1530. Evidently, a famine in 1407 resulted in a lack of available grain and, consequently, bakers were instructed to make bread out of almond stocks stored in granaries. Actually, “marci panis” or St. Mark’s bread is derived from a Middle-Eastern word with its roots in



ABOVE | Holstentor, south city gate in Lübeck, Germany. Photo: Alan G. Luke

INSET | Lübecker Marzipan Apfelstrudel dessert (layered apple strudel with marzipan). Photo: Jacquie D. Durand

TOC | Pedestrian street Breite Strasse, Lübeck. Photo: Alan G. Luke



Asia, where there were regions for growing almond trees.

During the 15th century, sugar was a relative rarity, available only at exorbitant prices, until sugar cane plantations emerged following the discovery of America. Supplies of sugar destined for Europe from the New World began to increase in quantity. It was not until the beginning of the 19th century, when beet sugar was obtained, that it became possible to produce marzipan on a larger and more affordable scale.

Originally regarded as “fortified bread,” it eventually found its way to the table of royalty as a “fruit” on banquet tables. The palatably pliable product found a creative medium for imaginative minds contributing to festive settings. Even the Russian Czar ordered consignments of life-sized geese, which he would send to privileged court officials.

Coincidentally and conveniently, across from the Rats Keller is the marzipan café and museum, Café Niederegger. It was opened in 1806 by Johann Niederegger and, by 1825, his confectionery had achieved prominence with his high standard of marzipan over the seven other establishments operating in Lübeck during this time. Currently, as the centre of marzipan production, 25 tonnes of choice marzipan is exported annually to 32 different countries, yet the greatest quantities are still consumed in Germany.

The Hanseatic League primarily traded in copper, timber, herring, grains and furs. Marzipan remained a seasonal product confined solely to Christmas, until the outbreak of World War I. In fact, not until 1950 did marzipan secure a permanent place in the confectionery market with regularly manufactured specialties.

I decided to mingle with the marzipan merchants and enjoy the almond-based treat with a tasty history. Their innumerable incarnations included vegetables (onions, carrots, potatoes, etc.) and fruit (lemons, bananas, pears, etc.), which are morphed and replicated to perfection. The shop keeper told us “we have the sweetest onions in the country,” holding up the applicable vegetation personification.

The parlour on the upper floor inside Café Niederegger was installed to inform about the history of marzipan. Life-sized figures are exhibited as are framed displays depicting the history and production of marzipan while a local artisan applies decorative elements to marzipan items. In the 1800s, a confectioner’s apprenticeship lasted a full six years, a term regarded as necessary to master all the various sugar-icing and marzipan-modelling techniques.

Featured on the classical round tarts and on the circular package labels is the winning design of the Holstentor (city gate). The landmark trademark is also illustrated on several stamps and German banknotes. This was the southern entrance (1478) to the city and part of the walled fortification. The Holsten gate hosts a museum on the city’s history and accommodates an exhibition displaying influences of Hanseatic trades on the city.

The beguiling Old Town (Altstadt) was declared a UNESCO cultural heritage site in 1987. En route to the 15th century structure, we noticed an interesting attraction snuggled down

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a cobblestone lane. It was the world-renowned Lübeck Museum of Theatre Puppets. Located on four floors, the collection displays everything from archaic and ornate to gaudy and grotesque puppets and marionettes from around the world. Many of these colourfully eclectic creatures are several centuries old.

Nearly 1,000 puppets are exhibited, and a designated area presents an old-time puppet show for the public. "I'm never alone here," said the resident puppeteer. Making a sweeping hand gesture, he added "I am surrounded by friends from around the globe." Maybe there is also a Muppet genealogy here. And I swear I glimpsed a Charlie McCarthy look-alike wink at me on the way out.

Lübeck's anachronistic connection to a glorious past remains especially important in the 21st century. As with other cities, it was considered a "Free and Hanse City" and continues to exist as such today. |

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by EVE LEES



## EXERCISING WITH A FACE MASK

The World Health Organization (WHO) advises not to wear a face mask during exercise. However, it may be necessary when physical distancing (indoors or outdoors) is not possible. Exercise physiologists say masks can be worn for gentle or low-intensity exercise, but it's not recommended for high-intensity exertions. Save those harder workouts when you can safely do them without a mask.

Heart rate increases more than normal when exercising with a face mask, even among the very fit. Your regular workout may seem more difficult. Your body temperature will increase quickly, and you'll likely feel more fatigued than usual during and after your workout. But exercise physiologists say the body will adapt to the "stress" of wearing a mask – just as it adapts to the imposed demands when increasing your fitness level.

Adjust your workout intensity by how you feel: Reduce the intensity if you feel dizzy, lightheaded, short of breath, or very fatigued. Due to the fatigue, balance can also be affected, particularly in older people.

All the above symptoms may be more intense in those with pre-existing respiratory or cardiovascular conditions (like COPD, asthma, allergies, or bronchitis). In these cases, face masks during exercise are not recommended.

Your mask may become saturated with moisture, so bring an extra. And bring extra water, too, as you'll need to hydrate more due to the higher body temperatures generated wearing a mask. Never wear a mask while swimming: Wet masks make it difficult to breathe. In the pool, maintain physical distancing instead.

When buying masks suitable for exercising, consider these features: Masks should be at least two layers, moisture wicking, antimicrobial, breathable, comfortable, durable and, of course, washable. It may take a few tries to find a design that fits and works best for you.

Avoid using masks with an exhalation valve or vent. They protect inhaled air, but not exhaled air, putting others at risk. Neck Gaiters (cloth "tubes" covering the neck and lower face) are designed for warmth, therefore you will overheat while exercising intensely, even more than with a face mask. Face shields during exercise are currently not recommended by several sources. Little is known about their efficacy.

There is some concern exhaled CO<sub>2</sub> becomes trapped in a face covering, and re-inhaling the exhaled CO<sub>2</sub> will risk hypercapnia (abnormal CO<sub>2</sub> retention). Hypercapnia can create a condition known as acidosis, which leads to headaches, dizziness, fatigue, seizures, or loss of con-

sciousness. However, exercise physiologists and medical experts believe carbon dioxide molecules are freely diffused through medical, cloth or N95 masks, allowing normal gas exchange to continue.

If you choose to wear a mask while exercising, you'll need to make adjustments to your exercise length and intensity until your body adapts to the new "stress." Along with hand washing and social distancing, masks are an effective way to lower your COVID-19 risk. |

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)

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# BUILDING CAREGIVER RESILIENCY

By WENDY JOHNSTONE

*“What happens if one of us gets COVID-19? We don’t have children locally who can help us, and I wouldn’t want to expose them either. My husband relies on me to provide care. I worry so much about this. I just don’t know what we’d do.”*

Margaret is caring for her husband who has multiple chronic conditions, including kidney disease. Caregiving got a whole lot harder since the pandemic hit our shores: potentially contracting COVID-19; feeling isolated at home (or not being able to see the person we are caring for); managing day-to-day activities; getting food and other necessities; and, coping with emotional and financial strain.

These stresses are normal and expected. In fact, it would be surprising if a caregiver wasn’t stressed or worried during a pandemic. But, when stress escalates, it can dominate a caregiver’s thoughts and actions, create unhealthy responses, disturb sleep, and be a catalyst in the decline of their own health and wellbeing.

Building resiliency helps caregivers go from feeling discouraged to capable, while sustaining their health and wellbeing. It expands capacity and reduces vulnerability to stress. Vivian Komori captures resiliency perfectly in her quote, “Life is not about how fast you run or how high you climb, but how well you can bounce.”

The following strategies for building resiliency are supported by research and real caregivers’ experiences:

**Stay Connected:** A primary factor in resiliency is having strong connections with family and friends who are supportive and caring. Join or start a virtual support group.

**Nurture Your Inner Superhero:** Seeing ourselves in a positive light, believing in our abilities and knowing our strengths helps us bounce back from stress and challenging situations. Being a caregiver takes great strength and fortitude. Take a moment to reflect on what you’ve overcome since COVID-19 and remind yourself this isn’t your first rodeo! Caregivers are likely more adaptable than most. So, nurture that superhero, knowing that your steadfast and heartiness can withstand difficult situations.

**Make Friends with Reality:** Change and acceptance are a part of caregiving, especially when we are surrounded by so many unknowns. Resilient caregivers often provide the advice, “Accept circumstances that can’t be changed. Then turn your attention to what you can control and focus on that.”

**Take Off the Rose-Coloured Glasses (temporarily):** Thinking about stressful situations, challenges or worry about the future is not a problem; ruminating about them is. Research also shows the importance of not staying too long with negative thoughts and working towards a long-term perspective. One strategy that is proven: Bookend the stress, worry and anxiety by journalling, thinking or talking about it for an hour a day, and then turning your attention elsewhere.

**Don Your Own Oxygen Mask First:** Caregivers admit to struggling with this concept. Self-care is non-negotiable but can look different under different circumstances and based on your current needs. One caregiver has a strategy where she checks in with herself in the morning, at lunch and in the evening and asks, “What do I need right now?”

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



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# GET UP AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE



## COURAGEOUS & OUTRAGEOUS

by PAT NICHOL

I have been surveying friends and acquaintances recently about their most favourite and least favourite birthday celebrations. The reason? I am totally freaked out about my birthday this month. I am not sure if it is the number – 80 – or if I am terrified that the calendar will turn over and, all of a sudden, I will be 25 years older than I feel or think I look.

The year I turned 40, I threw myself a party with the theme of “Life Begins at 40.” At 50, I bought myself a black car with a sexy vibrational sound that made me feel even younger. Sixty and 70 came and went without much fanfare – positive or negative.

But right now, I am feeling neither courageous nor outrageous. I’m not sure what I want or where I am going. Yes, I am grateful that I am where I am, that I am as healthy as I am, and that I have the wonderful friends that I do.

I need some suggestions from those of you who are teetering on the edge of a birthday that makes you nervous. How are you handling it?

Maybe this is the answer: instead of worrying, I am going to do things to live intentionally. I am going to make every day precious. According to one of my mentors, Dr. Bernie Siegel, “We are given an opportunity to experience life. It is what we do that brings the meaning to it. We are here to bring love to the world.”

One of the loving actions Dr. Siegel suggests is to make a card that says, **YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE**, and give it out to people. They can only keep it for one day and then they must pass it on to someone else. Between November 1 and November 11, I am going to find 80 people and share that card with them. If I do not find you in that time, send me an email and I will get a card to you.

How about that? Between the first few paragraphs of this column and the end, I solved my challenge – maybe. My birthday wish is to make every day precious. You can help by letting me know your ideas for keeping life exciting and making each day count.

I want to celebrate daily and continue to be grateful that even though I don’t have all the answers, I can still get up and make a difference. |

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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