


INSPIRED

55+ lifestyle magazine

MAY 2022

A close-up portrait of a woman with long, wavy, light brown hair. She is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a light pink, ribbed top and a pearl necklace. Her earrings are pearl studs.

LORI MCLEOD
RAISING MONEY
& AWARENESS FOR
SENIOR ISSUES

THE JOY OF TAP
PRESERVING HABITAT
& SACRED LAND
SAVING & PROTECTING
THE LIVES OF REFUGEES

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Cover LORI MCLEOD

Executive Director of the Greater Victoria Eldercare Foundation, Lori McLeod has mastered the secret of raising money and awareness for seniors: relationships!

Photo: Gregg Eligh

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55+ lifestyle magazine

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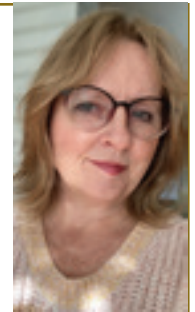
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THRIVE BEYOND 55

by BARBARA RISTO, PUBLISHER



Magazine publishers live in a world that can feel a little like a time warp sometimes. As much as we operate in the present, we are just as likely to be looking over our shoulder at the past or leaping ahead to plan the future.

As I prepare to go to print with the May issue that you are now reading, I'm reviewing some recent events – our 55+ Lifestyle show (see photos on page 21). I'm evaluating what worked, what didn't, who to thank, what loose ends need tidying up, etc. In other words, I've got a toe in the past.

At the same time, I'm lining things up for May and beyond... making sure all the content is collected for the months ahead, reviewing the schedule, determining when staff can take a break this summer, and already thinking about dates for next year's show.

It's such a relief when I can set the past and future aside and just be present.

Being present is a new skill for me. It developed incrementally over the past two years as I navigated my way through the ebbs and flows of the pandemic.

With pressure mounting from outside forces beyond my control, I began searching for ways I could release the stress and gain some element of control – and calm.

The practice of turning my attention upon my own body was unfamiliar at first. I was habituated to observing external stimulus, casting my focus upon what I saw and heard, or shifting into imagination mode where I mentally recalled images of the past, or projected images of future events.

At first, being present was something I could only accomplish for a brief moment. But, gradually, I was able to sit for longer periods of time – a few seconds, maybe a minute – quietly taking stock of my body and giving the world permission to pass by without offering judgment or making comment upon it.

Being present with myself is like finally reaching an oasis – an inner space that offers peace, nourishment, and healing.

Outside noise and world chaos deepens my desire to retreat internally – more often, and quicker.

Instead of getting pulled into the emotion

of the moment, I take a deep breath. I feel myself becoming calmer and more centered. I take a moment or two to remember who I am and where I am.

I am here. I am okay. All is well.

I often reflect on some key words that I find soothing and comforting to further support the process of being present – like “calm,” “ease,” and “well-being.”

The more I cultivate being present within myself, the less I feel dominated by the cacophony and commotion of life.

It's not necessary to cut myself off from society to find those moments of quietness and solitude. Nor is it necessary to spend hours in meditation. Centering in the present can happen in the time it takes to draw a deep breath.

Being present is possible in the most acute situation. We often do it unconsciously. If you've ever been in a stressful situation and felt the need to take a deep breath to regain your composure, you were most likely, in that moment, seeking out that sacred space of your inner oasis.

For me, this has been the beginning of a shift from focusing on problems, to focusing on potential. Instead of allowing the noise of the day to overwhelm my nervous system and deafen my inner awareness, being present allows the problem to exist but not dominate my attention.

Finding the quiet space inside allows my imagination and core intuition to surface, paving the way for a solution, a new potential to arise.

Reimagining a problem as a potential is an exquisite exercise that can only take place when I am able to quiet the chatter of the past and future, allowing the unlimited insight of a quiet mind to expand and reveal its ingenuity.

Last month I mentioned the hesitancy I feel as I emerge from isolation back into mainstream.

As we take our first steps into a changed and rapidly changing world, inner practices of self-discovery and self-awareness can be powerful tools to help with the integration.

Just breathe.

“I am here. I am okay. All is well.” |



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Lori McLeod is raising funds and raising awareness around issues that impact seniors.
Photo: Maryam Morrison

LORI MCLEOD: A CALL TO ACTION

by JOHN THOMSON

Lori McLeod couldn't believe her ears as she listened intently to her former mother-in-law, Donna, describe the "nice man" who helped her with chores.

"He was the window washer, and he was a good guy," recalls Lori. "He was taking her places and she was buying him things. 'You need me to drive you to the doctor? I'll drive you there. Oh darn, my truck's not working. Can you lend me some money to fix it?' My red flags started going

up," she says. "This doesn't sound right."

It wasn't. The friendly handyman was working the building, fleecing Donna and others of cash under the guise of helping. Lori figured about \$10,000 over an 18-month period was lost and since the other residents were too embarrassed to press charges, Lori and her brother-in-law confronted the grifter on their own.

"I said you've got to sign this promissory note and pay her

back, and then he disappeared. She never got the money back and neither did anybody else in that building.”

Lori never forgot that experience. Predators were taking advantage of vulnerable seniors, and something had to be done about it. It was a call-to-action, and over the last 20+ years Lori has been a fierce advocate for seniors’ issues. She is the Executive Director of the Victoria Eldercare Foundation, a non-profit organization committed to addressing the emotional and material needs of the elderly.

Eldercare provides equipment and activities to four long-term care buildings owned and operated by Vancouver Island Health. Eldercare also contributes, on a shared partnership basis, to VI Health community programs – a bathing program, a program that facilitates day trips with a caregiver, and one that subsidizes those seniors who have signed up for a personal lifeline alarm but can’t afford the device.

“We identify the need, we raise the money, and we spend it,” says Lori.

The Foundation also provides education and research bursaries to students and professionals studying or working in geriatrics.

“We’re lean and mean but we have a big footprint,” she says. Eldercare consists of Lori, an assistant, and two part-time employees. Her secret is multi-sectoral collaboration, partnering with other organizations to get more bang for the buck.

“We learn from each other and share.”

Dave Sinclair is the Past President of BC/Yukon Command Royal Canadian Legion and currently sits on the Board of Directors for Legion Manor, a 147-unit retirement community in Saanich. He remembers working with Lori 20 years ago to raise funds for Eldercare and two Legion housing societies. It was a lottery. The first prize was a trip to Rome, the second a trip to Paris and the third, a new car. Lori went to work securing the prizes.

“Lori did the bulk of the sponsorship side of it,” says Dave. “Once you say yes to Lori, you’re there for life.” He laughs. It’s a personal and professional relationship they maintain to this day.

Eldercare’s operating budget is approximately a million dollars a year, a result of grants, fundraising activities, like the lottery with Dave, and public donations. When asked about process, Lori says Island Health therapy, social work, and front-line nursing staff supply her with the kind of personal stories donors can relate to.

“Those testimonials will help us explain where the money is going and why it’s making a difference in someone’s life.”

Lori says she’s not just raising money but raising awareness.

“There’s a myth out there that the senior generation has lots of money, but guess what? There are a lot of seniors below the poverty line. They’re choosing between buying groceries or paying for their medications. Seniors’ poverty is a real thing.”

A very real thing. A 2014 Statistics Canada report pegged seniors’ poverty at 12 per cent of the total or approximately 600,000 Canadian seniors, most of them women. Keep in mind that’s an old statistic. The true figure is likely to be higher.

“These are the people that created the society that we are so blessed to live in today,” says Lori. “They fought for us, they worked hard. Don’t they deserve dignity and respect and to have a quality of life after everything they’ve done for us?”

Lori has been helping others for a long time. Born in Thunder Bay, Ontario, she moved to BC with her family when she was seven years old.

“I was kind of a leader in school. I was the president of the student association. I did a lot of volunteer work when I was younger as well,” she says.

She toyed with the idea of becoming a lawyer and worked at a law firm while still in high school, typing and filing documents.

“That’s when I met a guy, got married, and got into Elk Lake Sports, sailing and surfing and all that kind of stuff.”

Elk Lake Sports was a shop she and her then-husband co-owned. They sold wet suits and t-shirts and rented out canoes

and windsurfers to day trippers. Lori also conducted sailing lessons. In the off-season, she dipped her hand into conveying and paralegal work.

After seven years at the sports shop, she joined CHEK-TV as the executive assistant to the general manager and quickly carved out a niche for herself as community liaison.

“I noticed the not-for-profit organizations that were looking for free television publicity for their event were going to different departments,” she says. “There was no co-ordination. So, I created a community access program for not-for-profits. They just had one place to go, and they got really good television exposure.”

Her job introduced her to many of the Island’s businesses, service clubs, and charities. She was eventually promoted to co-general manager of the station but left CHEK in 2000.

“I’m a serial volunteer,” says Lori, “and my job at CHEK in community relations had me involved in a number of organizations, sitting on their boards and volunteering for their special events. I happened to be sitting on the communications committee of an organization called the Juan de Fuca Hospitals Association. I heard their executive director was leav-

“If I didn’t love it and if it didn’t make me feel like I was contributing somehow, then I think I probably wouldn’t.”

Snapshot

with Lori McLeod

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

"I would say follow your heart and be open to change and opportunity. I wish I had travelled a bit more and experienced a little bit more of the world and different cultures. I think that really leads to more understanding."

Who or what has influenced you the most and why?

"I would say my parents. My father always encouraged me to try different things at my own speed until I found something that fulfilled me. 'You want something? You got to put your nose to the grindstone and make it happen,' he would say."

What are you grateful for?

"My family. I volunteer a lot, I work a lot, I work hard. My job isn't Monday-to-Friday 9 to 5, and my family's very supportive. They understand that and they're behind me 100 per cent of the way."

What does success mean to you?

"Success for me is when I feel I've done everything I can do to meet a goal. I did as much as I could. Success is giving my all no matter the outcome."



ing and I said, I think I want that job." She was motivated, she recalls, by that incident with Donna and the grifter 20 years earlier.

"It was the weirdest job interview ever," she remembers. "I had no experience fundraising, and I couldn't answer any of their questions, but I said deep in my heart I know how to promote things. I want to grow it; I want to get the word out. I want to bring seniors' issues to the forefront."

She got the job and settled into the position, and Juan de Fuca Hospital Association soon changed its name to the Greater Victoria Eldercare Foundation.

"I'm very proud I've been able to make a difference in people's lives in the last 22 years," she says of her position.

"She is just an incredible leader," says Linda Jones, a 20-year member of Eldercare's Board of Directors. "It's a real commitment, a real dedication, and a real love of the Foundation. She's really the Foundation's heart."

Lori's social activism goes beyond Eldercare. She's the past Chair of the Oak Bay Rotary Club and the present Chair of Telus Vancouver Island Community Board, a funding organization that supports Island charities and marginalized populations. Since its inception in 2007, the Community Board has awarded \$5 million in grants including \$20,000 to the United Way's More Than Meals program and \$50,000 to the Children's Health Foundation's Q̓w̓alayu

House in Campbell River. Q̓w̓alayu House is a respite for North Island youth and families who need to travel for critical medical care.

"With Eldercare, I'm raising money and giving it away. For Telus, we accept applications from organizations, and we fund them. I don't have to raise the money. I've done everything from being on the board of the Dragon Boat Festival to being the co-chair of the Southern Gulf Islands Seniors Planning Table to Big Brothers and Big Sisters," she continues.

And she still helps out her friends and allies. Dave Sinclair credits Lori with helping him promote Legion activities and in running his Board.

"As far as governance of a Board is concerned, I've gone to Lori instantly over the years and she has given me whatever help I've ever wanted. I've got all the respect in the world for her capabilities. That woman is just amazing. I'm waiting for the moment she leaves there because I want her on MY Board immediately."

"I have to be careful to not take on too much," Lori sighs. When asked about burn-out she replies, "No, I do it because I love it. I wanted to be a leader and make a difference. If I didn't love it and if it didn't make me feel like I was contributing somehow, then I think I probably wouldn't."

When not volunteering – and she does take a break from time to time – Lori finds comfort with her adult son, her two daughters, and her grandchildren.

"I love spending time with my family," she says. "I'm always the one doing the big dinner parties. They call me



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Grandma. I tried to get my grandkids to call me Bella. Bella means beautiful in Italian so I thought it would be great if they called me that, but it didn't work out," she laughs.

She admits COVID protocols slowed her down. Sure, she was able to take her seven-year-old Shiatzu, Max, out on walks but social distancing kept her away from the one thing she loves to do and that is meeting people.

"COVID's been really hard for me," says Lori. "I'm a super social person, I like to get out there and it's been very difficult. One of the things I miss the most is being able to go around to the various facilities and programs that we support and just spend the day talking with people. Seniors have the most amazing stories and I miss learning about them and their lives and everything they've been through. That's been the most emotionally difficult thing for me – not being able to have that connection."

Having said that, she still finds the

time and the energy to push her pet project, a province-wide seniors' strategy.

"We're saying, 'hey, we're here, don't forget about us.' I think governments are starting to look at things. I mean we have a federal Minister of Seniors where we never had one before, and provincially, we have the Seniors Advocate. A lot has been done already and we just have to make sure we keep it up. We want to keep pushing."

"That place wouldn't be what it is if it weren't for Lori," says Dave Sinclair, highlighting her drive, focus and persistence. Lori just shrugs off the accolades.

"I'm a successful leader. I'm very fortunate to attract really wonderful people who have lots of expertise and experience and it helps me a lot because I don't know everything, and I can't do everything. If I can surround myself with great people, we can all do so much more collectively together and that's kind of what I like to do." |



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NOTES FROM THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

by KYM PUTNAM

Haida Gwaii, an archipelago located 90 km off the North Pacific Coast of British Columbia.

JOURNAL ENTRY – It's blowing like crazy. Yellowish foam stacks up on the rocky shore and everywhere you look its grey water, grey sky, grey mountains; unless you turn around then it's dark trees and pumpkin-coloured buildings topped with red roofs. Yesterday it was warm, and dead calm out on the water. We hiked along the north trail through giant cedar and fir trees. The trail follows the shore most of the way and ends at a small river. We discovered a few trees down and will come back later to clear them. We'll mark the spot with flagging tape on the beach so we can bring the GIANT chainsaw by skiff. Must be careful though, we're completely alone out here on the edge of the world.

THE BACKSTORY

My husband, Brian, and I accidentally fell into the job as caretakers at a remote (that means no roads) fishing lodge on Haida Gwaii. When my nephew first offered us the job, we immediately checked out the website and pictured ourselves cozied up by a crackling fire with steaming mugs of cocoa, watching winter storms, dining on gourmet meals with wonderful wine (did we really think the chef would still be there?), splashing in the hot tub, and enjoying the gym and

sauna. Oh, and check the property and the generator. We quickly packed up rain gear, our sea kayak, books, computers, and other projects we'd been putting off and headed for the coast. Ah, yes – the perfect autumn retreat on the water.

Getting to our new place of work was an adventure in itself. After the four-hour drive to Prince Rupert from our home in Smithers, we waited a day for the gale force winds to stop and then hopped on a four-seater float plane, with kayak strapped to the pontoon. We arrived 90 minutes later to our home for the next two months.

Right away we saw it wasn't what we expected. The close-down crew had removed the floating pier and four floating buildings. The massive log lodges were encased in grey tarps, the water was turned off and the hot tubs were empty. At least 35 boats were scattered over the grounds along with stinky barnacle-covered platforms stacked next to the cook shack.

ABOVE | (Left) The author enjoys some leisure time boating in the waters around Haida Gwaii. (Right) The author learns new skills and surprises herself by being drawn to mechanical operations.

TOC | Soaking in nature while kayaking. Photos: Brian Hall

JOURNAL ENTRY – Our accommodation is basically a hippie-like surf shack perched over a fern laden creek. The cabin is set back amongst the perpetually dripping trees and next to the sewage treatment plant, boat shed, rusting machinery, oil drums, and a couple of huge incinerators.

It has a large sleeping loft, bathroom, living room with wood stove and a lovely outdoor shower on the upper back balcony. I can grab a cedar branch while I shower and enjoy the scent of moss and forest. It's a two-minute walk to the staff cook shack that serves as our kitchen. We laugh at how our expectations vs reality are so far apart, but still, we are perfectly comfortable and happy.

JOURNAL ENTRY – Before we arrived, our helpful friends were delighted to give us advice.

1. It rains sideways there, so take rubber rain gear.
2. Make sure you watch the movie *The Shining* before you go.
3. You're crazy, you'll die out there.
4. Haida Gwaii is home to the biggest black bears in the world.

Well, 30 days here so far and we're still alive, have no intention of watching a horror movie, and our rain gear has been well used. Big John and Little John, the resident black bears, do more property checks than we do. They lumber along the boardwalks, investigate every container, leave muddy footprints outside our door and poop everywhere. So far, we're living together peacefully.

JOURNAL ENTRY – I'm surprised how much I like the mechanical stuff. To date, I have learned how to change air, oil, and fuel filters on the generator; open the valve on the top of the outboard motor so it will keep running; find the tiny fuel filter on the log splitter and change it so it will start; and run a loader/skid steer. YouTube helps me every time and Brian taught me how to drive the loader.

JOURNAL ENTRY – Our fresh food groceries are delivered only if the weather is favourable. The open boat has to nip out to the exposed Pacific before it ducks into our sheltered harbour. We've learned to place



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our order *before* the potato chip cravings get too strong. We won't starve though; the walk-in freezer is full of food and the New York Cheesecake is one of our best-loved dinner items.

JOURNAL ENTRY – Did I mention the weather? As Brian says, “sounds like a tanker full of water was just dumped on the roof.” Forecast today is for a weather bomb over the North Coast and reads as: “Strong southeast winds that may cause damage will develop this morning.” I can hear it arriving now – will keep you posted.

Damage report: The huge cement block and gravel Heli-landing was washed away, a few downspouts and roof parts retreated into the forest and all kinds of objects ended up on the lawns.

JOURNAL ENTRY – There are days when Brian and I barely cross paths. We both have our own favourite projects. I like organizing shelves, cleaning, painting and figuring out how to get some machine to work. Brian likes playing with the chainsaw, doing carpentry projects, and washing floors. It turns out we can't just sit around and have the kind of retreat we first imagined. The change of scenery, the isolation, and the challenge of learning a few new things have made this the perfect autumn retreat.

It's blowing like crazy out there right now and the fog has erased the horizon. Not the right conditions for a float plane to land and take us home. That's okay, we're well prepared to wait awhile. That's life on the edge of the world. |

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SAVING & PROTECTING THE LIVES OF REFUGEES

by MELANIE DORCHESTER

News headlines come and go.

From the safety and comfort of our homes, we can carry on until, one day, we can't. In 2021, many residents of BC experienced sudden disruption in their lives due to fires, floods, and heat domes – or they knew someone who was affected.

At the global level, the daily news of Ukraine overshadows emergencies in other parts of the world, and some residents have been personally affected by this: the fastest growing refugee crisis since World War II. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) plays a significant role in these global emergencies.

WHAT DOES THE UNITED NATIONS REFUGEE AGENCY DO?

When the UNHCR was originally launched in 1950, it was funded primarily with voluntary contributions from national governments and the European Union. It now consists of more than 17,000 dedicated staff in over 130 countries. They work to save and protect the lives of millions of refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced and stateless people.

Global trends for 2020 and information about the complex range of activities they do around the world are outlined on their website. Recent examples include the distribution of thermal blankets at the Shehyni border crossing point, where displaced people from Ukraine waited to cross into Poland.

REFUGEES

The 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 protocol to it defines the term 'refugee' and the rights that member states are expected to respect and protect. Half of the refugees in the world are under 18, yet they are forced to leave their homes

ABOVE | Natalya and her mother, Yulia, who fled the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, sought refuge in a reception centre set up in the sports hall of a school in the Polish border town of Medyka. Photo: © UNHCR/Valerio Muscella

and cross into another country, without adequate clothing, food, or shelter. Some flee in search of safety. Others are displaced or driven to hide within their country without access to essential services, under conflict and deteriorating conditions. Without access to basic needs or emergency health care, their situation can become fatal.

RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES

Some refugees can remain trapped in limbo for years. Canada has a resettlement target, with distinct programs to meet that target: the UNHCR referral-based Government Assisted Refugees program (GAR); the civil society-based Private Sponsorship of Refugees program (PSR); and the hybrid Blended Visa Office-Referred program (BVOR), which focus on UNHCR-identified refugees, and split the integration costs between private sponsors and governments.

Additionally, there are refugee claimants who come to Canada and seek asylum, and their cases are determined by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. If accepted as refugees, they can then apply for permanent residency for themselves and their dependents. UNHCR reported that between 2015 to the end of 2021, there were 15,165 refugees who resettled in BC, primarily in Vancouver, but also in Richmond, Victoria, and Kelowna.

Federal and provincial ministries, as well as many social organizations provided funds and services to refugees in Canada. UNHCR is not involved at this stage.

MODEL UNITED NATIONS

The Model United Nations (MUN) invites selected high-school youth to attend conferences and brainstorm solutions for authentic challenges. More than 40,000 students in 80 countries took part in the 2021 editions of the MUN Refugee Challenge.

At the Vancouver Model United Nations from April 21 to 23, 2022, the focus was on one or more of the following: Finding Durable Solutions for Refugees, Climate Change and

Displacement, Ending Statelessness, and Protecting LGBTQIA+ Rights, and Refugees.

The resolutions that emerge from these debates will be put before a jury composed of UNHCR members, young refugee leaders, and independent experts. The best ideas will be shared with policymakers and be promoted on UNHCR's social media channels, which are followed by millions.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY IS JUNE 20th

Ever since the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees came into existence, the UNHCR has encouraged the world to “celebrate the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution.” In 2022, World Refugee Day will highlight protection, and the critical human right of access to safety and asylum. |

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PROTECTING HABITAT, NATURAL COMMUNITIES AND SACRED LAND

By JESMINA BISEROVIC

The Land Conservancy (TLC) of British Columbia, located in Victoria, is a charitable land trust working to save native flora, old growth forests, and endangered species. TLC also helps landowners ensure the long-term protection of their properties (via conservation covenants) and works to preserve critically imperiled Coastal Douglas fir (CDF) ecosystems and at-risk heritage homes and gardens.

In February, TLC announced a landmark partnership agreement to transfer title of SISÇENEM (Colonial name: Halibut Island), a 3.91-hectare island off the east coast of Sidney Island, to the WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council as an act of reconciliation.

TLC Executive Director Cathy Armstrong offers an intimate look into the land transfer and the significance of the island's name, "SISÇENEM (pronounced cease quin em), which means the place that you go to bask in the sunlight.

TLC's board had created a three-year plan with an overarching strategic direction focusing on reconciliation, responding to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and what that means for a land trust.

The concept the board could agree on as a group was that they would always look through that lens of reconciliation and how to apply it to each project. They would determine what that means and how they would honour the Commission's recommendations.

"When SISÇENEM came along, we're going through our strategic plan and the opportunity falls out of the sky and feels so easy and right," says Armstrong.

As it happened, Dr. Tara Martin, a UBC research scientist working in the

Salish Sea with her eye on SISÇENEM, approached TLC. The previous owners, who had the land for 50 years had just put it up for sale. Dr. Martin wanted to find a buyer who would respect the scientific and First Nations aspects of protecting the land.

When Dr. Martin asked Armstrong what they could do, she replied, "Well, we need to go first to the WSÁNEĆ. This is the other part of how TLC operates, it must be right from the beginning."

After approaching the WSÁNEĆ, Martin was granted a presentation to the leadership committee where she offered evidence supporting why the land is significant for both First Nations and for scientific research.

Because no deer live on the island, the flora can mature naturally resulting in superior flowering plants compared with those in surrounding areas. Scientists, like Martin, use these flowers and plants as a baseline for restoration work in previously damaged areas.

As Armstrong recalls, "Dr. Martin brought SISÇENEM to us. She brought it to the WSÁNEĆ, but she also came with people she knew from spending so much time researching the Salish Sea, who might be donors to the project. It ended up being just one American couple who funded the acquisition 100 per cent."

PHOTOS | (Top right) Aerial view of SISÇENEM island.

(Bottom right) Seagull egg found in a nest at SISÇENEM beach. Photos: The Land Conservancy



“This all went quickly,” says Armstrong. “We made the offer in October with a closing very soon afterwards and it was all signed, sealed, delivered and we had the property in December.”

When Armstrong knew this was really happening, she did a search to see if transferring land back to First Nations people was previously done in Canada. Although she couldn't find an example, there was a case in the US, but of course legally that would be handled quite differently.

TLC spent months checking and cross-checking all legal requirements before entering into a partnership agreement with the WSÁNEĆ.

To celebrate, the WSÁNEĆ performed a virtual welcoming dance and drumming ceremony for TLC.

“It gives me goosebumps as I reflect on it,” says Armstrong. “Tsartlip First Nation Chief Don Tom said that this land transfer was a true act of reconciliation. That's where the goosebumps came for me.” |

For more information about TLC, visit: conservancy.bc.ca

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THE JOY OF TAP

by JANET HARRIS

With over 25 years' experience, I could be described as a hardcore dance instructor who never cancels classes; power outages resulting in no heat and no music is no problem. Wear a ski jacket and dance a cappella (even better to hear the beat). So, after a global pandemic had sidelined my classes, I was eager to dust off my tap shoes and get back to business.

Adults with no previous dance experience who invest in special shoes and courageously plunge into the uncertainty of a new activity are my heroes.

Some have waited all their lives to finally lace up a pair of tap shoes – most too busy working and raising a family to pursue their own interests. Or they have watched their child take class while secretly wishing it was them.

Some adults danced as kids and are finally returning to their passion. I remember watching my mom in the kitchen in her slippers busting into a time step that she had learned some 30 years prior. The step was lurking in her muscle memory ready to emerge at a moment's notice.

Whatever the circumstances, moving as a group to music is therapy, and it's never too late to start.

I had an 85-year-old tap student nicknamed Hurricane Louie, a former bush pilot, who came to class each week after his guitar lesson, which took place one floor above the studio. He was a poster boy for brain plasticity by learning new skills.

When Louie died, his wife gave me his tap shoes, which were so long, I contemplated turning them into a planter.

One of my former students returning home from performing arts school for the summer, mentioned he needed to find a pair of tap shoes. He tried on Louie's, which fit perfectly, and the shoes were brought to life once again.

My main focus as a teacher is working out interesting combinations that incorporate rhythms to different styles

of music. Will the step be done to a waltz tempo, or will it be swung? Should I choose Frank Sinatra, Aretha Franklin, a big band standard or a new pop tune?

When choosing themes and music for the shows, I can always count on the adults to bring the choreography alive – their years of life experience really help them get into character. Adult students tend to be the “darlings” of the show... move over tutu-clad toddlers!

One of my adult groups has been tapping together for almost 10 years and they love to perform in the year-end shows. That class has one token male, Pat, the husband of another student.

One day, Pat was approached at the grocery store by an older fellow, “Hey, weren't you that guy at my granddaughter's recital that was up onstage tapping with those ladies?”

When Pat proudly nodded his head in affirmation, the guy said, “Balls!” and walked away. Is that how men give each other compliments?

The look in a new student's eyes is so rewarding when they hear the feedback from the sound of their first cramp roll, and the smiles on their faces that say, “I'm really doing this!”

A trust develops within a group when they realize that, yes, we are vulnerable, but we have nothing to prove or lose. In no time, they are laughing at themselves, rocking out to the music, and proudly admitting only nailing 50 per cent of the exercise. At times, the chemistry and camaraderie are so successful, I can barely get a word in edgewise! Why not? This is all about them!

When I cancelled classes during the height of the pandemic, I asked myself how important tap is to overall happiness. From

ABOVE | Dance teacher Janet Harris leading her adult tap class, who eagerly get back into the swing of dancing together in person. Photo: Tony Harris

what I observed after teaching my first post-COVID class, tap definitely brings joy. The general energy in the class was more like that of a party – lots of smiles, laughter, and cautious hugging.

Without prompting, students proudly flashed their vaccine passports and trickled to their favourite spots in front of the mirror. I enforce one rule: masks are to be worn in the change room but optional when dancing.

The students dutifully adhere to the rule but fling off their masks in gay abandon while entering the studio, much like an exotic dancer would a bra – freedom!

A newfound appreciation has been injected into my teaching and for my students. I realize that teaching tap technique will always be an important component, but it pales in comparison to the magical ingredients of positive energy, trust, and fun.

I look forward to standing in front of the mirror, ready to dive into the warm-up while looking into all the eager faces behind me and seeing Danielle in her signature striped leggings and Sharon in her snazzy two-toned tap shoes.

And I never tire seeing the smirks when I say, “Okay, let’s go to the barre!” |

Janet Harris is the founder of Creative Roots Performing Arts studio in Smithers, B.C. Her ongoing quest is to teach movement in a way that is engaging, brain-compatible and fun for students young and old. She can be reached at janet@bulkleyriver.com



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SOMETHING FROM NOTHING

by NAOMI BETH WAKAN

Despite the fact that I start every day by brushing off my overnight emails and then checking out the mostly depressing news of the moment from seven different news sources, I still arrive at the breakfast table carrying somewhere within me the idea that I'm living in a startlingly wonderful and mysterious world.

As a devoted detective story reader, I know that mysteries bring up questions – “Who dunnit and why?” I can't remember who wrote it, but I read recently that “sentences ending in questions are worth one hundred times sentences ending with periods.” I, myself, am much given to asking questions both in my essays and my poetry. I guess the practice lingers from my childhood when I was always pestering my parents with questions, some of them the very same that I am still asking today, having not received very satisfying answers in the meantime. Which brings me back to the mysterious world we live in for the most basic question I ask myself almost every day: “Why is there something instead of nothing?”

As a personal essayist and a poet of the domestic hearth, I like to pull everything close to me, so when it comes to the ‘something from nothing’ query, I refer it to my daily practice of looking at a blank piece of paper and 10 minutes later seeing it filled with words. First there was blank paper

and then there was a poem, or an essay. Where did they come from? Of course, that is the most common question I am asked when giving readings in public – “where do your ideas come from?”

Creativity is certainly one of life's greatest mysteries. Some say that first black word on white paper, that first note written on a stave, that first brush on the canvas is sent from some great storehouse in the sky.

Others claim they are channeling geniuses – Mozart, Picasso, Tolstoy. Most creatives, I suspect, don't give the origins of their process much thought. They just go with the flow, or stop with it when writers' cramp, say, comes over the horizon. They just assume that it is their own ideas that they are making manifest.

Originality, it is said, is in proportion to the distance from the source. A little cynical perhaps, but I find that, on thinking it over, many of my poems have been triggered by a few words that stayed with me from a book I had just read, or the memory of a strong image from the past, such as a time I saw saffron monks' robes hung over a brilliant yellow wall for drying, from which I much later wrote:

*monks' robes
drying on a yellow wall
saffron and rust*



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Many of my essays also have been spurred on by others' paintings, compositions, dance and words. Even when my writing seems to have come directly from me, say, when haiku jumps into my mind via my eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and fingers, they never seem to be quite my own. The other day I took a walk around the garden. I noted that the bulbs were pushing up and was surprised to see in one a sleeping bee. The following words immediately came to mind,

*heavy frost
in the half-opened crocus
a sleeping bee*

It was really a nothing much incident, yet those few words gave rise to a load of thoughts such as that I should be more patient awaiting spring and just put all those seed packages to one side. Which gave rise to the thought of my general impatience when things don't go my way in life.

A thought I immediately generalized into the un-satisfactoriness of humanity always wanting what they don't have or not wanting what they do. Yes, that is the way with the creative act, it can always be expanded to the ends of the universe in its significance.

But just consider, whether you pick up a crochet hook and yarn, or create a new dance form, or add an unusual spice to an old recipe, you are possibly seeing things in a fresh way, maybe a way no one else has ever seen things before.

As to whether it is your own inventiveness, or whether you are a channel for the great creative energy of the universe doesn't really matter. Just allow yourself to grow with the joy of something arising when before there was nothing. |

Naomi Beth Wakan is the inaugural Poet Laureate of Nanaimo (2014-2016) and the Federation of BC Writer's Inaugural Honorary Ambassador. She has published over 50 books. Her trilogy, *The Way of Tanka*, *The Way of Haiku*, and *Poetry That Heals* was published by Shanti Arts in 2019. Naomi is a member of The League of Canadian Poets, Haiku Canada and Tanka Canada. At 90, she continues to write on Gabriola Island, BC, where she lives with her husband, sculptor, Elias Wakan. naomiwakan.com



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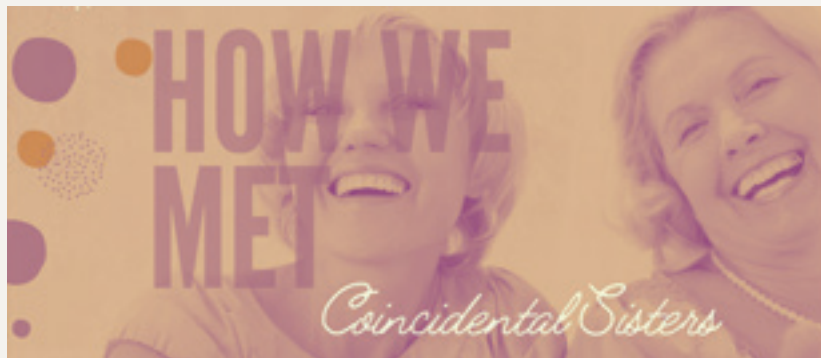


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by VERENA FOXX

When Swiss-born Ursula joined the staff at one of the Vancouver School Board's job sites, she immediately came over to me after the staff introduction and said, "I have a sister named Verena. Are you Swiss, too?"

I said, "No, but I have an Austro-German background." I went on to tell her that since the first-born daughter in my family got the traditional "grandmother's" first name, when it came to naming me, my parents were freer to choose. Living in Austria, post-World War II, my mother decided to choose a more unusual and melodic name. When she came across "Verena," she liked it. So did my dad.

Later, they explained to me that it was a Swiss name, historically based on a third century Swiss Saint and derived from Latin (*veritas* = truth, *ena* = little).

Ursula and I immediately bonded over this curious connection; not only being Canadian immigrants born in post-war Europe, one year apart, but also sharing this uncanny coincidence to my then unusual name.

What we found out sometime later, was even more surprising.

One day, a year after we'd met and become friends, we decided to take a spontaneous short trip to California during one of our breaks.

Still working at the time, we hastily made the booking during lunch hour. As we were looking over each other's shoulder to make sure we filled in all the details correctly, Ursula let out a short gasp when it was my turn to enter my birthdate.

Not only did I have the same name as her late sister, but our birthdays were also on the same day: May 1. Only the year differed.

We howled in synchronistic laughter on discovering this and decided that we had to be "sisters" by coincidence.

That was about 10 years ago, and when we are together, people still ask us if we are related because of our similar stature, facial features, and European backgrounds.

And there's that uncanny connection to a name and a birthday. |

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THE SURPRISES OF SWITZERLAND

by KATE ROBERTSON

I come from a line of strong women. My mother, a school teacher, worked full-time in the early '60s, when it wasn't en vogue. Not because she had to, but because she enjoyed her job. My maternal grandmother, a farmer's wife, never worked outside the home. But when my grandfather died fairly young, she didn't sell the farmstead, but continued to run it, and all the male farmhands, with Thatcher-esque authority.

I definitely appreciate a strong woman, so when I travel, I'm always excited to find a good story that features a woman not afraid of adventure. To my surprise, a recent trip to Switzerland provided me with lots of inspiration.

My first stop was Herzogenbuchsee, a small village just a 30-minute train ride from Bern. It's here I learn about Lina Bogli, Switzerland's first female travel writer. After working in Krakow, Bogli decided to strike off on her own to visit destinations like Asia and Australia. In Bogli's time, the late 19th century, it was a novel concept for a woman to travel alone, especially to such faraway countries.

Bogli wrote two books about her travels around the world, before settling in Herzogenbuchsee. I imagine she was drawn here by the verdant rolling hills and fertile plains and the stunning views of the Jura and Alps in the background. Called Switzerland's "Mittelland," this region is the heartland of Swiss farming and industry.

I'm staying at the historical Hotel Kreuz, which dates back to the year 1787. Today, the hotel is designated as a Swiss Historic Hotel and, accordingly, follows strict au-

thenticity and architectural guidelines to maintain its originality.

In 1891, a woman named Amelie Moser bought the building and made it into a woman's boarding house and the first alcohol-free community lounge in Switzerland. Bogli rented a room here until her death in 1941. Across the street, at the new Lina Bogli Centre, you can visit the permanent exhibition which depicts her life and travels with displays of artifacts like her diaries and original manuscripts.

A scenic train ride to Lausanne, followed by an even more scenic boat ride across Lake Geneva, brings me to Veytaux, a small municipality in the canton of Vaud. Here I check into Hotel Masson, the oldest hotel on the Swiss Riviera, as this region is known. The Masson, originally a mansion built by a rich winemaker in 1829, was later converted to a public hotel by Elise Masson, who hosted guests like Russian aristocrats, English and Germans.

Just up a steep mountain road is Caux Palace, stunning with its towers and coloured-tile turrets. A 400-metre-long terrace provides mesmerizing views of Lake Geneva below – the surrounding Alps range and lush-green lakeside vineyards reflected flawlessly in the crystal-blue water.

ABOVE | Caux Palace Hotel overlooking Lake Geneva, above the city of Montreux, Switzerland.

TOC | Chandolin village, one of the highest inhabited villages in Europe in the heart of the Alps. *Photos: Kate Robertson*

At the palace, I learn about the tragic past of Empress Sissi, wife of the Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria. Although in North America she may not be a well-known historical figure, in Europe, Sissi is famous and beloved. Thrown into court life at a young age, she didn't like formality and would often leave Austria to visit more relaxed environments, especially after the death of her son in 1889. Sissi would usually travel incognito, with just her lady-in-waiting to avoid public attention.

Even though Veyteux is just down the road from Montreux, home to the famous Montreux Jazz Festival and now a very popular tourist region, in the late 1900s when the Caux Palace opened, the region was still scarcely populated. Mostly natural woods and local farms and pastures, Sissi was free to roam on her own, undisturbed. It was widely known that unlike other aristocratic women of her time, Sissi had a passion for exercise (she also had a passion for diet and fashion, and after age 32, supposedly she did not sit for any more portraits or photos, as she wanted to preserve herself in youth).

Although the Caux Palace is no longer a public hotel, but rather a conference and seminar centre, which often hosts peace and reconciliation conferences (yes, Switzerland is still well known for its neutrality), it offers rooms for seminar guests year-round. The pal-

ace's renovation process has maintained its history, with high ceilings and original period furniture, and you can still see the room where Sissi stayed when she was often a guest. Sadly, Sissi was murdered by an anarchist in 1898 during a visit to nearby Geneva.

My last stop is at the small mountain village of St. Luc, situated on the sunny eastern slope of the Val d'Anniviers, an Alpine valley in the canton of Valais, where I check into the historic Grand Hotel Bella Tola. From my room, I have a first-class view of the Alps, including the Matterhorn peak. The region is known for its hiking and mountain biking trails, and in the winter, you can meander a 60-kilometre network of ski lifts and trails.



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BOB & TERESA MARSHALL

I visit nearby Chandolin, a historical village of authentic Swiss timber-frame houses. At an altitude of 1,936 metres, Chandolin is known as one of the highest settlements inhabited year-round in the Alps.

The village is the epitome of nature, surrounded by jagged Alpine mountains and natural pine and larch woods. It's no wonder that Ella Maillart, renowned traveller and sportswoman of the 20th century, chose here to spend the last years of her action-packed life.

Also ahead of her time, Maillart undertook a daring trip through the Middle East and India for an entire year (her life is documented in a 2015 documentary called *Double Journey*). In 1946, she settled in Chandolin and had a chalet built, where she spent six months a year until her death in 1997.

To honour her, the village has built a Maillart museum, a permanent exhibition that showcases items from her life, including photos of her drawings, articles, and posters.

Unexpectedly discovering the stories of these strong, intriguing Swiss women was a lovely travel gift. But I've also discovered that the pandemic has changed the way I want to travel. I'm finding myself drawn to less populated, more rural destinations. The discovery of so much history in such beautiful, off-the-beaten-path places in Switzerland was positive reinforcement that this kind of travel works. |

For *IF YOU GO* information, visit www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/surprises-of-switzerland

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FOREVER FIT

by EVE LEES



'NATURAL' PRODUCTS NOT NECESSARILY 'SAFE'

Many of us are unaware of the potential dangers of self-medicating – even with something “natural” like a vitamin.

It's essential to educate ourselves about supplements and seek information from credible sources. Avoid taking well-meaning advice from friends and non-credible sources about what pill to take for what ailment. Especially if the supplement is attributed with having “too good to be true” effects.

The first thing we must stop believing is that supplements are natural and, therefore, safe. Anything that has the power to positively affect our health will also have the ability to negatively affect our health. It's naïve to think supplements will only generate “positive” results.

Here are just a few examples of the many contraindications of “natural” products:

All herbs act as blood thinners. If you are taking any blood-thinning medication, it's best to consult your doctor before consuming herbs in any form, on a regular basis.

St John's Wort, commonly used to alleviate depression, can make the birth control pill less effective. It will also decrease the effectiveness of cholesterol-lowering drugs, some chemotherapy drugs, blood pressure medications, blood thinners, and many other medications.

Goldenseal, used to treat colds, has the opposite effect of St. John's Wort. Goldenseal may allow certain medications to reach high concentrations – sometimes toxic levels – in the bloodstream.

Glucosamine, a common arthritis remedy, is often derived from shellfish and should be used cautiously (if at all) by those allergic or sensitive to shellfish.

Chondroitin, also used by people with arthritis for easing joint pain, may be derived from bovine cartilage. There can be cross-reactions if you have beef or cow milk allergies.

For those with allergies to wheat, corn, or soy, be aware most vitamin E supplements are commonly derived from one of these three foods.

Stinging Nettle, used to alleviate seasonal allergies, is rich in iron. Caution is advised for those with Haemochromatosis (excessive iron in the blood).

Chamomile is commonly used as a tea to promote restful

sleep or for indigestion. However, this plant belongs to the Composite Family (a vast plant family), the same family as Ragweed. Therefore, be cautious as there may be a cross-reaction if you suffer from hay fever.

The popular cold remedy “Cold-FX” is made from ginseng. Ginseng may have contraindications with certain health conditions and medications. Talk with your doctor.

Taking high doses of fish oil supplements (an omega-3 source) has been found to deplete levels of vitamin E in the body. (Incidentally, eating fresh fish* is a more balanced way of getting omega 3s, without risk of overdosing!).

There are many other contraindications – far too many to list here. Be aware of what you are using and how much of it you are using. Supplements can have a place and purpose in our nutritional needs. But far too often, we abuse their use, usually through ignorance: you will likely harm yourself if you have the mindset of, “If a little will work, more will work better!”

The potency of most herbs and herbal preparations often requires using only a small amount. Herbs used in excess over a long period can eventually reach toxic levels in the body, placing much stress on the liver and kidneys, which filter and purify the blood.

Use common sense with supplements. They are not “safe” because they are “natural” (whatever you define “natural” as). They certainly aren't always safe. Herbs are our oldest form of medicine and should be respected as such.

If you have concerns, consult your family physician, a pharmacist, a clinical herbalist, or a naturopath. |

**See my September 2021 column on fish at www.seniorliving-mag.com/articles/forever-fit-should-we-stop-eating-fish/*

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

JUGGLING WORK AND CAREGIVING

By WENDY JOHNSTONE

One in three caregivers are juggling work and care. The research shows most caregivers experience wonderful gains by giving back to the person they are caring for and enjoy strengthened family relations. However, the strains of managing a job or operating a business and being a caregiver can take its toll:

Caregivers report a change in employment including reducing their hours and responsibilities, taking a loss of income, a leave of absence from work, or simply having to quit their jobs altogether to be a caregiver. Almost 20 per cent of employed caregivers experience physical and emotional health challenges.

Managing caregiving and work situations vary tremendously and no single action plan works for everyone. Here are a few strategies to consider in making a plan and reducing stress.

Be honest and proactive. Describe the situation to your employer before it becomes an issue and let them know that you are committed to your job and want to find solutions that work for them and you.

Demonstrating a genuine obligation to provide care (versus personal choice) is important to include in your conversation. Be honest with yourself – and them – about the situation. Minimizing your caregiving responsibilities won't help in the long run and will cause additional stress.

Learn about available support. Every workplace is different. It's important to inform yourself about the benefits and support that might be available to you including human resources policies and benefits. Explore ideas that allow you to manage your caregiving role and work responsibilities including realistic alternatives and available caregiving

options, like other family members, friends, health care and community supports.

Some of the questions you may want to ask: Can you work flexible hours? Is there someone who can cover for you if you need to leave the office or finish your day early? What policies does your company have in place to support working caregivers?

Document, Document, Document. Create a file and keep track of information about your situation, how it changes over time and all the interventions and programs being accessed or used. Such documentation serves as a valuable reference when dealing with your employer, colleagues, doctors, and others involved with the person you are caring for.

Recognize the signs of stress. Listen to your body and mind - don't wait until the physical or emotional consequences of stress negatively impact you. Small steps and actions go a long way. Identify one way you can support yourself with stress (i.e., a 15-minute walk at lunch, five minutes of meditation, a support group once a month) or consider professional help if you feel overwhelmed.

We've got your back. Family Caregivers of BC's Caregiver Support Line staff can support you, offer strategies, and help you make a plan for caregiving and yourself. And almost all of us are employed caregivers (or were in the past) so we "get it." Reach out through our toll-free number at 1-877-520-3267. All our services are free.

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



Celebrating Family Caregiver Month!



The month of May marks Family Caregiver Month in British Columbia. Family Caregivers of BC will celebrate this important event with our annual 'Caregiver Aware' 2022 campaign. Visit our website regularly for new blogs, caregiver stories, resources, information, and event details.

<https://www.familycaregiversbc.ca/>

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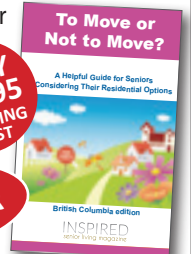
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BE BOLD!



Living on purpose

by LAURIE MUELLER

Do something today that scares you or simply takes you out of your comfort zone or pandemic rut. When you look back on it, you will be proud of yourself.

Will you be bold? What might you do?

My 'bold' was to allow myself to be interviewed LIVE on Facebook as a senior leader in the community. For a whole hour! I'm okay writing about myself... but talking? It happened, and I got through it fine. But, for me, that move was bold+++.

It got me thinking about mustering the courage to be bold, so I thought I'd share some suggestions with you:

1. Reach out to an old friend or colleague from the past. Mail a card, make a phone call, or send an email. Recently, I received an email from someone I once volunteered for. He was thanking a group of us that had contributed time to get him re-elected a few elections ago. He remembered and wanted us to feel special again. Whose day can you cheer up?
2. Be bolder, call an old (or new) friend and invite them out to lunch. Tell them how much you appreciate them or get to know them better.
3. Redesign a room in your home and paint it a bright colour or add a vibrant area rug or whimsical chair.
4. Sign up for an online course for something you know nothing about but has always tickled your curiosity. It's good to remember what it's like to be a beginner again! Colleges and universities have some great offerings, and the variety of courses online is endless.
5. Find a recipe you've never made and make it today. If you aren't the main cook in your home, double points for you! If you are the only person in your home, share with a friend or neighbour, or take a photo and post it (and maybe even the recipe) on your social media.

6. Take a new photo of yourself (or have a friend take your photo) doing something fun and post it to your social circle online, send it to your family or to a friend. Be flirty or do something different in the picture (maybe not a handstand). When you look into the camera, imagine you are looking at the person you love the most in the world and smile at them. Should be a great photo!

7. Read something different. Go to a section of the library you don't usually visit and find a book on a subject or in a style you've never read. Commit to reading the whole book.

8. Rent a luxury car for the day, take a tour around town and then down the highway. Enjoy yourself! Oh, and here's a great way to get that new photo of yourself – standing beside the car or sitting behind the steering wheel (parked of course).

9. Get breathless. Go for a hike, a walk, a run, or climb the stairs. Jump on a Rebounder. Swim laps at the pool. Dance! My friend Maggie danced at the beach all through the lockdowns.

10. Try something new each day for seven days in a row. I'd love to hear!

Do something bold to expand your mind, your creativity, and your sense of self. Let it take you out of the pandemic blues and into a bold new place. |

Laurie Mueller, M.Ed is retired and lives in Victoria with her husband, Helmuth. She recently published *The Ultimate Guide on What to Do When Someone You Love Dies* on Amazon. To reach Laurie: laurie@lauriemconsulting.com or www.lauriemconsulting.com or on Facebook.

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