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55+ lifestyle magazine

JUNE/JULY 2022

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Cover LOLLY BENNETT

After jumping ship from a stable job, this ferry captain decided to embrace adventure, her innate love of people, and a vocation that promises variety from day to day and season to season.

Photo: Tom Gould

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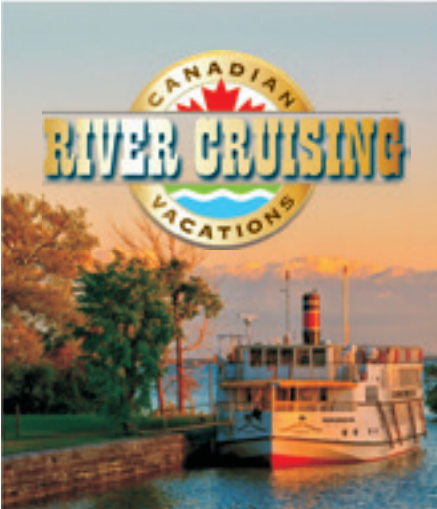
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THRIVE BEYOND 55

by BARBARA RISTO, PUBLISHER



INSPIRED Magazine is officially 18 years old. This month's issue marks the start of our 19th year in print.

As with any passage of time, when you hit a particularly meaningful milestone, you want to take a few moments to savour the achievement.

This 18-year journey has brought with it plenty of challenges and many sweet and positive memories. There isn't anything else I can think of doing that would have brought me the depth of satisfaction as publishing this magazine has.

I'm deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to do something I love and believe in, and very honoured to have *INSPIRED Magazine* welcomed into your homes every month.

In June 2004, the first copy of this magazine hit the streets of Victoria. Within a couple of years, we expanded to the Greater Vancouver area.

The magazine was called *Senior Living* back then. As time passed, we began to realize the word "senior" was not a large enough basket to encompass our audience and what we wanted to say.

Throughout all the years we've been in publication, our predominant intent has always been to inspire. So, the name was changed to *INSPIRED Senior Living*. Eventually, in November 2018, we dropped the word "senior" altogether, and the name became *INSPIRED 55+ Lifestyle Magazine*.

Despite the evolution, one thing has remained steadfast – the loyalty of our readers. Rarely a week goes by when someone doesn't approach me to say how much they love the magazine. It made an emotional connection with our readers right from the start.

My main vision when founding the magazine was to provide a quality publication that would celebrate the positive achievements of people over the age of 55.

The success of this intention became ever so clear early on with the comments

of one reader who wrote to say, "I've always shied away from anything to do with aging. But since reading the stories of the people you profile and realizing all the possibilities available to me, I'm not longer afraid of getting older."

Every issue we publish contains stories of people who are living life to its fullest. I draw upon these examples for my own inspiration as I age, and I know many of you do too.

Not long ago, I got an email from a reader saying she had launched her life in a new direction by going back to university after reading in *INSPIRED* about another person's experience with returning to the classroom.

This is the charm of the magazine – always encouraging you to try something different and new – and demonstrating by deed, not just word.

We offer real life examples of people who are living some of the best and happiest years of their life. They have found a way to move past the difficulties and reach for something that lights a spark in them, fueling a way of life that is enriching and illuminating to all those who observe it.

Over the years, we have celebrated the lives of many talented and resourceful people. Some have reached a level of celebrity that is widely recognized, while others shine their light within a smaller radius of influence that is equally impactful. Each person is a beacon of inspiration that cannot be extinguished.

I couldn't have kept this magazine going without the consistent encouragement and support. The success of *INSPIRED Magazine* has taken a village of people – staff, advertisers, suppliers, and contributors. To each and every one of you, my deepest gratitude.

Finally, a heartfelt thanks to every reader – for choosing *INSPIRED* as your reading companion.

Happy 18th Birthday, *INSPIRED Magazine!* |



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Captain Lolly Bennett
Photo: Tom Gould

LOLLY BENNETT: SMOOTH SAILING

by JOHN THOMSON

There's a slight chop on the water as the stubby, little ferry *Spirit Three* glides into the dock on Vancouver's Granville Island. Three passengers disembark while another four wait patiently to climb aboard.

"Hi, where are you off to?" asks the captain ready to take on another troupe. The boat pulls away and heads east on False Creek to David Lam Park, Yaletown, and Science World.

"Are you going one-way or round trip?" she asks. After processing everyone's charge card, Lolly Bennett opens the throttle to start the journey. *Spirit Three* is one of 17 boats in the False Creek Ferries fleet, the older of two companies that carry tourists and commuters up and down Vancouver's inland waterway. Lolly, originally from Manchester, England, has taken to skippering, well, like a duck to water.

"I spend hours in the fresh air and meet loads of people," she says. "The wind changes, the water's calm and then it's not. It's clean and fresh and engaging. How pleasant to get on a boat and give yourself 15 or 20 minutes to wind up or wind down. It's a lovely little jaunt."

Today it's a bit blustery, abnormally cold for a Vancouver spring morning, but that doesn't dissuade Lolly from chatting with a young couple from Switzerland. They tell her they plan on going to Whistler the next day. Lolly commiserates over the lack of sunshine – it's starting to rain – but tells them Whistler should be ideal because "you're going high above the cloud line so there may be snow AND sunshine." They respond by telling her about where they live and leave the boat as fast friends.

Naturally gregarious, Lolly likes talking with her passengers and will often point out landmarks along the way. In the summertime, the ferries are swamped with cruise ship passengers, but a surprising number of locals use False Creek Ferries as a water taxi. There are nine stops up and down the waterway, but Lolly never knows the routes she's been assigned until she shows up for work. She's an early riser and prefers to take the early shift.

"The busiest stops are probably Yaletown, Sunset Beach and Science World," she says. "Our main commuter traffic is from Sunset Beach to Granville Island."

Lolly's been skippering for the past three years, drawn to the life by a chance encounter with another female skipper.

"This one girl, Alita, was quite a happy girl and she was always smiling and so I said to her 'you're always smiling. Where are you going?' and she said 'Oh, I'm driving the boat today.'

Boat? What boat?

"It was her enthusiasm that caught me. She was so jovial about it, and I said to her 'I'm going to do that one day.'"

Lolly already had a job. Stability and a steady pay cheque. But she was restless. A sudden career shift would scare most people, but undaunted, she popped in on False Creek Ferries operations manager Jeremy Paterson.

"I said 'hey, are you hiring?' and he said 'well, we can be.' I said, 'what do you need?' and then he said, 'a small vessel operators permit' so I promptly went online and signed up for a course."

Lolly spent over a thousand dollars for a one-week intensive course on navigation, VHF radio, first aid, and marine emergency duties administered by Transport Canada. Permit in hand, she went back to Patterson and got the job. She admits it was a bit scary hitting the water.

"I remember being white knuckled on a windy day. I was challenged and a little bit nervous."

But she persevered and on her second shift, she saw Alita on the dock.

"'Oh my God,'" said Alita. 'You're my hero. You said you were going to do it and you did it.'"

"Lolly's a great ferry operator and we all feel lucky to have her as a member of our crew," says Paterson. "You can tell she's good with people. We can teach the boating skills, but we can't teach the people skills. That's an inherent quality that they need to have and that's always something that we're

Snapshot

with Lolly Bennett

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

"I would tell my 20-year-old self to be fearless. I wasn't fearful. I was scared. I was afraid of the world. I think I was asleep all those years before. What was missing for me was my own personality and when I arrived in Vancouver by myself without my siblings, I came to life."

Who or what has influenced you the most and why?

"My foundational influence was the family I was fortunate to have experienced in my early growing and teenage years. The stability it provided has been a driving force and requirement in my own life. As for Gavin, he is a great gift to me. [Parenting] has allowed me the opportunity to grow deep and wide as a human being."

What are you grateful for?

"I am very grateful to have a huge sense of adventure and being healthy. Little things fascinate me, and it keeps me curious which makes me very happy."

What does success mean to you?

"My definition of success is knowing you're happy and comfortable in your day-to-day life because when you're radiating happiness and confidence and joy, that's what other people pick up on." |



looking for."

Lolly's positivity is infectious. Chatting with a young woman on the way back to Granville Island after dropping off her other passengers, Lolly discovers

her current fare works for a local ballet company.

The young woman says she's premiering a new production.

"Do you like dance?" she asks. "Would you like a ticket?" "Oh, I would love one," replies

Lolly. "Are you free tomorrow night? I'm going to get a ticket for you," the woman promises. Lolly is beaming. A free ticket is nice but engaging with people is its own reward.

Lolly attributes her success to her loving family and no-nonsense northern England upbringing. Dad was a painter/decorator and Mum "was a lot of fun." Her parents named her Lorraine but because her siblings (she's one of seven) couldn't pronounce Lorraine properly, it became Lolly and the name stuck. With such a large family, the focus was on getting down to business

"I don't think I ever heard the word 'failure' in our vocabulary," says Lolly. "It was just move forward. Just get on with it. I remember saying to my Mum once, 'I'd like to write something, Mum' and she said, 'like what?' And I said 'I like books and I like poetry. I think I'd like to write something.' And then she said, 'you want to write, Lolly? Well, bloody well write.'"

The family emigrated to Canada in the late 1960s, landing in Toronto and settling in Hamilton, Ontario.

"All we knew was love. We were unconditionally loved," says Lolly. Loved but constrained too.

"I felt like a duckling. I followed my older siblings around. I followed the one ahead of me, she followed the one ahead of her, and she followed the one ahead of her. We moved around like ducklings because that's how it goes in a big family."

By the time she was an adult, Lolly was ready to leave the nest and spread

her wings. She moved to Windsor and then London and finally to Vancouver.

"My girlfriends called and said, 'you gotta come out here, it's great' and so I did and I never left."

She got a job with Via Rail, working the dining car and turning down beds in the roomettes. It wasn't glamorous but she loved socializing with workmates and passengers. She was married now but unfortunately the union soured and Lolly and her three-year-old son, Gavin, fled to her parents, now retired and living on BC's Sunshine Coast.

"It was the darkest of dark," she remembers. "I didn't know anything about single-parenting because I had lived in a two-parent household with multiple siblings. We were born and raised next to our grandparents."

"Everything that I had seen in my growing years was not my new reality. I told myself I have to put all of my energy into Gavin and that's where my focus has to be. I wanted to stay present in everything that was in front of me: my loving parents, my son's joy. Those things were in the forefront of my mind, and I really worked hard to stay there."

Thanks to her supportive parents and a job opportunity at Via Rail, Lolly eventually found her footing. The railroad was upgrading its passenger service and the company wanted to train Lolly as a facilitator, bringing other employees up to speed on the new procedures.

"It was that training that changed the course of my life because my jobs from then on were more in the facilitation line. I've got people skills. I like people and I trust my instincts and I'm compassionate. I didn't want to just survive; I wanted to thrive."

Years later, as a building manager, she honed those people skills organizing barbecues, gardening projects, and a recycling program for one of Vancouver's first purposely built rental buildings. The company vision was inclusion and participation "so that people living in apartments really felt like they had a sense of community." She was particularly active in recycling.

"I contacted the Boys and Girls Club

in the neighbourhood, and I said, 'do you have someone that can pick these bottles up?' And then all the refundables went to the Boys and Girls Club. It literally raised thousands of dollars over a period of time."

As a result, Lolly received a 2018 BC Achievement Award acknowledging her community work.

"I was moved, and I was touched," she says. "I've been fortunate in that regard because I wasn't good at school, and I didn't like school but I do like learning things and I like to watch things and I like to participate."

"Here we are at Granville Island. Mind your head," she says as *Spirit Three* returns from its 20-minute downstream shuttle. Her passengers disembark and Lolly connects with a scheduler on the dock. A three-minute turnaround and she's off again.

"Driving the boat is easy for me," she says but don't expect to find Lolly on the bridge of the *Queen of Coquitlam*, or any other BC Ferry, anytime soon.

"I don't have any aspirations to drive a bigger boat," she says. "I'm very happy where I am. My big passion that keeps me anchored is yoga. It just feeds my soul."

In addition to yoga, Lolly parlays her organizational and social skills into other endeavours, such as freelancing as a landlord's agent.

"I look at the apartment, I access what needs to be done to

make it move-in ready, I call the trades, I coordinate the work and then I tell the landlord this is what it's going to cost."

And for the last 20 years she's been working with Clinical Teaching Associates, a grass-roots organization which instructs medical students, naturopathic doctors, and nurse practitioners on the intricacies of sensitive pelvic examinations. Sure, medical schools tackle the subject, but students practice on plastic dummies and as Lolly says, plastic models don't tell you what hurts and what doesn't. CTA members focus on a more personal approach using their own bodies and experience as guides. Lolly is presently writing a podcast on the issue, which she is going to narrate.

"My role is to articulate the bridge between the practitioner and the patient. I'm a storyteller," she says. "I'm compassionate and I'm empathetic because I have a sense of where people are coming from."

Lolly acknowledges her own dark moments and the effort it took to get back on her feet and that makes her a perfect listener and advisor. For her it's that no-nonsense northern England upbringing: just buckle down and get on with it.

"I am a happy optimist," she says. "Living in the moment brings me so much joy. I have learned to invite into my life the things that bring me joy, and I can tell that my patience in bringing myself joy is paying off. That's what I want and there's no reason why I can't have it." |



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A LOOK AT PARADISE

by LINDA A. BLAIR

This legendary island beckons 1.5 million travellers annually from around the world. Characterized by a coastline punctuated with natural beauty, this magical island has pearl-white, powdery soft sand beaches, coral reefs brimming with jewel-coloured marine life, and warm, translucent turquoise water lapping at its shoreline.

Relatively new on the world tourist map, watersport enthusiasts flock here for excellent scuba diving, snorkelling, sailing, kayaking, kitesurfing, and deep-sea fishing. Located just 40 km off the Tanzanian coastline lies the island of Zanzibar, once known as the “Spice Island.”

Relaxation can be found here in several ways and places. Luxuriate at a spa, enjoy a sunset dinner aboard a traditional dhow, or merely relish the simplicities of nature’s gifts.

Bask in the radiance of a pink and crimson sky, as the sun leisurely sinks below the horizon. For the more adventurous, you will find an abundance of varied water sports and optional tours to further explore this enchanting island with its welcoming and hospitable locals. It is hard to believe this now idyllic and hypnotic island with such warm and friendly inhabitants so eager to please has such a dark, turbulent, and sorrowful saga.

Full of character and rich in colour, Stone Town’s roots are deeply embedded in history. Stone Town became a major trading centre along the caravan trail for traders from other parts of the world looking for spices, ivory, and slaves. An estimated 100,000 elephants annually were poached for their ivory. Some tusks so large it took four men to carry just one.

However, even with poaching of elephants rampant and ivory in high demand (one elephant equalled 45 pianos), slaves soon took over as the top commodity. Approximately 50,000 people were enslaved annually and are said to have been abducted from the Ivory Coast and carted away to Zanzibar aboard ships filled to capacity. With no regard for safety or wellbeing of the cargo, the many who died along the journey

ABOVE | Powdery soft sand beach in Zanzibar.

PAGE 10 | (Top) Masai Tribesman guide. (Bottom) Freshly picked nutmeg.

TOC | Slave Memorial in Stone Town. Photos: Linda Blair

were simply tossed overboard. Documentation of the chaos and brutality of the abuse inflicted upon enslaved people can be found in the local museum.

Extensively documented, Dr. David Livingstone was appalled by the slave trade, and what he witnessed on the island. He played an important role in working towards abolishing the “African Slave Trade.”

Today, the Anglican church sits on the original site of the Town Square where the auctions took place. Located next to the church, a Memorial displays life-size figures chained and collared, standing in a pit with expressions that appear to be rooted in pain.

Inside the museum next to the Memorial, you will find, chronicled in detail, the fascinating history of the slave trade and eventual abolishment. The museum is recommended for a better understanding of the history.

Zanzibar survived this fierce and turbulent time, and the resilience of the islands’ ancestors stands as nothing short of remarkable.

Stone Town has now become the pulsating heart of Zanzibar, a well-preserved and intact UNESCO World Heritage Site. A walking tour of the old city will soon have you strolling through a maze of stone-paved streets and alleyways. Colourful shops stand shoulder to shoulder with lively restaurants, bustling bazaars, and historical sites alike. The original house where famed musician Freddie Mercury lived with his grandmother still stands proudly.

Along the winding cobblestone streets, you will encounter numerous 200-year-old stone and coral houses, which have ornate Arabic or Indian doors. Some still have spikes on the outside to “keep out wandering elephants” according to my guide. Not much has changed here in the last two centuries. You can see where the hands of different cultures have connected across time in the architecture with Indian, Arabic, Portuguese, and Persian influences.

Evidence of a strong Islamic culture can be seen in the 50-plus mosques throughout the city, from where the call to prayer can be heard five times each day.

Tembo House Hotel, built in 1854 originally as an embassy, shines through as the crowning jewel of Stone Town. Decorated with antique furniture, historical artifacts, and photos throughout brands this hotel as both interesting and informative. Situated on the waterfront and conveniently located close to many shops and historical sites, this boutique hotel makes a great place for a stop-over.

Local fishermen set sail at sundown as they did centuries ago with their nets and lamps, for a night of fishing. Gliding back in the early morning hours, brimming with fish, the bounty is sold first to hotels and restaurants, while the remains go to open markets. The lively Darajani Market opened in 1904, and here locals continue to haggle for fish, meat, produce and spices.

With no shortage of spice plantations on the island, you may want to plan a visit to discover what various spices look like prior to making their way into kitchens around the world. You will find plenty to keep you guessing.

For instance, the lipstick tree produces a red furry little pod with a soft seed inside. When opened, squashed, then applied to the lips, the colour appears orange but quickly changes to red when reacting with the skin’s natural oils.

Pepper trees produce pure forms of green and black pepper, whereas white and red are processed. Lemongrass stands tall and appears like sugar cane. The scent, however, quickly identifies itself. Available for sampling or to purchase, you will find vanilla beans, cinnamon bark, mint, cardamom and nutmeg, to name just a few. Many spices have heady aromas and can be easily identified from the scent.

Cloves have now become the principal export from the island. Spice plantations also grow a variety of seasonal tropical fruits, such as jackfruit, starfruit, pineapple, durian, coconuts, mangos, papaya and, of course, bananas.

Today, Zanzibar has become a mecca for people seeking



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While unwinding poolside under the shade of an umbrella, I met the heavily-accented Jackie from New York who regaled

me with her life stories. She and her adult son, Josh, who works in the movie industry in California made a most intriguing pair to chat with. To see Josh's devotion to his mother's needs and happiness was endearing.

As we sat and chatted, we could hear many foreign languages being spoken all around us. I realized in that moment, why even a few simple words spoken in Swahili was enough to bring a smile, and sometimes even a look of amazement, to the faces of staff and locals alike. My guide, Wilfred, confirmed that very few people say anything more than "Jambo" (hello) so when someone tries to learn a few words in their language (even if not grammatically correct), it is much appreciated.

It does not take much effort to put a beautiful smile on someone's face. Sometimes it's not just about the destination or the journey, but rather the people you meet along the way.

While we chatted, the beat of African music could be heard in the background, and the fragrant scent of frangipani wafted through the air. I believe I have found a little slice of paradise on the island of Zanzibar. |

For IF YOU GO information, visit www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/zanzibar-paradise

Linda A. Blair is a freelance travel writer and photographer.



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BUILDING CHORAL COMMUNITIES

by J. KATHLEEN THOMPSON

If you ask people why they sing in a choir, be prepared for some passionate responses.

“The voice expresses our soul, who we are. And when you sing with others – pulling the cart together, so to speak – it becomes a deeply emotional experience,” says one chorister.

Likewise, another tells me, “Singing has the supreme power to bring us together. There’s a real strong synergy when we breathe and vocalize together – we are all tuning ourselves into the same wavelength. I can’t think of another collective activity as rewarding as singing.”

Willi Zwozdesky, Executive Director of the BC Choral Federation, director of the Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral Choir in Vancouver and entering his 41st year as director of the Vancouver Men’s Chorus, knows all about the transformative power of communal singing.

“Singing gives people immense pleasure,” he says, “I’m always a beat away from bursting into song myself! It’s particularly thrilling when the music you’ve been hatching with a group of dedicated people comes to life in concert. Everyone in the room feels it: the choir, you, and your audience.”

Like most people engaged in the soul-satisfying business of bringing people together in song, Willi’s immersion in music began early. Son of Ukrainian immigrants, the family house outside of Edmonton resounded with music from dawn to dusk.

“Everyone played an instrument in my family and, every Saturday, my parents would take us into Edmonton for pia-

no, violin or accordion lessons. I also picked up the trombone and the French horn in school band class.”

Singing was also prized by his family and, as a teenager, Willi was singing with a church choir, and leading a Ukrainian show choir. A summer in Vienna, honing his skills as a singer, cemented a desire to pursue music professionally. But with two graduate degrees (one in choral conducting and the other in music theory), and on track to becoming a teacher, it was his gift for arranging that proved the catalyst to choral leadership.

“I was starting to write primarily for choirs and one choir – the Vancouver Men’s Chorus – felt that if I wrote it, I should conduct it! So gradually, as our relationship developed, I worked myself into a long-term conducting job!”

ABOVE | Will Zwozdesky directing the Vancouver Men's Chorus during a rehearsal. Photo: Andy Rice/BCCF

With his expertise as a writer, Willi expanded his involvement in the choral field to include the publishing and marketing of choral music. Founding his own publishing company, Rhythmic Trident Music Publishing, and taking on the position as a choral music consultant with a major Canadian music retail store – Long & McQuade – earned him a name as a vital resource to BC’s growing choral community.

If you were looking for a particular piece, arrangement, recommendation, or clinician, go see Willi! Of course, this made him the perfect candidate for the executive directorship of an organization committed to supporting the work and promoting the growth of choirs in the province of BC.

Now, after 16 years at the helm of the BC Choral Federation, with community, professional, and award-winning choirs flourishing as they have never before, Willi feels confident in saying:

“BC has a very strong choral culture, and a wealth of talented and knowledgeable and dedicated people working in the field, and all kinds of opportunities for people to sharpen their vocal and conducting skills. I think people are becoming more and more aware of singing’s power. And it’s accessible to everyone – from infants to nonagenarians!”

There has, indeed, been plenty of research to confirm the powerful way singing enhances overall health. For instance, long a champion of adult choral singing, Victoria Meredith (Professor Emeritus of Western University, Ontario) determined that the very act of singing boosts the immune system.

The concentration of immunoglobulin A – proteins in the immune system that function as antibodies – increases significantly during a rehearsal or performance. As well, the increased oxygen needed to sing stimulates and strengthens the respiratory system.

And best of all, due to the chemical wizardry triggered by the act of breathing, vocalizing, and bathing in beautiful pools of sound created in harmony with others, cortisol (the stress hormone) is reduced, and endorphins and oxytocin

(feel-good hormones) are increased.

A runner’s high and a sense of social connectedness – all achieved with one dose of singing with others!

The unique ability of choirs to both vitalize people and foster community has been stifled by pandemic restrictions in recent years.

“Not being able to gather in person has been acutely felt by choirs across the world,” Willi confirms. “Even though some choirs have continued virtually, I think we all miss the physical presence of each other, and the magic that occurs when voices align.”

Choral singing having been identified as a potentially ‘super spreader’ event early in the pandemic, there has been no option for singers and choirs but to comply with strict medical directives.

“Because choirs are like families,” Willi shares, “I think our members’ first reaction was ‘we need to protect each other, like that 83-year-old in our bass section!’ You can’t do this work and not have a social conscience and charitable sense about our work together. And even though a lot of directors have been furloughed during this time, choirs have really rallied to try to keep their artistic staff. And keep singing – in safe ways.”

During the pandemic, choirs weathered the directive to socially distance by turning to technology, and a host of other creative means to keep their collective love of choral singing alive.

With increasing vaccination rates and decreasing rates of COVID-19 infection locally and globally, these hybrid ways of being together to sing are slowly yielding to ‘before-times’ modus operandi.

Given that it has been 18 months since choirs have met en-masse, you can expect some mighty happy singers returning to their folds this September (don’t be surprised if you hear the earth move...).

If you would like to join that migration back to a cherished activity this fall, check out the choirs on tap in your community. There are seldom any prerequisites other than a willingness to be hijacked by the joy of joining with others in song! |

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SCOTLAND CALLING

by JOHN THOMSON

“Right then, off to the colonies,” my father announced in his thick Scottish brogue, anxious to escape austerity and start afresh in the New World. As a child of six, I had no choice but to don my tweeds and join the party. We emigrated to the United States and then to Canada where we eventually settled. Now, a half century later, I was in Glasgow, a scant 16 kilometres from my birthplace.

In the pouring rain, I approached the Millennium Hotel opposite George Square in the centre of town. Unable to find the main entrance, I stumbled through a side door only to end up in the dining room where I was met by an officious looking maître d’.

“Where do ye think yer going,” he bellowed. “I’m cutting through to get to the lobby,” I replied meekly.

“Then I’ll have to charge you five bob,” he said sternly. The thought of parting with five pounds hung in the air for a split second and then he smiled and waved me ahead. It wasn’t the last time I encountered droll Scottish humour.

It happened again at The Glasgow Tenement House; a four-room Victorian flat lovingly maintained by Scotland’s National Trust. Susan, the on-site guide was a wellspring of information on Victorian customs – Victorians slept sitting up, she said, pointing to the shorter-than-usual bed.

“What part of Glasgow are you from?” I asked, struck by her knowledge and Scottish lilt.

“Ohio,” she replied without missing a beat. Decades ago, Susan met a Scotsman touring the States and followed him home. The relationship soured but she stayed on. I wanted to know more about Susan and less about the House, but time was pressing, and I had to move on.

Every year, over 14 million tourists visit Scotland, drawn by history, family connections or the promise of a wee dram at one of the country’s many distilleries. I was in the auld country on business, intent on finding out more about my homeland before moving on to London.

Leaving Glasgow, I drove west to Oban (pronounced Obe-in) a picturesque coastal town and ferry terminal for the Inner Hebrides – Mull, Coll, Rum, and others. The crossing to Mull takes 50 minutes and lands at Craignure. Another 40-minute drive leads to Tobermory and its seafront promenade peppered with brightly-coloured houses.

ABOVE | The famous Jacobite steam train in Scotland. Photo: Jack Antsey

RIGHT | Buchanan Street in Glasgow.

PAGE 16 | Glencoe. TOC | Loch Tummel, Pitlochry. Photos: John Thomson

From Oban, I drove north to Fort William, gateway to the Highlands and the home of the Jacobite Express, the steam train featured in the Harry Potter series. Originally part of the West Highland Line, the canny Scots rented out their rolling stock to Warner Bros in 2000 and then re-branded it to take advantage of Potter-mania. Sadly, Harry wasn't aboard. No matter, the 66-kilometre run is arguably the most scenic in Britain, passing villages, lochs, and heather clad hills to Mal-laig and its ferry port to Skye and the Small Isles.

Fort William also marks the beginning of the Caledonian Canal, a 97-kilometre series of lochs and channels running east to Inverness. The largest in the chain is Loch Ness, but I was too busy dealing with impatient tailgaters to look sideways for Nessie. I was assured she lurks beneath the waves. Or not. There are numerous boat tours available to test the premise.



By the time I got to Culloden Moor outside Inverness it was grey, misty, and cold, much like that day in 1746 when 7,000 clansmen charged the Hanoverian line only to be cut down by grape shot and musket fire. The Jacobite Rebellion was crushed at Culloden and Scotland joined England in a political union 55 years later. A series of markers, rocks really, loosely grouped together acknowledge the clans that fell in battle.

I noticed the Campbell marker sitting apart from the other clans in a sort of no-man's land. When I enquired, I was told the Campbells, the most populous and arguably the most powerful clan in Scotland, were reviled for siding with the English and shooting their brethren from behind a stone wall. The Scots remember their history.

The road south to Edinburgh was picture postcard country. The Cairngorm mountains may not be as imposing nor as foreboding as elsewhere in Scotland, say at Glencoe for instance, but the rolling hills, rivers, and magnificent castles create an otherworldly experience. Balmoral Castle, 12 kilometres west of Ballater, is the most famous. No time to pop in on the




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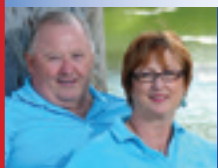
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Queen though; I was in a hurry to reach the capital and, besides, I wasn't royally attired.

Edinburgh is Scotland's capital city and the seat of the Scottish government although London still controls immigration, telecommunications, and defence. Edinburgh Castle was impressive, but it was the streetscape leading from the fortress into Old Town that I enjoyed more.

The ancient limestone buildings now repurposed as cafés or shops conveyed the city's medieval past. The area was pedestrian friendly and peppered with interior courtyards or closes. A huge park called The Mound separates Old Town on the hill from New Town below and once on Prince's Street in the shadow of the Castle, I stopped for a pint. The conversation focused on football and Scottish independence.

Edinburgh has a gentler vibe than scrappy Glasgow, but I have to admit a fondness for its gritty sister. It's that deadpan humour. It gets me every time. It was the end of my trip, and I was back in Glasgow dutifully lined up for an Indian meal at a non-descript restaurant pretending to be more lavish than it really was. The doorman, elegantly dressed as a maharajah in his finest silks and turban greeted me at the front door.



"And what part of India are you from?" I asked.

"The Scottish part" he replied in his broad Glaswegian accent. Zing. The less charitable would call it sarcasm; I prefer to call it Glasgower patter.

I felt at home in Scotland. The scenery is rugged, and the people are warm and friendly with a wicked sense of humour. The trip certainly re-acquainted me with my homeland, but I hung my hat in another continent a long time ago and have no intentions of re-settling.

Having said that, there's some validity in the expression "bred in the bone" and as the American novelist Katherine Anne Porter once said, "the past is never where you think you left it." My affinity for Scottish culture and deadpan humour will stay with me the rest of my life. |

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FOREVER FIT

by EVE LEES



HEALTHY SNACKS FOR YOU & THE GRANDKIDS

Hopefully, you and your grandchildren are filling up on foods that offer the most nutrients for the calories they provide. These foods are also called whole foods.

On the other end of the spectrum are low/no nutrient foods or “junk foods.” As fun as marketers make them appear, they are not innocuous.

Without the nutrients needed to sustain life, the body can't function properly. Unfortunately, neither can the brain: depression and lethargy can result.

While inactivity (due to television and computer games) contributes to poor health and obesity, an inadequately fed body and mind will suffer from fatigue and potential illness.

As adults, we should also consider our health and be conscious of our eating habits. After all, kids are watching us and following our example.

These healthful meal and quick snack suggestions need only a little preparation:

- Dates, figs, and raisins are naturally sweet and nutrition-loaded alternatives to candy.
- Raw, unsalted nuts or nut butter (like peanut, cashew, almond, etc.) provide healthy fats needed for brain development and functioning.
- Precooked and frozen chicken breasts, sliced in 3-4oz serving sizes, are handy for a quick snack or stir-fry. Hard-boiled eggs stored in the refrigerator are a smart snack, cracker topping, or sandwich filling.
- Keep a basket or container on the counter with stone ground or whole-wheat crackers. Top them with healthy spreads (perhaps hummus or nut butter) or cheese slices. Or fill the basket with baked (not fried) pretzels and taco chips. Store a container of salsa in the refrigerator for a dip. Salsa is all vegetables with lots of nutrients. It makes a tasty dip, salad dressing, or topping for any food.
- Prepare cut-up vegetables often and store them in the refrigerator with a healthy dip (plain yogurt or low-fat sour cream seasoned with a few herbs and spices) or use salsa as a dip.
- Canned legumes like garbanzo beans (chickpeas), kidney beans or other large beans are tasty finger foods. Rinse them well and store them in the refrigerator

for easy access. Canned legumes are precooked; there's no need to heat them before eating.

- Whole-wheat tortillas make a unique sandwich for snacks or meals. Stuff with nut butter, bananas, leafy greens, salsa, shredded cheese, precooked chicken slices, canned tuna, or salmon (not all at the same time). Use your imagination! After they're stuffed, roll them up and enjoy.
- Keep fresh fruit like apples, oranges, and bananas well-stocked in the refrigerator and in baskets on the coffee table or kitchen counter.
- Frozen grapes or frozen unsweetened strawberries are a cool treat on a hot day. And so are frozen peas or corn!
- Puree a variety of frozen fruit in your food processor or high-powered blender. Add a small amount of yogurt or milk to allow the blades to rotate (avoid adding too much, or your mixture won't be thick enough). A dash of vanilla extract is optional. Enjoy your fruit ice cream!
- Frozen yogurt popsicles are another nutritious cold treat. Mix 1 cup plain yogurt with two tablespoons of frozen concentrated orange juice (unsweetened) add a touch of vanilla, if desired. Pour the mixture into popsicle moulds and freeze. |

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-healthnews.com



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THE POWER OF NO

By WENDY JOHNSTONE

Most children go through a phase where their favourite word is No. That's because No is a power word. It gives us a definite sense of self. As adults, saying No is an ideal opportunity to evaluate our priorities and keep our values front and centre.

In caregiving, saying No can often be extremely difficult. Not saying it, however, can overwhelm family caregivers with too much to do and not enough time. Saying Yes more than No can lead to decreased quality time with oneself or family, and a negative impact on health and stress levels.

As a family caregiver, it's important to know you have a right to say No, especially when:

- You are stressed or overwhelmed
- You are already doing too much
- You are tired or sick
- It's someone else's responsibility
- It takes away from your values and wishes
- You need and deserve time to yourself

Understanding the beliefs caregivers attach to saying No is key. As a caregiver, try answering the questions: "People who say No are _____." and "People who don't say No are _____. This can bring clarity to your own personal belief system.

Another helpful exercise is to write down whatever pops into your head when you ask yourself, "What in my life do I need to say No to? Then ask yourself (and write down your answers), "What currently stops me from saying No to these things? Bringing awareness to the "whys" behind our actions illuminates where we may want to make changes.

Wanting things to be different is a great first step. Understanding you can't change everything at once is also a realistic expectation, too!

Manage Guilt: As you learn to say No more often, you'll probably feel more guilt! Guess what, that's a good thing (assuming it's not genuine guilt that requires you to take corrective action). This guilt is a sign that you're making important, positive changes in your life. It should leave you feeling strong (even if there is some guilt).

One Size Does Not Fit All: Every answer you give to a situation depends on the relative importance, people affected, what's going on in your life at the time, the person asking, your history with them, etc.

Change Gradually: If you are generally a Yes person, you may want to gradually become a person who says No. Take your time and practice on small things, working up to larger No's.

Practice: Imagine you're someone who is already comfortable saying No, and mentally rehearse difficult situations. You can also role-play with someone you trust.

If you are a caregiver and want some support in learning to say No or to explore how you can bring new action into your roles, call our Caregiver Support Line any time at 1-877-520-3267, and our trained caregiver staff will support you one on one.

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



Join our June Facebook Live!

Saying no isn't always easy and takes practice, but there are ways to make the process a bit easier. On **June 16** at **9:00 am PT**, join Wendy Johnstone on our Family Caregivers of BC Facebook page for a fun and interactive session on **The Power of Saying No.**

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ON BEING 70



by LAURIE MUELLER

Seventy? Can you believe your age? I am 70-and-a-half this month, and I am still trying to get used to it. I tell everyone: I'm 70! I'm pretty pleased to have all this experience and life skills within me. I love how I feel at this age. It's like I have a doctorate degree in life now. (You can call me Dr. Laurie if you like). But I continue to be amazed that 70 years have flown by since that traumatic entrance into the world in 1952.

I know I've learned a lot over the years. Which isn't to say I don't have a lot more to learn. Some of what I learned was easy, some of it came harder. Now my challenge, of course, is how do I share my knowledge, my experience, my best advice with those who want it and need it. I don't want to waste it. What exactly would be best to share?

Do you ever have those thoughts? I listened to my friend, Keith, give a talk the other day, and he was ruminating on being retired for five years and still wondering what his next important task is in life. Now I know I'm not the only one pondering this.

There are days when I feel tired, and I just want to stay in bed and read or sit on the couch and write or do a crossword or play silly games on my iPad. But there are other days, I want to sink my teeth into a meaningful writing project. I love writing stories about people and events, and those who are making a difference in the world.

I've discovered over the pandemic that I can find a million reasons not to go out and exercise, but then I get all creaky. And when I walk by a mirror, all I see is an old lady.

But when I'm active and moving and meeting with people, I feel energized and limber and not at all like I have 70-year-old bones.

I look around at some folks who have been on this planet longer than me and are making waves of difference in the world – even over the age of 90 – and I am inspired by them.

My friend, Barbara Waldner said to me one day, "I'm giving up my executive position in the organization this year." I replied, "I'm sorry you feel you have to do that." She said, "I always said I would give it up when I turn 90." Oh! Okay.

She then added that she wanted to celebrate her 90th birthday and could I attend a party on her back deck to celebrate? Turns out she had two parties per weekend for several weeks so all her friends could attend. She still runs a mother's support group for those who have children with (or have had) life threatening diseases.

Oh yeah, and she still walks around in high heels (but that is another story altogether!).

I want to be a Barbara Waldner when I get older, how about you? |

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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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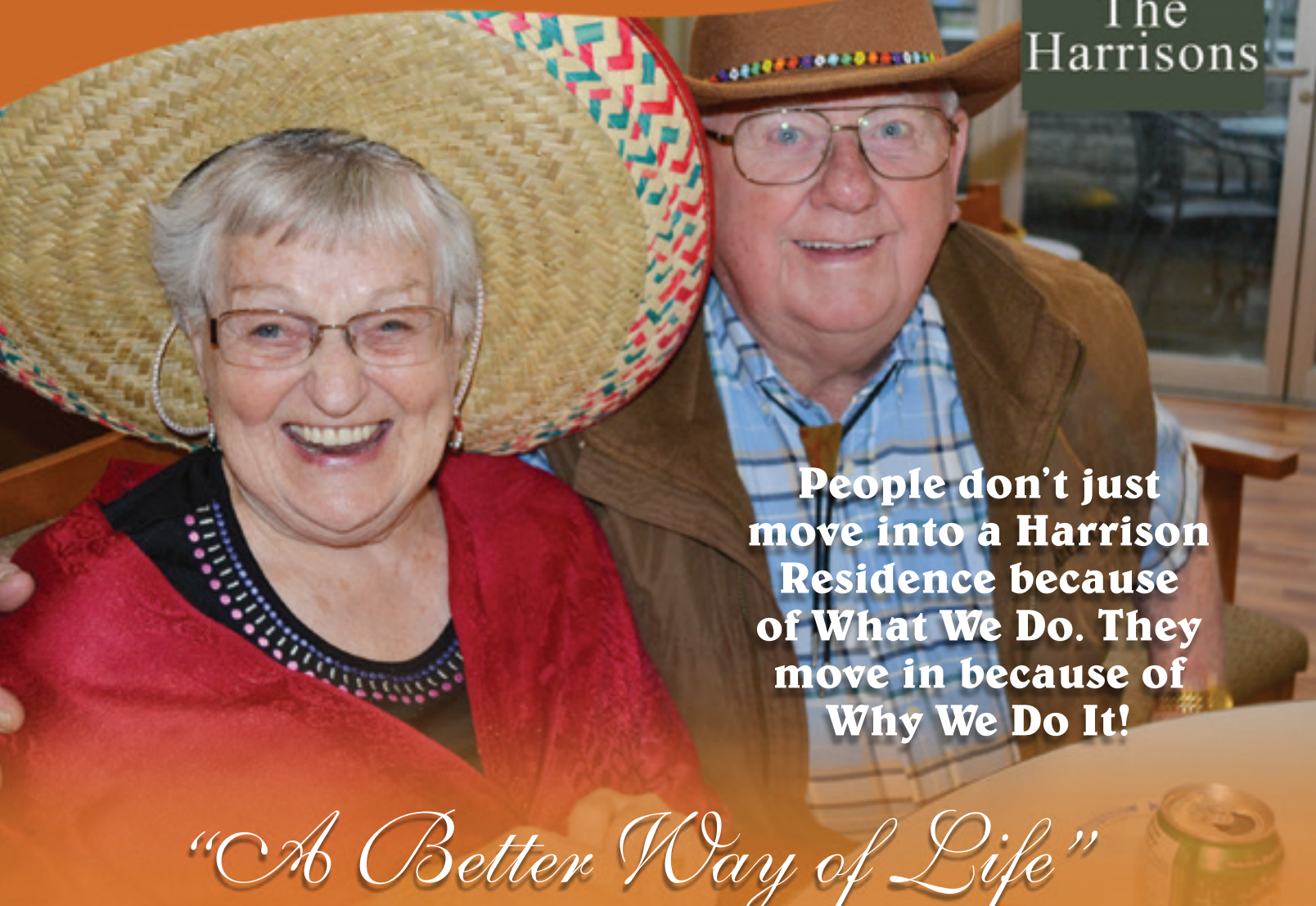


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