

INSPIRED

55+ lifestyle magazine

JUNE / JULY 2023

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DESIGNER
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COBBAN

MAD ABOUT TANGO

COWBOY CULTURE &
MORE IN LUBBOCK

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Cover MARILYN COBBAN

From humble beginnings, Blue Sky Clothing Co. has grown to 10 stores, a large warehouse and an online shop employing 70 people – all due to the passion and grit of its owner.

Photo: Tom Gould

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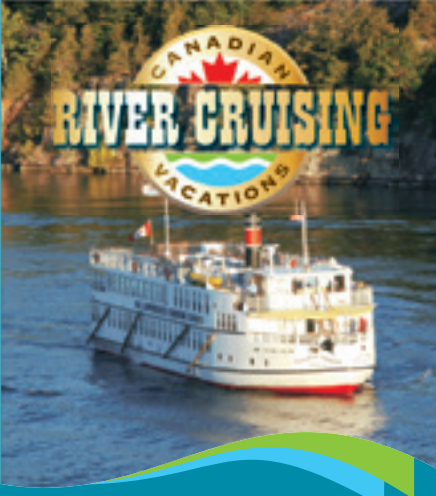
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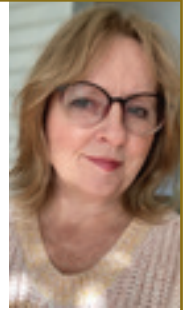
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THRIVE BEYOND 55

by BARBARA RISTO, PUBLISHER



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

This month marks the beginning of our 20th year of publication.

I still remember the day the first magazines arrived in my driveway – the excitement and the anxiety. So excited to be launching a new business and seeing my vision displayed in printed pages before me. Anxiety about how it would be received, and how we would find a place for 10,000 magazines!

Here we are, having survived so many ups and downs, including a global pandemic, not to mention countless twists and turns in the marketplace.

Being a business owner, you never forget that you are always dependent upon your customers. We are very grateful to the many advertisers who found benefit in reaching out to our readers through this magazine.

We are so appreciative of our readership, which remains strong and loyal. A week rarely goes by that someone doesn't write me to say how much they love the magazine.

I also want to thank the writers whose words you read each month, and the numerous suppliers who have worked with me to get the product to market.

I have had amazing staff along the way, helping me achieve this vision. While everyone is noteworthy, I want to give a special thank you to the two people who assist me today.

Bobbie Jo Reid has been a part of the magazine since its inception. She took over the editor duties very early

on and so she, too, is celebrating this milestone of 20 years with me. Thank you, Bobbie Jo, for enduring with me through all these years, for maintaining my vision and so skillfully managing our writers and laying out the pages. Your attention to detail, thoroughness, and consistency has made this endeavour much easier for me.

Kathie Wagner has been with the magazine for just over 10 years. She has a love for magazines and bonded with my vision for *INSPIRED* from the start. She wears many hats, from selling advertising to event planning and more. She is a strong advocate of the 55+ demographic and is always ready to engage with business owners about the benefits of marketing to this massively influential consumer group. Thank you, Kathie, for your dedication and many, many contributions.

There have been numerous other people whose efforts helped to make *INSPIRED Magazine* what it is today. To each and every person, thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Over the coming year, I will reflect on some of the key reasons why *INSPIRED Magazine* exists and has such a strong reception in the community.

I will take you on a little walk down memory lane by featuring some of the past covers in this space. We have had the privilege to profile many amazing people, including some celebrities. All our content is posted on our website, so I invite you to visit www.seniorlivingmag.com to have a read and check out what else is there. |



Benefits of Walk-in Tubs

As we age and begin to lose our mobility and sense of balance, bathing can not only become difficult but also a cause of additional stress and anxiety.

Fear of falling and a fear of not being able to get out of the tub are two of the most common occurrences with many of our seniors today. Walk-in tubs have become extremely popular in the last decade and estimates show that people who go ahead and install a walk-in tub in their homes today, will be able to live independently for an additional five years.

Walk-in tubs are exactly what the name implies, tubs that have large doors that open, and you simply walk in and sit down on a 17-inch-high seat. You close and lock the door and the tub fills rapidly while you are sitting comfortably and safely inside. All the taps and controls are easily accessible at your fingertips. Once you are done your bath, turn the dial and the tub quickly drains and you simply open the door and walk out of the tub. The various models all have numerous grab bars and non-slip surfaces making getting in and out worry free. Walk-in tubs are designed for an aging population who desire to remain independent for many years to come.

Manufacturers have optional tub designs accommodating every shape and size of person and bathroom. There is a tub size that will fit in the space where your existing tub or shower is. Walk-in tubs can be as basic as a soaker tub to as deluxe as your own personal spa. Offering numerous options such as heated back, multispeed warm air jets, water jets, ozone, light therapy, aromatherapy, and more.

The benefits of a walk-in tub are numerous. Many people crave being able to confidently have a bath again and find relief by just soaking in a warm tub. Owners say they believe they sleep better after a soothing bath. The warm air or water jets give a deep massage and help to stimulate circulation, thus carrying additional healing oxygen throughout the body to the hands and feet. This has shown positive results increasing mobility and helping to relieve the pain and symptoms of such conditions as arthritis, chronic back

pain, fibromyalgia, diabetic and peripheral neuropathy, as well as various other acute and chronic conditions.

The Canadian Government website states that 1 in 4 seniors fall every year, and 25% of these falls are serious, leaving the victims permanently disabled and bedridden. A large percentage of these falls take place in the bathroom.



Aside from all the pain and suffering it also ends up costing the Canadian medical system two billion dollars annually. Therefore, the British Columbia and Federal Governments are helping many people who decide to purchase a walk-in tub now. The help comes in the forms of a tax credit, a Provincial Sales Tax waiver, and in certain qualifying cases a \$7,500.00 Government Grant.

As we all age and the years fly by, many seniors are faced with the reality that taking proactive steps today and deciding to retrofit their homes with a walk-in tub is one of the best investments they can make to help them age in place, comfortably and independently in the home they love.

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Blue Sky Clothing Co. owner
and designer Marilyn Cobban.
Photos: Tom Gould

MARILYN COBBAN: FASHION & FIT FOR EVERYONE

by JANE MUNDY

The first day Marilyn Cobban sold clothes from her Volkswagen van at the Balfour ferry landing just outside Nelson, she brought in \$500. It was more than enough to turn the electricity back on in her cabin. That was 25 years ago. Word spread fast from the people waiting for the ferry who tried clothes on in her “Buggie,” as she affectionately called it.

Today, Blue Sky Clothing comprises 10 stores in BC, a warehouse in North Vancouver, a thriving online business and numerous wholesale locations throughout North America. Her stores alone employ 70 people.

But wait, there’s more. Every year, Marilyn visits employees and family members who run the manufacturing component from their villages in China and Indonesia to ensure fair trade practices.

Since that first successful day at Balfour, Marilyn “wanted to know why we didn’t have clothing to fit beautiful people like my mum,” and this question triggered her vision: to supply comfortable clothing that is fashionable and fits everyone. Seems like a no-brainer but ask a customer whose size is 4X how hard it is to find a beautiful dress she feels comfy in. That was Marilyn’s goal, and by all accounts she has achieved it.

Right from the get-go, Marilyn wanted her own clothing label. In 1997 she took a course on how to write a business plan and soon afterward acquired the Blue Sky label. Quite an accomplishment for someone who left home in Calgary at 14 years old.

“I rented a house with a few friends and cleaned hotel rooms and waitressed until I was 17,” she says. “I always juggled two jobs at the same time because I was tough. And I still work a lot, but it’s a cake walk now.”

At age 17, Marilyn decided to go back to school. Since she only had a Grade 8 education, she moved to Nelson, where Selkirk college offered a program to finish high school.

“Manpower gave me \$50 per week, enough to live on,” she quips.

During those years away from her family, Marilyn stayed in touch with her mother. “Mum and I always loved each other but I didn’t contact my dad much; he was busy with a new life,” she says. Even though divorce can be hard on teenagers, Marilyn managed to get her high school diploma. She also got married in Nelson, but her husband was killed in a job-related accident. “For the next six years, I really struggled with booze and drugs, but knew I had to make a change,” she confesses.

Marilyn believes telling her story could help someone. She says alcohol was her “true love” and cocaine was a vehicle to drink more. She started drinking at 12 years old.

“I loved it more than my friends did,” she recalls. “The ability to stop and have a social drink was never there. Ever since I can remember I tried to be a social drinker but never accomplished that. I also remember my dad leaving home when I was six years old, leaving Mum with four kids. I am the third girl, so I never had new clothes. I always loved clothes, but only wore hand-me-downs.”

“When I was 13, my mum married a bad man and we moved to Castlegar. We had no money, and he physically abused my mum. With friends’ help, we got him out of the house.”

Marilyn ended up leaving home at the tender age of 14. To this day, she believes that “lots of people, women especially, are stuck in their lives. If I can be slightly inspirational to help someone move past the fear of trying something new, getting sober, starting your own company, quitting your job as a waitress, you too can create something from nothing.”

Snapshot with Marilyn Cobban

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

"I may tell her to think about her thoughts and where they take you. I would try and tell her about the law of attraction."

Who or what has influenced you the most? And why?

"My mother, she wouldn't have won Mother of the Year, but she unconditionally loved her children and thought we were all great no matter what. She had an awesome temperament. Her body shape was the reason I started Blue Sky."

What are you most grateful for?

"My health, my husband, family and all my employees. Blue Sky would not be here without all those things. I love Blue Sky and am so grateful for all the help I have had along the way."

What do you do to stay grounded?

"Sleep, eat healthy and exercise." |



"I think I tried to drink myself to death, until my girlfriend gave me a book titled *You Can Heal Your Life* and I was determined to do everything that Louise Hay advised."

Hay, a New Thought Minister, self-help author and the founder of Hay House publishing, argued that your thoughts and your quality of life are directly related and that negative beliefs – like believing we're not good enough or blaming others for our problems – bring more problems into our lives. Marilyn got the message – almost. She stopped drinking heavily but couldn't get completely sober.

"I thought positive energy would ensure success, so that's how I started my vision: comfortable and natural clothing to fit beautiful people. I wanted to be kind to people, from the textile mills to my customers to the planet. But I didn't have much money," she adds.

Because she could only sell at the ferry landing a few months a year, she investigated how clothing is made and that took her to Indonesia, where she finally got sober.

"I was sitting in a restaurant and noticed people going upstairs," says Marilyn. "I followed them up to an AA meeting, where I found my brothers and sisters who gave me the support and tools I needed to accomplish sobriety. In 2003, I finally got that monkey off my back."

"I can't believe I made it without smashing into a brick wall, that I came through pretty much unscathed. Except for the people you hurt along the way. I've done the 12 Steps and I'm a huge fan. I learned to dig deep inside, pull the filter out, pick off the nasty bits and put it back inside when cleaned. And move forward."

Marilyn leapt forward. She turned an old shed at the ferry landing into a store that is now 26 years old. It has changed over time with bigger and bet-

ter renos every year. About 10 years ago, she built an extension to make it 700 sq ft. Next up, she opened a store in Nelson. Most of her customers were women from Alberta who had summer cabins there, and they are repeat customers to this day – she has a large fan club. In Nelson, in 2010, she became reacquainted with her childhood sweetheart over lunch and married David Cobban.

Soon after they reconnected, Marilyn and David walked down Commercial Drive in Vancouver – she had the two Kootenay stores back then – and saw a storefront for lease. Next up, they found a store in North Vancouver that wanted to sell their inventory, but they weren't made with natural fibres, which Marilyn firmly believes in. So, they bought that store, minus the inventory.

Marilyn also believes in affirmations. "I make affirmations of what I want, and when you keep saying them over and over again, they will happen," she explains. "I have said more than a million times, 'I love and approve of myself therefore I am a successful businesswoman.' Affirmations have pushed me forward into what I want, and the vision I had materialized. But you have to really want it and work hard."

And since she was 17, Marilyn has worked hard, although she doesn't see it that way. As for challenges, Marilyn says she writes them down and does affirmations. "Like Wayne Gretzky said, 'you have to see the puck in the net.' I see the puck in the net and move forward. Instead of mind grinding, I focus on solutions. Problems are issues that have solutions."

David believes Marilyn is successful because she listens to people and she charges the same amount for clothing regardless of size, from x-small to 4X, even with the disparity of fabric. There's also a unique connection with customers.

"This may sound cheeky, but a bunch of guys wouldn't engage with each other, like saying, 'Your butt looks great in that outfit.' But women can say that. I remember when ladies made their husbands take them to the Kootenays just to shop at Balfour because it was the only place where clothes fit them. Not every item is made in 4x, but one lady asked for 6x undies and Marilyn made them just for her. Marilyn is one of



the hardest working people I've ever met. She is ambitious, but kind at the same time."

Omar McBride, an employee at the Blue Sky warehouse, concurs. "When I applied for this job, I was straightforward with my goals: I wanted to find a place to call home. David asked about my driving record, and I said I had been sober 10 years. Marilyn reached over the table, took my hand and said, 'Sixteen years for me.' I believe that honesty clinched the deal."

Building Blue Sky from the ground up, Marilyn changed lightbulbs and put TP in the bathrooms. Now Omar does that. "I've learned a lot at Blue Sky in the past four years. As we get older, we want comfort, and we aren't going to suffer for fashion anymore. At the same time, Marilyn realized that you don't need to stop being fashionable, so she created all these popular styles and prints. Then there is the human part of her vision: she supports families in the fair-trade economy. Knowing that we are able to provide incomes to a significant amount of people in two villages – China and Indonesia – is heartwarming."

And another heartwarmer: With the help of her older sister, Marilyn runs the "Sock it to Literacy" program every year. Through this program, Blue Sky gives one dollar to local literacy programs for every pair of Merino wool socks sold. Last year they donated \$26K – that's a lot of socks. "If you can't read you can't succeed," says Marilyn.

Lisa McFarlan sees a lot of retired customers at the Blue

Sky store in Victoria. "We also get shopping parties, such as sisters and daughters with mums jockeying for the fitting rooms. Our biggest sellers are Indonesian batiks and summer sundresses, and bamboo undies fly off the rack."

Bamboo–linen blends are a hit with everyone: just wash and hang to dry and the wrinkles fall out, unlike linen. No ironing appeals and bamboo appeals for anti-bacterial and moisture wicking. And all-natural fabrics for those who experience hot flashes. And the size range allows everyone to look and feel good in their own skin.

"I think one reason that Blue Sky is successful is due to my lack of schooling," Marilyn says. "Blue sky clothes fit really well because I never learned how to make patterns. Instead, I look at people's bodies and translate that image into the shape of the garment, to how people really look. When you get up to a larger size, you want something longer to cover your tummy... Most manufacturers don't make plus sizes."

"My goal was to have a shop where my mum and my niece could find the perfect fit. I have never had a customer come into the store and not find something that fits them well. And we wanted natural fibres and clothes that fit at a reasonable price. Clothes that single mums with four kids could buy and feel beautiful, so you can get up in the morning, put on a dress that makes you feel good and gives you a positive outlook for the day."

"Blue Sky is successful because Marilyn believes everyone should be comfy and look good," says Omar. "And be good to each other." |



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MAKING THE GRADE

by JERRY RYAN

Halfway into the 16-km climb on that second day of cycling, I wasn't sure I'd made the right move signing up for this trip. I may have bitten off more than I could chew.

The cycling trip through the Black Hills of South Dakota on the 109-mile [175km] Mickelson Trail, advertised by Road Scholar, a not-for-profit organization providing educational travel programs geared to adults over 50, had intrigued me.

"Cycle abandoned railroad lines while learning about geology and human history along the way.... Designed for intermediate to experienced cyclists, we cover 16-35 miles daily on trails of crushed limestone, with grades up to four per cent and trail elevation gains/losses up to 1,000 feet. Elevation ranges 2,850 to 6,300 feet."

This sounded doable. Sign me up.

Participants were urged to seriously cycle the month before the trip, including 77km segments every week. Pfft. Big deal. I'd done this regularly all summer. I scoffed as I looked at the daily mileages of 26-56 kms. As a veteran cyclist, I wasn't impressed with these distances. Shouldn't be hard at all. Welcome to Fool's Paradise.

At our orientation dinner, I met the other participants in the program and Janet, a local historian, a naturalist and our trip leader. On our tour, she would share stories of the Black Hills Gold Rush and the ghost towns lining the trail.

She would point out geologic structures, flora and fauna. She mentioned a few other things.

- Don't pet furry cows. Bison are dangerous when males rut, when females have young, and on days that end in "y."
- Watch out for rattlesnakes that sun themselves on the crushed limestone trail.

I didn't remember surly bison and rattlesnakes being listed in the brochure.

Road Scholar provided accommodations, meals, bicycles, helmets and snacks along the route. Janet cycled with us, making sure everyone was okay. Every morning, our bikes were prepped and waiting at the beginning of every trail segment. Sag support was offered if you tuckered out and needed to take the support vehicle to the next trailhead.

The Scholar part of Road Scholar made our trip more than a bicycle trek. The Mammoth excavation site, an active pale-

ABOVE | The author asks himself, "What was I thinking?" at the Temple of Abandoned Bicycles. (Inset) The cycling group at Mt. Rushmore.

TOC | The author celebrates at the 109-mile marker on the Mickelson Trail. Photos: Jerry Ryan

ontological dig, provided a guided tour to view Ice Age fossils “in situ.” Evenings included lectures describing the history of the region and the Mickelson Rails to Trails program. Stephen Yellowhawk, a chief of the Sioux Nation, related historic accounts of the local culture, peoples and traditions along with a fully costumed Willow and Warrior dance.

The guided tours at the Crazy Horse Monument and Mount Rushmore were two of the reasons I went on this tour. The Crazy Horse monument, still being built after 75 years with no state or federal funding, is stupendous. The entire head of George Washington from Mount Rushmore would only come to the nose of the Crazy Horse sculpture. Seen in pictures and documentaries, the real thing was inspiring and impressive.

Mount Rushmore was a delight. A walking tour revealed the monument from many different angles and more closely than I’d imagined. The evening ceremony that illuminates the sculptured faces of the presidents and the flag folding ceremony by the veterans called up from the audience was moving. A storm with thunder and lightning brewing behind the monument added to the experience.

The Road part of Road Scholar got my attention. Besides a total elevation change from 868 to 1920 metres, we would climb and descend 305-610 metres daily on 24–32-kilometre grades. Even with mild grades of 3-4 per cent, the steady climbs were taxing. Cycling at higher elevations was a burden to a flatlander like me until I acclimatized by the end of the trip. The loose limestone chippings of the trail surface were a challenge, especially when riding too near the edge, where often steep drop offs induced that frightening “here we go” feeling. The heavier mountain bikes with 5cm knobby tires had more rolling resistance than my road bike.

Nothing I had done to prepare for this trip had really prepared me.

The first day of our trip was an eye opener with a 14-km grade to the 60-metre-tall earth bridge at Sheep Canyon, once one of the taller railroad trestles in North America, now filled in with earth and stone with gorgeous views of the steep canyons on either side. The 26-km long ride that I thought would be a breezy jaunt was a lot tougher than I thought. So, halfway through the 45-km ride on that second day, I was having my doubts. That’s when Sue came to my rescue.

An experienced mountain biker, Sue had a lot of leg and lung that made the trail an easier ride. She also had a lot of heart. She’d noticed me lagging with my spirits flagging. She dropped back, reduced her pace, and rode with me for a while, encouraging me to drop down a gear and ride at a reduced speed. She chatted me up, telling me about mountain biking in Montana, taking my mind off the long climb, and generally uplifting me.

At the top of the grade, I’d gotten my gumption back and thanked her for her help. I said my Jewish friends would consider her help a mitzvah. She chuckled, rode off, and shouted Mazel Tov over her shoulder. I passed on this friendly encouragement to others having a tougher time on the trail. We all helped each other. The next two days were easier, even though climbs were longer and altitudes higher.

The 32-km climb on the last day was tough but manageable.

To motivate us, Janet said the last 14 kms were all downhill. Were they ever! The disc brakes on the bikes were a godsend on the fast and steep descents. We tore into Deadwood with smiles on our faces. As we posed for a picture at trails end, I passed around a flask of Irish whiskey that I’d saved for a celebratory reward. That might be why everyone is smiling in the photo.

At our farewell dinner, we talked about what meant the most to us on our trip: the beauty of the Black Hills, the wild-life, the national monuments, the camaraderie and the sense of accomplishment. Janet told us that of the five groups that had toured the trail that year, we were the only group where everyone rode every mile. After that, we all had one injury in common. Our shoulders hurt from patting ourselves on the back. We were all proud of our accomplishment.

I’ve been asked if I would do this again. Sure, it was a much tougher ride with longer climbs than I anticipated, but the people were great, the historical sites were inspiring and the vistas were grand.

You didn’t have to nerd out to enjoy the informative portion of the trip, which made every mile new and unexpected. Our docent, Janet, and Matt, who supplied and maintained our bicycles, made our ride safe, manageable and fun.

So yeah, sign me up. Let’s do it again! |

For additional photos, visit www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/mickelson-trail-south-dakota



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Whistler, Barkerville & Sea-to-Sky Gondola



July 4-8: 5 Days The scenery around Whistler in early summer is simply stunning with views of snow-capped peaks and the spring wild flowers. Explore British Columbia’s Gold Rush town of Barkerville and enjoy entertainment at the Royal Theatre. Ride the Sea to Sky Gondola in Squamish and the Hell’s Gate Air Tram in Boston Bar. 5 Meals - \$ 1,495 Cdn pp dble occ. plus GST. \$ 1,895 Cdn single, plus GST.

Sunshine Coast



Sept 5-7: 3 Days This tour captures the incredible scenery of the seaside communities of the Sunshine Coast. The myriad waterways, Pacific Coastal Mountains and old growth forests draws visitors from around the world. In Lund, visit mile “0” of the Pacific Coastal Highway 101 ending in Chile. A lovely 3 day B.C. experience. 2 Meals - \$775 Cdn PP Double Occ. Plus GST. \$965 Cdn Single. Plus GST.

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MAD ABOUT TANGO!

by LINDA BLAIR

The colourful and lively city of Buenos Aires never sleeps and can get under your skin in many ways. It's not just about the good looks and sparkle of the city but rather, it's more about peeling back the many layers of history. That's when you really get to know her in an intimate way.

In this city, you will find a combined mix of Latin passion and European grandeur, which includes everything from gourmet meals, surprising architecture and creative artworks to elegance and boldness. You never know what you might find tucked into the twists and turns of these energetic streets.

If you look deeply into the soul of Argentina, however, you will certainly bear witness to the romantic side, and the seemingly profound connection between a Tangero and his partner. While they dance the Argentinian Tango, the dancers become oblivious to their surroundings as they become lost in each other's eyes. This seductive, passionate and yet, sometimes wistful dance is very much alive and has captured the hearts of many from all four points of the globe.

Tango took the world by storm in the 1930s with its daringly close embrace and sultry moves. The Argentine Tango has been described by some as "vertical lovemaking" and its humble beginnings came as a glimmer of light during a dark time. It has since developed into one of the most well-known dances in the world. The sensuality, romance and nostalgia that identifies the tango has become part of the identity of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The roots of tango are believed to have originated in the dark and shadowy corners of Buenos Aires, when the

barrios and slums were filled with slaves and immigrants from around the world, particularly Europe.

Therefore, the development of the tango was greatly influenced by rudiments of other cultures, and as a result, tango music was created from a mixed heritage originating from these various ethnic groups. Lyrics frequently portray sorrow and melancholy, and are often about love lost and won, or irony and humour. A famous tango composer named Enrique Santos Discepolo once said, "A tango is a sad thought, that dances."

Much to the vexation of the colonial authorities, slaves and poor immigrant workers alike gathered in the far reaches of the barrios nightly, as a cloak of darkness wrapped its sinewy arms around the city. Only here, in the darkest corners of the city could they freely express themselves through dance, without restrictions. Records that date back as far as 1789 reveal that the authorities were constantly trying to shut down these social gatherings to assume total control over the slaves and immigrant workers.

After 1902 the tango began to emerge at balls held in opulent theatres around the cities of Argentina, where it very quickly gained in popularity. Soon dancers began to travel the

ABOVE | During the 1950s, a group of people aspired to rejuvenate this neglected and run-down portside area of La Boca. Today, the Caminito Streets thrive with shops, restaurants and, of course, tango.

PAGE 11 | Tango dancers. Photos: Linda Blair

world taking this style of tango to other large cultural cities such as Paris, London and Berlin, then eventually to New York. There the dance began to evolve into ballroom tango, where there was less body contact. In Argentina, however, the tango remains the same passionate dance it always was.

The traditional Argentine Tango is less choreographed and more improvisation with intimate and varied expressions of emotions, unfiltered, raw and powerful. This unfiltered element makes the Argentine Tango more difficult than ballroom tango and requires a creative mind to create a beautiful and sometimes very complex routine. Having said that however, the true essence of the Argentine Tango is not as much about fancy footwork as it is about the embrace and emotional connection to the partner.

A drop in popularity came about with the Great Depression. Nevertheless, milongas (dance halls) remained open and the much-loved form of dance continued. The haunting accordion music accompanied by the raspy voice of a male vocalist could still be heard in the tango clubs and milonga halls throughout Buenos Aires, seven nights a week.

In the 1980s there was an upsurge once again for the Argentine tango, when live stage shows such as “Tango Forever” and “Tango Argentina” began to make the rounds in all the clubs and halls around the country and eventually made their way abroad. Of course, who could forget the famous scene on the big screen from the movie *Scent of a Woman* when a blind Al Pacino dances the Argentine Tango with Gabrielle Anwar. The international fire and passion for tango was re-ignited and thus prompted the birth of tango lessons and venues around the world.

The wonderfully romantic soul of Buenos Aires can be felt and seen in and around the many corners and neighbourhoods of the city. Today, within the colourful, bohemian neighbourhoods of La Boca and San Telmo, you can hear the click of dance shoes on small temporary make-shift dance floors fashioned over the cobblestone avenues.

In the streets of Caminito, many restaurants offer tango shows with dancers performing throughout the day, most of whom dance for donations. Strolling through these neighbourhoods is like wandering through a live and vivid art gallery. However, this area was not always so colourful.

At one time, a railroad ran through the very streets of Caminito where some say the tango was born. When the railroad ceased to operate, the area was largely abandoned and

almost forgotten. Then, during the 1950s, a group of people aspired to rejuvenate this neglected and run-down portside area of La Boca, and the characteristic streets of Caminito.

Artist Benito Quinquela Martin jumped on the band wagon and began using the old communal immigrant dwellings as his canvas to breathe new life into the streets. The tenement buildings here were precariously built of wood and sheet metal, making them a perfect workspace to showcase one’s artistic impressions. Thus, Caminito was reborn.

The streets of Caminito have once again become a thriving, trendy and colourful location for people gathering to listen to music and watch the many talented dancers, and perhaps, come away with a few new dance steps of their own. Talented artists paint the dancers and active street scenes. Their artwork sells to those who want to bring home a small reminder of the elegant, seductive, yet tastefully creative dance known as the Argentine Tango.

Argentina appears to be mad about tango, and opportunities abound for individuals and couples to take tango lessons in private or as part of a group. What better place to learn than in the country and birthplace of this dance? The city is awash with milonga and tango clubs, tango schools, tango-themed cafés. There are countless venues around the city ranging from large ballroom-sized theatres with stirring ambience showcasing impressive theatrical shows, to small intimate dinner theatres with live orchestras. Gourmet dinners and velvety smooth Argentinian wines pair well with a tango show. Finding a venue is easy. Just ask any dancer, hotel concierge or city guide.

Countless signs of tango can be seen in and around the city; everything from street graffiti to architecture said to have been designed with the shape of a dancer’s leg in mind. A sample of this can be seen in a suspension pedestrian bridge named

“Puente de la Mujer” (Women’s Bridge). This striking piece of architecture was dedicated to significant women in the working-class neighbourhoods during the depression era. One can see how this eye-catching piece of architecture reflects the lines of an extended leg in a tango pose.

Evidence demonstrates that the spirit of the Argentine Tango lives on, and I for one am glad it does! |

Linda A. Blair is a Freelance Travel Writer & Photographer

For IF YOU GO information, visit www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/argentine-tango





LUBBOCK: COWBOY CULTURE & PLENTY MORE

by KATE ROBERTSON

“To put things in perspective, Denver had its own symphony before this region was a permanently inhabited settlement,” says Lea Ann Lust, our guide at the National Ranching Heritage Center. The 12-hectare museum and outdoor historical park in Lubbock, West Texas, houses close to 50 ranch buildings dating between the late 18th to the mid-20th century.

Structures like frontier homesteads, a barn, a blacksmith shop, a church and railway depot, are so authentic that you can still see the bullet holes in chimney pipes, which cowhands used for target practice. Back then this was still the wild west and life was rugged. You’ll still see a cowboy hat or two being worn around these parts.

A working windmill on-site at the Center is an important reminder that this technology was a major necessity for the survival and population growth on the High Plains where Lubbock is located; a flat semi-arid grassland with an average rainfall of 25-50 centimetres per year.

Formerly declared to be uninhabitable – there was no water (when they were digging wells, they kept hitting black sticky liquid, but no water) and no trees – it was the last region of the US to be permanently settled. The West Texas area still has one of the lowest population densities in the country. With a population of around 300,000, Lubbock

is the “hub city” for the region.

Founded in 1890, Lubbock didn’t experience significant growth until windmills boomed and supplied water and a livelihood of crops and cattle to the dusty plains. Ranching and agriculture are still mainstays, and the region is one of the biggest producers of cotton in the US. Peanuts are another major crop.

LUBBOCK WINERY SCENE

The newcomer to the agricultural scene in Lubbock is the vineyards and, just a short drive out of town, you can see hectares of the flat landscape blanketed in rows of grapevines. In fact, more than 90 per cent of the state’s wine crop, including for wineries in Fredericksburg, Texas’ wine country epicentre, is grown here.

Although now the Lone Star State is one of the top wine producing states in the country, (#5 behind California, Wash-

ABOVE | (Left) Texas Tech Public Art Collection. (Right) Working Windmill at the National Ranching Heritage Association.

TOC | The author and the Iconic Buddy Holly glasses at the Buddy Holly Center. Photos: Kate Robertson

ington, New York and Oregon), it's a relatively new industry. West Texas didn't have much of a wine scene until local Lubbock university professors planted an experimental vineyard in 1966.

The fact that prohibition was in place in Lubbock city until 2009, also slowed local wine industry growth. Before that, wineries like Llano Estacado, which was established in 1976 by the aforementioned university professors, were located just outside the city limits, and Lubbock residents had to drive if they wanted to pick up a bottle of wine to drink at home.

Matt Bostick, Llano's event manager, tells the story of making this drive during his university days, saying the state police would often pull them over for any excuse and then confiscate their wine purchase.

Despite the late start, Lubbock region now has upwards of six wineries with tasting rooms, where you can sample top-notch vintages. If you're a wine lover like me, it's worth a day's drive around the dusty countryside to visit each.

Also due to the late prohibition, Lubbock craft breweries are about 10 years behind other parts of the country. Local craft brewers are closing that gap with a vengeance, like Good Line Beer Co. which opened in June of 2022. Good Line (a nod to the local music scene) is already winning awards, bringing locals "beer from the Dust Coast" (the wind blows here a lot and there is a phenomenon called a "haboob," an intense dust storm that drastically reduces visibility. I just missed a haboob the Sunday before I arrived in March, and every towns person I met excitedly asked me if I experienced it). Five other breweries are thriving in the city, with one more due to open soon.

LUBBOCK ART SCENE

Just as important as the windmill was to the settlement of Lubbock is Texas Tech University, which opened its doors in 1925 with 1,379 students. Today, the university has 40,000 students and is a driving force for the local economy.

The campus certainly has some distinctions and has been named one of the US's most beautiful, with buildings largely adhering to the Spanish Renaissance style. It occupies 769 hectares, the second largest contiguous campus in the country. But what attracted me to the campus is their public art collection funded by an initiative started in 1998 whereby the university allocates one per cent of the estimated cost of each new capital project to commission high-end works of art.

This collection is mostly outdoor sculptures, which you can see via a self-guided walking or driving tour (there are extensive guide maps on-line), or like I did by booking in advance a guided tour on the "art cart." There are 253 art pieces strewn over the huge campus, so if you're wanting to see the entire exhibit, you could approach it over a couple of days.

The art scene in downtown Lubbock is also alive and well. The Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts is a non-profit art and entertainment district initiative for downtown revitalization and to stimulate the visual and performing arts.

If you can, visit Lubbock on the first Friday of the month

to catch the First Friday Art Trail, a free public event where artists and musicians highlight their talents in the Center's venues and on the street from 6-9 pm.

LUBBOCK MUSIC SCENE

I knew when I checked into my room at the Cotton Court and the front desk staff encouraged me to come back and take a guitar to my room that music was a big part of the Lubbock landscape. Even if you've never heard of Lubbock before, it's likely that you've heard of their most famous musician, Buddy Holly.

The Buddy Holly Center is filled with paraphernalia including his motorcycle and his iconic glasses, recovered from the fatal 1959 plane crash. But really, there are Buddy Holly references all about town, and you can do a self-guided tour to see his schools, homes, church and the roller rink where he performed on weekends.

J.I. Allison's childhood home (the drummer for Holly's band, the Crickets) has been moved on-site at the Center and is well worth a walk-through to see the bedroom where practices took place and be amazed at how small homes used to be.

Cowboy culture, wineries, breweries, art and music – and the hauntingly barren and beautiful West Texas high, dry plains – make Lubbock a really unique destination. |

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INSPIRED MAKEOVER: MAUREEN LEYLAND

by **INSPIRED Staff**

For Maureen Leyland, an *INSPIRED* makeover came at the perfect time! A difficult winter brought two scary visits to the ER for her grandchildren's allergic reactions and displacement from her condo for six months.

Maureen's whole life has been one of caring for others; from volunteering on telephone crisis lines at the University through to 30 years as a social worker, mostly at BC Children's and Women's Hospitals.

Since retiring, she has volunteered for a Seniors Advocacy Group working on 'ageing-in-place' issues and been a docent for school programs at the Vancouver Art Gallery, whilst caring for an elderly parent. Today, she mostly treasures time caring for her two young local grandchildren (who are now being treated by an allergist).

Maureen's hobbies include singing in a community choir aptly named Joyful Voices, doing Zumba and ballroom dancing, playing the ukulele, plus trying to learn German as a son and family now live in Munich.

Of the makeover experience, Maureen says meeting the style team and the other models was her favourite part.

"The whole experience was a delight – meeting Hana and Gina and Chris at Blue Sky! So much love and encouragement!"

The thing she'll take with her from the *INSPIRED* makeover is advice she's given countless times over the years to others.

"When faced with life's stresses, it's more than okay to allow others to spoil you!"

HAIR: After a great chat with Maureen about her needs and lifestyle, I learned she wanted a "lower upkeep" hairstyle. I decided on some babylights and a soft colour to blend her grey. Babylights are a great choice for anyone who doesn't want a noticeable regrowth line. I opted for a low-ammonia colour called "Color Gels" by Redken, which slightly puffs up the cuticle to give the hair more texture and lift.

Because Maureen's hair is fine, I decided to cut a chin-length bob with some graduated layers. The graduated layers build up the weight to create more volume towards the top of her head.

To style, I used Redken Root Lifter Volumizing Spray Foam for volume, the Redken Quick Blowout Heat Protect Spray and finished it off with Redken Triple Take 32 Extreme High-Hold Hairspray.

Maureen's new colour complements her skin tone and the new cut accentuates her beautiful facial features.



COSMETICS: Maureen has such beautiful skin and cheekbones, so I started off with the ELF primer and CC foundation to create that flawless skin. Then I applied a taupe-coloured eye brow pencil to fill in and help shape and define her eyebrows. I added a dark brown smudge proof eyeliner to just the top lash line and applied an off-black, water-resistant mascara to her top lashes. I applied a peachy tone blush to cheek bones and added a little to the upper corner of her eyelid. Finished off with nude lip liner and a hydrating tinted lip oil in a peachy pink tone – all soft colours to coordinate with her lovely yellow blazer.

CLOTHING: Maureen wears the Celine Tunic Sunny Day with Tulip Jacket Pastel Sun – A bamboo linen blouse made with 50% bamboo, 50% linen fabric/and a jacket made from 95% modal, 5% Lycra. |

SPECIAL THANKS

Hair Stylist: Hana Akai of Akai Hair Salon, visit online <https://akaihairdesign.com>

Makeup Stylist: Gina Lavertu of Gina Lavertu Esthetics, part of Wild Oak Hair Collective 778-533-2486 Gina not only did the makeup application, she provided a facial and a manicure to all the models.

Fashion Stylist: Marilyn Cobban of Blue Sky Clothing Co. Victoria store manager Christine Blainey worked with all the models and assisted them with fittings and clothing selection. Blue Sky gifted the models all the clothing that was chosen for them free of charge.

Photographer: Jan van der Hooft of J. Abram Photography. |

FOREVER FIT

by EVE LEES



CBT: AN EFFECTIVE INSOMNIA TREATMENT

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) can be a highly effective treatment for insomnia, particularly for adults over age 55, several studies show.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends CBT-I (CBT for insomnia) as a first-line treatment, due to its exemplary safety record over pharmaceuticals. CBT has few drawbacks and no side effects, except that it requires commitment.

As we age, we tend to suffer more insomnia than in our younger years. An estimated 20 to 40 per cent of older adults have insomnia. Unfortunately, medication is frequently the first treatment choice.

Pharmaceutical agents are effective short term, but long-term safety and efficacy in aging adults are unknown. And clinical trials of insomnia medications rarely include geriatric patients.

CBT focuses on how our thoughts, beliefs and attitudes can affect our feelings and behaviour. CBT is not designed to be long-term: it is generally considered short-term therapy. Treatments require anywhere from four to 20 sessions, each about 30 to 60 minutes. The object of the treatments is to learn adaptive skills with quick, practical “mindful” exercises, then continue those exercises daily. Refresher sessions are an option for those who may revert to negative thought patterns, but CBT has proven to be effective long-term.

Along with identifying and replacing limiting, negative beliefs that may interfere with sleep, CBT-I intervention also includes a focus on several lifestyle and mental health components that are key to improved sleep:

1. Structured sleep hours for bedtime and rising (napping is discouraged).
2. Removing factors that can disrupt falling asleep (noise, lighting, room temperature, digital and electronic devices, etc.).
3. Sleep hygiene for optimal sleep (nutrition and physical activity during the day, etc.).
4. Relaxation training (meditation or breathing exercises, etc.).

There are some downsides to CBT-I. It requires commitment to be successful. It is more labour-intensive than medications and requires a trained and motivated provider. Session fees may also be a factor. However, CBT is a com-

mon, popular therapy, so you will likely find a practitioner in your area. Some may offer online sessions for those with mobility or transportation concerns.

Insomnia can create physical and emotional distress. For those uncomfortable taking over-the-counter treatments, knowing there are options other than medications is a relief. Talk to your physician and visit a CBT practitioner. |

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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GATHERING FOR THE GRAPE

by J. KATHLEEN THOMPSON

“We season all our reds in these oak barrels. Most of the barrels are from the US or France, but we just got a shipment from Hungary! I’m sure that’s going to give a new twist to the flavour and finish of our wines.”

Kayla Sahara, Guest Services Manager of Gneiss Wines in the District Wine Village, is showing us around the craft winery’s production room, and excitedly drawing us into the winemaker’s world. The cache of oak barrels gives way to gleaming floor-to-ceiling silver tanks that will yield this year’s carefully curated whites.

“Our whites are based on either a Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier or Chardonnay grape, though we have been known to sneak in some Riesling or Pinot Blanc in a few of our blends.” Kayla informs me. “Similarly, with our reds, though they are either Pinot Noir or Shiraz based, we do experiment with a blend of other grapes. We harvest those grapes from our own vineyards on the Naramata Bench, as well as from neighbouring vineyards in the South Okanagan. Most of the vinifera grown are French, but there is an increasing number of vines imported from other countries, like the Tempranillo from Spain. Each year there seems to be more to choose from.”

Gneiss Wines is just one of the 12 wineries that are part of the Okanagan’s collaborative District Wine Village. As though customized for the phenomenal growth in the Okanagan’s wine industry, the District Wine Village brings together a spectrum of wineries in a single location for

the convenience of winemaker and aficionado alike. Situated at the base of the sun-drenched, vine-strewn slopes between Oliver and Okanagan Falls, the centralized hub for viticulture and its fans makes pragmatic and economic sense. You can call it one-stop shopping, or you can call it a great way to learn about the local culture. Either way, it’s a concept that’s winning a lot of supporters.

Located on land of the Osoyoos Indian Band, a large statue of a pow wow dancer ushers visitors to the site via a well-marked turn off Highway 97. A spacious parking area brings you to the outer rim of the village, and within a few steps up into the pedestrian-focused complex, you are swept into the wheel of wineries that make up the village. Situated ‘in the round,’ the 12 wineries, interspersed with Neighbourhood Brewery, Workshop Distillery and Ward’s Wine Country Kitchen, occupy the outer ring of the complex, with ample balcony space and a spacious amphitheatre occupying the centre. Each outlet is a fully operational winery with indoor/outdoor sampling areas fronting their space.

ABOVE | The District Wine Village is the community-focused vision of childhood friends Max Brock and Matt Kenyon. *Photo: J. Kathleen Thompson*

Surprised to learn that the ‘wine village’ was actually a ‘winery village,’ I asked Darcel Giesbrecht, Marketing Manager of the District Wine Village, for a bit more information.

“The District Wine Village is not just a retail plaza for wine growers, rather, in order to attain a license to sell their products here, the wine producers must also make their wine on site. Which means some pretty interesting things are happening behind the scenes! In the fall, the grape harvest is brought here, the grapes are de-stemmed and pressed – we have a state-of-the-art press on wheels – and then transferred to the barrels and tanks for fermentation. When ready, the wine is bottled and the seasoning process continues. Though these are small craft wineries, producing about 2,500 and 3,000 cases a year, there is nothing small about the effort and steps involved in getting to those sample-ready bottles of wine!”

Knowing the District Wine Village is the first of its kind in Canada, I wanted to know more about the pioneering people behind the project.

“The wine village realizes the vision of Max Brock and Matt Kenyon, two Okanagan Falls born and raised friends,” Darcel tells me. “Max, the great traveler, had seen the concept of a shared, community-focused wine production centre operate successfully in other countries, and thought it would be a good fit for Okanagan winemakers and their ever-growing following. Though Max sadly passed away shortly after the project broke ground, Matt Kenyon and supporters proudly brought the project to fruition, opening the District Wine Village to the public in June 2021.”

Now in its third year, the District Wine Village is open year-round, on select days in the winter (complete with skating rink, mulled wines and warming centres), opening daily from 11am–6pm starting Easter weekend, and until 7pm during the summer. Special community or ticketed events (such as large concerts) are frequently held during the summer in the 600-seat amphitheatre. Otherwise, local entertainment, a farmers’ market on Wednesdays 4-7pm, yoga on Saturday mornings, opportunities to see “Max” at work (the name bestowed upon the mo-

bile wine press), or to linger over your beverage with a charcuterie board from Ward’s Wine Country Kitchen, will all be part of the summer experience at the village this year.

“I think Max would be delighted to see how his ideas have taken wing,” says Darcel. “He had envisioned the village as a gathering place and you see that every day in the way the vendors support each other, sharing resources and knowledge, and in the way that

people always comment on the sense of community that you feel at the village.”

And with glass in hand, listening to the tunes of local musicians as the sun slips behind the sage-tinged hills, life at the village seems destined to not just meet, but surpass Matt and Max’s wildest dreams. |

For *IF YOU GO* information, visit www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/okanagan-district-wine-village



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UNDERSTANDING SHINGLES

by NANCY J. SCHAAF

Have you seen the latest TV ad promo called, “Shingles is Sleeping”? The awareness campaign was launched to inform Canadians of the risks of developing this disease after a recent study indicated that many Canadians underestimate their risk of shingles. As an example, three of my friends developed shingles within the past few years. Each told me it is extremely painful. One friend said she walked around her home at night crying due to the intense pain.

Shingles is a red blistering painful skin rash caused by the varicella-zoster virus, the same virus that causes chickenpox, which can lie dormant in the body for years. In many people who have had chickenpox, the virus becomes active again later in life and causes shingles.

According to the Canadian National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), 90 per cent of Canadians have had chickenpox and are at risk of developing shingles. The odds of developing this rash are one in three if you are 50 and older but rises to one in two if you are 85 or older.

Canadian NHL hockey legend Denis Savard said that he was “laid up for a month” and the pain was “unbearable” when he experienced shingles. These comments from a man who played hockey and endured hard hits from opponents illustrate the intense suffering experienced by people with shingles.

As you age, your immune system weakens, and the virus can be activated and travel from nerve-to-nerve cells, causing a painful blistering skin rash. The first sign you have developed shingles is pain, burning, itching, or tingling in your body. You may experience chills and fever. Then, in several days, you develop a rash of reddish fluid-filled blisters that usually appear on the chest, back or stomach but can be on the neck or face.

The major complication (although if you have shingles, the rash and pain will seem major) is the risk of developing further nerve damage, referred to as Postherpetic Neuralgia (PHN). After the rash heals, this condition will endure for weeks, months or possibly years.

The complications include neurological difficulties, vision loss and joint pain. Outbreaks on the face near the eye can cause blindness if the cornea is affected. Bacterial infections from scratching can develop and lead to scarring. The pain, loss of sleep and difficulties with daily activities can cause depression. Some people are susceptible to pneumonia.

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, risk factors include having chickenpox as a child, a weakened immune system, certain medications, such as corticosteroids that weaken the immune system, radiation treatment and having cancer, particularly Hodgkin’s Disease or lymphoma.

Having HIV/AIDS, even if you are younger than 50, also puts you at risk due to a weakened immune system. A study published in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* linked asthma in childhood with an increase in developing shingles as an adult. It is thought that the suppression of

the immune system may escalate the reactivation of the herpes zoster virus. Consideration should be given to immunizing adults aged 50 years and older with asthma.

For seniors with these risks, prevention can be vital. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, vaccination reduces your chances of developing shingles. Currently, there are only two vaccines authorized by Canada. Shingrix and Zostavax provide powerful protection against shingles and PHN. In adults, a vaccine is more than 90 per cent effective at preventing shingles and PHN. Immunity lasts for at least seven years. In those with weakened immune systems, the vaccine is 68-91 per cent effective in preventing shingles.

Immunize Canada recommends vaccination to prevent shingles and the complications that could arise from this disease. The organization recommends that adults aged 50 and older, as well as adults 19 years and older with weakened immune systems because of illness or therapy, receive the vaccine as

they risk getting shingles and related complications.

Studies show that the vaccines are safe and create a strong defense against shingles. However, temporary side effects from getting the shots are likely to last two to three days. Most people have a sore arm with mild or moderate pain, and some also experience redness and swelling at the injection site. Others feel tired and have muscle pain, headache, shivering, fever, stomach pain or nausea.

If you experience side effects, you may take over-the-counter pain medicine such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen. To determine if you are a candidate for the vaccine, consult your physician. |

Shingles: 10 Tips to Feeling Better

1. Rest, drink lots of fluids, especially water, and eat nutritious meals.
2. Apply a cool moist washcloth to the blister area.
3. Apply lotion such as calamine to the affected area.
4. Oatmeal baths and baking soda applications can be used.
5. Clothes should be loose fitting as skin and blister area can be sensitive.
6. If blisters are oozing, keep them covered.
7. Avoid scratching blisters as this can cause scarring or infection.
8. Avoid stress.
9. Take over-the-counter pain medication as needed.
10. Wash hands often.

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SUMMER READING TO IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH



Living on purpose

by LAURIE MUELLER

I like to get caught up in an enchanting novel, but I also like to read nonfiction which can teach me something new or inspirational. And I never turn down a cozy mystery even if the subtext is to eat more almond croissants in the south of France.

Of course, whether it is fiction or nonfiction, reading a book – or listening to one – can teach us new things or even remind us about events or things that we have not thought about for a while. Lifelong learning is a factor in staying healthy and enjoying our lives. Our minds are like a muscle; and our minds need to exercise regularly to stay strong. Reading and other learning pursuits are a great way to keep us healthy and vibrant as the years go by. Relaxing is also a good way to remain healthy!

My friend Dave suggested a book to me by Lisa Genova (yes, she is the author of *Still Alice*) called *Remember: The Science of Memory and the Art of Forgetting*. “It makes you think about how you remember things and that as you start getting older you start getting paranoid about having Alzheimer’s. It is encouraging that not remembering things is a part of aging. Your brain can’t remember everything that has gone on and that’s a normal process. Like walking into a room and not remembering why you went into the room and not being able to find your keys. In the book, she doesn’t just teach about what is happening, she offers strategies to help us remember.” (I need those strategies!).

Kelly suggested Author Kate Quinn, who has a way of making history interesting. Ms. Quinn shows “the life, the laughter, and the humanity” that runs through the people who lived at that time. Her novels take place in a variety of European countries such as England, France, Rome and Renaissance Italy. You can read them in any order as they are all stand-alone books: *The Diamond Eye*, *The Alice Network*, *The Rose Code*, *Empress of Rome Saga*, and *The Huntress*.

Someone told me about Margareta Magnusson, who is an 89-year-old author. I’ve started reading her book, *The Swedish Art of Aging Exuberantly*. I’ve only started the book, but so far, so good! It’s always nice to have older people as role models.

One way I acquire new authors is by subscribing to The Fuzzy Librarian and getting daily emails that allow me to try an author out for free. I’ve just been to the South of France and a little town where a ‘busy body’ by the name of Molly Sutton has moved to and runs a ‘gite’ (or, in English, a bed & breakfast). She’s very good at solving crime, eating almond croissants and learning about the French culture.

The author is Nell Goddin and she has a long list of books to choose from. I suggest you start at the beginning with a book titled *The Third Girl*.

Meanwhile my husband is reading the Stuart Woods series about Stone Barrington, a lawyer and ex-cop, who lives a lavish life with inherited money. Stone drinks Knob Creek Bourbon of which we now have several bottles in our cupboard! If you decide to start that series, start with *New York Dead*.

Enjoy your summer reading, and if you are reading this online, share your fave summer reading books in the comments. |

Laurie Mueller, M.ED is retired and living in Victoria with her husband, Helmuth. Her book *The Ultimate Guide on What to do When Someone You Love Dies* is available on Amazon. More about Laurie can be found at www.lauriemconsulting.com or on Facebook.



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