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55+ lifestyle magazine

MAY 2023



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### Cover DR. JANE BARRATT

Alongside other NGOs, Dr. Barratt's work focuses on how the environment can help support or hinder one's journey through all the stages of life.

Photo: Luana Colnago

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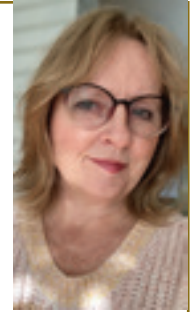
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## THRIVE BEYOND 55

by BARBARA RISTO, PUBLISHER



This month we celebrate the many worthy charities in our communities that help to make life better for people, animals and the environment.

Several years ago, I met with one of the charities that ran monthly ads in the magazine. Their director excitedly told me about a reader who had walked into their office with a \$1.2 million donation. I asked, “How do you know they heard about you through our magazine?”

“Easy,” was the reply. “They brought in your magazine, and we spent the first five minutes talking about it.”

Turns out this reader had an intention to give a donation to this charity about a year earlier, but life got in the way. It was the persistent reminder of seeing the charity’s recurring ad in *INSPIRED Magazine* that finally nudged them into action.

As you can imagine, the charity was ecstatic. Likewise, we were thrilled to have played a role in helping to bring about this incredibly happy set of affairs.

Not everyone has the wherewithal to write a million-dollar cheque, but we can all contribute something in support of the very worthwhile charities that support us day in and day out in so many ways.

Even a small donation like \$25 can help make a difference, especially if multiplied by several donors.

I believe everyone has been touched by the assistance provided by the non-profit sector. These unsung community heroes fill in the many gaps left by government resources that never seem to stretch far enough to meet the needs of their constituents.

Whatever cause you feel drawn toward, there is probably a charity somewhere in the background, quietly doing incredible work to make our

planet better in some way. Tackling the problems that are overlooked by society is where charities shine.

Sometimes we don’t realize who is doing this work, and the difference they are making. This is why we dedicate two issues every year to highlighting the charitable work that is done in our communities. Whether you love animals, nature or people – there’s a charity out there doing good work that you could help in their efforts.

If you can’t afford a donation, there are often other ways to support a charity.

Ask how you can volunteer. Skills we have learned throughout life can come in handy to lighten the load for staff who are often doing much more than they are paid to do. Sometimes there’s a vacancy on a board or committee. Your experience, skills and perspective can be invaluable.

Charitable work is one of the most rewarding activities we can embark upon. When you are doing something to make a difference, without thought to how you will be financially remunerated, it truly does make all the difference in the world.

Take a little extra time this issue to browse through the ads accompanying the editorial this month. If you see a charity that tugs at your heart, don’t hesitate. Write a cheque and mail it today or consider a legacy donation in your will.

And if you don’t have the means to help financially, I encourage you to call and ask how you can be of service. It might open up a whole new opportunity to meet like-minded people and expand your social network.

You may not be able to bless a charity with a million-dollar cheque, but by doing what you can with what you have, it can feel like a million bucks anyway. |





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Sadly, Peggy passed away at Royal Jubilee Hospital in 2017. Inspired by the compassionate care of the hospital staff, Ernie has made generous gifts to the Victoria Hospitals Foundation in her memory.

"We should all give back," shares Ernie. "It makes me feel good to give, and it makes my family feel good. That's what my wife would have wanted to do."

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# DR. JANE BARRATT

## ADVOCATING FOR HEALTHY AGEING

by KATE ROBERTSON

Ageing. There are songs about it, books about it and jokes. Tropes on the topic abound: “You’re not getting older, you’re getting better.” “Sixty is the new 40.” And so on.

When it comes to the topic of ageing, few know more about it than Dr. Jane Barratt, Secretary General for the International Federation of Ageing (IFA), whose entire career has been focused on the ageing and disability fields. She’s a Winston Churchill Fellow and recipient of the Queen Eliza-

beth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in Canada for her commitment and passion for issues relating to ageing, and in September 2022, Jane was also recognized as one of 50 leaders working to transform the world to be a better place to grow old.

Jane grew up in Western Australia as one of five children and had a brother born with a heart defect called Eisenmenger syndrome. They were a very active family, but her brother, Paul, couldn’t do all the things that a child with good cardio



capacity could do. This shaped the family, but it also shaped Jane as a person. Her deep love for her brother and her family was the beginning of her interest in serving those around her.

Jane became an occupational therapist by trade, the chair of the disability commission, and then an academic. Her master's degree studies looked at the relationship between mothers with rheumatoid arthritis and their children, and her Ph.D. was trying to deeply understand how we identify and fund services for folks across the generations living with a disability.

"That's what my frame of reference is," says Jane, "what can we do in the environment to support someone? An understanding of how we travel through life, and how the environment can support and enable, or can be a barrier. And that's not only physical, but also psychological, social and political."

In 2000, Jane applied for and landed the position of Secretary General at the IFA, an international non-governmental organization with members in nearly 80 countries. The IFA's goal is to help shape and influence policy and good practices to drive the agenda around ageing and to encourage investment in the health of the older population. It has a formal general consultative status relationship with the United Nations (UN).

"We have a program of work that is built around some of the agendas of WHO [World Health Organization], but we work in partnership with many country organizations. We inform WHO, OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development] and the UN, but we help build the capacity and capability of organizations on the ground," says Jane.

At the IFA, the focus is on ageing starting at birth and a life course approach to ageing. "Of course, we're on the journey of ageing from the moment we're born, but it's the last third of our life that is really the focus at the IFA," says Jane.

The IFA and its partner organizations are now in the second year of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing, a global collaboration which brings together 100 countries whose societies and government agencies have signed onto the agenda to improve

the lives of older people, their families and community. The focus is on four main areas: age-friendly environments, combating ageism, integrated care and long-term care.

Jane explains that there are usually three main trajectories for ageing. There are those highly stable older adults with the capacity to be independent who may age into their eighties and nineties and be relatively independent. Then there are those who have a slow deterioration and declining function. They may have cardiovascular disease or diabetes but generally can function with some assistance. Finally, you've got that cohort that experiences a dramatic decline, whether it's through illness, or someone who has dementia and has a slow decline that lasts a lifetime. "I think not about chronological age, but about function. How do we create an environment that enables people as they age?"

Although there has been progress in some areas on the topic of ageing, Jane advises that growth in other areas has been slow. "You only have to look at the last three years of a pandemic. In Canada and in many high-income countries, we were ill prepared for a pandemic, even though we knew the pandemic was going to come. When it came to those that were most at risk of infectious diseases – not just the frail, older people but also those 50 and older that have weaker immunity – we failed them, time and time again," says Jane.

She gives the example that in the depths of winter, somebody decided we needed to line up for the Covid-19 vaccine in weather conditions that made it very difficult for older folks.

Although we're currently living longer than in the past, ageing also often means increasing health comorbidities. Advancement has been made in understanding chronic conditions, but further work on prevention is still necessary. For example, we understand how to treat those with diabetes, with diabetic retinopathy and with cardiovascular disease. "We're good at treating, but we are terrible at preventing, and our health promotion and prevention strategies are grossly underfunded," says Jane.



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# Snapshot

with Dr. Jane Barratt

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

*“Be curious, engage and be engaging, seek and take opportunities to learn from all. Live the values that guide you – grace, honesty, integrity and authenticity. Learning happens every moment of the day, but it also takes courage and humility to gain personal insight and transform it to action that brings everyone along for the journey.”*

Who or what has most influenced you and why?

*“Both the who and the what have contributed to the person I am today, and it continues. Foundational family values and work ethic, but the courage and freedom to say “yes” when I didn’t have all the skills required. The ability to ask questions, to be vulnerable and respect vulnerability. Gaining insights into how situations are handled by different people. Relationships are the most influential action and entity of life – how to build them, how to grow them and nurture them and how to sustain them.”*

What keeps you grounded?

*“Life and death, joy and pain, the moment and the silence of living. I take nothing for granted and live with deep humility for the opportunities as well as the challenges that have been offered up to me.”*

What are you most grateful for?

*“The moment, the experiences, health and well-being – belonging, being part of an international community that has a strong sense of family. The world of technology that helps us and hinders us from being connected, the human touch.” |*



This reorientation to health promotion and prevention falls off the table all the time, sometimes due to a political cycle. “We do not invest in health and wellbeing; we invest in the health system capacity to treat and manage disease. So, we start sitting in these disease conundrums,” she says.

Ageism is an area that is currently getting a lot of attention. Jane advises there are three kinds of ageism: self-identifying, interpersonal and institutional.

“If you think about the institutional, you can also put that lens over many of our policies. So how do our policies reflect that?” Jane continues, “We recognize that older people may require fairly targeted messages in terms of public health, for example around the value of them receiving a vaccine being equal to that of school aged children.” (Note, in Jane’s world, the word “senior” isn’t used, but rather “older” person or adult.)

“We also know that for those that do not feel positive about ageing and who experience discrimination live 7.5 years less,” says Jane. It’s this kind of evidence that makes this field so exciting for her. “Because it’s really very intricate and then, of course, you get the whole business philosophy – how does the industry understand the field of ageing and what innovations and technologies are available to create this enabling environment?”

Dr. Barratt also points out that today’s systems are designed for past generations and not current or future ones. For example, studies show the fear of vision loss is greater than the fear of cancer, and yet in many countries the pathway to see an ophthalmologist or retinal specialist is very complicated. If a person goes to their GP and then is diagnosed with diabetes, they might be referred to a diabetologist, but they also should be referred to an ophthalmologist because eye disease is a serious complication. And the doctor could also be saying, “I see that you’ve missed your Covid-19 vaccine, you know that’s going to be important.”

It’s important to link up the disciplines, but when the system is broken, we’re not

providing coordinated care management. “At the moment, we still live in quite separate disciplines. In some regions it may be better than others, but we don’t have a systemic integrated way of working,” says Jane.

Some countries and societies have naturally done better with healthy ageing. “I think it’s probably correct to say that some of the Nordic countries have a different set of values that they live by, and their tax system gives rise to different opportunities.”

In Denmark, for example, the fundamental mode of transport is bicycles. That gives rise to a healthier population just by the mere fact that that’s a normal way of living.

“In Perth, Western Australia, you wouldn’t see that,” says Jane. “I think with societal change and the generations to come, we may see these. It’s an investment in health promotion and prevention across the life course so that older people will be healthier, which will then reduce the burden on the healthcare system.”

What does an age-friendly environment look like? It’s an environment that’s not only physically accessible, but emotionally and psychologically accessible to all people with a focus on older people. Ireland is one country that has done an exemplary job. This started about 15 years ago when Ireland was economically broke. What they did initially was cost-neutral, but now money is invested because there’s return on investment, like a decrease in hospitalization.

Ireland’s also the first country that was designated as age-friendly in the midst of the pandemic because of the infrastructure. The government has an age-friendly lens over all their policies.

“They were very quick to respond to specific needs of older people because it’s on their agenda,” says Jane. “That’s what makes an age-friendly environment – it’s not a bench or a park. It’s how they view the policies.”

Other examples of how age-friendly policies have been instituted are public transportation systems that are responsive to specific needs in both rural and remote areas or creative initiatives like a school bus being used for another transportation system when not in use during the day. An



age-friendly supermarket is one that's open at a particular time, only for older people.

In Canada, when it comes to health promotion and prevention, we've known for a while what we can do to help ourselves and our community achieve healthy ageing. There are modifiable risk factors for dementia, for example. "They're food, exercise, nutrition, social isolation," says Jane. "A sense of novelty is also important – doing different things to stimulate your cognition."

Now the focus needs to be getting buy-in from people. Or understanding why they can't buy in because we also need to recognize that there is a growing marginalization in the community. For example, it's harder for older women, older prisoners, older migrants, older refugees and older LGBTQ2S. "It's hard for this narrative around healthy ageing to be useful to someone that's been living on the streets," says Jane, "so it's really about getting a balanced approach."

It's becoming more widely recognized that older people can make significant contributions to society, especially when they're in good health, and Jane strongly believes that we can make the world a better place for those that are growing older.

"But to continue making progress, it's important that we start 'walking up the hill' to the end of the Decade of Healthy Ageing," she says.

And what would that look like? For Jane, it would mean that policies are in place, and a different cohort of activists and advocates would be coming together towards a common agenda.

"It's also about social justice," she says. "I would hope that we would have a UN convention on the rights of older people by that stage. That's been 12 years in the making at the United Nations."

Although we're not 100 per cent there yet, when it comes to our understanding and treatment of ageing, Jane is optimistic: "I'm a glass half-full kind of person. Every single moment of the day, we've got the opportunity to change someone's life. That's the gift I've got, and you've got. What you say and do could save a life. We just need a joined-up approach of those that are on the same team."

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# DISCOVERING WONDERS IN MY OWN BACKYARD

by KATE ROBERTSON

“The tug is the drug,” says Cam, my fly-fishing guide, and after my first catch of a small rainbow trout, I’m hooked. We’re fishing from a small flat-bottomed fishing boat that you can stand up in, called a jon, in the middle of Black Water Lake #2, a small backcountry lake close to Golden, BC.

Initially we trolled along the lake’s edges, casting with a dry fly and got some nibbles, but it’s when we switched to a wet fly that the nibbles turned into bites. Like most guides, Cam is a wealth of information, not just about casting technique, but also about the region and where to go to catch the “big one,” like the coveted bull trout that can weigh up to 15 kilograms.

This was my first in-province trips after restrictions eased from the pandemic; an opportunity to explore both Yoho and Kootenay National Parks, and their gateway cities of Golden and Radium.

Golden’s abundant activity list has continued to grow since the Golden Skybridge opening in 2021. The facility boasts Canada’s two highest suspension bridges: one, a scary 130-metres high; the other, 80 metres. Both crossings allow plenty of time for a bird’s eye view of the canyon and the crashing creek below on my wobbly totter across the 150-metre span to the other side.

Across the valley, I visit Boo, the 650-pound resident grizzly at Kicking Horse Mountain Resort, where he’s foraging for food close to the fence. “Bears can smell 14 kilometres away, and more if it’s wet out,” says interpretive guide, Cala, as she describes the treasure hunts that staff set up for Boo each day. His current fave food is corn on the cob, which he husks with his 18-cm-long front paw-toes. Boo has lived on this 6.9-hect-

ares of mountain terrain since 2002 when a poacher shot his mom. He was five months old.

For a different perspective of the Serlkirk and Purcell mountains, I booked an ATV tour with Canadian Off-Road Adventures. We travel on forestry service roads up the mountain to the Gorman Lake trailhead, where there’s still plenty of snow on Gorman Peak. Owner Che Koroll is one of our guides and he knows all the local peaks and trails from ATVing and sledding up here for years. On the way back down, things get exciting as we branch off on wagon trails and bounce through puddles and over rocks. When we cross Gorman Creek, the water is so high my shoes get wet, and it feels like the ATV starts to float.

Only a half-hour’s drive away, Yoho is Golden’s national park playground, as it is for local hiking guide and interpreter, Laura Crombeen, owner of Self-Propelled Adventures. Walking down the shaded Wapta Falls trail, Crombeen stops to give educational chats about interesting things like burls on trees (often caused by bacteria or fungi disturbing the cell growth) and to identify the local fauna. Even though it’s late June, spring is late this year, so early bloomers like anemones and glacier lilies can still be spotted.

ABOVE | (Left) The author on the Golden Skybridge. (Right) Emerald Lake.

PAGE 9 | Che Koroll, owner of Canadian Off Road Adventures at Gorman Lake trailhead.

TOC | Boo the Bear at Kicking Horse Resort. Photos: Kate Robertson



At 18 metres high, Wapta Falls is the largest waterfall on the Kicking Horse River, with a width of more than two football fields at 107 metres, and the spray of water reaches us even though we're standing far past the waterfall base.

One of the beauties of Yoho is several attractions just a short drive off the main highway, like Emerald Lake, surrounded by the towering peaks of the President Range. Emerald rivals any of the more famous Rocky Mountain National Park lakes when it comes to beauty. Yoho is home to a large number of glaciers, and Emerald Lake is full of rock flour (rock particles finely ground by moving glaciers) that refract the light in a vibrant display of colours, hence the name. Summer melt-season is when the green-blue colour is most vivid.

An hour's drive along highway 95, which skirts the Columbia River (keep your eyes open when driving this stretch, the extensive wetlands is habitat for more than 250 species of birds,



including eagles, osprey and herons), brings me to Radium Hot Springs. Just inside the gates of Kootenay National Park, I meet Chris Skinner, guide and owner of Playwest Mountain Experience, to hike a local favourite: the Kindersley-Sinclair loop.

Summer is grizzly bear season, so Parks Canada has signs at the trail-head advising groups of at least four. "There's no known grizzly attack on a group of four or more," reassures Skinner, as we start our ascent through dense forest.

Biologist Leah Pengally is joining us today to educate about grizzly facts,

and she says the chances of a grizzly sighting are high. They frequent the avalanche chutes here, where vegetation they love, like cow parsnip, glacier lilies and dandelions, grows abundantly. Although we didn't see a bear, at the summit, as well as stellar views of the surrounding valleys and snow-covered peaks of the Rockies, we did find plenty of "digs" (grizzlies dig deep holes to catch ground squirrels), some over 1.5 metres deep.

Kootenay National Park is unique in that it was established in 1920 to build a 94-kilometre highway from Banff to the Windermere Valley (most people still just drive through the park without stopping), and the park's long, narrow shape is due to the initial agreement, which set aside park lands on either side of the road.

Several massive forest fires have swept through the park in the past few decades, leaving residual burn sites that give it a distinctive gothic-romance feel. Stanley Glacier Parks Canada guide Vicky Mont educates visitors on the natural forest regeneration cycle. "Fires are not bad," she emphasizes, as she pulls photos out of her backpack to show us the Stanley Glacier area 100 years ago versus today.

After a 365-metre hike up, the group arrives at a boulder field at the base of the glacier. But this isn't just any boulder field. Although Burgess shale fossils were discovered in Yoho National Park in 1886, the fossils here were not discovered until 2012. Unlike most Burgess Shale locations, where a guide is necessary, at Stanley Glacier you can hike on your own to find fossils, which clearly show the visible details of bones and insides of creatures from the underwater ecosystem that existed for a short time after the first explosion of multicellular life on earth over 505 million years ago.

As I travel back home, I'm thankful I had a chance to explore the wonders in my own backyard. |

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Photo: Courtesy of BC SPCA Foster Program

## OPENING THEIR HOMES AND HEARTS

by LAURIE MUELLER

Visiting a pet rescue website or your local BCSPCA and seeing the animals that are waiting for a new home, you may want to rush out, buy a farm, and adopt them all.

Perhaps more pragmatically, you can help and get your four-legged friend cuddles by becoming a foster parent. Consider a puppy or a kitten, a hamster or a bunny or any number of farm animals or an old one that needs some tender loving care for a short period of time. You can make a difference and feel the joy of being with an animal in their time of need. And you can still have free time to travel or go on vacation for two or three months!

Adrienne McBride, of Kelowna, is enthusiastic about fostering from two standpoints: as a foster pet parent; and as the director of the BC SPCA Fostering Program. Her mother often looked after kittens when Adrienne was growing up and both she and her mother continue to foster today.

The first time Adrienne and her family fostered a stray cat and her six kittens, the family wanted to cry when they returned the cat and kittens to the SPCA. But after a time and new fostering positions, the family came to accept that the temporary placements were their gift to the little ones as they begin their lives. And each time they took on a new foster pet, they had joy all over again.

The BC SPCA's foster program allows you to make a difference in an animal's life while they are transitioning into a

stage of being ready for adoption.

Time commitments range from one week to 16 weeks. For instance, a sick or injured animal could be with you for up to eight weeks. Whereas bottle feeding animals ranges from five to 12 weeks. You can also accept a compassionate placement in an emergency situation, which can last up to six months. The times vary with different situations.

Diane has been fostering kittens for eight years. Sometimes they come with a mother cat and are still nursing. Sometimes they are orphaned and are being bottle fed every two hours. Diane and her family started fostering when their long-time cat was 18 years old. Her children were younger, and she wanted to emotionally prepare the children for the loss of their old friend. She put in the application and started fostering kittens. Diane thinks it is a good arrangement for her family as they can choose when they have kittens in their home, and when to take a break.

Many retired people, who love animals but don't want to give up their freedom to travel and enjoy life away from home, can take on a foster pet for a period in which they will be at home. Sometimes those cute kitten or puppy videos on the internet just aren't enough to get your pet needs met. Having a pet visit can have health benefits not just for the animal but also for the caregiving fosterer. The joy and convenience of being a foster parent, says Adrienne, is nice and the impact



on the animal is tremendous. It's a double-win situation.

There are many reasons why pets need fostering. People who foster animals are not only helping the animals but often helping people who find themselves in dire circumstances and are unable to continue with their animal's care. Sometimes it is a family fleeing spousal abuse, or an isolated elder needing to go into hospital for surgery, or a natural disaster that displaces a family.

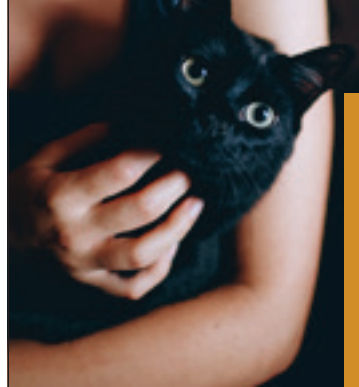
During the wildfires in BC, the BC SPCA was able to say, "Don't worry about your pets, we will take them and look after them until you can get back home." This was a significant help for those who were in the traumatic circumstance of losing their home and their loved ones. Being in a kennel for an animal can be upsetting, while moving into a person's home is less disruptive in distressing times. In some cases, pets who live together can be fostered to the same home, which provides some stability in a new environment. As the season of wildfires and flooding starts to build in BC, the BCSPCA issues a call for people to add their name to an emergency foster list. Adrienne calls this an incredible gift someone can offer another.

One grandmother mentioned how she taught her granddaughter about empathy and caring for animals through being a part of the foster program. She often invites the neighbourhood children to come over and help with the care of the kittens. |

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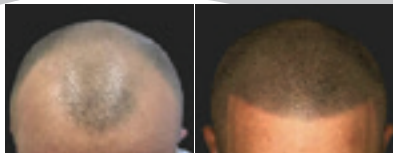
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# VOLUNTEERS FIND PERFECT FIT HELPING WOMEN IN NEED

by JESMINA BISEROVIC

Women In Need (WIN) is a non-profit community service cooperative consisting of an online shop and four resale stores in Victoria, BC (Cook St, Saanich Centre, Pandora St, and Westside Village). Revenue from WIN resale stores, together with donations, funds five empowerment programs, while maintaining costs to operate the non-profit.

“WIN programs are designed to offer support that is low barrier, free of judgment, and meets a participant where they are on their own unique journey between crisis, wellness, and self-sufficiency,” says Nicole Lapierre, Programs Coordinator. “Some of our core values are conscious choice, personal growth and empowerment. This means our programs are both guided by the wisdom of our program participants and that our program participants know best how they can be supported in moving forward.”

Incorporated in December 2005 and actively operating as a co-op since July 2006, WIN helps women, trans, non-binary and Two Spirit people and their families. There are plenty of places to purchase, donate or volunteer with WIN.

We spoke with volunteers Wendy Kysow and Franklyn Roy to get the inside scoop on what it’s like to be a part of this vital community cooperative.

## What brought you to volunteer with WIN?

Wendy: “When I took early retirement from teaching and we moved from the Mainland to Victoria, I first did some substitute teaching for an ESL school but often felt guilty that I was unable to work as many days or as frequently as they required. I tried volunteering at a local school but, as a volunteer, was restricted in the degree to which I could assist students in a non-teaching role.

About 11 years ago, I noticed the WIN store in the local shopping mall and was super happy to find such a store as I have always liked a bargain. On closer investigation,

I discovered this was not just a great place to shop but also supported ‘women in need’ and wonderfully for me, needed volunteers – it was obviously destiny!”

Franklyn: “I’d recently stepped away from a volunteer position steering another non-profit through the COVID crisis. I contacted WIN to continue to be of service to my community and to support women, trans, non-binary, and Two Spirit people.”

## What services do you offer as a volunteer?

Wendy: “There is not really a typical day volunteering at WIN but there are specific duties I perform on a regular basis: ‘doing the racks’ which involves ticketing, pricing, sizing and labelling regular or boutique clothing; emptying boxes and arranging the merchandise on the shelves in an attempt to emulate the high standards and incredible artistry of Julie – the West Side store manager; working the till, usually to cover the regular staff while they are on their breaks; general tidying of racks and shelves, filling in holes, straightening hangers; and acting as a fashion consultant for customers who request it.”

Franklyn: “The days vary widely, but as Volunteer Support, I’m there to sit in on interviews, welcome, learn from, train, advocate and have fun with volunteers. Some volunteers are in high school searching for meaningful service and wanting to gain work experience for developing their early-stage

PHOTOS | WIN Volunteers Wendy Kysow (top) and Franklyn Roy (bottom).  
Photos: Jasmine Phillip





résumé. Others are learning English and trying to establish a new community in a new country. Still others are looking to make their community contributions richer and offer their talents and skills developed over a lifetime. Our volunteers have gravitated towards giving their most precious commodity – their time – to WIN because they feel they have a social responsibility and want to support what the organization does in the community.”

There are volunteer positions at the Donation Centre, at the five retail shops, and in the Administration Office. The Donation Centre volunteers work behind the scenes and help sort, price, and pack up donations.

Volunteers for the Administration Office help with routine office tasks. Volunteers at WIN’s resale shops assist by tagging, pricing, sizing, and putting out new stock, pulling old stock, tidying and organizing, recycling, and helping customers and staff.

### What do you love about WIN?

Franklyn: “We work together to support WIN’s programs because we care deeply about the program participants. We are an organization that is invested in growing our knowledge and understanding. WIN hosts training workshops for staff to ensure that we provide the best experience and support that we can in an accessible and empowering way.”

Wendy: “I love that WIN is an organization that makes a difference in the local community. WIN supports program participants with its programs and services and provides customers with a fun, affordable and often exciting shopping experience. The staff are kind and friendly and I love volunteering there.”

### What do potential WIN volunteers need to know?

Wendy: “I would like potential volunteers to know that their work will be appreciated. They will be embraced by the WIN community, welcomed and valued. They will have the flexibility to adjust their volunteer schedule according to their needs and will be able to take time off as required. They will be working in a friendly atmosphere alongside wonderful staff, will be trained to fulfill tasks according to their comfort level and, above all, they will have FUN while knowing that they are sincerely helping people in need.”

Franklyn: “As a WIN volunteer, you’ll feel welcomed, valued and receive support and training. Your ideas will be respected. There is flexibility for time commitment, location and attempts to take your interests into account. The range in age, diversity and ability of volunteers and staff is exceptional.”

“Volunteering at WIN has a deep impact on our program participants, our staff and the community,” says Jasmine Philip, Marketing & Communications Coordinator. “In 2022, WIN was able to support over 2,000 program participants, and volunteers play a crucial role in helping WIN thrive and meet the ever-growing demand for our programs.” |

*For more information, visit [www.womeninneed.ca](http://www.womeninneed.ca) or call 250-480-4006 extension 204.*

# What does being a family caregiver look like or mean?



## Definition of a Family/Friend Caregiver:

Family member or friend who provides care and support to someone living with disease, disability or frailty due to aging. The role of a family caregiver is mutually determined by the people providing care and support and those receiving it.

“ It’s nice to be heard and understood. Until you’ve gone through this, you don’t have any idea. Thank you for your support and resources.”

From a family caregiver

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## Do you regularly help someone with these activities?

If you help someone (or a number of people) in your life or community with any of the following activities, you are considered a family/friend caregiver:



Transportation



Personal care, such as helping with a bath/shower and getting dressed



Talking with doctors, nurses, care managers, and others to understand what needs to be done



Medical procedures or treatments, including medication management



Attending appointments (health care or other) to take notes and help with follow up

If you checked 'yes' to any of the above tasks, this means you are a family caregiver and there are resources to support you. Visit [www.familycaregiversbc.ca](http://www.familycaregiversbc.ca) to access our learning center, a free online learning community offering caregiver resources in the form of: articles, tip sheets, flip books, webinars, videos, on-line courses and podcast episodes.

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# Join us this May for Family Caregiver Awareness Month

[www.familycaregiversbc.ca](http://www.familycaregiversbc.ca)



Family Caregivers  
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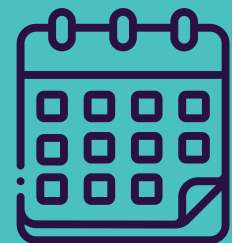
## 1 Sign up for our Enews

Sign up at [www.familycaregiversbc.ca](http://www.familycaregiversbc.ca) to receive 4-weeks of great content on caregiver themes: work and care, mental health, young caregivers and financial well-being.

## 2 Register and attend our virtual caregiver event

Join us virtually on May 18th from 10:30 am - 12 pm PST for *Caregivers Connect: Celebration*. It is a special event that offers caregivers an opportunity to enjoy fun and reflective activities, including mindful movement and connective dialogue. Register and save your spot,

<https://www.familycaregiversbc.ca/events/caregivers-connect-celebration-3>



## 3 Join and use #CaregiverAware

Make some noise and share on social media how you are celebrating caregivers throughout May.





# DOING WHAT WE CAN

by JOHN CHARLES HILLMAN

I was born March 18, 1919, in Newport Mon South Wales. I was first British but recently became a Canadian and have been living in Canada for the past 23 years to be close to family. I intend to continue living here for the rest of my days.

At 104 years old, I am a veteran of World War II, having served as a Wireless Operator with the Royal Air Force from 1937 to 1949, earning medals of recognition for service in four wartime campaign areas as well as two years in Great Britain, namely: France 1939/40; North Africa 1942/43; Italy 1943/44; and Burma 1944/46.

In 2020, in Victoria, BC, while the world was wrestling with the ravages of Covid-19, I was inspired by my comrade-in-arms of the UK, Captain Sir Thomas Moore (a fellow Burma Star holder), walking the length of his garden until he reached his 100th birthday to raise money for charity. This inspired me to follow suit and walk 101 laps around the courtyard of Carlton House, the seniors' residence where I live, to raise \$101,000 (CAD) for Save the Children. I chose to walk five laps per day until the goal was reached or the number of laps surpassed.

Amazingly, I underestimated the generosity of the Canadian people, and the target was reached at about 35 laps. I continued walking until I completed my personal goal of 101 laps, and this resulted in a total count of \$167,000. An amount far beyond my expectations.

I also accumulated a countrywide reputation through the offices of the local and national media, the management and staff of my residence Carlton House of Oak Bay, local business

organizations, and in no short measure veterans' organizations and province-wide political associations.

Come the following year, having marked my 102nd birthday in March and recognizing my previous success, continued fitness, and joy in walking, I decided to repeat the appeal increasing the target to 102 laps and setting the target figure at \$102,000. Due to the persistence of the pandemic and the prevalence of an oppressive heatwave, I increased the number of laps per day to 10. Sadly, when the date for starting arrived my wife of more than 70 years fell seriously ill, and she passed during the fundraising campaign. These impediments caused me to fall short of my target, however \$48,000 was still raised bringing an overall total of almost \$215,000 to the fund in just over one year.

In 2022 at 103, I watched the conflict unfold in Ukraine. From a distance, I saw the dire situation faced by so many families and children, including even family members of Carlton House staff. So, I decided to repeat my fundraiser again, this time supporting Save the Children's humanitarian response in and near Ukraine. Again, the generosity of the Canadian people far exceeded my expectations. \$118,000 was raised which went to providing food, water, clothing and blankets to displaced Ukrainians and ensuring protective services for unaccompanied minors fleeing the country.

Today, when I look at the figures, I'm astonished at what I see. One in six children in the world live in a conflict zone. And almost 200 million children live in the world's most lethal war zones, which is the highest number in over a decade.



It is critical that we do what we can to protect these children from the physical and emotional wounds of war.

In light of this and having just passed my 104th birthday, planning is underway for my fourth collection in a row. I have practiced diligently, weather permitting, walking 10 laps around my residence courtyard per time, and when that has not been possible, I have used our indoor cycling machine to maintain a level of fitness with the fourth walk in mind.

Commencing on May 1st, I will walk 10 laps per day to reach a minimum of 104 laps with a goal of raising \$104,000. All funds will help Save the Children respond quickly to humanitarian crises across the globe that are threatening children's lives.

It is my considered opinion to be a very worthy cause as there are currently millions of children to protect, and they need as much help as we can possibly afford to give them. I humbly pass my appeal for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
John Hillman



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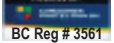
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Cascades Fall Foliage-Oct 10-13th-4 Days  
Leavenworth-Dec 12-4 Days  
Northern Lights of Finland-Collette Vacations: January 20,2024-8Days

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# THE WORTH OF WATER

by BRENT STUMPH

The water truck moves slowly up the gently sloping hill, carrying 20,000 litres of precious but contaminated agua, to Buena Vista. It passes by a graveyard, with vultures lurking in the shadows of the few trees surrounding the many forgotten burial plots.

The road is unlike any you've ever seen – rutted, bumpy, with jagged rocks poised to shred a tire if the driver is not cautious.

As the truck reaches the poverty-stricken neighbourhood, Mestizo mothers and their children line the road, patiently waiting, clutching a few Lempira coins, hoping the truck will stop at their ramshackle little home. If not today, then maybe tomorrow.

The men are conspicuously absent; a few working, many looking for work and some who have given up their search for employment and drinking away what little they have.

The children are clean and happy, revealing big, beautiful smiles, even though they will never experience the lifestyle you and I enjoy. Most do not wear shoes.

The community of Buena Vista sits high on a hill on the outskirts of Tegucigalpa, which is the capital of Honduras in Central America. It's a poor city of about 1.2 million, where more than half live in poverty. This impoverished, Latin American country experiences high unemployment, out-of-control crime, and severe water shortages. Buena Vista suffers from them all.

Honduras has a population of about 9.5 million. More than one million do not have access to improved sanitation. Over 638,000 lack safe water. Diarrhea-related diseases kill over 4,000 children each day. Access to healthy water is a large-scale problem.

In the Buena Vista community, all the one- or two-room shanties have no running water or indoor plumbing, although most have electricity, a fridge and hotplate and, of course, a television. Some have chickens, indoors and out.

Crude but creative troughs catch rainwater from the roof and empty it into a large cistern behind the house, about the same size as the volume of a bathtub. When heavy rains come, they fill quickly. But it doesn't rain as much as it used to.

The water trucks bring liquid survival. Refreshing to drink, but not entirely safe, even for those who grew up with contaminated water. The children suffer the most from recurring gastro-intestinal illnesses.

In 2019, our Fort Langley church arranged for a team of nine to visit Buena Vista to provide a means to clean, safe water. Ranging in age from young 20s to mid-60s, we would install bio-sand filters in homes, which would organically eliminate 99.9 per cent of harmful bacteria. This is an impressive number, but the water is still not safe to drink by visitors.

ABOVE | (Left) Fine sand must be kneaded so that every grain is wet. Unsanitary water passing through dry sand will not be filtered properly and will still contain bacteria and other contaminants. The children were always willing to help. (Right) Women and children gather around the water truck, hoping their cisterns will be filled.

Page 21 | The treacherous streets of Buena Vista. Photos: Brent Stumph



Our crew included an electrician, plumber, welder and builder; the rest of us enthusiastic volunteers. My skills are more office related, but you might consider me a Jack-of-all-trades.

We were hosted by Schools of Hope, an organization established in 2010 to partner with local public schools, their communities, as well as local governments and health units. Since 2016, they have installed almost 900 filters in homes and schools.

The process is surprisingly simple. Specialized plastic containers about the size of a typical garbage can are filled with sand and gravel. First, a layer of coarse, underdrain gravel is placed in the bottom, to catch sediment. Then a layer of finer separation gravel is arranged above, to keep the sand from sinking.



Then comes the hard part. Adding a thick layer of very fine filtration sand. But before pouring it into the container, every single grain must be wet. The sand is first poured into a tub, water is added, then kneaded and mixed, by hand, for 20 minutes.

It's compact, heavy and unyielding. It rips apart fingernails and causes the muscles in your hands to twitch from the stress of mixing sand and water. It also gives you the smoothest skin your hands have ever had!

Difficult yes, but the local kids loved getting their hands dirty. They were always available to help mix the sand and water, albeit not for that long. But many hands, and a few smiling faces, truly make light work.

The water is drained, and the sand is poured into the container. Then a thin biological layer of bacteria is added. The filter is tested to ensure that the rate at which the water flows is correct. It's then ready for use.

When any available water is poured in (and it can be quite disgusting by our standards), it's filtered through the bacteria and sand. You open the spigot, and you have a stream of crystal-clear water, safe for Hondurans to drink. Not so good for you and me.

The filter life is at least 10 years and takes about 30 minutes to filter five gallons of random water. It will easily provide an entire household with fresh, clean drinking water.

Our team had one unfortunate experience that reinforced the importance of water, in at least one unique way.

Our hosts treated us to dinner in a fine restaurant one evening. On the drive over, it was interesting to note that every business had an armed guard out front. We were assured that we were perfectly safe because the guns contained real bullets, reserved for the bad guys.

Soon after our traditional Honduran meal, our tummies started rumbling. By midnight, most of us were making frequent trips to the bathroom. Whatever we had to drink at the restaurant was staging a full-scale attack.

And to make matters significantly worse, our giant-sized cistern under the carport had surrendered its last drop of water. Fortunately, we had a few 18-litre water jugs available, which helped us get through a very long night.

When Benjamin Franklin said, "When the well is dry, we'll know the worth of water," he was most assuredly thinking of places like Buena Vista, but it certainly seems appropriate in our unique situation at that time!

After 10 amazing days, our team was tired, sunburned, and ready to go home. We learned so much about each other, but we will never forget our new Honduran friends.

The people of Buena Vista had nothing we would consider valuable. And yet, they seemed so happy. They were content with what they had. They valued family and community. They got along well and helped each other out.

Perhaps there's a few lessons there that we could learn. |

*For more information, visit [www.senior-livingmag.com/articles/honduras-water](http://www.senior-livingmag.com/articles/honduras-water)*



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# THE HEALING POWER OF MUSIC

by JANE CASSIE

A group of Alzheimer's patients gather in the recreation room of the care facility, my mom is one of them. She sits in a chair, off to the side. Her eyes are vacant; her mind is somewhere far away. The woman next to her is clutching a tattered stuffed animal as if it's her best friend. Her eyes appear glazed over, lifeless and vague. A gentleman on the other side of the room is calling out profanities at someone who has supposedly stolen his food. Nearby, a fellow walks aimlessly, chanting gibberish as he shuffles along.

Linda, the Activities Coordinator, stands before the indifferent audience and introduces us. "Put your hands together for a warm welcome," she instructs, as she claps her own hands expressively in an effort to engage others. "And enjoy the sounds of Sweet Harmony."

None of the residents follow her plea for applause. Most of them don't even look up. But the three of us are okay with that. We're used to it. For the past year, while singing to clients in various care homes, we know what effect our three-part harmonizing will soon have. And before our first chorus of "Sentimental Journey" is over, it's already happening.

Flickers of recognition cross a few of the previously blank faces. Some start to sway in time with the beat. More join in as we continue sharing our line-up of familiar favourites: Ain't We Got Fun, Harbour Lights, You Are My Sunshine and Bye Bye Blackbird. By the time we're belting out Five Foot Two, there are a number of serious toe tappers and rhythmic clappers joining in. Even my mom has moved closer, mesmerized by these tunes that resurrect memories of long ago.

Our trio's desire to entertain this sector evolved from personal experiences. We all had mothers who resided in care and, though they were no longer able to have conversations, we realized they could still recall many of the "golden oldies." And as well as enhancing their well-being and quality of life, it was clear that our tunes helped trigger memories.

Studies have shown that listening to songs associated with strong memories activates the nucleus accumbens, otherwise known as the pleasure centre of our brains. Research even suggests that music promotes the brain's ability to make new connections between nerve cells through its rhythms.

Relaxing music can lower the production of cortisol, which lowers stress and, in turn, lowers elevated heart rates, blood pressure and sometimes cholesterol. For individuals with



The author enjoying a visit with her mom before her Sweet Harmony performance. Photo: Brent Cassie

hypertension and related conditions, music can be much more powerful and safer than many prescription drugs.

For our moms and other clients in varying stages of Alzheimer's, it may help improve their focus, enhance their ability to communicate, reduce agitation and lower the need for psychiatric medications. A study conducted by researchers at the University of Miami School of Medicine revealed that music therapy leads to increased secretion levels of "feel-good" brain chemicals, including melatonin, serotonin, norepinephrine, epinephrine and prolactin in Alzheimer's patients. Even in the late stages of this disease, some clients are able to tap a beat or sing lyrics to a song they knew from their childhood.

Most of us can relate, even if we're not dealing with a health issue. Have you ever cranked up the car radio when a favourite song comes on – usually one that brings back great memories? Some of us will even exercise our vocal chords if we're sure the car windows are rolled up and no one can hear.

And then there are those songs that bring back emotional or hard times in our lives – the ones that remind us of a person that we miss or has passed on. Whenever I hear



John Lennon's, "Imagine," I think of my nephew who was killed in a motor vehicle accident nearly 30 years ago. It was played at his funeral and is one that I'll never forget.

Throughout history, music has been used in spiritual ceremonies in the form of acapella singing, chanting and drumming. It helps during times of grief, loneliness and even anger. It uplifts our souls, fosters feelings of joy, compassion and love, and bridges the gap between generations – from tiny infants who are soothed to sleep by lullabies to octogenarians who are in search of comfort.

Even though Mom has been gone for nearly 20 years, every time I hear any of the golden oldies they conjure up the days of Sweet Harmony and the connection this healing therapy provided between us. Music spoke for her when her own words failed. It healed wounds that medicine could not touch. It lifted her spirits, opened her heart and made her smile. And like a Sentimental Journey, it transported her back to happy times. |



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# NAVIGATING IGUAZU FALLS

by LINDA BLAIR

Iguazu Falls straddles the countries of Argentina and Brazil and can be safely viewed from either country. The Iguazu River is split between the Upper and Lower rivers, with one plummeting into the other before flowing into the Parana River, 25 km downstream. These combined rivers create an 820-mile-long natural border between the two countries. Declared a National Park in 1934, this greenspace now has a combined total of 240,000 hectares sandwiched between Argentina and Brazil.

Taller and wider than Canada's own impressive Niagara Falls and considered to be one of the largest waterfalls in the world, Iguazu Falls is 2.7 km wide and ranges in height from 60-82 metres. The combined flow accumulating from more than 275 different cascades spread across two countries, drops an astounding 450,000 cubic feet of water per second into the river below.

## IGUAZU FALLS ARGENTINA:

A short two-hour flight from Buenos Aires takes you into the town of Puerto Iguazu, considered the gateway to Iguazu Falls on the Argentinian side of the border. From here you will find the falls a mere 16 miles from town with several buses and taxis available to transport you there.

With eight kms stretched over six circuits of trails on the Argentinian side of Iguazu Falls, it takes pretty much a full day to explore all of it, so be sure to allow a minimum of six hours to discover the area. Sunscreen, a hat and mosquito repellent are a must.

Starting out on the lower circuit trail, you will take an ecological train to a look-out platform near the formidable "Devils Throat," where the sound of thunderous cascading water and the feel of misty vapour reaches you long before you see it. The first glimpse of chocolatey-orange-coloured water tells you this is a waterfall like no other. This perspective offers up-close views of the waterfalls surrounded by exotic leafy plants, birds and small monkeys that call this corner of rainforest home.

ABOVE | Tourists marvel at the mid-point on the Argentina side of the falls.

RIGHT | A rainbow on the upper portion of the Argentina side.

PAGE 24 | Adventurers enjoy the falls on the Brazil side from a zodiac.

TOC | Baby monkeys in Brazil. Photos: Linda Blair



Trekking upward to the connecting middle circuit trail, you will find a shaded rest stop with picnic tables under big leafy trees. Here you will find food, water and other refreshments available for sale, as well as a gift shop and washrooms for your convenience. With high temperatures and equally high humidity, it's very important to stay hydrated.

Coatis, a small four-legged animal with a long tail and long nose, are constantly roaming nearby. A cousin to the raccoon, they are not domesticated; they are wild animals so for safety reasons, do not approach them. "Do Not Feed the Animals" signs are widely posted yet many people ignore the warnings. Coatis are clever little bandits and if they spot your open backpack or food sitting out, they will attempt to steal it.

Continuing ahead on well-maintained pathways and bridges throughout this circuit, you will encounter countless



numbers of viewpoints which all have striking views of the falls. Birds, butterflies and small monkeys keep you entertained along the trail.

The upper circuit trail (with no shade) leads you to viewpoints and platforms that overlook the falls from dizzying heights at the top. Brilliant rainbows stretch across the many falls and can be seen from almost every vantage point. At this height, you can see where the upper Iguazu River rushes over a sheer 262-foot drop, into the lower Iguazu River.

After six-and-a-half hours and more than 18,000 footsteps, I was ready to point my tired feet towards the hotel for a much-needed foot soak and an ice-cold beverage. Exploration begins tomorrow on the Brazilian side of the falls, to determine which country has the best views.

#### IGUAZU FALLS BRAZIL:

A 45-to-60-minute ride from Puerto Iguazu will take you to the Brazilian side of the falls. Transportation can easily be arranged through your hotel. Your passport will be required to cross the border.

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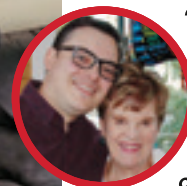
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One of the world's "Seven Natural Wonders," Iguazu Falls can be seen from the Brazilian side from very strategically placed walkways and trails with visibly stunning natural panoramic views of the waterfalls. At last count, this amazing spectacle is seen by 1.6 million visitors annually and was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984.

With nine kms of trails to follow, it would be another full day to take in all this amazing park has to offer. It has been reported that it can often be cooler and wetter on the Brazilian side, and I found this information to be accurate.

A short walk from the main entrance of the lower circuit brings you to a long metal walkway that extends out over the raging torrent of water. As you approach, you immediately feel the powerful force of wind and mist generated by these massive waterfalls. To keep yourself dry, donning a raincoat is a must.



With raingear flapping furiously all around me, and violent winds howling and blowing at me from every direction, it was impossible to keep myself and my camera dry. However, I was determined to endure the challenging elements in order to witness the wild and thunderous waterfall in all its ferocity. Mesmerized and captivated by the sight of these intimidating falls, all the while trying to comprehend the sheer power that lies within, was mind-boggling.

Retracing my footsteps back to the start of the metal walkway, I continued upward on the trail to the midsection of the circuit. As you make your way along the footpath, many smaller but still noteworthy falls can be seen.

Alarmingly, spine-chilling screams could suddenly be heard from the water far below. Fearing the worst, people rushed to the safety railing and peered over to see what had

happened. Much to everyone's relief, it was not a falling body, but rather thrill-seekers in a zodiac on the river passing daringly close to one of the falls. The park offers more than one way to see the waterfalls, however, I am well beyond the age of doing things the "Evil Knievel" way. I chose to keep my feet firmly planted on the trails.

Pushing forward, you will eventually reach the third level where an elevator will take you to the final and uppermost observatory platform. Here, you will find refreshments and souvenirs available for purchase.

The park, at times, will close this viewing platform due to excessive amounts of water spilling onto the platform, caused by its very close proximity to the edge of the falls. Today, however, was not one of those days. I was gifted with the magnificent sight, sound and feel of one of Mother Nature's exhibits of raw and powerful forces at work.

In conclusion, it appears that the most recognizable and popular section of falls to view from either side, without doubt, would be that of "Garganta del Diablo" (The Devil's Throat). Half of the river's flow falls into this U-shaped cataract, 82 m wide and 72 m deep. These imposing falls have been the backdrop of many films.

Navigating these remarkable waterfalls is impressive from either country. Even though 80 per cent of the falls are on the Argentinian side, Brazil has plenty of memorable views on offer and should not be missed. |

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

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





## KEN & ROSALIE

Ken and Rosalie, now in their 70s, are getting ready for their 45th anniversary river cruise in France this month.

Both Saskatchewanians, they met there in 1975 when she was working at a Saskatoon architect's office, and Ken, who worked nearby, popped in to pick up some mail for his office during a Canada-wide postal strike.

"He was handsome, and I was friendly," recalls Rosalie. "I thought she was cute," adds Ken, who then called her up and invited her out for a drink. That drink turned into dinner and dancing a few nights later. By 1978, they were married.

During their five years together in Saskatchewan, they managed to build their own home on an acreage with 500 trees, a vegetable garden and lots of Saskatoon berry bushes.

They also found time to sail on Lake Diefenbaker, ski in Alberta and fly around in small planes that Ken piloted. "We once dropped in for dinner at my family's place, by plane," chuckles Rosalie.

"We taught each other all kinds of things then," she adds. "He showed me how to fish and canoe, and I taught him to ski. We taught each other how to sail."

By 1983, with an infant daughter in tow, the small family moved to Victoria, where they started a business, designing and building homes.

Their second daughter came along a year later.

Somehow, during that busy time, they also managed to run a farm in Brentwood, outside Victoria. Apart from horses, they had 26 cattle and a bull. Plus, a field of hay. "We went there every day for years, from our Victoria home, and ran the farm as well as the business."

The couple continued their love of sailing on west coast waters until Rosalie told Ken one day that she'd "like to go cruising without a personal captain."

The active couple took their daughters on road trips across Canada and the US while they were growing up. After that, they travelled extensively on their own, by road or by sea. For their 40th anniversary, they toured Pacific Rim countries for 40 days by cruise ship.

Nowadays they continue to stay active, both mentally and physically. Ken takes care of their financial and business affairs, and Rosalie writes and publishes children's books (*My Little Owl*). Since the pandemic, she has also been working on historical fiction (*Maggie's Boy*).

"Getting older has its challenges, but if you stay active and creative, it can help you age gracefully," says Rosalie, still grateful for the postal strike that delivered Ken into her office all those years ago. |

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# FOREVER FIT

by EVE LEES



## BE KIND TO YOUR LIVER

Fatty liver occurs when excess fat constitutes more than five per cent of the liver's mass. It tends to develop in people who are overweight or obese, although it also affects those at a healthy weight (with extra fat around the waist) who eat a diet high in sugary and fatty foods.

Heavy alcohol use is also a cause of fatty liver, known as alcoholic fatty liver disease (AFLD). But when the disorder occurs in those who drink little to no alcohol, it is called non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). Incidentally, exposure to certain toxins and chemicals can also overwhelm the liver, affecting its ability to function correctly and could result in fatty liver disease.

According to the Canadian Liver Foundation, NAFLD is Canada's most common liver disorder affecting about 20 per cent of Canadians. And the most common cause of NAFLD in Canada is obesity.

The liver helps process nutrients and filters harmful properties from the blood. A small amount of fat in your liver is normal. Too much becomes a problem as this may cause liver inflammation, which can lead to damage in the form of scarring. If scarring becomes severe, the liver will be unable to function, increasing the likelihood of liver failure.

Typically, people with NAFLD have no symptoms until the liver damage is severe. But if any early symptoms are experienced, they may include fatigue and pain in the upper right abdominal area.

NAFLD is strongly associated with metabolic syndrome, a group of risk factors contributing to poor health (large waist circumference, high blood pressure, high blood sugar levels and high cholesterol and triglycerides). Chronic illnesses that often accompany fatty liver disease include diabetes, insulin resistance (where your body can't properly use its insulin), high cholesterol and triglycerides, and high blood pressure.

No medications are currently approved for NAFLD. But if you have NAFLD without other medical problems, you don't need special treatment or medications. Since many develop fatty liver due to poor lifestyle habits, it makes sense to change those habits to treat the problem.

Lose weight if you need to. A gradual weight loss of one to two pounds per week is best, as rapid weight loss may worsen inflammation in the liver. Successful weight loss requires attention to diet and physical activity.

Avoid ultra-processed foods (especially refined fats, sugars and anything made

with them) because these offer few nutrients and no fibre.

Dietary fibre is associated with weight reduction, cardiovascular health, diabetes prevention and other disorders linked with NAFLD.

That's why plant-based diets are now often advised for many health problems because plants are a rich source of fibre. That doesn't mean you have to become vegetarian. Just eat more plants: fruit, vegetables, root vegetables, legumes, nuts and seeds, and whole grains. Visit a Registered Dietitian (RD) for more dietary direction.

Be cautious with supplements and medications. Many herbs, nutrition supplements and medications can be toxic to the liver if taken in large doses for too long. Be kind to your liver: Don't make it work harder than it should. Take supplements and medications only in advised amounts.

Being kind to your liver also involves sensible alcohol consumption. If you have NAFLD, it may be acceptable to drink occasionally. Talk to your doctor. But avoid alcohol if your fatty liver disease is from heavy drinking. It can lead to more severe liver damage.

Exercise assists in weight loss and improves overall health. Try being active at least 20 to 30 minutes daily, most days of the week. Start slow: Begin by sitting less and adding more movement daily. Find an activity you enjoy, so you will look forward to doing it and therefore be more inclined to stick to it. Consider visiting a Certified Personal Trainer at your local gym. One visit may be all you need to get started on your personalized program.

Be proactive if you carry excess fat around your waist and your diet is high in processed sugars and fats. Learn to love liver – yours! |

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



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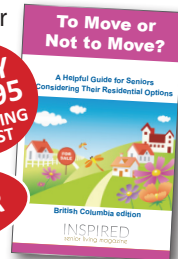
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*Living*  
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by LAURIE MUELLER

## MODERN-DAY FAIRY GODMOTHER

Graduation is an important time for a young person and wearing the right outfit to Grade 12 celebrations is an essential component of that rite.

While young people are making the transition from Grade 12 to adulthood, retirees are looking at their lives and asking what now? When Elizabeth Surerus retired from her university career, she had to make a decision. What would she do with her life in retirement?

She posed several questions: What is the need I can help fulfill? What are my strengths? What are my interests? What venue do I fit into best?

A strong woman with a bent for coordination and management, she decided it was time to strike out on her own and create a service for young people that met a need. Creating 'The Magic Wand' with a partner (who stayed with the project for a year and then moved on) became Elizabeth's way of living life with purpose and giving back. Twenty-eight years later, she is still making a difference in many young people's lives.

Three categories of students access her 'borrow a graduation outfit (both gowns and suits or tuxedos) for that special day' service. The student simply pays for the dry cleaning of the outfit after their graduation.

Some young people use her service because they have limited financial resources while others worry about the effect that buying new clothes and using them once has on the environment. A third group, and newer to Elizabeth's service, consists of the many international students who are unprepared for this cultural event in our educational system.

Elizabeth has had several locations for her Victoria, BC clothing room: starting out, it was in a friend's barn; a large room in her home; and now in a room of a friend's home. She has many volunteers and, each spring, she has a publicity plan for local schools to get the word out to students. Once a student (or their parent) contacts Elizabeth, a one-hour consultation is booked. The student books dates to pick up their selection a few days before their graduation date and to return it after the celebration activities are over.

A red headed young lad arrived to find a blue suit that looked stunning on him. He mused that he wished he could also wear it to a job interview the week after graduation. Elizabeth agreed to allow him to keep it. Years later, at the funeral of Elizabeth's husband, that young man attended to offer his condolences, wearing the blue suit.

Regularly Elizabeth sorts through the inventory. One dress she had earmarked for recycling because it had not been chosen for three years turned out to be the right colour, style and fit for a young woman that arrived just before the gown's trip to the thrift shop.

As the young woman was admiring it in the mirror, she mentioned what a beautiful gown it would be for her upcoming music recital. The result was that not only did Elizabeth tell the young woman to keep the dress for recitals, but Elizabeth was invited to attend the event, which she readily accepted.

Having won awards and been thanked numerous times for the magic her service offers young graduates, Elizabeth has truly found a way to live on purpose and enjoy the rewards it brings. |

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](mailto:laurie@lauriemconsulting.com) or [www.lauriemconsulting.com](http://www.lauriemconsulting.com) or on Facebook.



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