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55+ lifestyle magazine

MAY / JUNE 2024

TOM RODEN: Radio Royalty

JOHN THOMSON:
There's always a story to tell

Surprises of Arkansas

MARION BULLER

University of Victoria
Chancellor

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Makeover stylist Gina Lavertu applies eye liner to one of our makeover candidates at the 55+ Lifestyle show in Victoria. More photos on page 22.

Photo: Barbara Risto

resources

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Cover Marion Buller

From accomplished judge, to Chancellor at the University of Victoria, Marion Buller has been on the frontlines of meaningful change.

Photo: Greg Miller, UVic

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INSPIRED Publisher Barbara Risto and columnist Laurie Mueller grab a moment together at the 55+ Lifestyle Show in Victoria in March 2024. More photos on page 22.

Photo: Regina Akhankina, Portrait Couture

Celebrating
20 Years of
Publishing

THRIVE BEYOND 55

by BARBARA RISTO



Embracing the Heartbeat of Humanity: Why Charities and Nonprofits Matter

As I reflect on my journey through life, I'm reminded of the profound impact charities and nonprofits have had on both my personal growth and the well-being of our society. These organizations serve as the heartbeat of humanity, pulsing with compassion, generosity, and a relentless drive to make the world a better place for all.

I've certainly benefitted from the invaluable support provided by various charities and nonprofits. Whether it was receiving assistance during challenging times, accessing vital resources for education and healthcare, or finding solace in a community of like-minded individuals, these organizations have been a beacon of hope in my life. I'm sure many of you would say the same.

I've witnessed firsthand the transformative power of charitable endeavors in the lives of others. From providing shelter to the homeless, feeding the hungry, and advocating for social justice, charities and nonprofits tirelessly work to uplift the most vulnerable members of our communities. They offer a lifeline to those in need.

When my sister was in the last stages of her life, hospice staff and volunteers helped me navigate the intricacies of the medical system, never forgetting my emotional needs as they did so. In the aftermath, they were there to offer grief counseling and a roadmap back to a normal routine and connection with others.

Just a couple weeks ago, a stray cat found its way to my front yard, ripping through my recyclables to gain a morsel of food from the empty cartons. With the help of a local rescue group, I was able to trap the cat and get it into care where perhaps its owners will find it, or it will be adopted into a new, safe home in which to thrive.

These are just two ways non-profit organizations intersected with my life recently. This month's issue recognizes many worthy charities in our neighbourhoods and communities.

Supporting charities and nonprofits is about recognizing our interconnectedness as human beings and acknowledging our responsibility to uplift one another. It's about extending a helping hand to those who may be struggling and ensuring that no one is left behind.

As someone who has benefited from the kindness of others, I feel a deep sense of gratitude and obligation to pay it forward.

I've made it a priority to give back to the organizations that have touched my life in meaningful ways. Whether through monetary donations, volunteer work, or simply spreading awareness, every contribution—no matter how small—can make a difference.

But giving isn't just about the tangible impact it has on others; it's also about the profound sense of fulfillment and purpose it brings to our own lives. When we give, we become agents of change, catalysts for progress, and champions of compassion. We enrich not only the lives of those we help but also ourselves.

When we give something of ourselves to help others, it has as much impact within us, as it does outside of us. Love extended is really about serving that part of ourselves that understands vulnerability and loneliness — that part of us that knows no one should have to go through the tough times alone.

Volunteer groups and charities are built around these values.

I urge you to take a moment to reflect on the impact that charities and nonprofits have had on your life and the lives of others. Consider the profound difference you can make by supporting these organizations, whether through a one-time donation, a recurring contribution, or even by including them in your will.

Together, let us ensure that the heartbeat of humanity continues to thrive. Please consider a generous donation to one of the groups featured in this magazine. |

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QBKPN IS-01 Magazine Full Page
Version2.0: 11 Sep 2023

What is QBKPN?

QBKPN is a new medication in a class known as Site-Specific Immunomodulators (SSI).

SSIs are designed to train and/or improve innate immune function to reduce the risk of infections, improve immune response to cancer, and slow the progression of chronic inflammatory diseases.

What does the study involve?

If you are eligible and want to participate, you will be:

- Randomly assigned to receive QBKPN or placebo given through a small needle under the skin three times a week for 16 weeks
- We will measure your immune function using blood tests over the course of the study, monitor you for infections, and ask you about your quality of life, over a period of a year.

Who is conducting the study?

Principal Investigator: Dr. Theodore Steiner

Dr. Steiner is a Professor of Medicine at the University of British Columbia. He is also an Infectious Diseases Specialist at Vancouver General Hospital, a Research Scientist at BC Children's Hospital Research Institute, and the Chief Medical Officer for Infectious Diseases at Qu Biologics.



MARION BULLER: Up Close and Personal with UVic's Chancellor

by JENNIFER HARTLEY

"Stay calm, be brave and wait for the signs. Never say never and keep an open mind."

For the Honourable Marion Buller, one of the most accomplished judges in Canada and Chancellor of the University of Victoria, this has been her life motto, and not only has it served her well, it is great advice.

You might think someone of her stature would be tough, and maybe even a little stern.

After all, her CV reads like the Who's Who of the legal community: the first Indigenous woman appointed as a Provincial Court Judge in British Columbia in 1994; former President and Director of the Indigenous Bar Association in Canada; the B.C. Police Commission, the Law Courts Education Society and the Law Foundation of British Columbia.

In 2006, Marion initiated the First Nations Courts in British Columbia, and, of course, she served as Chief Commissioner for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in 2016.

In reality, she is one of the kindest people and her warmth is absolutely welcoming.

Given her relaxed and gentle nature, you might think it all came easy. It didn't.

"I had to learn many things the hard way. To be honest, being faced with

both overt and subtle racism and sexism, I have always lived with having to be better just to be equal."

Combined with being an overachiever, her dedication to strong values has meant she has been very hard on herself.

Her challenges spilled over into health. A cancer survivor for over 24 years, Marion says that experience made her stronger and more determined to make a difference.

"I never let that define me. I considered the diagnosis a wake-up call to take nothing and no one for granted."

One of the great things about Marion's story is that she fell into law entirely by chance.

"I didn't grow up thinking I wanted to be a lawyer. It never even occurred to me."

She had been working for a company in Victoria and had risen through the ranks as far as she could without more education. She explored becoming a chartered accountant or pursuing an MBA, but they just were not feasible.

"I had many friends at UVic law, including my first husband, so I wrote the LSAT, was accepted and so law it was."

Initially, it was to be a path into corporate law but in her first year, a criminal law class and an inspiring professor changed everything.

After reading about cases that were "horrible --- I couldn't believe how

Indigenous people were treated by the courts," she felt she needed to do something.

"It went against everything that the law school was teaching us about equality, equity and human rights."

She was part of the very first native law course that UVic offered (a far cry from the now vibrant Aboriginal Law program at the Law School) and knew then that Aboriginal Law was her path.

"I was lucky I had mentors who pushed me along, sometimes kicking and screaming, but they did it anyway. In the six years that I practised law I got 12 years of experience."

Her gratitude to those advisors just underlines her humility. They saw her potential, telling her she had an opportunity to make meaningful change in the Canadian justice system.

"They told me to grasp opportunities as they come up."

Thanks again to the incessant prodding of one of those mentors, she applied to be a provincial court judge. She was accepted, of course, and focused on criminal law.

"One day I had this amazing man in the courtroom. He was a residential school survivor. The two of us just started talking like two people, and it was like we were alone in the packed courtroom. You could hear a pin drop. We paused for a minute and I said to him, 'You are someone who should be celebrated, not someone to be harmed again. You're an important part of Canadian history, I will say it again, we should be celebrating you.'"

"He looked at me like I had hit him. He was shocked. But I walked out a changed person. I said to myself, 'I can't do this anymore, I can't harm my own people anymore.' When I get into that frame of mind, I get into troublemaking."

While Marion was born and raised in Toronto, she is Cree and a member of the Mistawasis First Nation in Saskatch-

INSPIRED PODCAST

Long-time broadcasters Michael Forbes and Lisa Marshall, known as "Forbes and Marshall," combine their love of broadcasting and helping older adults with their real estate needs in a new podcast, in collaboration with INSPIRED Magazine.

Check out this month's interview with Marion Buller at www.seniorlivingmag.com/podcast





Photos: Greg Miller, UVic

ewan. Her Indigenous story is not unlike others. Her family lost their status when her grandfather left the reserve but when the laws changed in 1980s, they reconnected and were warmly embraced by her family. “My family history is very much like Canadian history and Indigenous history.”

As for troublemaking? Completely the wrong term. She became an instrument of change.

“I saw how Canadian laws were harming Indigenous people and how I had become part of that harm. As a judge, I have a lot of power, and nobody really can tell me what to do and so that led to starting the First Nations Court in New Westminster off the side of my desk. The court and Crown administration I think collectively rolled their eyes, ‘Oh Judge Buller’ but in October 2006, we had a soft start, and it was very collaborative.”

It grew from there. Her focus on restorative and inclusive justice led to new connections and eventually to the creation of another court, the Aboriginal Family Healing Court in B.C.

And then came the National Inquiry

into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in 2016.

“Again, it happened by chance. A group of us judges were having lunch and they asked me what I thought about the inquiry. It was the early days when they were putting it together.”

“I said, ‘They’re doing it all wrong!’ Word got to Ottawa and a couple of weeks later I got a call asking if I could meet with the Minister. Of course, I made some notes in preparation for the dinner but I was in a rush to meet her and forgot my notes. It was funny, but I pulled out a napkin and a sharpie and I wrote and drew out what the inquiry should look like.”

One meeting led to another and eventually the Privy Council offered her the appointment of Chief Commissioner.

She thought they were kidding. (They weren’t.) Not wanting to move from BC, she started the national inquiry in her garage. “We even used our own gmail accounts in those early days.”

By the time the Inquiry closed, there were 120 employees across Canada.

“I just wish we had more time because

there’s so many subject areas that we just touched upon. But an elder once said to me this is going to be a marathon not a sprint and he is right. I am very proud of the work we did. We had an incredible team and we dedicated so much of ourselves into this important work.”

Garden of Eden

It is a good thing that back in the 1970s, Marion’s summer job while a student at Carleton University fell through. She decided to visit relatives across Canada and her last stop was Victoria.

“I thought I had landed in the Garden of Eden! Victoria was so beautiful! My relatives were very welcoming.”

She stayed, helped care for her grandmother and transferred to UVic to continue her studies in Anthropology. The rest is history.

Today, when she speaks about law, her face lights up and glows. Her love of her work is palpable and infectious.

It should come as no surprise she was inducted into the Order of Canada in 2022 and awarded two honorary doctorates, (Lakehead University and Thomp-



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son River), the Queen’s Jubilee Award, the Distinguished Alumni Award from the UVic Faculty of Social Science and has received many other accolades.

She continues to practice law and as Chancellor of UVic, she has another opportunity to make a difference.

“I am excited about contributing to promoting change at UVic - it is a dynamic, forward-looking university. There is a wonderful opportunity for increasing inclusion and diversity. I am particularly interested in making sure that the University’s land acknowledgment isn’t just empty words.”

There is a genuineness about her. You can almost see goosebumps as she celebrates others.

“I joke and say when I entered a courtroom, people were not happy to see me because they didn’t want to be there, but as Chancellor, people are happy to see me! Convocation ceremonies are amazing.”

She mischievously enjoys photobombing and sharing the students’ joy and excitement.

Her free time is filled with Canadian literature, a love that started as a high

school student. Robertson Davies, W.O. Mitchell, Margaret Atwood and now the whole class of Indigenous authors. She has started learning the piano and you will likely see her on the golf course.

While Marion has been incredibly successful in life, she still says her most rewarding accomplishment is her family. “I look at them and I know I had some influence --- and I say ‘so why did you turn out so well?’ [The self deprecation is genuine.] They are my greatest pride. I am also grateful to them. I took great inspiration from the women in my family. Actually, my whole family have made me who I am.”

Any bad habits? “Cookies.”

Biggest surprise? “My whole life. Life is an adventure and I live by that. Another thing? I am engaged. At my age, love happens.”

Marion Buller is a treasure for her contributions to making our country a kinder place and one filled with compassion. “I try to live the seven sacred teachings - love, honesty, humility, courage, respect, truth and wisdom. Once in awhile, I come close!” Indeed she does and inspires us along the way. |



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TOM RODEN: Radio Royalty

by KERILIE MCDOWALL

Tom Roden, the host and producer of “What’s Next” on CHLY 101.7 FM, shares insights on maintaining an active lifestyle and achieving longevity.

At 93 years old, Tom, an online business pioneer, emphasizes the significance of family, close friendships, and humour. As a recovered cancer survivor, he attributes his positive outlook to his daily appreciation of life.

Born in Ireland in 1931, then emigrating to Canada in 1954, Tom started off at Canadian Westinghouse in Winnipeg, Manitoba as a television technician; a new exciting technology at that time.

He met and fell in love with 18-year-old Yvonne in 1957 in Regina, Saskatchewan. She had been raised by supportive parents and enjoyed happy childhood memories.

Following their marriage on October 10, 1959, they welcomed five children while residing in Regina. Subsequently, seizing a new career opportunity, the couple relocated to British Columbia. Their final child was born in Kelowna before they moved to an oceanside property in Yellow Point, Vancouver Island.

Eventually, they settled in an oceanfront neighborhood in Nanaimo. Yvonne managed the household as Tom pursued his career with London Life and later Beltone.

Tom ended up working a 25-year stint with Motorola before retiring at the age of 62. After raising their family, Yvonne em-

barked on a career with two appraisal firms, remaining with the same employer for over 35 years.

Asked about the past decades spent with Tom, wife and radio co-producer Yvonne says, “I just love having a family like we have. It’s been the best thing in my life. He’s the most generous, wonderful person that I could ever have met. I’m very fortunate. He’s a wonderful father.”

“When you’re helping somebody who needs help, it’s the best thing you can be doing.”

Tom was the local golf club president and the dedicated couple has spent time together traveling as golf captains, into the USA and even globally. According to Tom, the couple’s secret to a long happy marriage is their love for one another.

Because he was ambidextrous, he was chosen at 11 years old by his teacher to play the French horn and the trumpet in his brass and reed band.

Since then, his “secret to life” and his love for music has never stopped.

Tom began collecting records at age 16. As a radio show host Tom is still an avid vinyl collector with over 25,000 records.

Encouraged and persuaded by his best friend, the late Gordon Theedom, Tom Roden started radio broadcasting at age 79. Gordon had been broadcasting at CHLY (Radio Malaspina) and had been the number one Nanaimo radio broadcaster at Nanaimo’s first radio station in 1948, CHUB.



Photos courtesy of Tom Roden

LEFT | A collector of vinyl since age 16, Tom boasts a collection of over 25,000 records. And he’s not done yet!

ABOVE | Tom and Yvonne celebrate 65 years of happy marriage.

Gord and Tom first met in 1969 collecting vinyl together at the local Goodwill store. Tom has now been on the air at CHLY for 14 years.

“I started on May 3rd, 2010. I was just new on the air. I was so open to it and to many different things. My programs were very different back then than they are now. I’ve somehow got into a groove.”

Indeed, Tom has enjoyed creating over 250 radio podcast shows, over 750 “What’s Next” radio programs, programming occasionally for the local Nanaimo Songsters. He loves to play early jazz music and finds seniors a receptive audience. His yearly Irish extravaganza special on St. Patrick’s Day is always a hit.

“All my life I have been a fatalist, that things are planned out for you. Your whole life is as it begins,” says Tom. “I was destined to become a programmer with Radio Malaspina.”

Tom features all music styles on his radio program including the greats from early jazz like Coleman Hawkins, to obscure country curiosities. Tom is a Benny Goodman, Harry James, Billie Holiday, and Ella Fitzgerald fan.



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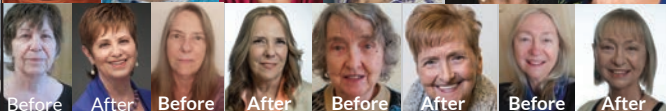
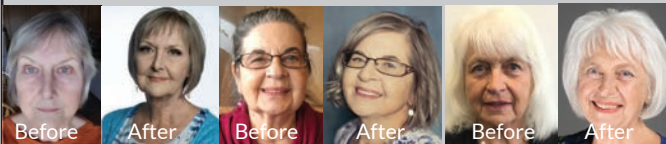
Tom is known for his eclectic approach and rare one-of-a-kind vintage records, made even more potent with his gripping radio stories in the fine art and skilled tradition of the historic Irish storyteller.

Before the days of radio and television, he explains, there was the art of story.

Tom once had the pleasure of meeting the great Lester Young. He was introduced to the great saxophonist by his favourite chanteuse, Sarah Vaughan, in 1957. He had even convinced Sarah to autograph six of her own rare records for him as a collector.

“She said to me, ‘Before we start the second show, would you like to meet Lester?’ I said, ‘Are you kidding me?’ ‘Yeah, he’s out there on the stage right now waiting for the curtain to open.’ I went out and Lester was standing on the stage behind the garden with his saxophone. She introduced me to him. And that was another of the great thrills of my life,” says Tom, the vinyl collector and jazz aficionado.

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Tom has met some significant challenges. He has completely recovered from a battle with cancer that started in 1999, and he's a recent stroke survivor. Focus on a positive attitude has been his biggest secret weapon in coping with life's obstacles.

"Even when I was diagnosed with cancer, I kept a positive mental attitude that I would be okay. Always be positive in your outlook, because things will happen that are good for you."

In the early 1990s and post-retirement, Tom was an online business pioneer on Gem with his business, Roden's Rare Records. For seven years, he sold records online all over the world to Japan, Europe, the United States, and of course in Canada.

About to celebrate his 65th marriage anniversary, the 93-year-old producer enjoys the accomplishments of his wonderful family and says that his greatest accomplishment has been being a good father.

"I think both Yvonne and I are most grateful to God for the fact that everything has gone so well for years. We now have 11 grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and a lot of great-granddaughters and great-grandsons. Our kids are so loving towards each other and so loving towards the world and to their own kids. Those qualities we see [also] in our grandkids and our great-grandkids. We see the effect that Yvonne had on our family to start out with. It carries on down through the generations. We've been blessed."

Tom is known for assisting the disabled and the vulnerable at non-profit organizations such as Nanaimo Citizens Advocacy, the Recycling Exchange, and the United Way.

"Being able to find ways to help others will definitely be my priority. Because no matter how much time you spend helping others, it's still not enough. I've always had a feeling that when you're helping somebody who needs help, it's the best thing you can be doing."

You may bump into Tom scouting the thrift shops and stores of Nanaimo vinyl-hunting, or out with Yvonne for a fine meal.

Better yet, catch him on the radio airwaves on Mondays at 11 am at CHLY 101.7 FM in Nanaimo, BC on "What's Next". |



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by MAUREEN LEYLAND

JOHN THOMSON: There's always a story to tell...

by MAUREEN LEYLAND

Photos courtesy of John Thomson

Pop quiz! How many magazine writers can you name off the top of your head? Perhaps you 'follow' some favourite writers?

In general, most of us remember the content of an article but not necessarily the writer.

As a long-forgotten poet once said, "I want to be like the very air you breathe; that essential, and yet unnoticed."



Perhaps writers are the 'essential air' that keep a magazine alive? They prefer to remain in the background and let their words do the talking?

INSPIRED attracts writers from many diverse backgrounds but one stands out not only for his informative and humorous storytelling, but for his quiet "essentialness" to the magazine over the last 12 years.

"That travel piece by John 'someone or other' is the best one on Scotland I've ever read – I will recommend it to anyone I know planning a trip there," offered a Scottish-Canadian retiree in Vancouver.

"I love *INSPIRED* Magazine and read everything in it! I especially like the cover stories written by someone with the same last name as that famous painter, Tom Thomson," said a resident on Vancouver's North Shore.

These fan comments just represent the tip of the iceberg of appreciation for one of *INSPIRED*'s most frequent contributors, former TV producer and now prolific writer of 'creative non-fiction,' John Thomson.

He has written over 75 articles for *INSPIRED* over the last 12 years – 36 of them being the 'cover story' sharing the inspirational stories of so many flourishing boomers!

Recently the magazine publisher asked John to step out of his usual preferred role as the interviewer to become one of these inspirational people in his own right.

John recalls in his travel piece "Scotland Calling" (*INSPIRED* May 2022) coming as a young boy of six from his birth country Scotland to Canada, the 'Promised Land.'

Growing up in Winnipeg he began to get the same yearning as many other young creative-minded Canadian teens of the time – a yearning to see beyond the fence and, in particular, to go to UCLA for film studies.

The non-resident fees were unaffordable, so the local art school seemed like an acceptable alternative to this young man drawn to be creative.

As many readers of *INSPIRED* will recall, the 1960's and 1970's was a time

when young graduates with a Bachelor's degree in practically any subject seemed to secure jobs in whatever field they set their minds to. The old cliché "the world's your oyster" definitely applied to John who, with his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in hand, moved to Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto to begin a decades long career as a television news and current affairs producer.

He worked on CTV's National News, CBC's The Journal, CBC Vancouver's Pacific Report (when he moved to Vancouver) and CTV's W5. John recalls being a young journalist on Brian Mulroney's cross country election campaign plane.

He eventually became an executive producer with educational broadcaster SCN in Saskatchewan, responsible for commissioning and overseeing a slate of original programming.

As retirement loomed in 2011 John chose to think creatively about his next steps! John knew he wanted to find ways to keep himself relevant and busy. Traditional retirement wasn't in the cards.

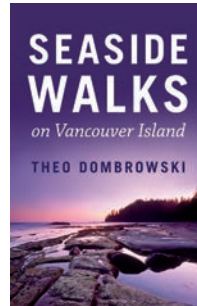
It was now time to get into actually writing for print media about the many topics that interested him. He found it an easy transition from television to print as the interviewing technique is the same - listen and engage.

In addition to *INSPIRED*, John writes for two art magazines and a history blog, linking back to his university passions.

His initial stories for *INSPIRED* helped him share knowledge about services relevant to the magazine's demographic.

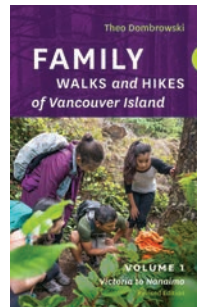
He shared his own personal struggles in securing 24-7 in-home care for his widowed mother residing in Calgary. As a 'chain-smoker,' going to a non-smoking care home was not in

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the cards for his mom. Those early stories of struggling to get the right care resonated with many readers going through the ‘caring for elderly parents’ phase of life.

Having had a whole career enthusiastically telling people’s stories, moving on to writing inspirational cover stories for the magazine was an obvious next step. With a humorous twinkle in his eye, John’s easy, friendly, charming manner can quickly and skilfully tease out the deeper story of a person’s current passion and its fulfillment before they even know they’ve begun to disclose it.

What has John most enjoyed about telling these stories?

Smiling, he says, “They’re an antidote to all the negative news in the world; in an age of extreme anxiety, it’s calming. All the interviewees are incredible people accomplishing amazing things in the world, each in their own way. Life is hard enough; many of these folks have overcome adversity and just keep pushing ahead. Each one of them is truly inspirational. These stories make me feel like the “Good News Guy.”

“I have found my own voice.”

In TV, John says, he was trained to be objective, neutral, and balanced.

“With *INSPIRED*, a big positive is that I can allow a bit of my own personality to come through – Bill Bryson-like*. I can be more chatty. It’s a public narrative but it’s my own. Plus, I like the immediacy of working with a smaller team of writer and editor.”

John is married to a novelist and screenwriter with a successful and still very active career of her own. As he and his wife begin to think ahead to their next “Big-O birthdays” and new decades, John hopes to take advantage of their current good health and



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travel more.

Japan is top of his list...though it might be another trip to Australia to see family in Adelaide and another visit to Melbourne, a city he has come to love (INSPIRED February 2021).

They may return to Norway having felt they just scratched the surface there in 2022.

Locally, kayaking – a pandemic-era coping activity – also adds to John’s gratitude for life in Canada and all the opportunities it has given him and his own children.

He feels he’s in a great space at the moment.

Worries in the media about AI making writers obsolete don’t faze him. He says he’s used AI for research but doesn’t believe AI will ever totally replicate the personal point-of-view of a skilled writer. He believes he will keep on writing forever.

Meanwhile, ever in the search for newness in his life story, memoir has entered his repertoire.

What next? That will be his story to tell.... |

**Bill Bryson – author of numerous travelogues, often with a humorous slant.*



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MARION & BILL

Vancouverites by choice, Marion and Bill recently celebrated their Golden Anniversary.

Bill, a Dutch immigrant who grew up in Smithers, BC, met Marion, born in Brandon, Manitoba and living in Abbotsford with her family, when he was in a course line-up behind her at Simon Fraser University, when she was 22 and he was 25.

They had set eyes on each other briefly at their SFU residences, but this time they engaged with each other and signed up for the same course that required them to embark on an off-campus self-generated project. As they exchanged ideas, they easily decided to collaborate on his project, which required them to take a 14-hour drive to Smithers to study totems.

He barely met her parents when he picked her up. She met his, on arrival in Smithers.

"That drive was worth more than a year of dating," says Marion. "I brought my ukulele, and he taught me some Dutch songs, which I then sang to his parents."

"We had a lot of open conversations and got to know each other very well."

"We laughed a lot," they echo, "and have been doing just that during our fifty years together."

They married two years later, in Abbotsford. She followed her professional passion as a French Immersion kindergarten and music teacher. He left teaching and, with his CN brakeman experience and conductor's papers in his pocket, joined CN's Locomotive Engineering programme in Gimli, Manitoba, before returning to the west coast for a

CN career.

Their honeymoon took them, by train, to Jasper, Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec City.

"Marion is a congenital optimist while my natural tendency is to be negative," says Bill. "I'm full of bright ideas, and when she gets behind them, they happen. She has had a profound effect on my life".

The two, with a couple of children in tow for their growing-up years, have been enjoying each other's company for a lifetime. "Even the many challenges that life threw at us just made us stronger. The hurdles we faced were never caused by each other."

When Bill retired from CN in his early 50's, he built a three-story house on their Kitsilano property. Initially her dad lived in the ground floor mobility-accessible suite of their house, and they lived upstairs. The tables eventually turned, and they now live on the ground floor and their son and his family occupy the top two floors. "We see our grandchildren regularly, and we all help each other out," says Bill.

Marion and Bill have always been active in their many special interest communities, including their church and her music group and French book clubs.

They also continue to travel extensively with friends and family and have taken up e-biking around the city. They have managed some serious health issues and just keep on supporting each other through it all. "We have always enjoyed each other's company."

Now into their 51st year of marriage, they add a further observation: "There must be guardian angels." |

Nurturing Machismo

by JOAN THOMPSON

It's winter and I'm not in sunny Mexico. I'm in Canada, partway to the Arctic, and the air prickles with cold and the crankiness that settles in mid-winter. Wrapped head to toe in layers of fleece and poly-something and jammed behind the wheel of my small all-weather car, I've stopped to fill up at the local gas station. Things are not going well.

There is a car arbitrarily parked between the two pumps, and I won't be able to reach the first one unless said car pulls ahead a little. I give a gentle honk to signal the driver to move ahead. In reply, the driver guns the engine, whips ahead, spins around the station and lurches to a stop behind me. He steps out, slams his door, and yells:

"Is that good enough for you?"

"Yes, thanks for moving. Didn't know if you had seen me or not," I respond a little too apologetically.

"Oh, yeah, I saw you alright." He is still fuming.

"Well, I couldn't reach the pump, and wanted to make sure that I didn't get too close to your car, and ding it," says she, who had just recently backed into another car.

"Yeah, right, worried about a little 'ding', are you? Maybe you should just stay off the road then!" he flings at me before storming into the station.

So, should I be affronted or just ashamed that I probably share the same nationality as this less-than-hospitable-and-understanding individual who just flattened me at the pump? Or the one

who publicly humiliated me in a staff meeting? Sped by me when I had fallen off my bike and needed help? Couldn't cool the profanities when my nieces, children at the time, were on the beach not far away?

I limped away from the gas station that day, absolutely sure that every young boy in Canada, regardless of how much he liked his grandmother or writing stories with hobbits in them, was doomed.

And I don't stop glowering until I ride across Canada a few summers later.

Terry Fox beams from every second highway sign on this part of the Trans Canada, and it's his spirit I'm summoning to keep my pedals spinning.

Our days have been full-on since the beginning of our cross-country trip for my sister and to raise awareness for ovarian cancer.

This one had started at 7 a.m. at the Thunder Bay Farmer's Market and now I'm in a race with the setting sun to make it to our campground before dark.

After hoisting myself up yet another hill, the campsite finally appears on the last finger of land by the Nipigon river, green fields bracketed by willows and bits of breakwater.

I almost burst into tears when our 'Ride for Sheila Rae' van appears beneath those willows. My partner is standing beside it, and the man he's with is smiling at me encouragingly, willing me to stay strong.

"Congratulations, you're at the

halfway point between Vancouver and Halifax!"

He's youngish, a freshly shaved face, eyes crinkling in welcome. Dressed in Canadian casual – plaid shirt, jeans and work boots -- he looks comfortably at home in a grove of trees near the shores of Lake Superior.

"Really?"

Truly, this was news for me. Ken had done all the big picture planning of our cross-Canada trip; I just tried to make it to the end of the road each day.

"Yeah, and what you're doing is fantastic. I lost an uncle recently to cancer. It's just the most brutal disease."

I murmur a thank you to him, for completely dispelling the throbbing pain in my legs, and making me dismount from my bike with something close to pride.

"Well, you guys let us know if there is anything you need. The toilets and showers are just at the end of this path, and, see that bench over there?" He points to a log cleaved in two and overlooking the river. "Make sure you carve your initials beside all of the other cyclists that have stopped here on their way across Canada."

I look around; being June, I was 'ahead of the pack'.

"Enjoy our little piece of paradise here, and don't forget to take in the music at the gazebo later. We have a local band, led by 'Mr. Nipigon' himself, that likes to entertain the campers and plays every Saturday night."

We call out our thanks as he heads

towards his truck. He's back in a moment with a few bills in his hand. He insists I take them.

"Hope this little bit can help." And then he is gone.

Warmth and generosity like this were not unusual on our trip; in fact, people like Dan, the campground attendant in Nipigon, had become wonderfully commonplace.

Bush pilots, motorcyclists rushing to catch up with us, mechanics who lost their wife to the disease – none of them would let us go before they had heard our story and donated to our cause.

The kindness, the chivalry, the machismo of my countrymen that summer I rode across Canada stunned me. Yes, machismo. Not the swaggering, bullying, misogynistic kind but the full-plumaged kind it was meant to be.

I remember that variant well from winters I spent in Mexico.

In Mexico, machismo, or 'manliness', is truer to its original Spanish roots and gives men the permission to express themselves in much broader, more nuanced ways.

It's the version that lets men greet their sons with hugs and backslaps and solve world problems with arms around a friend. It makes family sacrosanct; a man would never miss a Sunday taking their family to the seashore, or to show up to march in a funeral procession whether they're a pallbearer or not.

It's the version that ensures one's masculinity is not breached when you trade your wheelbarrow of bricks for a crocheted shopping bag, or wear tight sparkling pants and white boots so that you can be part of the scene and play music in the square for a dollar or two. Or climb onto your horse, amble into the village plaza, and be the caballero – machismo's most vener-



ated gentleman - for an evening. Or just hang out at a petrol station, and offer help when the need arises.

We had been on a road trip through the sugarcane highlands of the Sierra Madres, the agave-rich plains that surround the town of Tequila.

A pit stop was in order, and while Ken was getting help from the gas attendant, I was edging towards the facilities. Unusual for Pemex (the national petrol company), the bathroom door had a coin slot at the door; it would take two pesos to get in. I didn't have my purse with me. The young attendant with my partner noticed my hesitation, and after filling the car, came up behind me:

"Sí, cuesta dos pesos entrar. ¿Tiene usted dos pesos?"

(Yes, it costs two pesos to get in. Do you have two pesos?)

"No, no tengo nada." (No, I don't have anything).

The attendant reaches into his pocket and pulls out a couple



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PAGE 17 | Lake Superior at Dusk

ABOVE LEFT | Campsite 'fans' in Ontario

ABOVE | Aztec dancers in Mexico City

of coins, drops them into the slot and opens the door, saving me the discomfort of retrieving my purse, fumbling with the unknown machine, and counting on the bladder control I no longer had.

“Muchas gracias, señor.”

“De nada,” (It’s nothing) and he discreetly disappears into the station.

The inseparability of machismo and caballerismo – the idea that a man’s courage and strength be put to the service of the more vulnerable and one’s community at large -- appears unproblematic for most Mexican men.

It’s just when it heads north that the notion of gallantry and guardianship sometimes takes a wrong turn, and what’s left of machismo bumps into feminism and her now seismic forces. Sixty years of chipping away at patriarchy has left men on the defensive and caballerismo flummoxed. Witness the gas pump episode in Canada. Luckily for me that memory is getting a makeover.

We do go listen to Mr. Nipigon’s band that night. They are grateful for the much-expanded audience when we show up, and break into energetic renditions of “The Blackfly Song” and “Good-night Irene”.

After putting away his banjo, Mr. Nipigon comes over to welcome us to his town. He apologizes that the museum will be closed in the morning – he and his wife don’t open it on Sundays – but perhaps we would like to see the local materials his friends have used in the construction of their new post and beam home, up the road a little. Ken signs up. I’ll be riding.

The hills continue the next day, but now baptized into Nipigon country, I’m ready for them.

I stop at each look-out on Lake Superior, and marvel at an ‘ocean’ so still, and how it possibly could have been the raging sea that had split the Edmund Fitzgerald in two.

I receive a text from Dan - via Ken, via the universe - who is ecstatic that Ken has just seen his grandparent’s place.

Family, love, respect, honour, guardianship. Canadian men fully invested in life. Just one more thing on this trip on which I think my sister - Saint Sheila - wanted me to turn the page. |

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Surprises of Arkansas



by KATE ROBERTSON

Arkansas has never been on my radar. To my knowledge, I've never even met another Canadian who has visited the 25th state. Aside from the fact that it's nicknamed the Natural State, due to its beautiful lakes, rivers, and mountains, I have no idea what to expect on my visit to this southern state.

My first surprise is in Little Rock, the state capital, at the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts. The museum recently underwent a large-scale redesign, and the revamped galleries are bright and airy.

The permanent international collection has more than 14,000 pieces spanning eight centuries, with a good showing of my favourite, the Impressionist period (like Monet and Degas), and pieces from American favourites like Georgia O'Keefe and Andrew Wyeth. All of this in a city with a population just over 200,000 (that's smaller than Richmond BC).

Fort Smith is where I get a history lesson. After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 linked the eastern United States with the West, in 1817 Fort Smith, a regional centre for fur trading, was established as a frontier military post to keep peace. The location was strategic, because just across the Arkansas River, in what is now Oklahoma, was "Indian Territory" a known hideout for outlaws.

Today Fort Smith has won several awards as one of America's Top 10 True Western Towns for its many sites pre-

serving frontier heritage, including the newly opened U.S. Marshals Museum.

As a Canadian, you might assume this museum wouldn't hold your interest, but the interactive exhibits enlightened me about American history and the fusion of the Old West, featuring familiar figures like Billy the Kid and Wyatt Earp, as well as recent events like the Oklahoma City bombings and 9/11.

My Arkansas outdoor adventures begin at Lake Leatherwood Park, an expanse of upland hardwood forest covering steep hills in the Ozark Mountains.

I stretch my legs on a portion of the 40 kilometres of hiking/biking trails along the lake to one of the largest hand-cut limestone dams in the nation, built in the 1940s.

Birders take delight here with over 120 different bird species frequenting the park, and I spot several great blue herons along the shores.

Peaceful Eureka Springs is the only town I've ever been where the entire downtown area is on the National Registry of Historic Places, with Victorian houses and buildings lining the winding mountainside streets.

As home to more than 600 resident artists, Eureka is known as "quirky" (for example, I see a local resident walking their potbelly pig).

I find more quiriness at the Crescent Hotel, a railroad hotel built in 1886 for its stunning views of the Ozark Moun-

tains and easy access to the region's more than 60 springs, touted as being "healing". After changing ownership and purpose several times, a charlatan who called himself a doctor purchased the building in 1937 to use as a "cancer curing" hospital.

Many people died here and today the Crescent Hotel is known for paranormal activities, so a nightly ghost tour is a logical offering.

As a group of us nervously shuffle through the morgue in the basement we view grisly artifacts, like bone saws, and bottles of gruesome cancerous tumours left over from Dr. Baker's time.

Most staff have a ghostly story, and a show filmed for the Biography Channel actually captured a paranormal event on tape. (I was glad I wasn't staying in one of the "haunted" rooms, I barely slept as it was.)

Snow in Arkansas is rare, and the winter climate is temperate, so outdoor hiking/cycling happen year round.

Bentonville has taken advantage of this to become a "mountain biking capital of the world" and now boasts more than 225 kilometres of biking trails. There are over 400 kilometres of trails in northwestern Arkansas.

Another plus is that the "mountains" of the Ozarks are more like hills compared to the high peaks of British Columbia, so biking is accessible even to those who like the gentlest of trails.



LEFT | Razorback sculpture at Fayetteville

ABOVE | Shrimp and grits in the Arsaga's Mill District

TOP RIGHT | Grisly artifacts in the haunted Crescent Hotel

BOTTOM RIGHT | Frank Lloyd Wright house at Crystal Bridges



I fall in love with Coler Mountain, a free mountain bike preserve just outside of Bentonville, situated on 300 acres of lush forest terrain, not only because there are as many “green or blue” easy flow trails as expert ones, but also because it has some very civilized infrastructure like a cafe (with great smoothies) and a meditation/yoga platform, making it an outdoor space with something for everyone.

Biking isn't Bentonville's original claim to fame though, as it was first known as the place where Sam Walton opened his Ben Franklin Variety Store in 1950, before establishing Walmart stores in 1962. Although Bentonville only has a population of 52,000, with the benevolence of the Walton family, it's turned into a unique destination.

I probably shouldn't be surprised to find more world-class art at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art (founded by Alice Walton). In the summer there are forest concerts every week, and general admission to the Museum's permanent collection, always free, spans five centuries of American art, with masterworks from artists like Andy Warhol and James Turrell.

Amazingly, you can tour a Frank Lloyd Wright home which was moved here, and on my visit, one of the temporary collections is Diego Rivera.

My final stop in northwest Arkansas is the university town of Fayetteville.

To take advantage of the Razorback Greenway, an 80-kilometre network of paved trails which go all the way to Bentonville, I take a guided e-bike tour along the peaceful, green scenic trails that wind through Fayetteville and into the surrounding forest.

Like most U.S. university towns, this small city of only about 100,000 (second largest in Arkansas) has tons of great eateries and fine arts venues.

As we pass through the over 150 year-old University of Arkansas campus, I learn the passion the locals have for their beloved university athletics teams and the Razorbacks football team, references and memorabilia which are found everywhere.

Who would have known that Arkansas is such a great destination for the outdoors, history and art? |

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“A Wonderful Time at the 55+ Lifestyle Show”

March 25th dawned bright and clear. It was one of the nicest days of Spring we’d enjoyed to date.

Inside the Pearkes exhibition hall, people were having another enjoyable experience.

About 1000 people turned up to investigate the booths, savour the atmosphere and take in a variety of stage entertainment, from fashion shows, to ballroom dancing and even the reveal of three ladies who had a total head to toe make-

over, compliments of *INSPIRED* magazine and several community sponsors.

Lisa Marshall and Michael Forbes, known as “Forbes and Marshall” to those who followed their radio career, brought a touch of humour as Michael donned some colourful shirts as our sole male model in the fashion show hosted by Blue Sky Clothing Co.

Last issue’s feature personality, actor Darlene Tait, joined us to talk about her transition from a career in real estate

development and travel to becoming a supporting actor on Hallmark movies.

St. George’s Ukrainian Church provided tasty entrees of perogies and cabbage rolls, and the talented Victoria Ballroom Dance Society members entertained with dances from waltzes to disco line dancing.

“Every year we do our best to provide an event that meets the expectations of our readers and allows businesses and organizations with products and services for people over 55 to get in front of our audience where they can have one on one conversations,” says Barbara Risto, publisher of *INSPIRED* Magazine and founder of the 55+ Lifestyle Show.

It could be said, a good time was had by all! |



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TOP LEFT | Visitors enjoy meeting vendors and learning about products and services for the 55+.

TOP RIGHT | Models from Blue Sky Clothing are delighted when emcee Michael Forbes gets in on the action by modeling some of the company’s men’s wear.

ABOVE | Actor Darlene Tait takes questions from the audience, assisted by Michael Forbes and Lisa Marshall.

Many Ways to Fortify: Amsterdam to Dalmatia



by **JOAN BOXALL**

Fortification isn't only about food and drink, but in safety and strength gained. There's a 'je ne sais quoi' value-added ingredient in feeling encouraged and powerful.

A 3-day reunion with our extended family in Essex County, in southeast England, fortifies us for our adventure. Our defenses are built up. We rest. We gather and celebrate.

Amsterdam

Our first hop-off is a bike tour with Ashton of Mike's Tours Amsterdam. He has us close our eyes (after we get off our rental bikes) and jump up and down at Vondelpark, Amsterdam's largest urban park. Our hotel room backs onto this oasis of greenery where we'll take in an open-air jazz concert later in the day. A squishy sensation is what our guide is after.

"Planners floated the city on wooden pilings (later concrete)," Ashton says. "We are standing two meters below sea level... on peat."

Back on our bikes, with eyes wide open, he leads us along some of the 100 kilometers of canals (more than Venice) in a four-stranded pearl necklace around the city.

Tall, narrow houses incurred taxation by width of building. Steep stairs keep the Dutch fit, as does bicycle-riding. The

city has more bikes than residents.

"Watch out," says Ashton. "Cyclists break the rules."

Up early to beat the heat, we see hundreds of bicycle commuters. Maybe one in a hundred goes through a red spotlight.

We hoof it with due caution down Hooftstraat (the shopping street) to Rembrandtplein where the art of Van Gogh and Rembrandt are in two separate museums at either end of the plain. Like us, Van Gogh loved the outdoors, as depicted in his still lifes (sunflowers) and his landscapes. Portraits of peasants (including him) radiate colour in over 200 paintings.

'The Night Watch' by Rembrandt, at the Rijksmuseum, catches the-class-before-the-class-photo. Rembrandt depicted countless moods and nuances, starting with himself in 80 self-portraits. My husband goes upstairs to see a Dutch-designed fighter plane; I view antique furniture, silverware and signature blue-and-white Delftware pottery.

The latter comes to life in a flower pyramid on display in the coffee shop where we sample Dutch apple pie. The flowers are the streusel. Degas, Pissarro, Monet, Millet, Vermeer, Mondrian, Goya, and The Hague School artists are the apples. The crusty crux is the fortifying art of Rembrandt, Van Gogh and others.

Dalmatia

The essence of our trip comes in Dalmatia, the coastal region of Croatia. Adriatic breezes and refreshing waters counter September's residual heat.

We float like corks. Many locals take to the waters expressly to chat and socialize. They look at me swimming laps like I am crazy. I slow down. I wish I knew more Croatian than 'bok' (hello) and 'hvala' (thank you).

It is our good fortune to be here. We feel comfortable despite the effort it takes to ride. The Croatian archipelago (2nd only in size to the Greek archipelago in the Mediterranean) provides hundreds of natural formations: islands, islets and cliffs for fortification.

Trogir's medieval harbour town encloses the sacred art of cathedrals, and their treasuries. We marvel at silver incense burners and reliquaries (in which the remains of saints are kept in the shape of the body part).

We meet up with our group of 16 fit (another word for 'fort') cyclists in Kastel Kambelovac, one of seven castle districts between Trogir and Split. Our guide leads us to Fort Kastilac, completed by Benedictine nuns (for 17 war-torn families). In Split, we tour the primo 'Game-of-Thrones' filming fort: Diocletian's palace in his hometown.

Diocletian was the only Roman

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emperor to take early retirement (abdication) in the year 305 AD. From the 11th century onward, the trend caught on... if one had money, one built a castle (or fortified house). Diocletian's fort was ahead-of-its-time, and today is the only UNESCO World Heritage site in which people live within 220 buildings. In the courtyard where Diocletian entertained his guests, a male quartet sings a cappella in exquisite harmonies.

We ferry across to the island of Hvar where we cycle through lavender fields to the top of the island on our electrically-assisted bicycles. There, we purchase lavender oil and let its aroma waft while seated on a swing. Onward, to the town of Hvar where the hillside fortress of Fortica oversees our every move. After an Adriatic dip, we're on the seawall savouring a Balkan specialty, Pita Zeljanica, a smooch of spinach, sour cream and cottage cheese rolled in delicate pastry.

A catamaran ferries us to Korcula Town/Island, where we tour the Venetian town, designed in the shape of a fish skeleton with the main street its spine. We meander the cobblestone streets - angled like fish bones to optimize summer breezes and deflect winter gusts. Korculan skillful creativity is on display in shipbuilding (holm oak and pine) and stone masonry. Later, we enjoy a seafood risotto paired with Grk, an indigenous white wine, in readiness for our biggest cycling day to come.

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PAGE 23 | 16 cyclists plus one. Author, far left, and Nela, the fit/fort guide, far right.

LEFT | Delftware flower pyramids, a Chinese pagoda adaptation, became portable tulip gardens from the 17th century when Mary Stuart, the English queen, made them popular.

ABOVE | Cable cars rise above Dubrovnik to Mt Srd's Imperial Fort, a 3-minute ride.

We climb 16 kilometers to a village where we sit in a shaded area with locals before descending to a restaurant in the village of Zavalatica, overlooking the calm blue-green of the Adriatic. The return trip lolls through vineyards and pine forests interspersed with dark green spears of cypress.

We finish the cycling portion of our trip when we ferry back to the mainland and ride along the Peljesac Peninsula. To extend our cycling enjoyment, we opt for one more guided cycle tour through olive groves and ride the lush Konavle Valley to a village café with a stream-driven mill.

En route, we re-fortify with local figs, peaches and pears at a Franciscan Monastery turned museum where artifacts, encrusted in barnacles, have been recovered from three shipwrecks.

I'm fitted with 3-D glasses so that I can dive down into antiquity. It is a little dizzying but we maneuver back in time for lunch in Cavtat, the original town from the 6th century BC of present-day Dubrovnik. The people of Cavtat were looking to bolster their defenses. It took 450 years to build the thick seaside walls; the fortresses, bastions, and breakwaters. We get a 3-day Dubrovnik pass and see it every which way from the enclave's streets, walls, and from the ocean in a 1-hour kayak ride.

We enter through City Gate and ramble. Two exhibits impress us: one is contemporary Croatian art (Masle, Dulcic, Ettore) along the lines of Van Gogh. The other is a permanent exhibit: 'War Photo

Limited', telling of the Balkan War, but also of Ukrainian and world conflicts.

On the crowded bus back to the hotel, a woman sits opposite me. Her tee-shirt is inscribed: 'FOREVER'.

"Forever what?" I smile at her.

"Forever Free."

"You are Croatian?"

She nods.

Our cable-car ride to Mt. Srd's Imperial Fort helps us understand this hunger for freedom. The French, under Napoleon's rule, built the fort in the early 1800s. We learn of Croatia's Homeland War of Independence of 1991-95. The fortress is a symbol of defense from the high ground.

It's been thirty years, but for some, the memories are fresh.

Latin origins of the word 'fort' may imply moral and mental courage. 'Holding the fort' takes all kinds of strength.

From the fortifying embrace of family in Essex County to the fortified structures of Amsterdams's canals and Dalmatia's historic fortresses, this was a physical and emotional journey that married exterior defenses with the inner resilience one needs to navigate life's challenges. |

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Water, Water...

There is no simple answer to how much water you need daily. It's complicated. What we do know is we need to stay hydrated.

The adult body is about 60 percent water. Water is necessary for many vital functions that must occur daily. Chronic dehydration can raise your risk for many health problems, and it can have negative consequences on cognitive and physical performance.

How much water should we drink? The usual advice, to drink "eight cups a day," is often questioned and criticized. But it was never gospel. It was simply meant to be a general guideline since an adult can lose over a litre of water daily. This, of course, will vary (remember, it's complicated). How much water to drink depends on several factors, like age, weight, health, temperature, and activity levels.

As our bodies change with age, we can't hold as much fluid.

There are various other recommendations besides eight cups per day. However, most sources agree adult humans need approximately 12 cups of water daily (three litres), which includes about four cups (one litre) from watery foods. But all advice is approximate, as we each have varying needs. How much you need depends on how much you lose.

Heat and or exercise. We lose water when we breathe and perspire. Thirst mechanisms work well during rest but won't function well during intense activity.

Research shows when we rely on thirst alone during intense exercise, we tend to consume less fluid, replacing only about half of what we lose.

You can lose 1-2 percent of body weight when exercising intensely in a hot, humid environment. Therefore, it's recommended to drink at least 12 cups (three liters) of fluid on the days you exercise in addition to any fluid from food.

Diet. The kidneys need more water to excrete excess salt and protein in diets high in salt and protein. Therefore, the more meat, salt and high-sodium restaurant food eat, the more water you'll need. Same for those with diets high in processed foods.

Highly changed foods have very little water content, but whole, unchanged foods offer plenty. Therefore, if you eat mostly refined, processed foods, you'll need more water.

Alcohol and caffeine. Alcohol is a diuretic: Drink more water than you usually would when you drink alcohol. Caffeine is also a diuretic, but the amount of water in coffee or tea can offset any fluid loss from the caffeine. However, too much sweetener added to caffeinated beverages will be dehydrating.

Aging. As our bodies change with age, we can't hold as much fluid. Our thirst mechanisms and sensations may not work as they did in our younger years. And our kidneys may not either. Certain medications may affect our fluid needs and can increase urine output.

If you are over 65, consider drinking an additional 8 to 16 ounces (.25 to .5 litres) of fluid over and above your level of thirst. And know the symptoms of dehydration: dark urine, fatigue, dizziness, headaches, dry mouth.

How can you tell if you are getting enough fluids? Most of us can trust our thirst mechanisms, so drink when thirsty. Urine colour is a helpful measure of hydration, but it isn't perfect because the colour may be affected by foods, drinks, or medications.

Ideally, for most of us, urine should be light yellow. If your urine is bright yellow, you could be dehydrated; if it's colourless, you could be overhydrated. A dry mouth may also be a good way to measure hydration, especially if it's a challenge to form saliva.

Can you drink too much water? Yes. Excess water can disturb your body's normal balance of electrolytes, just as the balance is disturbed by not drinking enough. However, water intoxication (hyponatremia) is not as common as dehydration is. If you worry you drink too much, cut back – especially if you usually consume far more than the general recommendation!

Our hydration needs are constantly in flux, and dehydration can sometimes occur. It's best to understand dehydration, know your body, and treat it accordingly. |

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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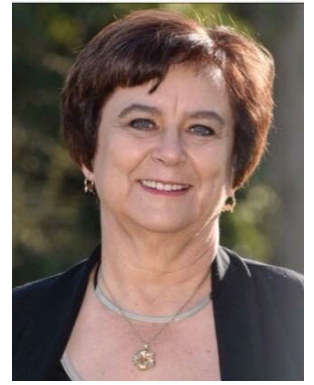


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LIVING ON PURPOSE

by LAURIE MUELLER



Downsizing or Bust!

Our grand plan of wintering in Mexico and the rest of the year living in a condo in our hometown of Victoria, BC was put on hold when the pandemic hit.

But by the summer of 2022, we were starting to think about the ease of living in a condo rather than a corner lot home with a rental suite in our basement.

The latest renters were great, including their two little Boston Terriers that joyfully came to visit us as often as possible. But the chores were a burden and we wanted to travel without worrying.

We half-heartedly flirted with the idea of finding a condo but didn't get really serious about it.

Then, driving by the condo building two blocks down our street, we saw a For Sale sign! Husband was scheduled to be at a Bridge game in the afternoon and leaving town the next morning for a few days.

I sent a quick email to our realtor.

"Can you get us in to see the unit after four today and before tomorrow?"

And because it was meant to be, the reply came back, "Yes."

We fell in love. We walked through the door, and we knew it was our next home – but not until we could sell our current home.

And that, dear readers, is how I found out that downsizing and moving in your 70s is no fun sport!

While it's rewarding, it takes a new skill set and a lot of energy. It's no easy task to let go of many, many things you love and have cared for over the years. Each item in your current home comes under scrutiny – if not by you, by your partner.

We found the condo in September; we had an accepted offer in October. We woke up in our new home on January 19th, 2023.

My friend Willa, and her husband Dennis, took a year to do the work of downsizing. I was told this before we put an offer on the condo. I just thought, "I can do it quicker." I forgot she's smarter than me. And way more organized!

At the beginning of this process, I attended a talk on downsizing at our local senior's centre. The presenter's whole spiel was about getting someone else to do the work. I was ticked off I had wasted a whole hour listening to this rich guy talk about hiring people to do all the work.

Now I wonder why I don't learn from other people?

Hiring someone was always an option. Instead, I wore myself out. I wore my husband out too!

Fortunately, I had a son with a pickup truck who gave us a lot of help. Some very, very good friends appeared with

boxes and time and even scrub brushes to help us out. I also appreciate that we are still friends!

We haven't made the trip to Mexico, but we did reward ourselves with three weeks in the warmer areas of the USA touring Nashville and New Orleans and swimming in a resort pool in Palm Springs.

So why am I writing this column over a year later?

First, I had to get over the experience! And second, I want to remind you to listen to others and learn from their experiences.

I'll even offer an alternate to the all-at-once-downsizing-race-to-the-finish dilemma. Some people call it decluttering or cleaning up, while others call it right-sizing. It is all about weeding out the things in your life that aren't essential for your well-being and the enjoyment of the best decades of your life.

Start downsizing long before you decide to move.

As one Facebook meme said, "We spend half of our life adding to our possessions and the other half of our lives trying to get rid of them."

I don't go shopping anymore for pleasure. It's no longer gratifying to walk through a shop full of things I no longer want, need, or have space for. Instead, I go out for lunch with girlfriends!

Even if you aren't planning to move... ever... start downsizing. It will save your health! |

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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