

INSPIRED

55+ lifestyle magazine

NOV / DEC 2024

**BILL NOON: HUNT FOR THE
FRANKLIN EXPEDITION**

**TRAIN ENTHUSIAST
TERRY GAINER**

**INSPIRATIONAL
DAVID ROCHE**

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**ADRIENNE
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Cover | Adrienne Arsenault

From jungles to politics, Adrienne has spent 30 years covering stories of consequence to the world.

Photo courtesy of CBC

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THRIVE BEYOND 55

Life Shouldn't Be On Speed Dial!

by BARBARA RISTO

Have you ever been surprised by how many hours your phone reports you spent each day last week texting, emailing, and scrolling through the internet and social media?

This morning, I watched a YouTube video about some teens in New York who decided to put down their devices. They chose instead to enjoy real-life conversations, create art, stroll through parks, and cook together. Someone called it “slow-walking through life.”

Yesterday, I had a call from an enthusiastic reader who shared that she doesn't own a cellphone or a computer. Yet her range of activities, interests, and knowledge was astounding.

One of our writers in this issue also admits she has no smartphone and not “a speck of social media interest.”

It's amazing how the universe finds

creative ways to send messages. I think I'm beginning to understand. There's a whole world to see, a community to nurture, and so many projects calling for my attention—beyond the reach of my smartphone.



— A stone in the author's garden

Of course, breaking a habit isn't easy. The first step is awareness, but desire for change needs action to follow. For example, if I'd never taken the steps to start this magazine, I wouldn't be celebrating over 20 years of publishing today.

Across the globe, people are rediscovering pastimes that ask for our full presence, invite community connection, and encourage putting down the TV remote or smartphone to engage with mind, body, and spirit.

During COVID, we learned how essential it is to interact with each other, even as we gained new ways to connect. But these same tools can sometimes lead to isolation. We might spend hours moving from one online distraction to the next, barely stepping outside.

Lately, I see more people on social media expressing their loneliness. Some even consider their pets their only friends.

When your safe space starts to feel like a prison, it's time for change. Put down the cellphone and take a step away from your cozy walls. Join a group, volunteer with a charity, or chat face-to-face with someone in the grocery store, coffee shop, or around your neighbourhood.

For most of my life, I've dreamed of travelling the world, settling somewhere picturesque for a month or two, and truly getting to know the culture and the locals—becoming part of a community that savours the slow-walk approach, like those teens in New York.

As a family caregiver for the last 30 years, I couldn't wander too far from home. Now, with that responsibility behind me, I have a chance to reimagine my life.

It's time to take a few risks, follow some dreams, make plans, and take action. I think it's finally sinking in.

When the universe starts flashing a green light, it keeps going until you get the message.

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A Positive Makeover Boost

by BARBARA RISTO

Over the past two issues, we have profiled the candidates chosen for a makeover at our March INSPIRED 55+ Lifestyle Show. Here is our third and final candidate, Karen Weiss.

“The makeover was a truly wonderful experience,” says Karen. “I absolutely love my new haircut and colour. I am discovering the different ways I can style it. All of them make me feel ten years younger!”

“Hana [the hair stylist] has a great eye for picking flattering styles. She was so lovely to work with.”

Karen gives the same credit to Gina Lavertu, the skin specialist. “She really knows her stuff. She made me feel so pampered. I was thrilled to be sent home after the show with all of the make-up - I would have never thought to use some of the colours, and they’re my new faves.”

Karen also had kind words for the people at Blue Sky Clothing Company. “Chris and Marilyn and the Blue Sky team are phenomenal to work with. It was so much fun trying on all of their suggestions. I ended up purchasing a few of the ‘runner up’ outfits. I loved hearing Marilyn’s story and talking to her about fabrics.”

She even gave kudos to our photographer. “The extremely talented Regina Akhankina is my favourite local photographer.”

“The collection of suppliers you’ve coordinated for this event couldn’t be better! This experience has definitely given me a positive boost and reminded me that a bit of self-care and pampering can be extremely energizing and motivational. Connecting with so many positive women is inspiring!”

Upon Karen’s arrival at the Akai Hair Salon, it was evident her hair lacked the needed bounce and was somewhat concealing her face. The stylist Hana Akai opted for a shag haircut, using a razor to infuse lightness and texture. A playful fringe was incorporated to give her look character and vitality.

By concealing her few greys and introducing a hint of red, Hana aimed to enhance Karen’s natural tones. Subtle highlights were delicately woven in to provide dimension.

At the salon of skin specialist Gina Lavertu, a deep cleansing facial called Nezza’s Naturals was applied for hydration and brightening. A manicure followed, using French polish with a white-on-white glaze from OPI’s Rosey Future.

For makeup, Gina used e.l.f.’s Halo Glow Liquid Filter in medium fair to give the skin a dewy look, and the Instant Lift Brow Pencil in taupe to shape and define. To accentuate Karen’s big, beautiful eyes, e.l.f.’s Mini Eyeshadow Palette was used, with the nude shade applied all over the lid and the rich mauve shade in the crease. Annabelle eyeliner in charcoal was used to line the upper lashes, followed by e.l.f.’s Volume Mascara in black. Karen brought her own strip lashes, which were applied on top. For the cheeks, e.l.f.’s Putty Blush in Bali (a neutral mauve) was used. Annabelle lip liner in a nude shade outlined the lips, followed by e.l.f.’s O Face Satin Lipstick in the shade Drive (a rose brown).

The result? A refreshed and radiant Karen, exuding confidence and charm with every stride.

All the makeup used was supplied by INSPIRED Magazine, and each model was outfitted by Blue Sky Clothing Company. |



Photo: Regina Akhankina, Couture Photography

ADRIENNE ARSENAULT: Thirty Years of Seeking the Truth

by JENNIFER HARTLEY



Adrienne Arsenaault, chief correspondent of *CBC News* and host of *The National*, has seen it all in her 30 years of covering the world. From jaw-dropping, terrifying, life-threatening experiences to sitting down with royalty, Canadian celebrities, or political figures, her mission is always the same: to bring us the truth, and she will go to any length to do it.

In 2008, Adrienne was arrested when she and her team, the only broadcast journalists with full accreditation to cover the Zimbabwe elections, were simply doing their job, filming video.

Another incident in Zimbabwe brought her close to death when she and her team came face to face with men wielding weapons, digging up graves. The men angrily shouted at them. “Thankfully, one of the gang intervened; he was clearly someone of importance, and that is the only reason why we are here today.”

She has reported on conflict and war in Ukraine, Syria, Mali, and the Middle East. She even reported from a flying hospital bringing injured Palestinians to safety.

Adrienne is trusted on the international stage for her honesty. She was granted an exclusive interview with Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the President of Liberia, which brought the heartbreaking misery of the 2014 Ebola outbreak into living rooms worldwide.

Remarkably, she has remained positive through it all. “I cover disasters and see a lot of terrible things, but I am inspired by the people I have the privilege to meet and their stories. Many times, it is people who have the least who give the most. Those who fight for justice and democracy when they are most threatened, fight the hardest. They inspire me.”

That quest for the truth has earned Adrienne academic accolades. It’s no surprise that her alma mater, Huron University (affiliated with the University of Western Ontario), and Western

itself have presented her with honorary doctorate degrees.

The 2023 Doctor of Divinity bestowed at Huron may seem a surprising choice, given she has no particular religious affiliation, but it is a fitting tribute. It honours her pursuit of knowledge, wherever that may lead, and her compassion and care for others.

She also holds an honorary Bachelor of Applied Studies from Humber College.

Unsurprisingly, she and her team have a long list of other awards. They won a 2015 Emmy for the Ebola coverage, beating out three contenders in the international news category for their heart-wrenching report.

Adrienne, who is based in Toronto, has been named the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association's Journalist of the Year, has earned two Gracie Awards from the Alliance for Women in Media, and has received a Golden Nymph Award from the Monte Carlo Television Festival for her coverage of the Zimbabwe election.

There have also been various Gemini and Canadian Screen Awards (CSAs). This year at the CSAs, she was named Best National News Anchor, and her show *Adrienne Arseneault Reports: Inside Ukraine* won the CSA for Best News or Information Program.

Even with all the recognition of her accomplishments, she remains disarmingly humble.

"Pride is a funny word. What does that even mean? I feel pride for what people in my life have done. I don't feel pride about stuff I've done. I am fundamentally pretty shy, and I wonder, how did this all happen? I don't consider myself a particularly brave person either. When faced with difficulty, I gently tell myself, 'It's okay; you can do hard things.' And then, afterwards, I say to myself, 'Look, you did a hard thing.' But I don't sit comfortably with the concept of pride."

Her show, *Adrienne Arseneault Reports*, has been very successful in landing exclusive interviews. Ukraine's First Lady Olena Zelenska, Princess Anne, and recently Céline Dion have all sat down with her.

"Believe it or not, I find the process difficult," she admits. "My favourite interview is when someone isn't trying

to push a message or agenda. Of course, I am interested in movers and shakers, but my favourite is when you don't see something coming, and you can gently pull and give people space. You get lost in the conversation, and there is a connection with that person."

The best advice she ever received?

"Hana Gartner [another CBC correspondent] once told me that a fundamental moment occurs in the time between the question and the answer. Worlds are communicated in those spaces. Learn what is between them."

She also received another nugget of wisdom from Canadian journalist Anna Maria Tremonti. "I was told to listen for the most interesting word and take it from there. In a delicate answer, there is always one key word."

Adrienne has perfected the art of storytelling in a way that makes us empathize and see the world in a more compassionate way, sharing the human side of the news.

Those investigative journalism instincts date back to her childhood, growing up in Toronto. "I loved *Harriet the Spy* and *Nancy Drew* books. The


notion of writing, observing, and flying around was mesmerizing to me. I also loved the physical feel of books, starting young with Richard Scarry's books in particular."

She still loves reading. "Today, I try to devour any of José Saramago's books (*Death at Intervals* is a favourite) and other works that play with language. I love an imagination that takes me where I never imagined. Books are still treasures to me."

Her curiosity took her around the world earlier in her career, as a CBC correspondent in Jerusalem, Washington, London, and Vancouver. She has also covered eight Olympic Games, including the Paris 2024 Summer Games.

She holds deep reverence for her parents.

Her father, Ray Arseneault, was a television director whose credits included *King of Kensington* and *Hockey Night in Canada*. "He would sit me in front of the TV. 'I want you to tell me what is live. I want you to snap your fingers when the picture should change.' He made games out of lessons, and it all stayed with me. He was kind and loyal and never said



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anything he couldn't honour." (Clearly, she was listening.)

Her mother, she says, "is one of the best-read people I've ever met. Her analysis of what happens in the world is something I seek all the time."

Look closely at Adrienne's right hand and you will see her dad's wedding ring, held in place by another beautiful ring she acquired in Jerusalem.

On her arm is also a moving tribute to Nelson Mandela. A bracelet.

"I bought it in South Africa, and it is Nelson Mandela's prison number. He was the 466th prisoner of 1964."

It serves as a symbol of inspiration for her. "I wear them because sometimes the world gets crazy and I feel grounded and safe having these with me."

She is also very funny. Search TikTok, and you'll see how she can make dinner out of a vending machine. "Chocolate milk and a crushed cookie have 26 grams of protein!" Or, "I look way taller on TV. I have to stand on a box because I'm the size of a fire hydrant."

Like many, she wishes she were musical, or a singer or dancer, "to feel that freedom to sing and dance without inhibition. I would also love to be much better at languages because I can't stand being somewhere and not being able to communicate with others."

One thing she had to learn the hard way? "Everything."

"Long ago, I was at a career session and was asked what I wanted to do. I said I wanted to be a reporter. The leader of the session responded, 'Yes, so that is what I mean about managing your expectations.' I thought I had failed before I even started. I walked home crying, and it made me mad. When I've been embarrassed because I felt I didn't do very well or someone made me feel like I hadn't done well — those have been the most useful times. They make you sit with yourself and think about what you really want. It wasn't her place to make me feel that way. I got mad. And it made me want to achieve it even more."

That spunky attitude of not giving up is inspiring, as is her enthusiasm.

"I don't think I'm toxically optimistic, but I am aggressively optimistic." She lives life to the fullest, sharing her optimism and insight into the world, bringing more meaning to life for all of us, one newscast at a time. |

INSPIRATIONAL HUMOURIST

DAVID ROCHE: I Will Not Hide

by JOHN THOMSON

He calls himself an inspirational humorist, using jokes and anecdotes to explain his misshapen face and the impact it's had on his life.

"You've heard of a bad hair day. I'm having a bad face day," David Roche says to a group of grade six students who have assembled to hear his message. They laugh. "What you see is a birth difference, not a birth defect. It's not something wrong—it's just unique. It's just something different."

David was born with a condition that caused one side of his face to droop—doctors call it vascular malformation—and as a result, he immediately underwent a series of surgeries and radiation treatments.

At fifteen months of age, his lower lip was removed. Inspired to dispel myths and prejudice, he has devoted his life to helping others, first in community service and later as a teacher and motivational speaker, primarily addressing elementary and middle school students.

When he visits schools with his partner Marlena Brevin, Marlena gets straight to the point.

"I was shocked. I was repulsed," she admits when she first saw David's face, "but I could feel his depth." She tells the class how she and David met while training to become massage therapists, and how she was attracted to his warm and compassionate voice, regardless of his appearance.

"It was who he was. It was so powerful. It was so intuitive. I felt like my soul needed to be with someone who could feel deeply like this, and I thought I'd be abandoning myself if I didn't follow this through."

She did follow through, and the couple began their 36-year professional and personal relationship, which continues to this day.

"What would have happened if I didn't take that second look and get to know David more?" Marlena wonders.

"That's what I say to the kids."

The message is simple: Don't judge a book by its cover. Stop. Step back. Take a moment. What do you feel underneath the obvious?

It's an inspiring story, but one that didn't come easily.

"I wasn't teased, I wasn't bullied," David says about growing up in small-town Indiana, "but at the same time, you know what's going on. You see it, you hear it. People stare. It's always there. It's part of daily life."

He wasn't bullied, but he often felt isolated. At first, encouraged by his Catholic upbringing, he repressed those feelings by losing himself in good works.

"I concentrated on being a good boy who did what he was told. I always tried to be responsible and to change the world."

At 13, he entered a seminary intending to become a priest, but it didn't take. Later, as a young man, he joined the Democratic Workers Party and entered the world of politically charged activism.



ABOVE | David Roche has devoted his life to helping others *Photo by Kim Komenich*

BELOW | David and life partner Marlena Brevin met while taking massage training *Photo courtesy David Roche*



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"I have always thrived in communities — families, church, school, town, and then activism," he says. "That helps me survive. That's the key to who I am."

Typesetting the Party newspaper, selling copies, and pushing the message gave him a sense of purpose, even though he says he didn't know what he was doing.

"I didn't have a plan, but I followed my heart. I became a communist because I wanted to change the injustices I saw."

But good works only delayed an inevitable reckoning.

"As I approached my thirties, I had never dealt with my facial difference." In reality, he felt ashamed of his face, angry at the constant stares, and, to top it off, disillusioned with the Party, which was losing focus and tearing itself apart through internal squabbling. David left the Workers Party in 1986 after 12 years of service.

"I was at loose ends. I was in bad shape. I weighed 115 pounds, drank cheap alcohol, smoked, and didn't eat healthily. What I needed to survive was nature and love—and love that was expressed."

He found that expression through caring for AIDS patients in San Francisco. Feeding, massaging, and nurturing people who needed him was an intense emotional and life-changing experience.

"I was loved for who I was and what I could bring to the table, which was love long repressed. Love came alive." And then he met Marlena.

"When I met him, he didn't talk about his face," she says. "Sometimes he wouldn't want to go to parties, and I thought, 'Wait, he's not talking about it — maybe it hurts him.' I watched every movie that was made about people with facial differences, and I tried to feel what it would be like to be David."

As their relationship grew, David allowed Marlena to reach out. "I lay emotionally naked on the table. Marlena was teaching me, integrating me with myself."

Talking about his condition opened up another opportunity. In 1990, he approached the Canadian organization AboutFace and offered to become its spokesperson. His unique style of

humour and candour led to speaking engagements throughout Canada and the United States, with side trips to Australia, New Zealand, and Hong Kong.

AboutFace is just one organization representing an estimated two million Canadians with some form of facial difference. There are others.

David and Marlena are also involved with the Children's Craniofacial Association, based in Texas.

The association has even created the David Roche Award to honour individual advocacy. David is also an advisor with Faceout Project, an online resource for the global facial difference community.

"It's taken me a long time to realize that my face is actually a gift," he says.

"My difficulty, my challenge is on the outside, where I've been forced to deal with it. I had no choice. I had to look inside to find my beauty and my sense of who I am, and once you do that, you can see it inside other people too."

Healing himself made it possible to heal others.

In 2004, the couple moved to Roberts Creek, BC. Although they've slowed down a bit—David no longer travels long distances—they continue their outreach in person or by video.

Marlena also volunteers at Sunshine Coast Hospice, teaching gentle touch massage to the staff.

"There's an awkwardness when people meet someone like David," she says.

"They get a little uncomfortable, so they don't say anything. Now, it's out in the open more. What David's doing, and what other disability movements are doing, dissipates the fear. Talking about it is helping to clear things up and make it easier for us to accept each other."

This was evident during David's appearance at the Sunshine Coast Writers Conference in Sechelt a few months ago, where he read a chapter from his autobiography *Standing at the Back Door of Happiness*.

Focusing on his medical history, he used a passage on scar tissue as a jumping-off point for a discussion on compassion and understanding.

"Scars are about healing. Scars are about forgiveness," the chapter reads.

"We got a standing ovation," he says. "I love standing ovations." |

HUNT FOR THE FRANKLIN EXPEDITION: Victoria's Captain Bill Noon Tells the Story

by JENNIFER HARTLEY

Captain Bill Noon is nautical royalty in B.C., and part of Canadian history.

It was summer of 2014 when Bill led his crew on the Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker *Sir Wilfred Laurier* to the Arctic for chart-making, just as he had every second year since 2010. Only 12-13 per cent of the Arctic was charted at the time, and he was part of the team learning more about the North.

"It was great fun to explore and get to know the area, which was a passion of mine. Parks Canada heard we were up there and asked if they could join us to hunt for the Franklin Expedition. Of course, I said yes."

A self-declared history nerd since childhood, he loved their quest. In the shelf he had built into his captain's chambers to house his books were tomes on the Franklin Expedition.

"For a week or two during our summer expeditions, Parks were with us." However, Bill wasn't optimistic about finding anything that year.

"We had planned to spend all summer in one area but we got completely iced out. We had to change the plan and search in an entirely different area."

But then, on September 2, 2014, the unexpected occurred. "We sent the helicopter to shore to set up a science station and the crew found the steel base of a ship's davit. It had the Royal Navy marking. The archeologists and I knew exactly where it came from: one of the Franklin ships. We couldn't believe it. It was just so exciting. We knew that we were close, and within two or three days we found one of the ships, *HMS Erebus*. We were beyond ecstatic. But our next reaction was 'What do we now?'"

With his characteristic humour, Bill says there were "buckets" of processes.

"I discovered I had this thick binder of protocols onboard that I had never



looked at. I raced through it only to discover we had to shut off every form of communication. We couldn't talk to anyone. In a fabulous twist of irony, people thought something had happened to us!"

Not one for pomp and ceremony, he was supposed to fly to Ottawa for the fanfare but Bill refused. "The cabinet minister came to us and we celebrated with the local community and the Elders who we knew and had a relationship with -- that was so much better."

However, he was thrilled to talk about the discovery. "I was doing stories all around the world, I even went to Australia. It was a wonderful experience. To be part of the riddle was just fantastic. I won the history jackpot."

And there is nothing better than when good fortune finds someone as kind, good-natured and humble as Bill.

"I started by cleaning toilets and doing rope work and worked on deck for a bunch of years at very small lifeboat stations and on smaller ships. I gradually



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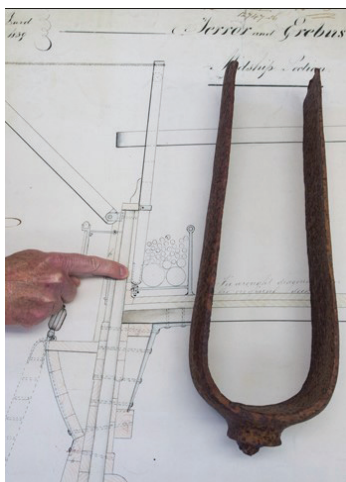
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PREVIOUS PAGE | Captain Bill Noon aboard his beloved *Messenger III*

ABOVE LEFT | Davit shoe (part of *Erebus*' crane system) laying on top of ship plan (photo by Jonathan Moore, Parks Canada)

ABOVE RIGHT | Bill Noon joined the *Sir Wilfred Laurier* in the late 2000s (photo courtesy Bill Noon)

increased my sea time and then went to Camosun College [in Victoria]. I got my first watchkeeping mate certificate there and then started working on larger and larger ships over the next 10 or 20 years and eventually got my captain's certificate and then stayed at that level."

For 10 years he was captain on the Coast Guard's *John P Tully*, a search and rescue ship on the West Coast that conducted oceanography. "We had offshore science trips looking at geology, biology, ocean sciences, species at risk and we had mammal trips to count orcas and humpback whales. That was great fun."

And then, in the late 2000s, he joined the *Laurier* as captain and worked up north. "I have to say global warming sure is real. I first went there in 1994, and then 2018 — it has completely changed. There have been astonishing changes in the amount of ice and the culture. It has gone from being isolated to almost busy there because with the ice melt, boats now have access. When I first went, nobody was there."

"Everything about the sea is fascinating. You never stop learning. The environment is always changing between nature, the weather and geology. The big events are few and far between unless they make the news, but the work I did and they still do provides valuable insight into our seas, and builds on our knowledge of our earth and oceans. And, of course, I met some incredible people."

Bill's original career plan didn't pan out. "I met with the recruiter for the

Air Force when I was 17 or 18. When I stood up [Bill is over 6 feet tall], he said: 'Bill, have you ever been in an F104? If you were to eject, it would rip your legs right off.' Then he handed me a form for the Army."

Thankfully, Bill followed his heart instead, went after his dream and looked to the sea.

His tales include sailing the entire Northwest Passage and a circumnavigation of our continent, from Victoria to Quebec City. "I am one of the fortunate few to have done that. Not many people get that lucky."

Retired since 2019, he spends a great deal of time sailing on *Messenger III*, his majestic wooden soon-to-be 100-year-old vessel that served as a missionary/medical boat sailing the West Coast for decades. He has owned her for almost 25 years.

She merges his love of history and the sea, the perfect combination. "It is incredible how *Messenger III* brings people together. I discovered that *Life Magazine* has a database of 240 historical images of *Messenger* travelling the West Coast in the 1950s with beautiful photos of the people and communities she visited. This one time, I was tied up at Secret Cove and a woman in her 70s came to talk to me. I showed her a picture and asked if she knew anyone in it. It turned out she was one of the school girls in the photo and I just about fell over. I love meeting people who have a tie to *Messenger*. So many fam-

ily memories come together. Boats like *Messenger* connect people.”

Not surprising, Bill has sat on the board of the Maritime Museum of British Columbia for 40 years, and is passionate about preserving maritime history. He also chairs Victoria’s successful annual Classic Boat Festival, which takes place Labour Day weekend every year.

“What makes a wooden boat so special is that every one of them is different. Each has its own character and personality. His beloved *Messenger III* has gone to 42 of the 45 years of the festival’s history. “She is part of the furniture.”

When not at sea, he spends time with his partner Sandra.

Ten years since the discovery of the *Erebus*, he still feels awe. “So many bits and pieces had to come together for us to find her. It was remarkable and completely serendipitous when you think about it.”

Bill’s passion for sailing is infectious and makes you want to grab your wellies and sea cap. Most of all, it is magnificent that someone who loves history so much has made it himself. |



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TERRY GAINER

Train Enthusiast and Travel Vagabond

by BRENT STUMPH

Some call him a vagabond, full of wanderlust and adventure — a free spirit who prefers the transient life of a traveler over the safety and security of home.

Terry Gainer would happily agree. He loves to travel, works in the travel industry as a consultant, and enjoys living abroad a few months every year. A pretty good lifestyle for this energetic octogenarian.

But Terry's roots, his greatest pas-

sions, run deep in the rails carrying passenger trains from eras past. From the days when traveling by train was a first-class experience with 5-star restaurants and magnificent scenery through the majestic Rockies.

Frank Gainer, Terry's Irish-born father, had lived in various places across Canada before moving his family to Banff in 1948. He was the new train station agent, and the family of seven lived above the

station.

Being an inquisitive six-year-old, Terry quickly learned to love everything about the passenger trains that arrived every day. He would watch from his second-floor perch as wealthy Americans, from mostly Eastern US locations, would gather on the platform, perhaps embarking, disembarking or carrying on to the West Coast through indescribable scenery and treacherous mountain passes. Of course, passengers from around the world also arrived to experience the romance of train travel and to explore Canada's untamed western wilderness.

Passenger trains. Not those squeaky mounds of nondescript metal flatcars, cradling containers loaded with unknown treasures, that block the road when you're in a hurry to get somewhere. They were sleek and aerodynamic. Row upon row of huge windows and shiny metal siding.

Most of us have memories of these trains. Watching them whiz by put the wanderlust in our hearts. The dream of travelling somewhere exotic, in the lap of luxury.

So, it's easy to understand why Terry loves passenger trains.

Shortly after arriving in Banff, he settled into a daily routine.

"My morning stop was the waiting room, checking out the passengers," Terry remembers. He was anxious to scrutinize the Americans, as he had only seen them on TV. He says they were easy to spot, as they were always "dressed to the nines." Mornings were consistently hectic, with two trains arriving only minutes apart.

But in 1954, calamity struck. At least in the eyes of 12-year-old Terry. His father announced his retirement from CPR. Terry sadly recalls, "I had never even entertained the idea we'd ever have to move away from my kingdom at the station; it was like moving to another world."



The family moved into the town of Banff, and Terry promised himself that, as soon as he was 15, he would get a job at the station.

And he did! He spent six summers at Banff Station, the first two as a baggage porter, followed by four summers as a redcap - a train station porter who helps passengers carry their luggage.

“Before I was old enough to work, my goal was to be a redcap. My brother Fred had been a redcap since 1953, and his stories cemented my ambition to follow in his footsteps.”

These are the years that hold Terry’s fondest memories. Each day was intense. Passengers arrived in droves, with way too much luggage. Trucks would deliver mounds of tour-group baggage. Redcaps would have to manage all the chaos — dodge passengers, answer questions, then sort the luggage and make sure it ended up in the right place.

Of course, there was the constant fascination of watching all types of people from interesting places. Seizing an opportunity to talk to an enthusiastic (or not) traveler was always a treat.

“They were crazy days,” Terry remembers. “Sweaty work, slinging hundreds of bags onto overhead luggage racks or spacing in compartments, always racing against the clock.”

Terry describes many memorable experiences in his days as a redcap, but one particularly stands out. 500 passengers, 1,200 pieces of luggage, all at the same time. Plus, a number of other regularly-scheduled trains. There were just three redcaps, and they’d never loaded an entire train before.

It was an incredibly hard day, but the trio finished the job ahead of schedule, with every piece of luggage accounted for. The \$749 tip, split three ways, was a pretty awesome bonus in 1960! It helped pay for Terry’s year of university, starting a few weeks later.

But the 60’s began the slow descent of luxury train travel, and the demise of the intercontinental passenger train. Terry will tell you that the ease of air travel and building better highways, were the beginning of the end. Leisurely train travel was no longer popular nor viable.

Yes, you can still sometimes see a Via Rail train rolling down the tracks, but it’s simply not the same.



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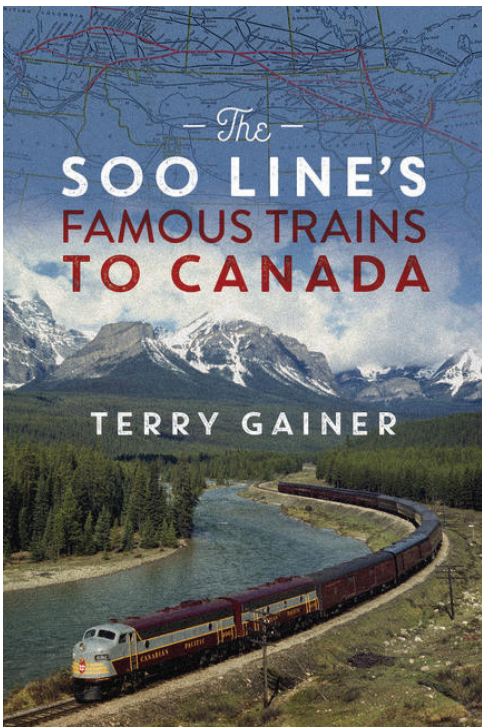


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Tracy Merkley



PAGE 12 | Terry Gainer enjoys writing books and meeting fellow train enthusiasts

ABOVE LEFT | Terry's train experiences and avid interest in history shine in his book *The Soo Line's Famous Trains to Canada*

ABOVE RIGHT | Redcap Terry Gainer can be seen on the bottom left, loading luggage on the platform, for Canadian 1

Photos courtesy Terry Gainer



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So, to keep the cachet alive, Terry is writing books about trains in Western Canada. He writes about the golden age of train travel, from 1948 through to the 1960's. He talks about the history, the politics, the money and, of course, the romanticism. Book number four is in the works.

He's also eminently active in the travel industry. He acts as a consultant for a number of tourist-based companies and is recognized as one of Banff's finest historians. He still travels the world, attends travel conventions and lives abroad for a few months each year.

When he's not on the road, Terry lives the bachelor's life in Kaslo, BC. He says that a simple life at home allows him the opportunity to travel far and often.

In summing up a life well-lived, Terry has this to say. "Wandering through a fascinating world, exploring all available corners of the earth, meeting amazing folks from all walks of life and experiencing as many adventures as possible. Life is such a beautiful adventure and needs to be savoured. It's a one-way ticket!"

Spoken like a true vagabond. |

AGING HAIR

by CATHERINE DUNWOODY

As women, we are well aware of the variety of changes (and challenges) we experience as we get older, and our hair is high up on the list.

As we age, so does our hair, and just like our skin, there is no one-size-fits-all for treatment and products. Some women struggle with overall thinning hair, and some with significant hair loss in patches. Other very real issues include dryness, slower hair growth, loss of pigmentation, more frizz, less volume, and more. Global beauty brands have recognized this and created divisions within their product lineups that target our concerns.

Here are five products aimed at keeping our crowning glory even more glorious.

Aveda has spent eight years in collaboration with world expert authorities in hair biology to create a new collection called Aveda's Invati Ultra Advanced. This much-anticipated innovation launched in late July 2024 and is a multi-step system that's 94%+ naturally derived, vegan as Aveda is known for, and aims to reduce hair loss by 77 per cent. As well as treating the scalp, the formulation thickens the hair shaft, resulting in plumped-up, fuller hair. The system goes beyond shampoo and conditioner, offering a scalp serum, leave-in fortifying treatment, and other options so you can fine-tune your routine to your personal hair needs.

Oribe's Silverati Collection keeps our greys glorious and our silvers spectacular. Remember that loss of pigment, also known as greying, can result in strands that lack lustre. These products add shine, eliminate yellow tones in grey and silver hair, and bring the silver front and centre. Since hair that has lost pigment is often fragile, the formulations in this shampoo and conditioner protect, soften, and tame.

Flat hair without volume is common, and if one's hair is a fine texture, let alone thinning, styling it can be tough. Hair powders can work wonders here. Sprinkled into the roots of dry hair and fluffed through with fingertips, they add fullness and the appearance of more hair. OSiS+ Dust It is a lightweight powder that adds buildable texture and is washed away at your next shampoo.

Toppik Hair Building Fibres target overall scalp thinning or balding spots and is easy to use. These natural keratin fibres are available in a variety of hair colours, allowing you to match them closely to your own, then apply them to areas where you want to see hair, not scalp. The spray applicator puffs out just the right amount of fibres, and you use the special comb with its irregular teeth to distribute them for a natural look, locking them into place with the fibre hold spray. It stays put until your next shampoo and is one of the most innovative and non-messy products on the market.

Experts in treating hair loss and thinning for years, the Nioxin brand addresses different needs for different heads. The Nioxin Scalp Care + Hair System 4 for coloured hair with progressed thinning works for women who need to protect their salon hair colour without the risk of stripping it. Colouring



thinning hair does add some volume to its appearance, which is why many stylists recommend doing so. This system boosts hair growth for people with advanced hair loss, all the while protecting that colour after you leave the salon. |

CORDOVA BAY HIKERS

by ROSALIE KNOGLER

In 1982, three women, Sheila Ogilvie, Audrey Mills and Shirley Mills, began hiking together on Wednesdays. Soon, others joined them.

In 1986, they placed an ad in the local Cordovan newsletter that brought more members. Two of those were new Cordova Bay residents, Cam and Vera Innes from Winnipeg. Now there were eleven women and one man.

The next year, Cam and Vera became the hike leaders, learning about their new city and surroundings as they planned weekly hikes.

By 1988, the club was flourishing with 34 members.

Besides all the local hikes, they travelled further afield to Carmanah Valley, Manning Park, Rosario Resort on Orcas Island, Mt. Washington, Bodega Resort

on Galliano Island, and several trips to Olympic National Park in Washington State.

Their multi-day trips often had “mixed” weather that didn’t slow them down. After one downpour, they enjoyed a soak in some hot springs. They accomplished hikes in the snow as well. Their potlucks and sing-alongs were a highlight.

In 1996, the club decided they would hike the entire length of the Juan de Fuca Marine Trail, a distance of 47 km. They did a section each year; the project completed in 2000. Members took great delight in claiming, “Oh yes, we did the whole thing!” (neglecting to mention it took them five years).

In 1997, the club travelled to Cannon Beach in Oregon and Cathedral Lakes.

There were the odd injuries, like on the East Coast Trail when a member slipped off an embankment. Her husband tried to save her, but fell into a deep sinkhole. Luckily, they were both rescued by the group.

Another hiker tumbled into a stream on the Royal Roads University grounds near Colwood and one fell hard while hiking Mt. Doug, a favoured park in Greater Victoria (now called PKOLS in the SENĆOŦEN language).

A tree limb once fell from above, but luckily it didn’t injure anyone.

Cam only got lost once.

An exciting hiking trip to Cornwall, UK was taken in 1998.

As the club continued to grow, they offered both short and long hikes. Christmas parties with skits and good food, and June picnics were always enjoyable.

More multi-day hikes to Quadra and Cortes Islands, Mt. Baker National Park, Long Beach and Tofino, Lynn Canyon in Vancouver, and Bridal Falls were accomplished with the help of many members.

The club collected money to donate to the Trans Canada Trail Association. A plaque installed at the Trail Marker Pavilion near Selkirk Trestle reads: Cordova Bay Hikers - dedicated to all who shared happy trail memories and to future hikers who will create their own.

The club started a website in 2003 including photos, schedules, attendance and members info.

After 18 years leading the Cordova Bay Hikers, Vera and Cam retired. 270 hikes were accomplished during those years, not including scouting.

Several members stepped up to replace them. The fun continued with 56 active hikers and 12 alumni.

More trips overseas had hikers doing a coast-to-coast hike across England in



ABOVE | The Cordova Bay Hikers conquer Sayward Hill (2022)

LEFT | The Cordova Bay Hikers enjoy a well earned picnic at PKOLS (Mount Douglas) Park (2024)

2004, as well as venturing to Northern Italy in 2007.

There were odd incidents, such as 16 members stopping to feed the donkey on Horth Hill, not noticing the rest of the group continued on. Luckily, they eventually found each other.

On another hike, one fellow brought extra rubber boots and plastic bags to get members over a creek.

We successfully completed trips to Whistler, Hornby Island, Chemainus, Ladysmith, Leechtown, Saltspring Island, Saturna, Orcas Island, Cascade and Olympic Mountains.

By 2011, there were 75 hikers and 5 alumni. That year, the hikers undertook a wonderful hike to Montenegro in Europe.

More than 40 years after the group's start, we are still going strong. Some members have moved away, gone into care, or passed away. We continued hiking, even during Covid. Every week, there are 15-25 members hiking, including some over 90 years of age!

We enjoy our picnics, Christmas parties and restaurant visits, but even more, the friendship, fresh air, exercise and fun. |

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A VISION THAT IS MINE

by THELMA FAYLE

“I have too many fingers,” she said, with sleepy eyelids drooping as she stood by the bathroom sink. I laughed for a change, and teased her for being a wimp. Imagine complaining about having too many fingers to dry! She grinned the way she used to; and then, just as suddenly, uncertainty reappeared on her overtired face. Loose rings jangled as she slowly rubbed the towel over each long bony finger.

Taking rickety baby-steps, Mom pushed the walker toward her bedroom. We thought she still recognized her own bright-eyed picture on the door; but who knows. Signs taped around the house were useless to a scrabble player who could no longer read. If only the signs could talk: “Extra toilet paper over here.” “Did you put your hearing aids in?” “Walker Parking.”

My sibs and I, a motley imperfect crew, were grateful she was not one of those elders trapped in a nursing home while visitors with aggrieved faces waved at masked-up seniors in wheelchairs – through windows – while trying to conduct fake-cheery-chats on passed-around cell phones.

Six adult-kids hoped she would reach the milestone birthday only months away. “You can do it Mom; make it to a hundred,” each of us silently chanted – even though her body was forgetting the drill and would soon fail to recall how to pump blood, open eyes, and fill lungs with air.

That morning, driving to my sister’s house, I felt as if I were in an old Twilight Zone episode. Like most cities through the early pandemic days, Victoria roads were eerily vacant.

Mom sat on the edge of her single bed in a floral flannel nightgown humming while I brushed her hair. She was one of the lucky ones who got even sweeter with dementia. I made oatmeal for her, we drank Red Rose tea and we admired the red geraniums outside. We were down to tiny words in our small talk.

Numb with “anticipatory grief” (one of the home-hospice nurse’s terms), I

had been paying apt attention to what I knew would be remaining days. I learned to administer the painkiller injection, but on first effort, the valuable vial of morphine squirted across her favourite pink-purple-blue blanket. The ironic-miss targeted mum’s life-long aversion to taking medication – likely one of the reasons she lived so long. Thelma Sr. once predicted – and even hoped – she might live to 117.

Tucking her in, I reminded her I didn’t know anyone who was as well-loved as she was. For a long time, she would look at me with suspicion and say: “Is that so?” And I would reassure her. But on this day, she smiled and said: “I’ve heard that.”

And then the awful question came: “What’s your name?” she asked.



Like a boot to the “backside” (one of Mom’s terms), her pivotal question threw me. There is little warning or advice for the unfamiliar new world dementia caretakers have come to inhabit.

I managed to give her a wide, warm, slow-motion, fake smile. “My name is Thelma,” I said. The dementia specialists recommended a steadily offered supply of smiles and simple-chats to help ease dementia patients’ fear of their

often-scary and unfamiliar new world.

“Wow, what are the chances?” she replied with widened eyes. And then, with the sweetest shyness, she introduced herself. “My name is Thelma too.”

Driving home slower than usual, I listened to weirdly jarring jazz on the radio. I wasn’t a particular fan; but gratifying, discordant and disturbing sounds happened to be on the station — and fit the moment.

I realized I needed to have something to look forward to. Don’t we all?

After mulling for a week, I checked out UKings school of journalism (Dalhousie). The program offered residencies in Toronto, New York and Halifax but because of the pandemic they would likely be organizing zoom lectures with brilliant guest speakers, talented mentors and discussion groups. The faculty seemed a collaborative lot.

I decided to apply for the MFA as a celebration of turning 65 – with a goal of becoming a better writer.

I explained to Admissions that I was involved in a care-taking role, unsure of when I might be available, and asked if I stood a chance of getting accepted. I paid the fee, sent in my application, and went back to helping my mother. I had no control over timing.

Mom lived six days past her 100th birthday and I was shocked to get a letter nine weeks later: Congratulations and Welcome to the Class of 2023!

I bought three little, old-fashioned alarm clocks and lined them up on my desk with block-lettered-notes below each one. VICTORIA – TORONTO – HALIFAX. With profs, mentors, and classmates in different cities, I didn’t want to get the time zone wrong and miss something.

Pre-residency, reading-assignment craft-books piled up. I read my head off. How the hell had I never encountered these sensational books before?

One thing made me nervous. As part of the dwindling 16 per cent of humans on the planet, I do not have a smart phone or a speck of social media interest.

Friends who sleep with their phones, shake their heads as if I were the old lady living in an Instagram-less shoe.

“You can’t be a writer without participating in social media,” they say. Maybe they are right.

After most lectures in my first residency, I ran upstairs and described the gist of another incredible presentation.

My husband, Daryl, had meals ready precisely when classes were over. I never imagined being so well-supported in a goal. I rarely did the dishes for two years.

I handed in assignments early. Sometimes weeks early. I said I didn’t care about marks, but when I got an A+ on a research paper, I ran screaming through the house. A+A+A+

Halfway through the program, I bumped into an old colleague. When I said I was a full-time student, he widened his eyes with fake alarm and with edgy exaggerated emphasis asked: “To what end?”

He didn’t say “at your age,” but I heard it. He didn’t get that I was trying to pursue a vision that was truly mine. He didn’t get that I have ideas about books I hope to write – if I live as long as my mother did.

Some days it can be hard to understand people.

When we finally met in person at the Halifax graduation, I encountered the talented, full-bodied classmates who had only appeared as heads and torsos on my computer screen for two years. We were strangers, but we weren’t. They were the beautiful non-fiction writers who loved writing as much as I did.

I bought the sterling silver grad ring – with the university coat-of-arms – to wear 24/7 as a pinky ring.

If engineers can wear rings to remind them of their responsibilities as builders, I think narrative-nonfiction writers can wear them for the same reason. Writers also have responsibilities as builders.

Thelma Fayle Sr. would have appreciated the thinking behind the ring on one of my many fingers. |

Thelma Fayle lives on Vancouver Island in Canada and she now has an MFA. ThelmaFayle.com



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WHEN GOD THROWS YOU HER CAR KEYS...



Road Trip Round the Peloponnese

by JOAN THOMPSON

When I started musing about another trip around The Peloponnese Peninsula in Greece, I wanted to present myself with a challenge.

This time it wouldn't be to survive a solo bike trip through the dog-patrolled sheep paddocks of the Parnonas mountains, it would be to make sense of Greek mythology and its place in history.

In contrast to the solemnity of monotheism and 'God' with a capital, the Greek deities, so closely modelled on human archetypes and all their flaws, seem like a cosmic joke.

Philandering Zeus, hard-hearted Apollo, humourless Hera, spiteful Athena; how did these characters become worthy of worship? And with their frequent mingling with mere mortals, how do you keep track of the ever expanding pantheon?

So, with this melange of gods to come to terms with, I welcomed the chance to experience "Pelop's Island" once again, but this time with the luxury of a rented car and a seasoned travel companion.

We start in Nafplio, the former capital of Greece, and once a Venetian stronghold. But fortresses and castles aren't the

only relics we want to see – we know that just a short jaunt away lays the legendary ruin of Epidauros.

Most people don't get past the perfect-in-every-way 20,000 seat theatre close to the entrance of this complex to realize that Epidauros is essentially a mammoth shrine to Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine.

After the Athenian plague in 430 BCE, Epidauros became the go-to place for the thousands of infirm, crippled, deaf and blind who were quite sure Asclepius could make them whole again.

After the required night in the enkoimeterion where they might incubate their own powers of healing, Asclepius would arrive to them in a dream sprinkling those final bits of fairy dust.

The fact that healing required an element of effort and self-examination on the supplicant's part suggests the Greek gods were wise to the real source of most of our ailments – ourselves! I am warming up to them....

We weave down the serpentine road high above the Argolic Gulf to get to Monemvasia, one of the most beguiling towns of Greece, on the south-east

coast of the Peloponnese. Cobblestone streets huddle against the steep sides of the rock, stone buildings interweave with archways, overhangs, dovecots, and bougainvillea empty into squares luminescent with light.

You access the upper reaches of town by a path that zigzags up the mountain and peaks at the Kastro and the beautiful Byzantine church of Agia Sofia.

While Monemvasia was significant as a trading centre among the Franks, Venetians and Ottomans, no doubt it is a place steeped in story — stories of the fallen and the victorious, the lost and the shipwrecked, and those who had been lucky enough to call Monemvasia home!

If coastal Monemvasia was a centre of trade and commerce, the medieval city of Mystra, three hours inland by car, was the western most centre of Byzantine worship and learning.

Today, terraced on the side of Taygetus mountains, the spectacular remains of Mystra read like the Samarkands of Central Asia and the Middle East, where the holy madrasas drew scholars from every corner of the continent.

Stone passageways connect one mon-



astery to another, with majestic octagonal-domed churches presiding over the courtyards of each monastic complex. Adjoining gardens, orchards, vineyards and animal pens ensured the community's self-sufficiency and a hill-top castle its security.

And then The Mani – the mythical, nothing-but-mountains peninsula at the southern tip of Greece. Mani crests at the peak of the Taygetus mountains and plunges steeply to the sea below.

As the road spirals upward from the sun-sparkled waters of the Laconian Gulf, we wend past tower houses that stand tacit and austere on the cliffs above, and through villages whose only purchase to steep hillsides are the bowers of bougainvillea they are entangled within.

We emerge from each dip into the cool green of the villages to views incandescent with sea and sky.

After a dip into the southernmost point of The Mani – and Europe – to seek out the rumoured lair of Hades, the god of the underworld, real legends spirit us up the western side of the Mani.

They bring us first to Vathi, a huddle of tower houses, home to the instigators and heroes of the revolution against the Ottomans in 1820, and then to boutique Kardimyli, the other epicentre of the feared Maniots.

A series of kathimerini, now popular hiking trails, lead to the cluster of towers that loom above Kardymili, and we walk to one that had belonged to a captain in the Greek revolution.

Given that the Maniots were considered descendants of the ancient Spartans, it's no surprise to find the Mourtzinos Tower equipped for the long run. Cisterns, vegetable garden, wine press,



OPPOSITE PAGE | Village of Vathia on The Mani

TOP LEFT | Medieval castle of Methoni, Peloponnese

TOP RIGHT | Napflio, former capital of Greece

ABOVE | Morning in Monemvasia

NEXT PAGE | Sacred site of Olympia

forge and olive mill all lie tight as a drum behind the fortress walls.

A longer lineage of celebrated heroes await us at Olympia, home of the first Olympic Games. This legendary site is a big deal: one moment it's just you and a tractor on the tucked away country roads in this northwestern corner of the Peloponnese, the next moment a fleet of tour buses is bearing down on you.

Forewarned, we make a point of being first through the turnstile of this World Heritage site the next morning.

Truly a sacred site, nothing but copses of trees, gentle rolling terraces, and stone-strewn fields distract you from your communion with the elemental forces of nature and the gods.

Getting friendly with Zeus, Hera, Rea, and Hestia et al had its advantages, especially when one's athletic success was at stake. Once propitiations had been made, competing athletes continued on to the reckoning that awaited them in the stadium.

Today, challenging your travelmates to a 400-metre dash, imagining the roaring crowds around you, tops many people's visit to the famed site.



As we return the car in Napflio, I recall the words of travel writer Jeff Greenwald: "Every time I see out on a journey, I feel like God has just thrown me the keys to her car," and how perfectly they describe our road trip round the Peloponnese.

She flung wide the door to those places dipped in magic and legend, and let us park awhile so I had time to untangle the

threads about gods, demi-gods, heroes, and history. From what I gleaned, there was a fluidity between them all, making the task of determining who was a god and who wasn't and what purpose they served, always an elusive goal.

Ultimately, my confusion about the Greek gods, she assures me, could be as much a sign of knowledge, as it was a lack of it! |

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SCOTLAND'S FIFE COASTAL TRAIL

One Step at a Time

by JAMES ROSS



I love rambling along a rugged coastline, listening to the crash of waves and the cry of seabirds, while breathing in the salty wind. For the last hour my wife and I have been hiking atop a steep escarpment, with tidy fields of green grass to our left and the shimmering ocean stretching off to our right.

Our trail slowly descends to the water, switchbacks taking us down through rolling dunes covered in silky, golden marram grass to a beautiful horseshoe stretch of sandy beach.

With the noonday sun warm on our faces, we decide to take a break, sitting with our backs against a concrete World War II bunker with a strategic view over the Firth of Forth.

We take out a baguette, cheeses, and meats, and a couple bottles of Scottish ale that, not wanting the extra weight myself, I had surreptitiously slipped into my wife's daypack that morning.

The tide is out, seals can be seen basking on the warmth of the exposed

rocks, while oystercatchers, curlews and redshanks scavenge the low-water tidal pools. It is the perfect place to rest our feet and enjoy lunch.

We are halfway into our five-day adventure, walking the Fife Coastal Path between Edinburgh and St. Andrews along Scotland's eastern shore.

When I think about hiking back home, I think of the West Coast Trail or hut to hut along the Sunshine Coast, carrying all my needs in an 80-litre pack. Here, in the UK, I am finding the hiking adventure a bit more civilized and relaxing.

I believe there are many travellers like me, getting a little older, but still wanting to travel in an active and adventurous way, while, at the same time, welcoming a bit more comfort.

Many companies are available to help with the logistics. Macs Adventure has helped set our itinerary, booked our accommodations, arranged for our luggage transport from Inn to Inn, and supplied a GPS app for our phones with

detailed maps of our route and highlights to see along the way. They have looked after everything, so we can just enjoy the walk.

The Fife Coastal Path opened in 2003 as Scotland's longest continuous seaside path. The full trail is 187 kilometres, but our short break itinerary from Kirkcaldy to Crail allows us a brief introduction to a walking holiday, covering 60 kilometres of some of the most scenic coastal sections of the route, characterized by its pretty seaside villages, beaches, and rugged coastal cliffs.

It is the perfect location for connecting with wildlife, particularly its marine species such as grey seals, bottlenose dolphins, harbour porpoise, and waterbirds, eider duck and sea eagles.

The path is also peppered with interesting historical relics, from 11th century churches to 19th century coal mines, from lighthouses to salt-panning windmills.

There are seaside caves with 5th century
INSPIRED MAGAZINE | NOV / DEC 2024 23

ture Pict drawings, crumbling medieval castles on bluffs high above the North Sea that were featured in Shakespeare's plays, and ancient graveyards where we stop to peruse the crumbling headstones.

My wife and I had left Edinburgh two days earlier on a short 45-minute train trip around the Firth to the seaside town of Kirkcaldy, where we overnighed at the Strathearn Hotel.

The following morning, we set our luggage outside our room, laced up our hiking boots and headed northward, hugging the coast. The path took us past the pre-historic caves of East Wemyss and the 12th century Macduff Castle ruin, until we reached our next accommodation in the town of Leven.

The Old Manor, where our luggage awaited us, was set in a fantastic location with panoramic ocean views. We celebrated our first day with a dram in the over-sized leather armchairs of its comfortable pub, followed by a delicious meal overlooking the sea.

From Leven the path rounded the headland, before descending to expansive Shell Bay Beach (where we had stopped for our trail lunch).

Satisfied and rested, we set off again. We walk along the beach, amble over bridges and tip-toe across inlets, before reaching the little fishing village of Elie.

The Ship Inn offers beautiful views over the harbour and of Elie Lighthouse. The lighthouse was designed and built in 1908 by David Stevenson, cousin to the famous author Robert Louis Stevenson – which has me imagining I am Stevenson's David Balfour in *Kidnapped*, trekking across the width of Scotland, returning to my family estate.

Our final day's hike is perhaps the most picturesque. The Coastal Path meanders along the edge of rugged cliffs, while far below dramatic waves tumble onto the rocky shore.

At St Monans, a church spire juts into the sky, and colourful houses with orange roofs sit along winding cobbled lanes. From a lofty position above the village are the crumbling ruins of Newark Castle and an old windmill that used to pump seawater into limestone beds to extract the salt.

We doddle through the idyllic white-washed fishing villages, finding Pittenweem and Anstruther the perfect places



PAGE 23 | The author on the Fife Coastal Path (Photo by Chantal Ross)

TOP LEFT | Lady's Tower

TOP RIGHT | Through the dunes

ABOVE | The enchanting harbour town of Crail

to stop for a coffee and scone, or a snack and a pint. When we needed sustenance on the trail, we were never far from a snug café or ancient flagstone-floored pub.

The locals were very friendly, though not always easy to comprehend. No matter, they did serve us delicious ales and the freshest seafood imaginable.

As we stroll into Anstruther, ominous dark clouds roll in and the rain comes.

So, we duck into the Anstruther Fish Bar for its delicately battered cod and chunky chips. The fish and chips are reputed to be the best in Britain, and certainly today best consumed indoors while looking out on the old stone harbour.

After the clouds move on, we set off again alongside the breaking surf, through fields of grazing cattle and sheep, and past an old farmhouse with a

thatched roof and a stone barn, to arrive in the enchanting village of Crail and the Balcomie Links Hotel, our final stop.

The epitome of a charming Fife seaside town, Crail has a picture-perfect harbour with creel boats and lobster pots.

Not wanting our trek to end, we wander Crail's steep web of cobbled alleys to its rustic High Street. Here, we get a cooked-to-order lobster roll at the Reilly family's Shellfish Lobster Hut, caught the same day by one of the family in their boat.

Putting one foot in front of the other, hour after hour, pulled me into the present, and made me realize that travel is not about rushing from one place to the next, but slowing down to fully embrace a destination.

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Active Living With Bunions

Having bunions doesn't mean you have to lead a sedentary life. There are several strategies to help manage the discomfort and slow the progression of those bony bumps at the base of the big toe.

Bunions can be inherited, but they also develop from poor walking mechanics and weak muscles, combined with ill-fitting footwear. When the big toe is forced to push against the second toe, it can cause the joint at the base of the big toe to stick out. It may become swollen and painful as it rubs against shoes while enduring the force of forward motion.

Ensure you are wearing comfortable footwear. Shoes with a narrow toe area, and higher heels that force your foot down into a narrow toe area, are not ideal choices. Your shoes, including footwear for exercising, should allow some room between the tip of your longest toe to the top of the shoe. And the shoe's forefoot should be wide enough for you to spread your toes. Visit a physical therapist for more tips on the right fit for your needs. They can also assist with bunion exercises.

Gentle stretching and strengthening exercises can alleviate bunion discomfort by enhancing the flexibility and strength of your feet. Here are a few simple exercises (and more can be found on the internet) that you can do two to four times weekly:

Toe Circles: Sitting comfortably, grip your big toe and circle it clockwise 10 to 20 times, then reverse direction for another 10 to 20 circles. Do 2 to 3 sets for each toe.

Ball Roll: Roll a tennis ball or other small ball under your foot as a massage. This reduces pain and improves blood flow. Do for 3-5 minutes on each foot.

Towel Curls: Seated in a chair, place a small towel or facecloth on the floor under your feet. Use your toes to grip the towel and pull it towards you. Use only the toes to "scrunch" the towel. You can repeat this movement for 3 to 5 minutes.

NOTE: It's wise to have more direction from a physical therapist or podiatrist for the above exercises. Also, if you have bunion surgery, it's essential to follow your doctor's instructions for rehabilitation stretches and exercises recommended for your recovery (not all bunion surgeries are the same).

Lifestyle changes can also reduce pressure on your feet and may slow the bunions progression:

Take frequent breaks to rest and elevate your feet. Remove your shoes, if it's possible.

Apply an ice pack for about five minutes whenever you can throughout the day to help reduce swelling and relieve any discomfort.

Maintain a healthy weight, as extra weight will place extra pressure on the feet.

Use bunion pads or soft inserts between the toes to provide cushioning for temporary pain reduction.

Orthotics, or padded shoe inserts, may help distribute pres-

sure evenly across the foot, thereby relieving the pressure on the bunion.

Foot taping or wearing a bunion split can provide temporary pain relief and possibly slow the progression of the bunion. However, research shows taping or splinting is not effective at realigning the big toe or eliminating the bunion. If you choose to use a bunion splint, avoid overtightening it. This can add to the discomfort and possibly make the deformity worse.

Despite having bunions, it's important to embrace an active lifestyle. If running and walking are uncomfortable, there are many low impact activities you can still enjoy: swimming, yoga, or cycling put less stress on your feet.

Monitor your feet carefully for any signs of increased pain, redness or swelling. If self-care strategies aren't giving relief, especially if the bunion seems to be getting worse, consult a podiatrist or orthopedic specialist. In some cases, surgery may be the best option to correct the deformity and relieve pain. |

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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LIVING ON PURPOSE

by LAURIE MUELLER



I Can and I Will

Not all of retirement, or even life, is good news. Not every day is the best day ever. But having the will and desire to make the most of any situation goes a long way in surviving any crisis.

In the 2024 Summer Paralympic Games, 24-year-old swimmer Ali Truwit, who won two silver medals and broke several records, offers us inspiration that we can move through any crisis to the other side.

“I can and I will,” Ali Truwit proclaimed during a talk at the Forbes Power Women’s Summit.

Her journey to the 2024 Paris Summer Paralympics began just sixteen months earlier when she was snorkelling in the waters of Turks and Caicos. A shark bite took her foot and part of her leg.

Ali swam the 64 metres back to the boat and continued to defy the odds as she was repeatedly told she “couldn’t,” only to prove she could.

From those first few moments in the water to a series of hospitals, she went from despair to victory.

While waiting for her prosthetics, she needed to exercise. Unable to walk or run, she turned to the pool. She could swim. She recalls telling the Forbes audience, “I can’t,” but then added, “But I can, and I will.” And she did.

Even when she accomplished what many thought was impossible, she remained ready and excited as she stood by the pool in Paris.

Seeing a large black underwater camera following the swimmers as they competed triggered an involuntary trauma response. It wasn’t a shark, but her body reacted, shutting down even though her mind urged her onward.

She didn’t quit. She could, and she did.

This young woman, who initially said she couldn’t bear for anyone to see her prosthetic leg and ordered her mother to give away all her short dresses, stood on the podium before the world in a bathing suit.

Watching her speak on *YouTube*, I noticed she was wearing a short dress!

Here I am, decades older than Ali, thinking—this is a mindset I need to adopt.

It’s not that I haven’t done incredible things in my life, but at my age now, with fading eyesight, hearing, and physical ability, it isn’t time for me to give up.

Just days after listening to Ali speak and writing the first draft of this column, I found myself hitting the “send” button on reservations for an extended stay in one of our favourite warm-weather destinations.

I had thought we couldn’t travel anymore, that we were too old, didn’t have enough money, and I wasn’t in good enough shape.

But Ali’s words kept echoing in my head.

Now, I’m exercising and looking forward to our stay in a small studio apartment in a Mexican suburb just outside Puerto Vallarta that we know well.

I can and I will (or, in this case, we can and we will!).

Sometimes, we need reminders that we can still achieve much of what we desire—from thoroughly enjoying retirement by relaxing around a pool in a warm climate during the winter to winning a trophy in the upcoming Summer Senior Games.

It’s easy to grow tired of trying, to say, “Oh well, I’ve had my day.”

Ali said, “I’m unique in that I was attacked by a shark, but I’m not unique in that we all go through hardship, trauma, and tough times in life, and we all have the capacity to rise back up.”

At our age, we’ve had the experience of doing just that—more than once.

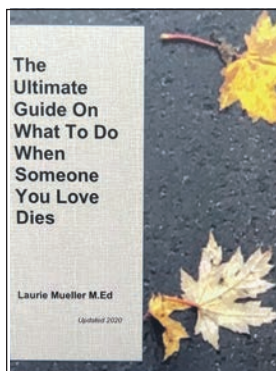
My words of encouragement to you today are: don’t stop doing, don’t stop achieving, and don’t stop becoming the person you want to be remembered for.

Whether it’s the loss of a loved one, a family member entering extended or palliative care, a move from the family home to a smaller, more manageable living space, caring for a child, or setting a goal to compete in a local 10k race, there are always challenges to meet.

Maybe it’s accepting a call to volunteer for an organization you care about.

In midlife, we learned how to say no. Now, it may be time to relearn how to say yes to the right things. |

Laurie Mueller, M.Ed is retired and living in Victoria with her husband, Helmuth. More about Laurie can be found at www.lauriemconsulting.com or on Facebook.



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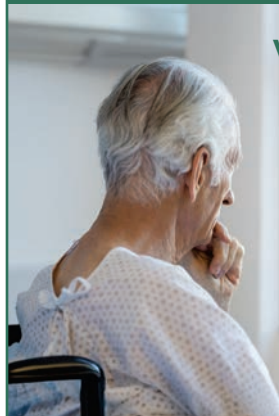
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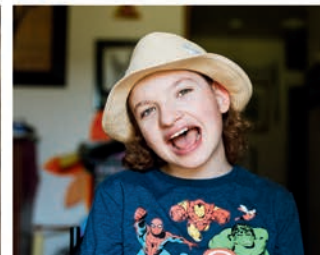
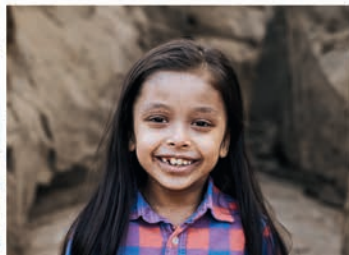


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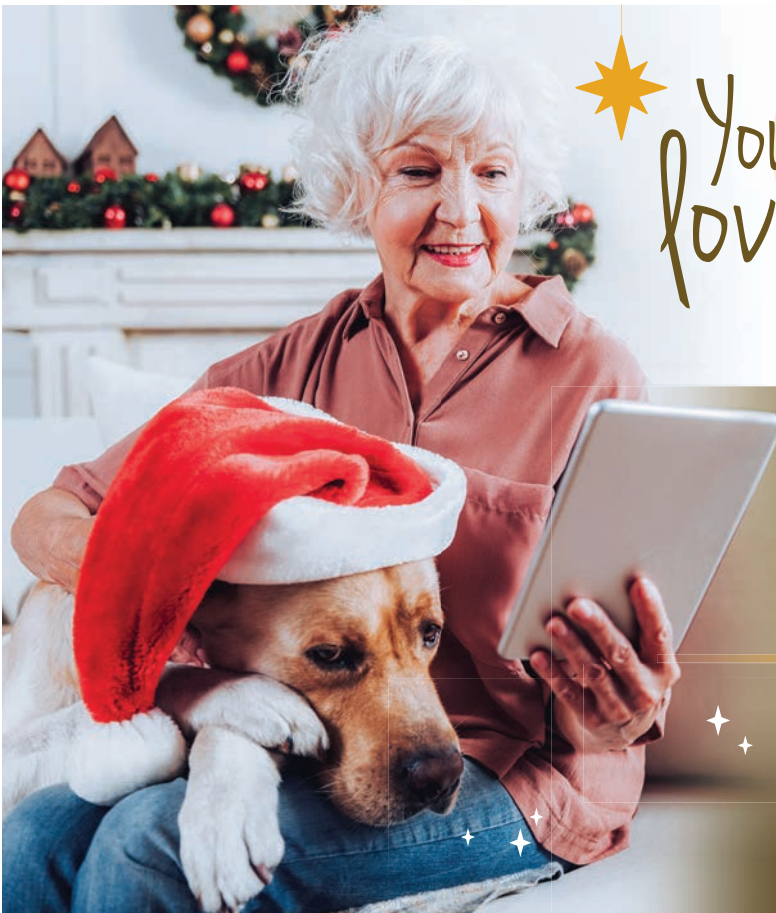
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