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CONNECTIONS

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Sex After 50 Better or Worse?

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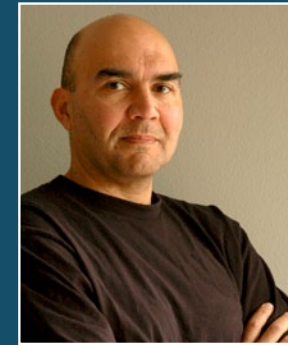
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Publisher's Note

by Max Wells



Max Wells
Publisher, Seattle Wise

We believe that the second half of life's journey can be filled with richness, unexpected choices and incredible opportunities for fulfillment and growth.

When I moved into my house my neighbors, who'd been there since the mid 1950's when the plat was first built, were all decades older than me. My wife and I were alternately charmed and bemused by their antics - the woman who brought cookies, the octogenarian who cut his lawn in his Speedos, the couple who never opened their door. We questioned some of the actions, but resigned ourselves to be good neighbors. As they were replaced by younger families we found ourselves being the oldest on the block and now wonder how we'll be viewed in a few decades.

Adapting also, I think, is part of becoming wise. Whether it's to bottle-liners or bifocals, too little hair or too much prostate, icing joints rather than lighting them, we learn to go with the flow. Adaptation is a part of aging, as are denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. The whole thing is a journey; a trip even.

Think of the magazine as a travel guide for this leg of the voyage, with suggestions of places to go, things to do and what to pack (Ibuprofen - check. Speedos - check). It's about enjoying the ride, and as with all travel, the best stories will come from making new rules, serendipitous encounters and twists of fate. As Douglas Adams, author of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* said "I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I think I have ended up where I needed to be."

The magazine will provide practical advice you can use NOW, on topics like intimacy, relationships, finance and the law. And it will contain tips on "creative loafing" with a calendar of events and places to go. We'll also have writing that will shift your perspective - about the inner journey towards wisdom and acceptance, about things to do to re-contextualize aging; like mentoring, mediating, mobilizing and motivating; and about technology and society.

Why the magazine? In 2011 the 76 million baby boomers started turning 65 at a rate of one every 10 seconds. For the past 60 years their rabbit-in-the-python bulge in the age distribution has profoundly transformed the economy and the culture; from the publishing success of Benjamin Spock's child rearing book in 1946 to the burgeoning sales in home gym equipment in the 80s. It's a demographic with expectations that stretch beyond the straight and narrow. Seattle Wise content will encourage and support their continued growth through insight and information gathered from leading writers, sages, and those who have embraced the journey.

And of course, boomers buy things. We control over 80% of personal financial assets and more than 50% of discretionary spending power. We are responsible for more than half of all consumer spending, we buy 80% of all leisure travel, 61% of OTC medication and 77% of all prescription drugs. The magazine will provide selected advertising in five broad categories: entertainment (including travel), health, education (life-long learning), services (financial, legal, labor) and accommodation.

Hopefully, you'll use the magazine and the website to share your stories and connect with the community, resources and wisdom of the region, so you end up where you need to be.

That's our intent. Bon voyage.

—Max



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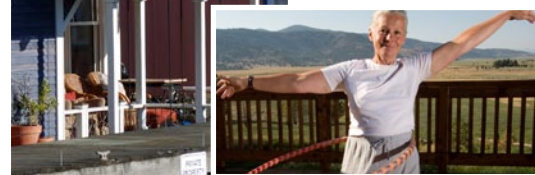
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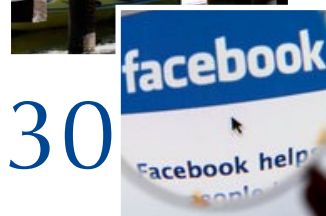
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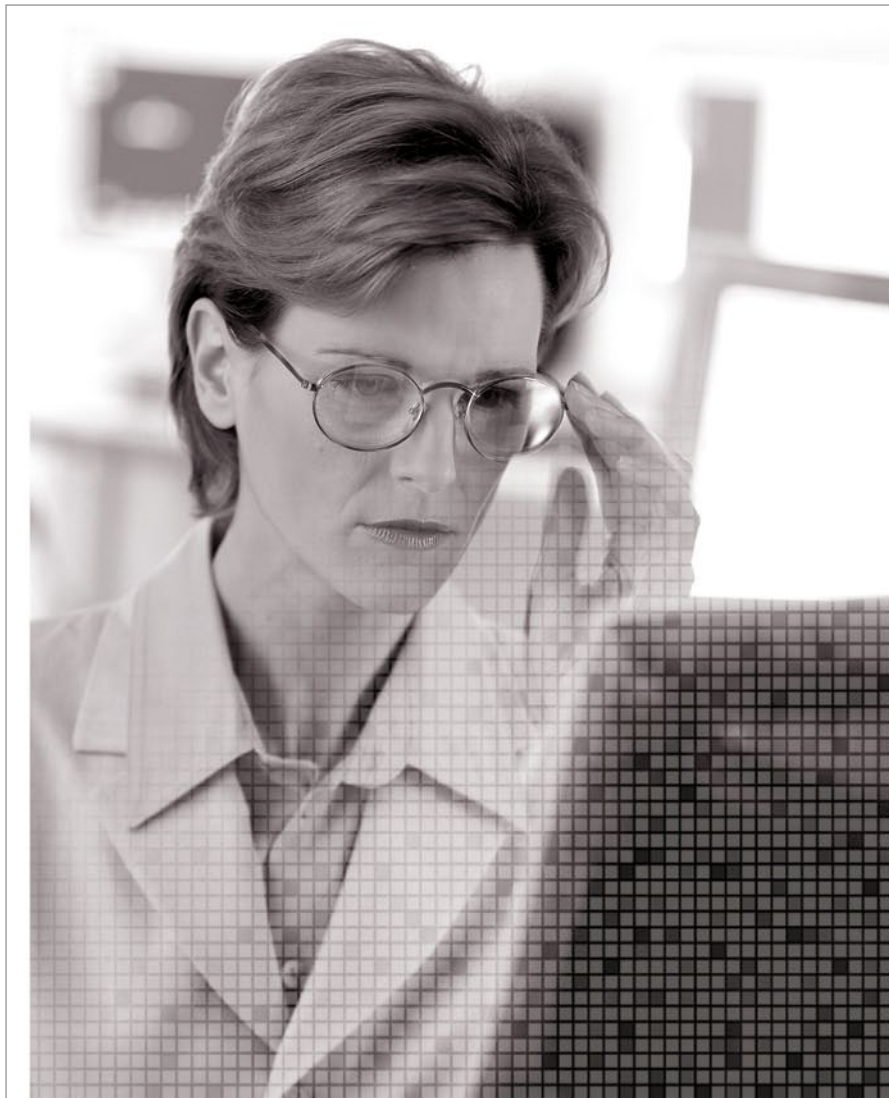
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www.mli-design.com

Sex after 50

Getting better or worse?

If you would like to become more curious about yourself, the best place to start is checking in with your body sensations, and the easiest way to do that is through your breath. This is called a micro-practice. Take the next 20 seconds and let in as much air as your body would like. Don't force it, just let it all the way in, and notice whatever it is about it that feels good, that brings you any pleasure, any at all. Savor that little bit. Then just go about your day. Later, when it crosses your mind, do it again. And again, whenever you remember. In this way you gradually learn to slow down, notice and savor. As your body discovers how good it feels, it will want to come back; and it will take you on the greatest path of learning and discovery there is.

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“If we are interested in looking deeper, finding transporting states of bliss and reaching more deeply into our hearts, then yes, it's better, absolutely.”

Someone asked me the other day, “So, sex after 50 – Does it get better or worse?” It's a great question and like most things about sex, it's something of a window into how you approach life.

That depends... on you.

Early in life, hormones rule, drumming in our brains (and elsewhere) – Reproduce! Reproduce! Even when we have no intention of reproducing, the hormones don't care, intent only on doing their job. Get laid! Get laid!

Enthusiasm can cover a multitude of sins. Sins in this case not referring to sex, but to whatever selfish, unaware, clumsy, rush-toward-the-finish-line-at-all-costs horny enthusiasm we have at the moment. Clumsy and unimaginative we may be but we somehow manage to get the job done. Many of us even manage to reproduce along the way.

Then things change. Thankfully. At some point we realize there is more potential here; deep and tender vulnerability, heart piercing intimacy, astounding states of surrender, profound discovery and self awareness. We can open up hilarious play, sweet affirmation, and a spiritual experience of connection to each other and to life itself. Not to mention just loads of fun. We explore deeper aspects of ourselves.

Or do we?

Therein lies the answer to whether sex becomes better or worse.

Clearly, we can't pound away for hours like we did at 20. If that is what you are counting on then yes, it's disappointing. But there is another door here. Slowing down opens an opportunity for more depth, sweetness, sensuality, power and real connection than anything we could have imagined at 20. **If we are interested in looking deeper, finding transporting states of bliss and reaching more deeply into our hearts, then yes, it's better, absolutely.**

It's embarrassingly simple. Are you interested in learning about yourself?

Are you willing to give up the illusion that your partner can (or should) read your mind? Are you taking more responsibility for your desires? Are you learning to communicate so that your heart can be at ease and your body can relax?

Are you learning to slow down and savor the moment? Are you learning to set aside the goal, get off the rushing train track and play in the meadow that you are already in? Are you becoming more aware of your body?

The trouble with growing and becoming more aware is that it's risky. We don't know what we are going to find, which is why many of us would just as soon not bother. Better not to know any more about our own tender hearts, lest we disappoint ourselves, lest we challenge our limiting ideas of what we are capable of, lest we have to take more responsibility for ourselves and our pleasure. Easier just to go along with what we already know.

This is the crux of the question, about sex and about life, certainly life after 50. Most of us have long since chosen which path we are on. Either we are on the path of curiosity about ourselves and the world - essentially, we are still alive - or, we've neglected self awareness in favor of feeling safe. Something in us has already died. It's awfully hard to have great sex if something in you has already expired.

It seems a little unfair to get to the end of an article without giving you at least some small thing you can do to begin, so I've included an exercise you can do right now (see inset over photo).

Welcome to SexWise! This column will feature thoughts on sensuality, sexuality, pleasure and affection. It will offer real, practical advice, to help you explore the rich opportunities of maturity. Future topics will include asking for what you want, reaching deeper into your heart, understanding giving and receiving, changes in body and soul, and maturity and passion. ■



Dr. Betty Martin

Dr. Betty Martin is a sex coach living and working in Seattle, founder of www.EroticEducation.org and the author of the forthcoming book, *The Lover's Touch, Bringing your heart into your hands, due out April 2011. Write to her with questions at sexwise@seattlewise.com.*

Wiser Style

by Skye Moody



Skye Moody and Tom Orton. Two authors connect at Ravish, on Eastlake Avenue East.

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC

Seeking Out a Wiser Watering Hole

The cacophonous drivel ratcheted up to earsplitting is your first clue. If you manage to parse out actual words and the most used is, "like," and the second most used is, "like," that's another clue. If your waitperson lacks bubble and spark, then you know you're drowning at the shallow end of the pool.

The "trendy, cool" new lounge your granddaughter habituates might not be for you. Don't blame little Ashley; she's mortified when you walk in. And don't misunderstand; some Wisers feel younger going deaf with twenty-somethings who bob and weave amongst their own school of *recherché ne plus* ultra hipsters while you sit ignored if not reviled alone at the bar, a crocodile among pollywogs, so... stand-out.

Catch another clue: If the host rolls her eyes, sneers at your dewlaps, and asks, "Do you have reservations?"

Reply: "Yes, but I'll try it anyway."

Better yet, flee. No shame attaches to eloping from a just-not-you nightspot, and if you buckle just because someone your grandkid's age tics at you, you may stunt your brain cells while squandering a potentially lovely evening. So suck it up, Wisers, (cougars and Sugar Daddys excepted) and connect with your peers or perish beneath a trampling of girly espadrilles.

Among the nation's favored barhopping cities, Seattle offers a plethora of deeper watering holes, perchance to meet attractive, intelligent, voguish, roguish, refined or foppish, Menshevik or eccentric cohorts. From swank nightclubs to downright dives, from house brew bars to sanctuaries of esoteric grandiloquence where the oh-so politically correct avert their eyes from alluring sweater puppies, there's a place for

hungry intelligentsia and thirsty Huskies fans.

Author Nick O'Connell likes the Tea Cup on Queen Anne, where he writes while enjoying an eclectic collection of tea. For dining, the O'Connells favor Ethan Stowell's How to Cook a Wolf. "The (Italian-inspired) food and venue are simple and rustic," says O'Connell. No wolves served, though the occasional gentlewolf may take your coat or hold your chair.

San Francisco's and Seattle's most literary mariner, Captain David Williams and the whipsmart Seattle realtor Carrie DeBuys, enjoy the Loft Café & Social Lounge in Edmonds. This casual, friendly dining spot, avers Capt. Williams, "...has great food, great help, and an intimate atmosphere that makes you feel miles away from home." A sea captain should know.

Seattle Times Features writer Nancy Bartley loves, "the coziness of Pioneer

Square's Grand Central Arcade, where I sit by the fireplace and have a latte or lunch." Bartley likes the Waterfront Grill's martinis, appetizers, and its "casually elegant Northwest atmosphere" overlooking Elliott Bay. Heaps of kudos flow in for Tom Douglas's Dahlia Lounge, where Bartley says breakfasts are "fabulous". Lunches, too. (Hot Tip: Watch for a new Tom Douglas venue in SLU.)

Author Tom Orton seems always first to discover the freshest sweet spot,

"Do you have reservations?" "Yes, but I'll try it anyway."

while keeping faithful to some classics. Among Orton's regular stops: Serafina, and its separate bites/cocktail bar, Cicchetti, Salvatore, Le Spiga, and Café Presse. Orton cites these as "lively but comfortable places to go with friends."

Orton suggests Shun, Nell's, or Eva as "quieter, more intimate...where hearing is never a problem." His three favorite solo spots are Kisaku, Piatti, Cicchetti, "places where you can go by yourself and eat at the bar."

Max Wells, publisher of Seattle Wise, and his wife Amy, a sales executive, enjoy Mexican food at Casa Patron on 65th, the Greenlake Grill, and the Roosevelt Ale House,

which serves gluten-free beer.

Business executive emeritus and globe trekker Steve Wald advocates the Olympic Peninsula's forests, where Wald and wife Joan, observe "the explosion of childlike joy when neophytes master the art of stalking the... wild chanterelle." 'Shrooming aside, hanging with your babe deep in the primeval forest may conjure all sorts of pastimes. Afterwards, you'll swoon over dinner at the amazing Agate Pass Café.

Mystery author Curt Colbert enjoys Café Argento on Capitol Hill and Hotwire in Shoreline. The coffee's great, Colbert vows, "and both venues allow me to kick back and

write with pen and paper..."

A favorite hangout may be a certain park bench, say, at the Hiram Chittenden Locks, or a walk through the Arboretum, or an afternoon alone at the Seattle Art Museum or the Rem Koolhaas-designed Seattle Public Library with its wine-sipping room.

Sometimes hangouts are very personal: Steve Wald has a specific site he visits regularly by himself—the University of Washington Medical Center. "I get repaired there," says Wald, "and while waiting in the lobby, I recalibrate to the mortal hell many unfortunate people go through, making my own travails seem puny." ■



Skye Moody

Novelist, photographer and essayist, Skye Moody has lived and worked in Africa, China, Russia, New York, and New Orleans, recently returning to her native ground, Seattle.

For a comprehensive list of Happy Hours and such, check out **The Stranger's Cocktail Compass for the iPhone.**



Test Your Level of Caregiver Stress

The weight of being a caregiver, especially for a family member with a chronic illness, can affect our health and well-being. —by Eve M. Stern, RN, MS

Caregiving has become a more commonly recognized and talked-about term in the last few years with an estimated 69 million unpaid caregivers, comprising 29 percent of the U.S. adult population. Almost 49 million of these unpaid caregivers are caring for adults only, while 12.9 million care for both children and adults. Each year, more and more baby boomers are faced with the burdens of caregiving for their parents, just when they finish raising their children. With the social trend of family members no longer living in the same city, long distance caregiving creates an additional set of complex challenges for the individual trying to routinely assess the loved one's needs and coordinating the necessary support for them.

Many of us don't self-identify as caregivers, yet we continuously provide unconditional care as part of our commitments or social obligations to the key relationships in our lives. However, the weight of being a caregiver, especially for a family member with a chronic illness, can affect our health and well-being. A recent AARP/MetLife study on caregiving in the U.S. reported that the typical caregiver averages 21.9 hours per week of caregiving activities for an average duration of 4.6 years.¹ The ability to sustain this effort on top of a paying job is bound to affect work productivity and absenteeism, which only compounds the stress of care giving.

Caregiver stress levels can be easily overlooked and, if not addressed, can lead to depression, fatigue, sleep deprivation, social isolation, poor nutrition, and even reduction of the caregiver's lifespan by as much as 10 years.² Overlay this with the financial impact of caregiving, and you have a recipe for suboptimal health.

Assess your level of caregiver stress by taking a quick five-minute test. Assign one of the following values to each statement in the caregiver stress test:

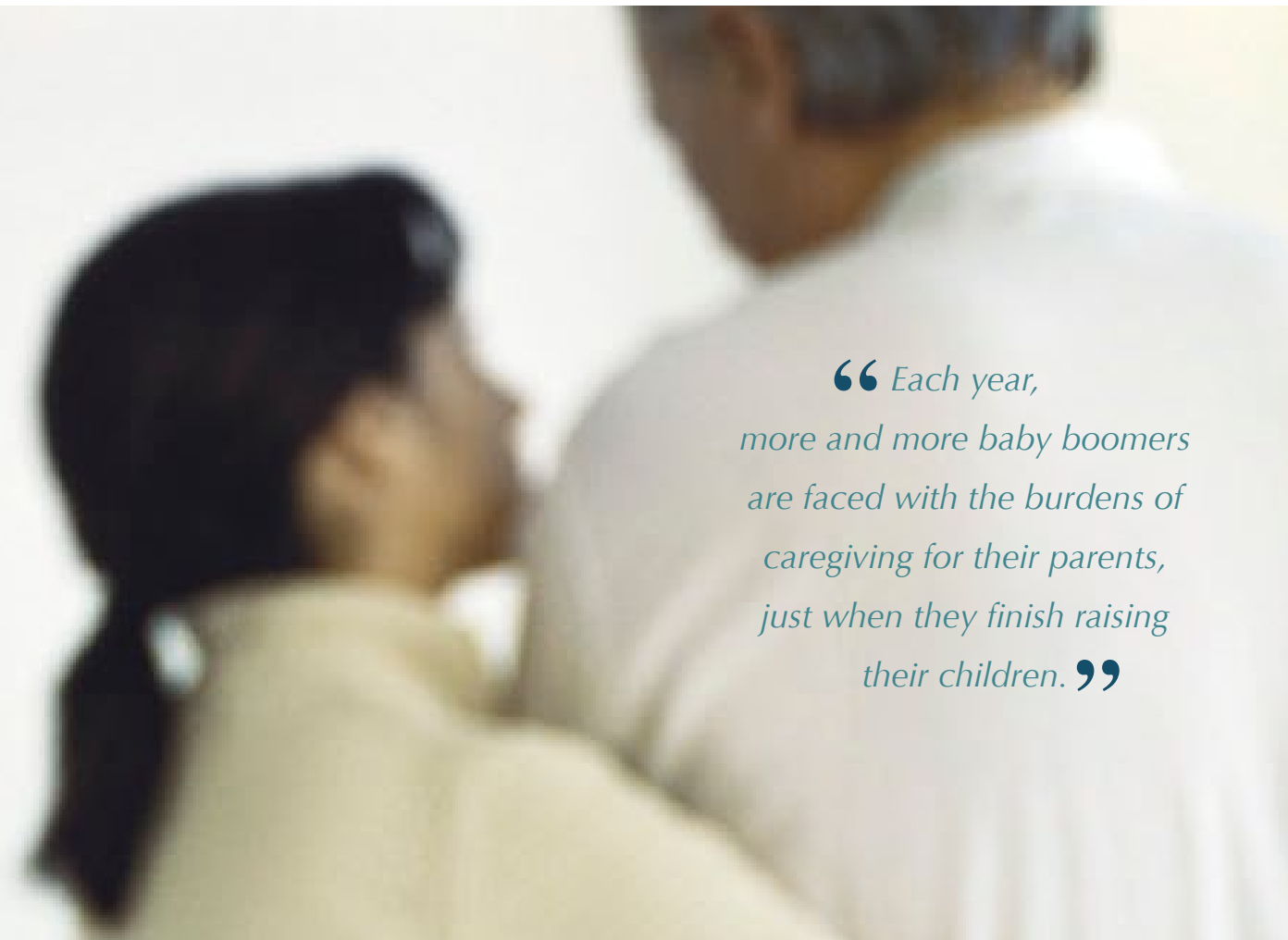
- Never = 0
- Rarely = 1
- Sometimes = 2
- Frequently = 3

CAREGIVER STRESS TEST

PHYSICAL HEALTH	POINTS
Have you noticed that your own health is suffering?	
Are you experiencing sleep disturbances?	
Do you have difficulty focusing on what you're doing?	
SOCIAL RELATIONS	
Do your family and friends say you're stressed?	
Has caregiving impacted your work performance?	
Do you need more caregiving support from family members?	
PERSONAL DEMANDS	
Do you feel isolated and that you're "missing out on life"?	
Do you worry that you should be doing a better job of caring for your loved one?	
Does the amount of caregiving feel too overwhelming?	
EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING	
Do you feel emotionally drained?	
Do you resent or feel angry about having to care for your loved one?	
Do you feel you need more privacy?	
TOTAL POINT VALUES:	

SCORING

0-9 Minimal Stress	Stress levels are easily managed. Evaluate your stress levels periodically to monitor increases.
10-18 Mild Stress	Your stress level is tolerable but could benefit by asking for help and taking more time for yourself.
19-27 Moderate Stress	Consider taking some time off from caregiving to reduce stress.
28-36 Severe Stress	Seek help from a professional agency, assisted living or caregiver to provide short or longer time relief from caregiving.



“Each year, more and more baby boomers are faced with the burdens of caregiving for their parents, just when they finish raising their children.”

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS

1. Learn about the condition of the person you are caring for. Chronic illnesses have stages of progression that require different care giving skills and capabilities.
2. Know what resources are available to help you. For example, home care, adult day services, and other respite programs can provide relief to offer a break from caregiving. Many assisted living communities will also accommodate short stays.
3. Get connected. Caregivers often feel socially isolated. Learn to ask for help from family and friends. Seek out support groups to find comfort from others in similar situations. Use the Internet to find others who can share their personal experiences and provide insights on dealing with caregiver challenges.
4. Remember to take care of yourself. If you exhaust yourself or get sick, you won't be able to assist your loved one, which can trigger feelings of guilt. It's hard to find a daily balance, but each day, try to make it a priority to eat healthy foods, take time out for yourself, and get a decent night's sleep: all basic essentials for your own physical and mental well-being. ■

Foot Notes:

1. National Alliance for Caregiving in collaboration with AARP. Caregiving in the U.S. (November 2009).
2. Epel, E.S. et al. University of California, San Francisco. From the proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, December 7, 2004, Vol. 101, No. 49.



Eve Stern

Eve Stern has been a serial entrepreneur in the health care industry for the past 30 years, and has built multiple national successful companies. In 2006 she became the Co-CEO of SNAPforSeniors—the leading data and technology company that manages the largest national senior service provider information network in the U.S.

Advice for the Journey

by Evan Kimble

“The journey between what you once were and who you are now becoming is where the dance of life really takes place.” — Barbara DeAngelis

Evan,

I'm a 52 year old guy and my youngest child is getting ready to leave for college. Part of me is relieved to be done managing her through high-school, but a much bigger part is terrified of what happens next. I can't remember the last time my wife and I talked about anything but the kids and the logistics of who needs to be where and when. Who am I and what should I do next?

• • •

This transition is the biggest since you became a parent. Your anxiety is normal and even helpful—it is telling you the time is right to dig deep and rediscover yourself. It is far better to notice and respond authentically to this transition than sleep-walk into a mid-life crisis. Another factor in your favor is that your child hasn't left yet. You have time to prepare.

As you've already noticed, the place to start is right beside you: your wife, and the quality of your relationship. Many couples lose intimacy during the long ride to launching children. The key is—are you still into each other? Do you share activities? Can you support each other's interests? It's time to try new things, hopefully some together. Slam poetry, sky-diving, or community environmental projects will breathe new life, and give you some things to talk about.

The second issue is the rediscovery of your self. Under your mature and capable exterior there lurk old dreams, lost loves, and longing for youth. Listen carefully to your inner thoughts, and go where you feel energy. It is time to get back to playing guitar or soccer, writing the one-act play, and reconnecting with friends. If you really miss connecting with kids, feel free to volunteer at a school or be a mentor.

Watch out for things that can really mess you up: younger women at work who admire you too much, expensive objects (hello boat!), drugs, alcohol, and loneliness.

And finally, your daughter will still need you next year, but in a new way. It may be that you will have an opportunity to be something closer to friends or pen-pals, and share the humor and hard-earned wisdom from your own (mis)adventures in college.



Evan Kimble

Evan Kimble is a Psychotherapist and Licensed Mental Health Counselor who brings together different elements: science and spirituality, passion and grace, East and West, laid-back and intense.

You can reach him at advice@seattlewise.com or via his website at www.safepassagetherapy.com

Evan,

Only recently, I finished being “mom-slave” to my wonderful-but-always-need-something children. Now my husband's mother has passed away, and my father-in-law may need to move in with us. What am I to do?

• • •

Eldercare is the new black. There's plenty of it going around and as our communities have fragmented, the weight of the job often falls on the backs of the most experienced nurturers: moms.

Take your next steps with care. Gather lots of information. Talk to friends who have cared for parents or hired others to do it. Consult with professionals who advise on these matters (some counselors or psychologists specialize in geriatrics and aging-issues).

Your father-in-law will be going through several stages of his own change and adaptation: grief and loss about his wife, more loss and possible depression if he has to leave old connections behind, factors of aging, mortality and meaning-making.

Consider your losses too, and the potential impacts. Are some of your personal plans thwarted by this new responsibility? You call yourself “mom-slave,” so maybe everyone else in the family has gotten used to you always being on duty. This is still the right time to redefine your role in the family and share the load. Your husband may resist, but sound the wake-up call: business-as-usual is over, and he's got to share in the new world order.

Taking care of your father-in-law may be necessity not choice. But it is still an act of profound love. Appreciate yourself for that generosity. And be generous with yourself. Watch out for burn-out. Your needs matter. Make sure you get time for yourself, Girl's Night out to the spa or the shooting range, and loads of affection from your husband. ■

Heart Warming Chili w/Walnuts



Warm up a dreary winter afternoon with the heart-healthy and simple chili recipe. The twist of adding walnuts gives an extra crunch and a boost of good eating.

Makes 2 servings, 475 calories per serving, 21 g fat, 46 g carbs, 400 mg sodium.

YOU'LL NEED:

- 3 T. Extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cups chopped onion
- 2 cups sliced carrots
- ½ t. salt
- 2 t. cumin
- ¼ c. chili powder
- 2 lbs lean ground turkey breast
- 2 cups minced yellow or red pepper
- 1-12oz can red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1-16oz can chopped or crushed tomatoes
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- ¼ c chopped fresh parsley

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Heat olive oil in large pan. Add onion and sauté over medium heat until translucent.
2. Add carrot, salt, and spices, and sauté until spices are toasted.
3. Crumble in the ground turkey breast, and sprinkle in the minced bell pepper and cook until the turkey breast is cooked through and becomes white and opaque.
4. Add the beans and tomatoes, and stir gently so as not to break the beans. Bring to a boil then lower heat and cook, partly covered, over medium-low heat for another 20 minutes.
5. Serve hot, sprinkled with chopped walnuts and parsley.

Identity **THEFT**



Photo © Heather Gail Delaney / Alamy

A connection you don't want

by Jacquie Harkema

What if someone creates a driver's license using your information and their picture? This is the driver's license they use when they get stopped and issued a ticket for speeding or driving under the influence.

When they don't show up for the court date, this means there is a warrant for their arrest. But whose information is on the arrest warrant? Yours!

At some future time, you get pulled over for speeding. When the officer looks in his computer to see what else may be on your record, he notices the warrant out for you. But it's not you. It's the person who stole your identity.

So it's not really you they want, but the person who used your identity. How do you prove you are you and not the person using your identity? Ahh! That is the essence of identity theft. This is the beginning of many hours of work and lots of emotional turmoil on your way to unraveling this mess.

Other types of identity theft include medical, Social Security, criminal, and financial.

Most of us have learned to associate the term identity theft with financial accounts and credit cards. We may have had some unexplained charges on our credit card. This is the type of thing that's been advertised as identity theft for years.

“According to the Federal Trade Commission, the definition of identity theft is: “when someone uses someone else's identifying information to commit fraud.” ”

However, this is actually considered credit card or bank fraud. Someone may have tapped into your financial accounts, but they are not actually assuming your identity. They are merely using your credit or money for themselves.

If you are a victim of financial identity theft, it would mean that someone opens new accounts in your name. They use the new identity (yours) to obtain funds and may or may not choose to make timely repayments or any repayments at all. If you are a victim of this, it could affect your credit rating if not caught soon enough. This is the real financial identity theft.

According to the Federal Trade Commission, the definition of identity theft is: “when someone uses someone else's identifying information to commit fraud.”

There are many misconceptions about identity theft. One of the most misunderstood aspects of it all is that we can prevent it. In spite of some proclamations made by a number of companies offering identity theft services, we can take precautionary measures, but it could still occur.

Think of all the places that have our Social Security numbers: every doctor, dentist, and hospital or any type of medical facility we've ever used; every place we ever worked; every school, college, or university we ever attended. Think about it, and you will be able to expand this list to the hundreds of places that have our Social Security numbers and other pertinent identifying information.

Scary, maybe. But think about this: Before I pointed this out, was this information not out there?

There are some things you can do, and the inset shows some ways to determine if an identity theft prevention service is worth your money and whether it will provide the peace of mind you seek. ■

.....
Currently a resident of Ann Arbor, Michigan, Jacquie Harkema has done a number of things throughout her working years, including presentations about identity theft to various groups.

Before you invest in one of the identity theft services, ask three questions.

1. Does the service monitor your credit files? Some monitor one bureau, but there are some that monitor all three credit bureaus.
2. How will the service deal with an issue of identity theft if it happens to you? Most will give some assistance and guidance, supplying contact information for the various entities you will need to contact. You can also obtain a comprehensive booklet from the Federal Trade Commission, with step-by-step how-to's to put you back to “pre-theft” status.
3. Does the service provide restoration of your identity, providing a professional investigator to handle everything for you? Identity theft is often the result of syndicated crime rings obtaining your information. With a professional to handle the situation, you will save many hours of your time and emotional turmoil.

MOVIEWISE

By Robert Horton



Photo © Masterfile / Royalty Free

Connection

Three movies spanning time and subject, but with the age-old theme of



Make Way for Tomorrow

This 1937 masterpiece has received a new appreciation in recent years, both for its unusual subject—an aging husband and wife separated by their adult children's inability (or reluctance) to care for them—and for director Leo McCarey's richly emotional and humorous treatment. The bonds of family are measured and found wanting, yet nobody is entirely to blame. And that's what's most heartbreaking.



La Ronde

True to its source material—an oft-produced Arthur Schnitzler play—this 1950 film travels from one character to the next in turn-of-the-century Vienna. Beginning with a prostitute and ending with a count, the film traces a chain of tenderness, regret, and hope through a series of liaisons. Also connecting these souls is director Max Ophüls' gliding camera, as his narrator (suave Anton Walbrook) spins a carousel of life that invariably travels in a circle.



Up in the Air

George Clooney is a hired hatchet man, laying off employees around the country; he makes daily connections flying city to city, while keeping his own life free of entanglements. Jason Reitman's witty 2009 film charts his fall to earth, as this 21st-century man finds that "human resources" might be something other than a corporate department.

Robert Horton reviews movies for the Herald in Everett and KUOW-FM in Seattle, as well as a number of national publications. His books on film include *Billy Wilder: Interviews* and the upcoming *Frankenstein*. He blogs about film at The Crop Duster <http://roberthorton.wordpress.com/>

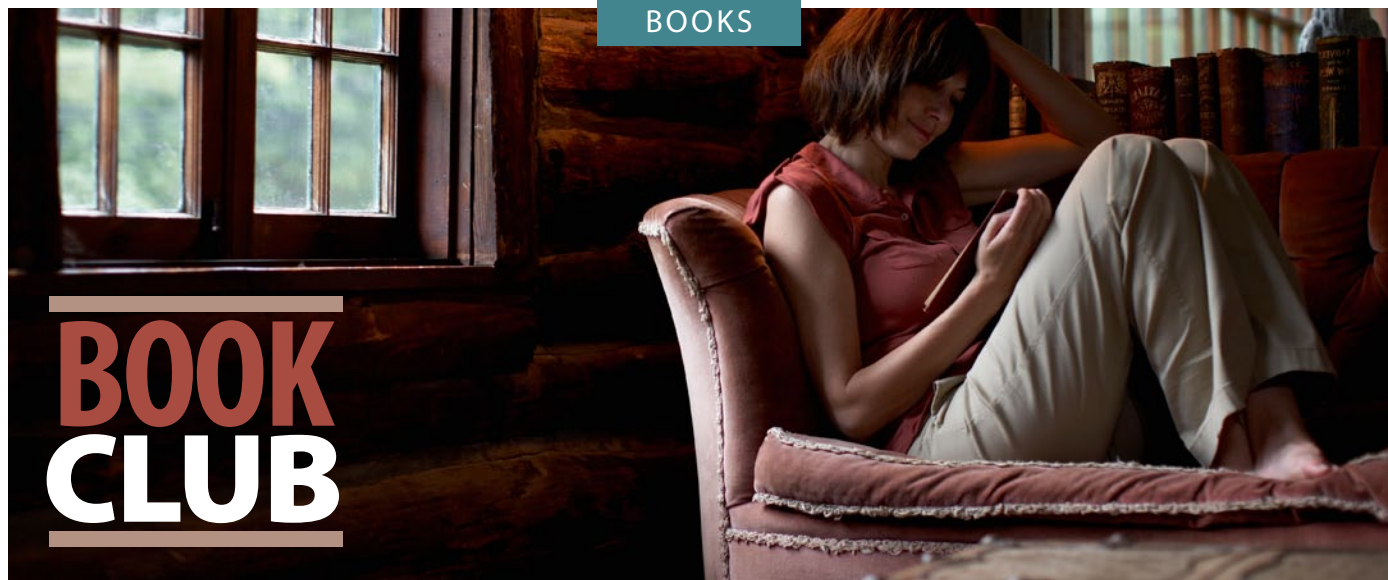
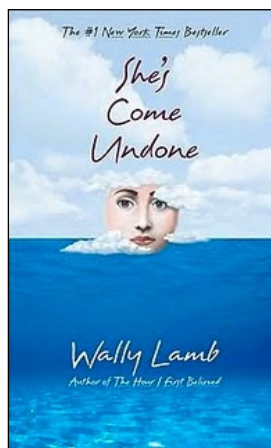


Photo by Kim Carson / ThinkStockphotos.com

BOOK CLUB

This month we present two compelling and inspiring stories, both about making connections with reality. One set in the desolate and desperate mind of a lonely woman, and one set in the concrete jungle of New York City.

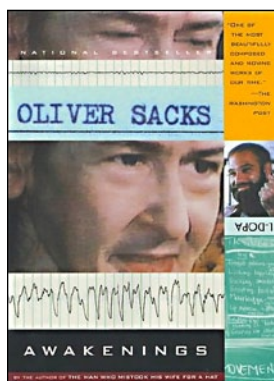


She's Come Undone —by Wally Lamb

"Mine is a story of craving; an unreliable account of lusts and troubles that began, somehow, in 1956 on the day our first television was delivered..." Disturbing yet hopeful, *She's Come Undone* offers look into the life of the fictional character Dolores Price. Since being born to a father who wanted nothing to do with her, and a mother who died when Dolores was just a teenager, she

could never really find anyone to really connect with. Until one night, walking alone on the beach, she watches a beached whale takes its last breath; and it's with this mighty animal that Dolores, feeling alone and overweight herself, finally truly connects with another living creature. That connection leads her on a journey that includes psych wards, miscarriages, and empty relationships. But it's also through that whale on the beach that Dolores Price is eventually, truly and fully able to connect with herself.

Wally Lamb, Pocket Books, List Price: \$16.00



Awakenings —by Oliver Sacks

It's not uncommon for doctors to connect with their patients. The real gift is when those doctors teach their patients to connect with the world around them, and learn something about their own interdependence in the process.

During the years between 1917 and 1928, a devastating encephalitis lethargica epidemic took over The Bronx in New York City. The condition causes patients to become catatonic and makes them completely lose touch with the world around them. After discovering a drug that will help, L-Dopa, Dr. Sacks begins to administer it to the patients who have been "sleeping" for almost ten years. As the drug begins to work in his patients, they must learn how to reconnect with the world and the people in it. In those awakening moments, both doctor and patient begin to see the world in a new light

Oliver Sacks, Vintage Books a Division of Random House, \$16.00

To buy these books, view the article online at:
www.seattlewise.com

Puzzle Me This!

Improve your math skills and keep sharp with the NY Times syndicated Ken Ken puzzles.

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1. Fill in the numbers from 1 to 6.
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4. Cages with just one square should be filled in with the target number in the top corner.
5. A number can be repeated within a cage as long as it is not in the same row.

2-		1-	24x	2÷	
2÷				2÷	
2-		6+	4-	7+	2÷
2÷	3-				
			1-		8+
1	2-		3-		

www.kenken.com

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Excima Martial Arts

April 16, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Yesler Community Center, 917 E Yesler Way, Seattle, WA 98122
This martial arts event is for adults.
\$5
206-386-1245
<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/yeslercc.htm>

Spring Egg Hunt and Pancake Breakfast

April 16, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Van Asselt Community Center, 2820 S Myrtle St., Seattle, WA 98108-3953
All ages are welcome to join in on the pancake breakfast. Egg hunt is for those ages 10 and younger.
\$1 per person/\$5 per family for pancake breakfast
206-386-1921
<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Centers/vanasseltcc.htm>

Speak Out for the Rights of People with Pain: A Public Educational Event

April 16, 10:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Cedarbrook Lodge, 18525 36th Ave. S, Seatac, WA 98188-4967
This event is for adults, seniors, and those with special needs. Pre-registration required. Experts talk about pain management and how to improve pain care. Exhibitors will be onsite.
\$10 in advance/\$15 at the door
[SpeakOut@painfoundation.org](http://www.painfoundation.org),
<http://www.painfoundation.org/events/speak-out.html>

Friends of The Seattle Public Library Spring Book Sale

April 17, 11 a.m.–4 p.m.

Magnuson Park, 7400 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115
Adults, seniors, and families are welcome to take part in The Seattle Public Library's spring book sale, which includes more than 250,000 books, CDs, DVDs, and audio books.
Free entrance
206-523-4053
<http://friendsofspl.org/>

Free Weekend Walk — Intro to Plant Identification and Taxonomy

April 17, 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Washington Park Arboretum, 2300 Arboretum Dr. E, Seattle, WA 98112
The University of Washington Botanic Gardens sponsors this walk around the Montlake and Portage Bay areas.
Free
206-543-8801
<http://www.uwbotanicgardens.org/>

Basketball Drop-In

April 18, 1 p.m.–3 p.m.

Yesler Community Center, 917 E Yesler Way, Seattle, WA 98122
Both adults and seniors are welcome to join in on this basketball drop-in game.
No pre-registration required.
\$3 adults/\$2 seniors
206-386-1245
<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/yeslercc.htm>

Social Media Class

April 18, 12:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m.

Senior Center of West Seattle, 4217 SW Oregon St., Seattle, WA 98116
Adults and seniors are invited to learn about social media and associated technology. Register by calling
206-932-4044.
\$10 members/\$15 non-members
206-932-4044
<http://www.sc-ws.org/>

Pickleball for Adults

April 19, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Yesler Community Center, 917 E Yesler Way, Seattle, WA 98122
Adults are invited to join in on a traditional game of pickleball.
\$3 adults/\$2 seniors
206-386-1245
<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/yeslercc.htm>

An Evening at Chess

April 19, 7 p.m.–9 p.m.

Yesler Community Center, 917 E Yesler Way, Seattle, WA 98122
Sharpen your chess skills by joining in on an evening of chess. All ages are welcome.
Free
206-386-1245
<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/yeslercc.htm>

Market Ghost Tours

April 19, 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Pike Place Market, 1410 Post Alley, Seattle, WA 98101-2034
Join in on this 75-minute walking tour of the Seattle market area and its ghost legends. Teens and older are welcome. Pre-registration is required.
\$13-\$15
206-805-0195
<http://www.seattleghost.com/>,
marketghosttour@gmail.com

Most Hilarious Comedy Show Ever

April 20, 8–10 p.m.

Comedy Underground, 109 S Washington St., Seattle, WA 98104-2521
Adults and teens are invited to join in on a night of fun and laughter.
\$8
holm.barbara2@gmail.com,
<http://www.comedyunderground.com/>

Technology 101 for Adults

April 20, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Cleveland High School, 5511 15th Ave. S, Seattle, WA 98108
Metrocenter YMCA is sponsoring this technology educational event for adults.
Free
bgordon@seattleyymca.org

Magnuson Habitat Enhancement

April 21, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Warren G. Magnuson Park, 6505 NE 65th St., Seattle, WA 98115-5016
Community members are invited to help the Magnuson Environmental Stewardship Alliance remove invasive plants, weed, and mulch, among other seasonal work. Teens and older are welcome. Pre-registration is required.
Free
206-524-8713
bmiller@serv.net,
<http://www.mesaseattle.org/>

Save the Sound: Build a Rain Garden

April 21, 6 p.m.–8 p.m.

University of Washington's Center for Urban Horticulture, 3501 NE 41st St., Seattle, WA
Learn how rain gardens positively affect rainwater from downspouts, driveways, and sidewalks while protecting local waterways. You will also receive a free rain garden manual during the workshop. Pre-registration is required.
Free
206-292-9875
sg@stewardshippartners.org,
http://stewardshippartners.org/raingarden_workshops.html

World Rhythm Festival

April 22, 10 a.m.–10 p.m.

Seattle Center, 305 Harrison St., Seattle, WA 98109-4623
Enjoy more than 120 performances from cultures around the world.
Free
206-999-2394
<http://www.swps.org/>

Peking Opera Painting Exhibition by Zhixian Ren

April 22, 2–5 p.m.

Wallingford Center, 1815 N 45th St., Seattle, WA 98103-6856
Celebrate the grand opening of the Peking Opera Painting Exhibit in the Gallery Room.
Free
206-876-0088
<http://www.wallingfordcenter.com/>

Save a Salmon-Bearing Stream

April 23, 9 a.m.–1 p.m.

McAleer Creek Lake Forest Park, McAleer Creek, NE 170th St., Seattle, WA 98155
Community members of all ages can help restore stream-side habitat on McAleer Creek, a salmon-bearing stream. Remove invasive English ivy that threatens trees and surrounding habitat. Pre-registration is required.
Free
206-297-8141,
Nisa Karimi: nisa@cedarriver.org,
www.cedarriver.org

World Rhythm Festival

April 23, 10 a.m.–10 p.m.

Seattle Center, 305 Harrison St., Seattle, WA 98109-4623
The Seattle World Percussion Society is sponsoring this festival for all community members. The 18th annual festival includes more than 120 musical performances.
Free
206-999-2394, david@swps.org

Funky Fremont

April 24, 10 a.m.–noon

Chipotle, 1501 3rd Ave., Seattle, WA 98101-1611 (Meet outside Chipotle's on the corner of 3rd and Pike.)
Take this local informative tour of the Fremont area that includes stops at the Fremont Troll, the Lenin statue, Theo Chocolate, and the Fremont Sunday Market. Call Brown Paper Tickets for advance reservations: 1-800-838-3006. Pre-registration not required.
\$19 advance/\$22 walk-up
206-853-3545, info@seattlebyfoot.com, www.seattlebyfoot.com

The Bridge Musical Concert

April 24, 8–11 p.m. (Doors open at 7:30 p.m.)

Tractor Tavern, 5213 Ballard Ave. NW, Seattle, WA 98107
Adults are invited to enjoy this musical concert sponsored by Square Peg Concerts.
\$10 advance/\$12 day of show
206-789-3599,
www.tractortavern.com

EnhanceFitness Exercise Program

April 25, 4–5 p.m.

South Park Neighborhood Center, 8201 10th Ave. S.
The EnhanceFitness program is an exercise program targeted to those age 50 and older.
Free
206-767-3650,
www.projectenhance.org

Volleyball Drop-In

April 25, 6–9 p.m.

Yesler Community Center, 917 E Yesler Way, Seattle, WA 98122
Both adults and seniors are welcome to join in on this volleyball drop-in game. Pre-registration not required.
\$3 adults/\$2 seniors
206-386-1245, Kiesha Cannon
<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/yeslercc.htm>

Pickleball for Adults

April 26, 10 a.m.–noon

Yesler Community Center, 917 E Yesler Way, Seattle, WA 98122
Adults are invited to join in on a traditional game of pickleball.
\$3 adults/\$2 seniors
Kiesha Cannon: 206-386-1245,
<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/yeslercc.htm>

Table Tennis for Adults

April 26, 10 a.m.–noon

Yesler Community Center, 917 E Yesler Way, Seattle, WA 98122
This drop-in table tennis game is for adults and seniors.
\$3 adults/\$2 seniors
Kiesha Cannon: 206-386-1245,
<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/yeslercc.htm>

Basic Computer Class

April 26, 9:30–11:30 a.m.

Senior Center of West Seattle, 4217 SW Oregon St., Seattle, WA 98116
This computer class is specifically for adults and seniors. Registration is required.
\$10 members/\$15 non-members
206-932-4044, <http://www.sc-ws.org>

Encore Careers

April 27, 7:00 – 8:30pm

Marc Freedman, social entrepreneur, Founder and CEO of Civic Ventures,

discuss his book, "The Big Shift: Navigating the New Stage Between Midlife and Old Age."
Microsoft Auditorium at Seattle Public Library, Central Library, 1000 Fourth Ave., Seattle, WA 98104-1109
Free
206-386-4636, http://www.spl.org/default.asp?pageID=about_news_detail&cid=1301432379653

Chinese Dance for Adults

April 27, 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Yesler Community Center, 917 E Yesler Way, Seattle, WA 98122
Join other community members for Chinese dance for adults.
\$3 adults/\$2 seniors
Kiesha Cannon: 206-386-1245,
<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/yeslercc.htm>

Skype Demonstration

April 28, 1–3 p.m.

Wallingford Community Senior Center (WCSC), 4649 Sunnyside Ave. N, Seattle, WA 98103
Adults and seniors will watch and learn how to use Skype, a free video-conferencing computer program. Pre-registration is required.
\$10 WCSC members/\$15 non-members
206-461-7825, Norah Erwin-Stewart:
norah@wallingfordseniors.org,
www.wallingfordseniors.org

Pet Loss Support Group

April 28, 6–7:30 p.m.

Seattle Animal Shelter, Upper Level Conference Room, 2061 15th Ave. W, Seattle, WA 98119-2727
The Pet Loss Support Group provides a place where pet owners who have lost an animal can share stories about their pet and talk about their grief. Groups are led by trained facilitators.
Free
206-386-7387,
<http://www.seattle.gov/animalshelter/>

Entry Gallery Exhibition: In Focus

April 29, 9 a.m.–6 p.m.

Gage Academy of Art, 1501 10th Ave. E., Seattle, WA 98102, 3rd floor
Gary Faigin's Still-Life Painting Atelier students present artwork that explores and expands on the still-life tradition.
Free
206.323.4243, info@gageacademy.org, www.gageacademy.org

Continued >>

American Diabetes Association EXPO April 30, 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m.

Washington State Convention Center, 800 Convention Place, Seattle, WA 98101-2350

Everyone is invited to join the American Diabetes Association EXPO, which offers information on how to prevent and manage diabetes and related health conditions. Receive free health screenings and consultations with health experts. Register online or on the day of the event.

Free
206-282-4616 ext. 7211, Susan Millender: smillender@diabetes.org, www.diabetes.org

Neighborhood Chats with Councilmember Tom Rasmussen

April 30, 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Capitol Hill Branch Library, 425 Harvard Ave. E, Seattle, WA 98102
Join Councilmember Tom Rasmussen, who will speak with city residents about transportation issues and more.

Free
Committee Chair Tom Rasmussen: tom.rasmussen@seattle.gov, 206-684-8808

Seattle Downtown Living: Exploring Urban Life

May 1, 1–5 p.m.

Starts at Westlake Center, 400 Pine St., Seattle, WA 98101-3625
The Seattle Architecture Foundation presents a behind-the-scenes look at Seattle's urban lifestyle. For suburbanites, tourists, and downtown locals. Pre-register online for a discounted rate.

\$25 in advance/\$30 day of/\$20 students and seniors
206-667-9184, Sydney Dobson, sydney@seattlearchitecture.org, www.seattlearchitecture.org

May Day! May Day! A New Music Marathon

May 1, Noon–10 p.m.

Town Hall Center for Civic Life, Great Hall (Enter on 8th Avenue.)
Join the second annual May Day! May Day! Marathon: a 10-hour performer-driven celebration of contemporary American music.
\$5 at the door (One ticket allows re-entry throughout the day.)
800-838-3006, www.brownpapertickets.com

Market Ghost Tours

May 1, 7–8:15 p.m.

Pike Place Market, 1410 Post Alley, Seattle, WA 98101-2034
Join this 75-minute walking tour of the Seattle market area and its ghost legends. Teens and older are welcome.

Pre-registration is required: marketghosttour@gmail.com.

\$13-\$15
206-805-0195, <http://www.seattleghost.com/>

Photo Exhibit “Expanding the Imagination”

May 2-31, 9 a.m.–9 p.m.

Odegaard Library, 2nd floor, George Washington Lane, Seattle, WA 98195
This photo exhibit features the work of Ryszard Horowitz, a photographer and graphic designer.

Free
206-362-3829, Ewa Poraj-Kuczewska: ewaporaj@q.com, www.polishstudiesuw.org

EnhanceFitness Exercise Program

May 2, 4–5 p.m.

South Park Neighborhood Center, 8201 10th Ave. S., Seattle, WA, 98108
The EnhanceFitness program is an exercise program targeted to those ages 50 and older.

Free
206-767-3650, www.projectenhance.org

Learn to Buy Foreclosure Properties

May 3, 6–7:30 p.m.

Keller Williams Seattle, 1307 N 45th St., Seattle, WA 98103-6704
Learn how to purchase foreclosure properties at auction. Call to reserve your seat.

Free
253-223-3138, Nikki Carter, sellingkingcounty@gmail.com, www.mydatasnap.com

Ballroom Dancing

May 3, 7–9 p.m.

Yesler Community Center, 917 E. Yesler Way, Seattle, WA 98122
This ballroom dancing event is for adults.
\$2 adults/\$1 seniors
Kiesha Cannon: 206-386-1245, <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/yeslercc.htm>

Pilates at Pacific Balance

May 4, 5:30–6:30 a.m.

Pacific Balance and Rehabilitation Clinic, 400 Mercer St., Seattle, WA 98109-4650
Pilates classes are held every Wednesdays. Pre-registration is required.

\$12 per class or \$40 for a package of 4
206.448.1906, nsabahi@pbrcseattle.com, www.pacificbalance.com

Technology 101 for Adults

May 4, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Cleveland High School, 5511 15th Ave. S, Seattle, WA 98108
Metrocenter YMCA is sponsoring this technology educational event for adults.

Free
bgordon@seattleyymca.org

Urban Forest Restoration

May 5, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

West Duwamish Greenbelt, 4408 Delridge Way SW, Seattle, WA 98106
Volunteers will help with urban forest restoration west of Seattle. Pre-register online for up-to-date site locations.

Free
206-923-0853, volunteer@naturec.org, www.naturec.org

6th Annual Cinco de Mayo Celebration at El Centro de la Raza

May 5, 5:30–8:30 p.m.

El Centro de la Raza, 2524 16th Ave. S, Seattle, WA 98144-5104
This festive event features food, arts and crafts, a health and services fair, and musical performances.

Free admission
206-957-4649, events@elcentrodelaraza.org

An Evening of Chess

May 5, 7–9 p.m.

Yesler Community Center, 917 E. Yesler Way, Seattle, WA 98122
Sharpen your chess skills during a fun night of chess.

Free
Kiesha Cannon: 206-386-1245, <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/yeslercc.htm>

“Fabulous Prizes” – Adult Theater

May 6, 8–9:30 p.m.

The “Art Building” of Seattle, 619 Western Ave., Seattle, WA 98104-1440
In *Fabulous Prizes*, The Satori Group and local playwright Neil Ferron dive into a world where “we are all held hostage by our fantasies.” Tickets may be purchased at [brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com).
\$12-18

Seattle Poetry Slam: 2011 Grand Slam

May 6, 7:30–9:30 p.m. (Doors open at 6:30 p.m.)

Town Hall Center for Civic Life, Great Hall (Enter on 8th Avenue.)
The top two poets from three local semi-finals and the Wild Card Slam compete one last time to determine who will be the final 2011 Seattle National Poetry Slam team member.
\$15 advance tickets/\$10 individuals

under 21
800-838-3006, www.brownpapertickets.com

Kitsap Peninsula (Bremerton) Street Scramble

May 7, 9:30 a.m.

Kitsap Peninsula (Bremerton), 6310 NE 74th St., Seattle, WA 98115
Visit 30 locations on foot or bike, score points, and you could be declared the Street Scramble winner! Awards and refreshments at the finish. Register online.
\$5-\$25
206-992-8663, Andrea Gardner: andrea@mergeo.com, www.streetscramble.com

etsyRAIN Handmade Craft Show

May 7, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.

Intiman Theatre, 201 Mercer St., Seattle, WA 98109-4626
Visit the Handmade Craft show to check out handmade clothing, jewelry, pottery, art, and furniture from the national Etsy community. The first 50 people will get a swag bag.
Free
206-683-9744, teametsyrain@gmail.com, www.etsyrain.com

Funky Fremont

May 8, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Chipotle, 1501 3rd Ave., Seattle, WA 98101-1611 (Meet outside Chipotle's on the corner of 3rd and Pike.)
Take this informative local tour of the Fremont area that includes stops at the Fremont Troll, the Lenin statue, Theo Chocolate, and the Fremont Sunday Market.
\$19 advance/\$22 walk-up
206-853-3545, info@seattlebyfoot.com, www.seattlebyfoot.com
(Call Brown Paper Tickets for reservations: 1-800-838-3006.)

Llandover Woods 2nd Sunday Work Party

May 8, 9 a.m.–noon

Llandover Woods, NW 145th St. & 3rd Ave. NW, Seattle, WA 98177
Llandover Woods is an urban forest with abundant native plants and wildlife. Join the Friends of Llandover Woods as they work on restoration each month. While gloves and tools will be provided, wear sturdy clothes and bring water or snacks. RSVP by e-mail.
Free
206-364-9252, Glenn Austin, gaustin@path.org

EnhanceFitness Exercise Program

May 9, 4–5 p.m.

South Park Neighborhood Center, 8201 10th Ave. S, Seattle, WA 98108
The EnhanceFitness program is an exercise program targeted to those age 50 and older.

Free
206-767-3650, www.projectenhance.org

Basketball Drop-In

May 9, 1–3 p.m.

Yesler Community Center, 917 E. Yesler Way, Seattle, WA 98122
Both adults and seniors are welcome to join in on this basketball drop-in game. No pre-registration required.
\$3 adults/\$2 seniors
Kiesha Cannon: 206-386-1245, <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/yeslercc.htm>

Pickleball for Adults

May 10, 10 a.m.–noon

Yesler Community Center, 917 E. Yesler Way, Seattle, WA 98122
Adults are invited to join in on a traditional game of pickleball.
\$3 adults/\$2 seniors
Kiesha Cannon: 206-386-1245, <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/yeslercc.htm>

Volleyball Drop-In

May 10, 5:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m.

Yesler Community Center, 917 E. Yesler Way, Seattle, WA 98122
Both adults and seniors are welcome to join in on this volleyball drop-in game. Pre-registration not required.
\$3 adults/\$2 seniors
Kiesha Cannon: 206-386-1245, <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/yeslercc.htm>

Ballroom Dancing

May 10, 7–9 p.m.

Yesler Community Center, 917 E. Yesler Way, Seattle, WA 98122
This ballroom dancing event is for adults.
\$2 adults/\$1 seniors
Kiesha Cannon: 206-386-1245, <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/yeslercc.htm>

Want to Look Forward to Mondays Again?

May 11, 5–6 p.m.

Talaris World Campus, 4000 N.E. 41st St., Seattle, WA 98105-5428
The Centerpoint Institute is a non-profit organization that helps individuals navigate through career and life transitions. The organization offers free orientations each Wednesday.
Free
206-686-5433, front.office@cpinst.org, www.talariscc.com

Badminton for Adults

May 11, 6–9 p.m.

Yesler Community Center, 917 E. Yesler Way, Seattle, WA 98122-5417
This session of drop-in badminton is for those aged 18 and older.
\$2 adults/\$1 seniors
Kiesha Cannon: 206-386-1245, <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/yeslercc.htm>

Earthquake Home Retrofit Workshop

May 11, 7–9 p.m.

Phinney Neighborhood Association (PNA), 6532 Phinney Ave N, Seattle, WA 98103
Is your home ready for an earthquake? Attend this class and learn how to retrofit your home using Home Retrofit guidelines, especially if your home was built before 1980.
\$20 PNA member/\$25 non-member, \$40 if combined with Phinney Retrofit Class
206-783-2244, Ruth MacDonald, Exec Admin Asst.: ruthm@phinneycenter.org, www.phinneycenter.org

Urban Forest Restoration

May 12, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

West Duwamish Greenbelt, 4408 Delridge Way S.W., Seattle, WA 98106
Volunteers will help with urban forest restoration west of Seattle. RSVP online for up-to-date site locations.
Free
206-923-0853, volunteer@naturec.org, www.naturec.org

“Guys & Dolls”

May 12, 8–10 p.m.

The 5th Avenue Theatre, 1308 5th Ave., Seattle, WA 98101-2602
Enjoy a night at the theater with an entertaining performance of *Guys & Dolls*. Pre-register online.
\$22-103
www.5thavenue.org

Seattle’s Original Coffee Crawl

May 13, 10 a.m.–noon

Seattle’s Best Coffee, 1530 Post Alley, Seattle, WA 98101-3520
Check out a sampling of Seattle’s world famous coffee, plus city lore that explains why Seattle is the “Capital of Coffee.” Advance reservations are recommended. Tours run rain or shine!
\$22 in advance/\$26 walk-up
206-853-3545, info@seattlebyfoot.com, www.seattlebyfoot.com

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WAKING UP IN SEATTLE



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Visitors to this progressive city should consider experiencing something uniquely Seattle — a stay on a houseboat along the city’s lush and vibrant waterways.

By Cheryl Knight

It’s Sunday morning, and I stretch out on the plush living room sofa and bask in the tranquility that often comes before the world wakes up. The sun cascades through the curtains and falls onto the steaming cup of Seattle’s Best in my hand. I scan the looming Seattle skyline outside the window, and a small boat catches my attention as it smoothly sails past my vantage point. A flock of geese quickly give chase.

This tranquil scene won’t last long, however. My husband and I have plans for the day: kayaking on the lake, a short trip to Pike Place Market to peruse the crafts and antique galleries, and finally back to our vacation rental for a home-cooked linguini with shrimp dinner on Lake Union.

You see, we’ve rented a houseboat for the week and intend to enjoy every second of it.

When and Where to Rent a Houseboat in Seattle

While the peak tourist season in Seattle features fast-paced, non-stop entertainment, those seeking less hustle and bustle and a bit more relaxation might find a visit to “The City of Good Will” during the off-season more appealing. From September through April, travelers come from near and far to explore the city at a more leisurely pace. While known for its rainy days, alternative music scene, and phenomenal views of Mount Rainier and the Olympic and Cascade Mountains, visitors to this progressive city should consider experiencing something uniquely Seattle — a stay on a houseboat along the city’s lush and vibrant waterways.

Renting a houseboat in Seattle should be done well in advance of your visit. Most houseboat moorages have become a premium in the area and rent out quickly.

Houseboat styles include houseboats with motors, typically located in marina rental slips and on condo-style deeded docks, and floating homes that don’t usually have motors and are tied directly to a dock.

Houseboat-Hunting Necessities

When searching for the houseboat of your choice, take into account size, available amenities, and cost. Houseboats range in size from small, at about 750 square feet, to expansive at 3,000-plus square feet — generally from one to four rooms and one to two stories.

Creature comforts include big-screen TVs, wrap-around decks, on-site laundry facilities, Wi-Fi, and full kitchens complete with utensils. If you’re bringing a pet along for the trip, make sure to inquire about pet-friendly accommodations.

What about cost? Houseboat rentals run the price-range gamut. Depending on your length of stay, rentals run from \$1,800 a month to \$4,000 a month, depending on the model and the season. Two-day rentals can be found at a rate of \$200 per day. A premium benefit of renting during the

off-season is lower rental prices.

Entertainment Close to the Water’s Edge

Seattle offers a wide selection of entertainment in and around its beautiful shores. The waterfront itself boasts such locations as Pike Place Market, one of the city’s focal points and home to clothing and accessories, antiques and galleries, fresh produce and fish, and restaurants and take-outs.

How about spending time taking in the city’s panoramic view by paddle boat on picturesque Lake Union or taking a hike at Discovery Park on Magnolia Bluff? Visit the waterfront’s Myrtle Edwards Park, which features grand views of Puget Sound and the distant Olympic Mountains. Or tour the Seattle Underground, an expansive network of underground passageways and basements in downtown Seattle.

“The Emerald City” also boasts countless bike trails, kayak rentals, the iconic Space Needle in downtown Seattle, an active nightlife along Eastlake Avenue, and live performances at the Seattle Repertory Theatre, Seattle Public Theater (Bathhouse Theater), and the Seattle Shakespeare Company.

If you’re looking to take a day trip while visiting, head out to Whidbey Island, a mere 25 miles north of Seattle.

Home to gorgeous flora and fauna, Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve, and stunning Meerkerk Gardens, the island represents the perfect winter retreat.

Whether you’re in the mood for a peaceful getaway or prefer a more active vacation, Seattle’s houseboating community and surrounding locales offer visitors distinctive, invigorating, and unforgettable adventures. ■



Cheryl Knight

Cheryl Knight is a freelance writer and editor with more than 20 years of experience.

She loves traveling, going to concerts and sporting events, watching movies, and spending time with her family.

<http://cherylknight.weebly.com>

“This tranquil scene won’t last long, however. My husband and I have plans for the day: kayaking on the lake, a short trip to Pike Place Market to peruse the crafts and antique galleries, and finally back to our vacation rental for a home-cooked linguini with shrimp dinner on Lake Union.”

To locate current houseboat rentals for short-term stays, visit:

- www.urbanashley.com/2008/09/12/new-listing-for-lease-lake-union-floating-home
- www.vrbo.com/vacation-rentals/usa/washington/puget-sound/seattle/lake-union
- www.duckin.com/seattle_houseboats.php
- www.seattlebedandbreakfast.com/290.shtml

For longer-term visits, go to www.seattlehouseboatrentals.com/rentals.htm.

After 50, Saying a Different *Yes*



Photo by Vision SRL / Thinkstock

The three stages of a human life – Camel, Lion, and Wise Child – are also three ways of connecting with others. I feel blessed to be pretty well done with the Camel years of loading myself up for the journey into the world, and with the Lion time of clawing out a place in it.

By Judy Lightfoot

On my 50th birthday a friend said, “Isn’t it nice not to have to waste time choosing among endless possibilities, because now you know what you don’t want? So liberating!”

Liberated by having fewer choices? How un-American! In my twenties I remember wishing all the eligible males would line up so I could pick the best one, like a contestant on *The Bachelorette*. But, had my wish been granted, could I have chosen a man with whom I might build a good life?

I couldn’t even choose a line of work. Strictly on autopilot, I became a teacher, a career fixation that started when I was six because I was good at school stuff. I loved reading, writing, numbers, and being in the company of my teachers, who liked me, instead of at home with my alcoholic parents.

It took decades to learn how I wanted to live—beyond seeking As and praise.

The learning started with a hunger for the kind of independence that I hoped would bring triumphant successes. After years of driven angst, this hunger finally led me to the sweetness of simply connecting with fellow human beings. But I had to travel every Independence Avenue before I could recognize true Connectedness when it showed up.

Like all journeys, mine was both unique and typical. To explain it, I’ll take liberties with the famous allegory in Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, which says that the human spirit must evolve through the stages of Camel and Lion to Wise Child.

First the spirit kneels down like a Camel to be loaded up with socially acceptable supplies for the trip into the desert. Out there the well-equipped Camel morphs into the Lion, who hunts, fights, and roars for freedom and mastery in rebellion against society’s constraints. But the Lion’s battles fail. Striving and struggling begin to seem futile.

In that moment the Wise Child emerges like a butterfly from a growling, sharp-clawed, hairy cocoon. The Wise Child possesses a fresh, innocent wisdom that says a new kind of No to socially defined notions of duty and success. As one translation puts it, the Wise Child knows how to play the “game of creation” and can say “a sacred Yes” to an original way of being.

The Wise Child knows we don’t have to be Camels or Lions at all! But there’s a catch, of course: we can’t learn this without going through those stages ourselves.

During my Camel phase, grownups piled society’s expectations on my

back and filled me with gallons of conventional wisdom, which tended to have a boozy flavor when it poured from my parents. In return I behaved with varying levels of effort and duty.

As a Lion teacher, wife, and mom, I unconsciously assessed other people according to what they could offer me and mine. Because I had been given enough smarts and schooling to succeed at my job, and enough energy to give back through a charitable endeavor or two, I could remain blissfully unaware of my dependence on others, including kind, talented strangers I would never meet. I paid for everything, didn’t I? I had earned everything through hard work and was the author of my own success, right?

But loading myself up to meet the world and clawing out a place where I might nurture the next Einstein or write *Great American Poems* made me forget all but the most superficial connections with other people.

My Wise Child remembers how to connect. My bonds with other people hinge less often, now, on social bargains like, “If you reflect my best self back to me the way Mrs. Sparks did when I was in third grade, I’ll flatter you in return. If you scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours, or else I’ll ‘pay it forward’ by helping some needy outcast.”

The Wise Child knows that life is not a business deal.

So lately I try to live by the simple wisdom of Yes. When I spend time with my granddaughter, I’m liberated from any need to boost her Camel or Lion powers and from half-conscious hopes of a reward for the gift of my time. What’s important is playing the wise, yet childlike “game of creation.” My favorite version is just being together in playful affection. I thank my retirement from full-time teaching for letting me spend hours with my grandchild in this way.

I try to say Yes, too, when somebody who wants to hang out and talk interrupts one of my writing projects. And when I’m able to do that—it’s still hard for me—I try to let go of any pride that might turn a human connection into just another chance to perform, to

play the good-girl role of my youth. It helps to have adult children (among my best teachers, these days) who recall how often I said No to interruptions: “Mom, remember how you used to sigh if we tried to talk to you when you were typing?”

Another “game of creation” I love is saying Yes to strangers who need companionship. So I freestyle volunteer, which means spending an hour each week in one-on-one conversation over coffee with someone who is trapped in the social ghetto of mental illness. Alfred, Gerald, and Mina show no signs of changing as a result of spending time with me, so I can’t say I’m making a difference in their lives. I’m just being a difference in their lives.

“99 percent of people’s problems arise from isolation. What makes and keeps us human is human connection.”

After all, 99 percent of people’s problems arise from isolation. What makes and keeps us human is human connection. We don’t really connect if we’re armed with expectations for some sort of reward from the other guy.

And it’s hard to connect deeply across distances. A Turkish author once wrote that he’s puzzled by the American need

for an arm’s length of space between individuals in personal conversation. How can you know someone, he wondered, unless you’re close enough to breathe the breath of his words?

I didn’t understand these things before reaching a certain age. So my birthday well-wisher was right. Half a century on this earth let me start (happily) rejecting the myth of life’s infinite possibilities and, along with it, the Declaration of Every American’s Individual Independence.

These two illusions are on glittering daily display in media and marketing imagery, but I’m almost immune to their predictable slogans and shine. I’d rather keep the weekly appointments with one of my coffee companions. I’d rather have a random encounter full of surprises with someone living in a tent city or just sitting on a bench in the sun.

So life has brought me back to where I began: connecting with others through the childlike wisdom we’re all born with.

Still, my Wise Child wouldn’t have shown up unless Camel and Lion had led the way. So I respect those two members of the human menagerie whenever I glimpse them trudging or tearing through downtown streets, whether they’re dressed in pinstriped suits or panhandlers’ dumpster finds. After all, my inner beasts pulled me along, too, in directions I needed to follow for years without knowing why. ■



Judy Lightfoot

Judy Lightfoot is a Seattle writer and Freestyle Volunteer (more information at www.freestylevolunteer.org). She is a regular contributor to the online regional news site Crosscut.com.

The Savvy Sage

By Sandy Sabersky

Low fares and bags fly free! Aging consciously is a good experience and a great place to be.

I recently bought a cup of coffee from a young barista who mentioned to her co-worker that her family was coming to town. Although excited, she was also dreading it because she says she always reverts to her 11-year-old self. I leaned over and sympathetically told her she might get over this when she's 55. She looked at me in a non-comprehending, horrified way—partly, I think, just contemplating the fact that one could be such an age as 55 and partly at the foreign idea that it takes so long to grow up. From my vantage point, a little further up the mountain, I realize, in fact, that it takes a life time.

We are born, our bodies and minds grow, and, in general, we focus outwards where our senses take us. And oh what a rich journey of discovery it is to see what the world is made of, what and who is around us, and to experience the textures, smells, tastes, sights, and sounds. We become engaged with the work of growing up, of operating and functioning in the world, of getting along in the social organization of life, and of doing. If we ever think about it, and we seldom do, we go happily along with the idea of having forever, or at least a very long time, in front of us.

“Doing the work of aging is like panning for gold. We start with a pan full of rocks, gravel, and fine sand and keep rinsing and swirling with a practiced hand until more and more of the tailings drop away.”

Then, something happens that shakes us from our stupor. It may be that our bodies begin to show we're getting older, through menopause, wrinkles, receding hair lines, or decreasing life forces. Perhaps we feel a stronger sense of urgency when we, or people we know, become ill. We may notice that the years we can anticipate living are fewer than the ones we have already lived. Then, no matter how much we eat or drink or read or perform, we don't feel full or satisfied. Sometimes these twinges can arouse a vague interest or curiosity; they can cause us to want to shift our journey from one that is sense-dominant and far-ranging to one where the senses quiet down and the journey doesn't require any movement at all. One way to deal with this curiosity is to do what we call “elder work.” It's an inner journey – no plane tickets or security pat downs required – and its essence is a shift from doing to being.

Elder work begins by asking three key questions:

1. Am I living life according to my values?
2. What mental housekeeping needs to happen?
3. What are the things I have yet to do to in order to have a sense of completion in my life?

Doing the work of aging is like panning for gold. We start with a pan full of rocks, gravel, and fine sand and keep rinsing and swirling with a practiced hand until more and more of the tailings drop away. We are left with the gold, the best of the best. More and more we continue to refine ourselves. The gift of our decreasing life forces is this: if we listen, we take the opportunity to make the sometimes tough

choices as to where we will spend our increasingly precious energy. With a little quiet and contemplation in our lives, we know with more clarity what is important to us and where we want to spend that energy. On the surface, it doesn't sound fun to embrace our aging, and the pull of the world around us is strong. However, even a little digging below the surface will begin to yield a different kind of joy, the joy that comes from knowing more about ourselves. That joy is amplified when we align our living more fully with who we are, as we make amends and make peace with our loved ones and the world. As we gain a broader and more loving vantage point in our climb higher up the mountain, we get closer and closer to who we are as we go deeper and deeper into the journey of self discovery.

Aging consciously is a good experience and a great place to be. Over the next several months this column will explore elder work and explain why anyone might be interested in embracing their own aging and the benefits. In the meantime, with the economy the way it is, think about taking that inner journey. The price is right! ■



Sandy Sabersky

Sandy Sabersky has a deep interest in aging and the value of wholeness in all people. She is the executive director of Elderwise, a multifaceted

enrichment program for older adults. A certified sage-ing® leader, Sandy serves on the Board of the Northwest Center for Creative Aging and is part of the conscious-aging movement.



facebook to the Rescue?

By Max Wells

A Pew Research Center study shows that twice as many Americans aged 65 and over used online social networks in 2010, compared to 2009. With 26 percent of this age group now connecting online, will this allow older Americans to stay connected longer? What are the implications for aging at home?

At a recent forum on “Boomers, Health and Technology” Intel anthropologist Dr. John Sherry described an observation from his study of elder care around the world. “Maria” lives on her own in Seville, Spain where, despite a stroke and some mobility impairment, she is still tightly integrated in the community. Her niece visits daily, and even her butcher checks in on her. “Maria, how are you doing today?” the butcher calls up to her second floor window every day on his way to work. “I don’t listen so much for what she says, but mostly for the sound of her voice. I can tell by the strength of her voice how she’s doing.”

John’s point was that, in many places, health is collaborative, accomplished by a social network of spouses and adult

children, most often daughters. However, in the US, with changing family compositions, higher divorce rates, high labor mobility and other factors, a major challenge will be enabling this large amount of informal care to continue. “To me” says John, “the interesting challenge is how we provide the analogy to Maria’s window, the lightweight, fluid, and easily understood methods for people to collaborate on their health in the flow of everyday life.”

Soon, many more Americans are going to be relying on those social networks for their care. According to the Census Bureau, the combination of aging boomers and increasing longevity will see the size of the 65+ population double over the next two decades, from the current 35 million to 70 million. By 2030, almost 1 in 5 Americans will be over 65,

with close to 9 million over 85. In this article, we examine whether Facebook is one of the tools that John seeks. We also look at social networks, in light of new and fascinating research described in a book with the ironically untweetable title of *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives -- How Your Friends’ Friends’ Friends Affect Everything You Feel, Think, and Do* by Nicholas Christakis and John Fowler.

We have been intrigued by social networks since the original outcast friended Eve and everyone got voted out of paradise. It’s as if we’re hard-wired to be drawn in by their drama. Indeed, some believe that our large brains evolved for the very purpose of keeping track of the multiplicity of relationships between people in groups. Whereas this was easy with the original three-way (Adam with Eve, Serpent with Eve, Serpent with Adam), the eight bronzed bobs in Jersey Shore each need to keep track of 28 relationships, and this number balloons to 190 with the 20 starved contestants in Survivor ($(n * (n-1)) / 2$).

Facebook and other social networking sites adds a few new wrinkles to our age-old entanglement by making our social web visible to us and to others. They also allow for hyper-connectivity, or the ability to use the Internet’s global reach. The permanence of the underlying databases that power these sites means that the friendships we create are cumulative – once made we rarely drop them – unlike in the real world where connections fade with disuse. Using tricks like knowing your age and what schools you attended, these sites can conjure up long lost contacts like a circus magician. This was demonstrated recently at “Continuing Minds,” a class to teach computer basics to users 50 and older. After creating her first Facebook account, one of the participants was both surprised and dismayed when Facebook suggested she friend her ex.

Yet another feature is that the medium dictates the nature of the communication, which tends to be in short, frequent bursts—conversation by sound bite. One of the more intriguing aspects of the social sites is they give us the ability to monitor not just the activities of our di-

rect relationships (our friends), but also their relationships (friends of friends). We become privy to every blowup, breakup, and hookup, leaving us with the illusion that we are the very kingpin in some never-ending social drama.

Interestingly, despite the potential to have thousands of social contacts, Christakis and Fowler have shown that the average number of friends is 110, and the number we actually feel close to is about 6.6. This, they suggest, may be a biological limit—as if there’s only so much drama a brain can stand.

“Using Facebook is a Faustian bargain of power for privacy”

We can generally intuit the nature of the relationships between our friends (“They’re no good for each other, it’ll end in tears.”) but when we add the processing power of computers and vast databases filled with the goings on between the participants, this is raised from an art to a science. For example, the Facebook watch site AllFacebook.com reports that Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg “could determine with about 33 percent accuracy who a user was going to be in a relationship with a week from now (by studying) who was looking at which profiles, who your friends were friends with, and who was newly single, among other indicators.”

Another Facebook wrinkle, again as old as our fall from grace, is the need to make money. The company has raised over \$850 million in investment funding, money that investors are expecting to see again. According to USA Today, Facebook’s business model calls for wiping out privacy. “In order to create an enduring, multi-billion dollar business on par with the likes of Google and Microsoft, Facebook must compel its users to divulge and make widely accessible as much information about their preferences and online behaviors—and their

friends’ preferences and online behaviors—as possible.” The results are constant skirmishes between Facebook and those on the side of preserving privacy. These forces won a hollow victory when the company conceded and made its privacy policy more transparent. But the problem is, that with every new feature and innocuous piece of added functionality, trying to understand who knows what about you, and who should, becomes as complex as our tax code.

Using Facebook is a Faustian bargain in which, for the power to achieve more connections, indulge in voyeurism, and proclaim our presence and status, we give up privacy, security (to scams and identity theft), and trivialize our relationships. (Is it true that with the click of a button I can transform someone into a friend?) To date over 500 million people seem to think the tradeoff is worth it. And, although some probably don’t fully understand the costs, others see only benefits, with statements like “I’m busy; I like it when marketers offer me products I might need.”

One of the top attractions in moving to senior living facilities is the social network of fellow-residents that immediately becomes available. For those who wish to stay at home, but have become less mobile or have lost spouses or friends, Facebook, or some of the more senior-focused sites like Boomster.com, ReZoom.com, Boomj.com, or Eons.com, might play a role in staying connected. The decision about whether to use them is multifaceted. Scams and dishonest people are not confined to the virtual world, and if we are overly fearful, we cut ourselves off from the very world we crave connection with. Sometimes a poor friendship is better than none at all, and living our lives vicariously through others is no different than watching most of what’s on TV. In the end it’s a question we each have to answer for ourselves. But until then, it might be worth finding the privacy controls and keeping them as restrictive as possible. Because, though Maria probably welcomes the butcher’s daily salutation, she may feel differently if he were to call up, “You sound a little irregular this morning; you want me to send up some Ducolax?” ■

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Seattle Archives Preservation Roadshow

May 14, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Pacific Alaska Region, 6125 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115-7959

Archivists and museum professionals give free advice on how to preserve photographic prints and negatives, letters and other family documents, e-mail, digital documents and photos, moving images, and audio recordings.

Free

Joshua Zimmerman: 360-927-2065, seattlearchivesroadshow@gmail.com

Tea Party

May 14, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Meadowbrook Community Center, 10517 35th Ave. NE, Seattle WA 98125
This event is for seniors and their families.

\$15

<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/meadowbrookcc.htm>

How to Hang Windows — Free Workshop

May 15, 1–3 p.m.

Second Use Building Materials, 7953 2nd Ave. S, Seattle, WA 98108

Learn how to remove a window and install a new one. Pre-registration requested.

Free

Elena Velkov: 206-763-6929 x13 or elena@seconduse.com, www.seconduse.com

4th Annual Mushroom Maynia

May 15 & 16, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Burke Museum, 17th Ave. NE & NE 45th St., Seattle, WA 98105

Bring in mushrooms for identification, taste mushroom specialties, and join in demonstrations of mushroom cultivation.

\$6-9.50

206-543-5590, burkepr@uw.edu, www.washington.edu

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PERSPECTIVE

The Missing Picture

By Rabbi Elana Zaiman

It happened over a decade ago, during my final year of rabbinical school, yet I think about it often. Scotch-taped to my dorm room door one morning was a rectangular piece of paper, a black and white photocopy of three pictures, one underneath the other. I, the eldest, was on top. My sister, Sarina, the second in birth order, was next and my brother Ari, third in birth order, followed.

I recognized the pictures from a gold volume published by Temple Emanuel in Providence, Rhode Island in the early 1970's. Included in that gold book, which recorded a popular history of the synagogue, were a few pages about my father, the then current rabbi, and his family.

I smiled at my younger self, my sister and my brother. But where was Rafi, our youngest brother? In the gold volume, Rafi's picture was directly underneath Ari's. Who had hung these pictures on my door and cut out Rafi? And why?

In search of an answer, I knocked on my friend and neighbor's door. Upon seeing me he grinned. "Aren't those pictures great?" he asked.

"Yes," I said, pleased to have discovered the culprit. "Where did you find them?"

"I was doing some research in the Seminary library, and I saw this gold book. I opened it up and there you were. I thought the pictures were great. I wanted you to have them."

"They are great. I know the book well," I said. "But where's Rafi?"

"I cut him out," my friend said. "I didn't want you to be upset."

My friend meant well. He knew that my youngest brother, Rafi, had died of cancer at eleven and that by cutting him out he would be protecting me from re-experiencing the pain.

So that's what happens when someone dies, I thought. People are hesitant to even mention the

dead person's name aloud, fearful that it will remind the living of their loss. I assured my friend that, although Rafi died, he would always be my brother. That to remember him is a positive, not a negative. Yes, I miss him. Yes, my memories include the pain of his illness and death, but also the joy of his fun-loving approach to life, his large brown eyes, his smile, and his sense of humor, his sweat after a good game of football, his kindness and love.

To this day when someone asks, "How many siblings do you have?" I say: "I have two siblings now, but I had another brother who died of cancer when he was eleven." If I sense that the questioner is uncomfortable, I might add, "You can ask me about him if you want, it's good to remember him." To not speak of him, would mean his life on this earth did not matter. It mattered. Our relationship mattered. It still matters.

In my faith, on Passover when we recite *yizkor*, we ask God to remember our loved ones. We must remember them; in our hearts and through our words. For only in so doing do we keep that connection alive.

Later that afternoon, when I returned to my room, I found a slightly longer piece of paper taped to my door, this time with four photocopied pictures: me, Sarina, Ari and Rafi. I carefully peeled the images off my door and hung them on the wall above my desk, so I could watch over them. So they could watch over me. ■



Rabbi Elana Zaiman is the first woman rabbi from a family spanning three generations of rabbis.

Rabbi Elana Zaiman

Photo by Brand X Pictures / Thinkstock



Thinking of you...

(In 140 characters or less)

By Jeff Wozer

There's a Sicilian proverb that states,

"Only your real friends will tell you when your face is dirty."

This may bear true with some, but for society today it would carry greater relevance if updated to,

"Only your real friends will text or Twitter you after posting a picture of you with a guacamole-smudged chin on Facebook."

Such is life in 2011. We now reside in a world where the only thing an emergency dime will get you is six minutes on a parking meter. Pay phones have been replaced by smart phones, Yellow Pages by Web pages, and six-page love letters by six-word Tweets. I don't endorse, but I accept.

To be frank, I never found fault with the phones of our youth. Sure there were limitations in being tethered to one location by a coiled phone cord that would inevitably knot and kink like an Orthodox Jew's side curls in high humidity. This would then necessitate unclipping the receiver from the base, standing on a kitchen chair, and unraveling the chord by allowing the receiver to dangle. Dad, as if on cue, would then stomp into the room and hiss, "That's not a toy!"

Yet, despite these trifling inconveniences, I always felt connected. More so than I do with Facebook, Twitter, and texting. And I feel no guilt with this admittance. Healthy reservation is part of the process. Disagree? Consider this Mark Twain broadside: "It is my heart-warming and world-embracing Christmas hope that all of us, the high, the low, the rich, the poor, the admired, the despised, the loved, the hated, may eventually be gathered together in a heaven of everlasting peace and bliss, except the inventor of the telephone."

I can only imagine what Twain would have to say about texting, which is as much a mystery to me as is Donald Trump's hair.

Granted, I have never texted. But all I need to know is that the average teenager, according to Nielsen, receives and sends 3,339 text messages per month. Anything embraced by teenagers can't be good. We proved this with bell bottom pants.

After watching teenagers at family dinners with heads bowed over their phones texting, I imagine it's only a matter of time before this becomes so accepted that when they become parents, they'll be scolding their kids for texting with their mouths full.

I do, however, have experience with Twitter. But it means nothing. Even after two years of Twittering, I'm still floundering in the Sunday driver stage, wondering if perhaps I'm part Amish. I don't get it. I mean I do, but I don't. I understand the use of Twitter codes and enjoy a modest following of 281, but in terms of initiating conversation—a tweet's intent—I'm ignored more than a fire extinguisher at Burning Man.

After 643 tweets, I've had only one retweeted—*This morning I heeded Robert Frost's advice and took the road less traveled. Two hours later, however, I became thirsty and returned home—by some unknown follower in Scotland. Messages in bottles have better response rates than my tweets.*

Facebook, on the other hand, I grasp. As do many others of similar age. According to the Pew Research Center, people over 50 represent Facebook's fastest growing demographic, attracted by its bloodhound-like efficiency in tracking down old faces and filling in the blanks to whatever-happened-to-so-and-so ponderings. Every day on Facebook feels like a reunion.

My only lament is that after the initial thrill of reconnecting has subsided, you must, more often than not, endure the agonizing blitzkrieg of rapid updates—"Thinking of going for a walk!!!" "Four more days until the weekend!!!" "Cake is delicious!!!"—made only more exasperating by the requisite multiple exclamation points.

In reading people's comments, I can't help but wonder what type of nightmare the next generation will face when it comes to elections. Given the permanency of Facebook, every politician will be held accountable for their wall postings. Had Facebook existed since the dawn of time, all the mystiques and legacies of our greatest historical figures would be tarnished.

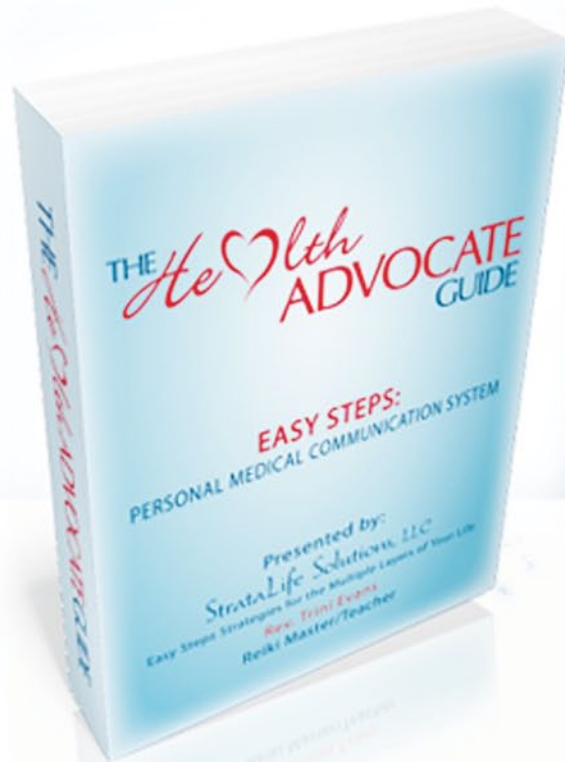
Think, for example, how differently George Washington would be viewed today if he had scribed the following Facebook update while crossing the Delaware River: "Oarsman screamed at me for standing in boat. Feelings hurt. Stupid oarsman." Or if Jesus had shared: "What was I thinking when I turned the water into merlot when they were serving tilapia?"

What was I thinking, indeed? A question I now ask after jumping the tracks with that last tangent.

Regardless, the bottom line is that whether we like or dislike today's high-tech options is of no relevance. But what is relevant is that we remain connected. Even, I guess, if it involves texting. ■

Jeff's humor articles have appeared in more than 30 publications including The Explorers Journal, Dining Out Miami and Outside Bozeman. When not writing, he spends his time sitting on his cabin deck dressed in tattered shorts and a thick Patagonia fleece jacket brooding about nothing in particular. www.jeffwozer.com

Personal Medical Communication System



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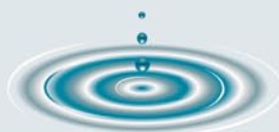
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