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TODAY'S SENIOR[®] NEWSMAGAZINE



In this rapidly changing world today, vehicles of the past can reprise many special memories. (Photo: Dan Propp)

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Inside This Issue

ACCORDION TO DAN

by Dan Propp 3

FREECOOVER: DISCOVERING VANCOUVER

By Ursula Maxwell-Lewis 4

TAIWANfest 26, A FUN WEEKEND.

by Lenora A. Hayman 5

FINANCIAL NEWS

by Rick C. Singh 6

STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

by Mel Kositsky 8

WORD FIND PUZZLE 13

SHELL BUSEY THE HOUSESMART GUY

by Shell Busey 13

WRITE AS I PLEASE

by Mel Kositsky 14

THE NEXT CHAPTER

by Mike McCardell 15

A YUCATECAN DAYTRIP

By Chris Millikan 16

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ACCORDION TO DAN

I was having coffee at a fast-food restaurant, scribbling away on the back of a paper menu cover.

Something rather ironic related to the historically significant tea tax by the British parliament in the American colonies, suddenly came out of the blue to me. Thus, the following bit of rhyme ironically occurred politically.

GOING BACK TO A BIT OF HISTORY!

A merry thought somewhat "Gilbert and Sullivan-ish" occurred to me. Way back a long time ago the British colonies in America had a quite a huge tariff England to pay. Indeed it was not exactly tariff-ic, rather taxing for the new settlers and their cup of tea.

Now up here in Canada, we are placed in a similar situation. 'Blimey, isn't it grand how sometimes history tends to repeat itself in this futuristic digital age of 2026! 'By jove', 'Roman' back just a tad further, it all seems somewhat 'Greek' to me. If only we could digitally bring the satirical team of Gilbert and Sullivan back, eh? Thanks to the wonders of technology and artificial intelligence today's developments would dwarf even the popularity of productions such as 'The Mikado' and 'HMS Pinafore' exponentially. Pleasant satire in today's era is virtually important. Goodness me, while sitting scribbling on paper, trying hard to find some humour with a burger, fries, and coffee at a popular fast food location in Richmond, close to Vancouver. Thus, the following.

BRINGING BACK HAPPIER MEMORIES OR TWO.

"Come on and hear, come on and hear it's Alexander's ragtime band". Back to the old days with these words many of us seniors sometimes nostalgically steer. Like magic all kinds of memories out of the blue appear. How about "Happy days are here again, the skies above are clear again, let us sing a song of cheer again, happy days are here again". Swayed by powerful lyrics for many of us, these now old songs from the nineteen forties and fifties can still stir fond memories.

Remember Teresa Brewer singing "Put another nickel in the nickelodeon. All I want is loving you and music, music, music."

Of course, who could forget "Oh my Pa Pa, to me he was so wonderful". Eddy Fisher, that's right! What

about 'The Tennessee Waltz' sung by Patty Page or 'Mona Lisa' preformed by Nat King Cole. Does that help to reprise a feeling of nostalgia for history and music. Amazing isn't it what seems to come back sometimes, big time, at our age!

A few key words and rhyme can also help restore holidays over the years.

HOW IT ONCE WAS

The railroad station in Banff, Jasper and, of course, Jasper Lodge. The Banff Springs hotel. Who could ever forget the stately atmosphere of The Empress Hotel in Victoria? How about quite a few years back when most cars were still popular names like Plymouth, Pontiac, and Dodge. The price for a whole gallon of gas was less than fifty cents. All those days now long time gone help some of us feel nostalgic, indeed sometimes even euphoric! We cherished what some folks today refer as the "Good Old Days". No Google app, no cellphones to text messages and the word 'email' wasn't even invented! Most nonverbal communication depended on the postal service. Domestic postage cost a nickel or so for a stamp. Letters were handwritten or typed and dropped in a mailbox. What a concept, eh? It seems, we had more old fashion humanity and leisure time. More intelligence and less artificial.

As a kid, around nineteen fifty-four, I still recall my parents paying a whopping fourteen dollars a night at the Empress Hotel in Victoria, wow! Living with far less luxury but still amazingly comfortable was the Hotel Alcazar in Vancouver situated close to the Pacific Stage Depot. It was around seven dollars a night or less! Things have changed just a tad today one must confess.

Now as the fall colours of October 2026 take shape, a few more musical memories to share as the pumpkins begin to ripen once more.

DO YOU RECALL?

Remember Danny Kaye playing the role of Hans Christian Andersen and that song about "The Ugly Duckling"? How about the 1960's era of "If you're going to San Francisco, be sure to wear flowers in your hair." "If I had a hammer..." sung by Peter, Paul and Mary. How about Seasons in the Sun? Remember our Terry Jacks and The Poppy Family? The magic of music, instrumental, voices and lyrics and special



feelings, so many! Folk music, calling for peace and togetherness, that was stirring folks to attend musical events, the biggest event was Woodstock.

As the fall season approaches and the leaves turn colour, hopefully that era of the 1960s and what it stood for will inspire.

Please visit www.Nostalgicroads.Weebly.com

Search for Song CD's by Dan Propp via cdbaby.com and also www.soundcloud.com

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Photo: In this rapidly changing world today, vehicles of the past can reprise many special memories. (Photo: Dan Propp)

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FREECOUVER:
Discovering Vancouver
without breaking the bank
Story and Photos by Ursula Maxwell-Lewis

Daylight Saving Time is the British Columbia norm, but navigating shorter days, rainy weather and travel budgets remains the same. As a savvy (cheap) traveller, coffee with longtime friend and author John Lee and blogger Rebecca Bollwitt to discuss their recent pocketbook collaboration, FREECOUVER: 101 Free Things to Do in and Around Vancouver, seemed timely.

“Even though it’s my home, I still have a kind of



travel writer’s eye to the place,” says Lee. “I’m always looking for something new, something interesting that’s happening here — something hidden, something under the radar.”

Bollwitt, the successful “Miss604” blogger and web publisher, explains: “I’ve always produced things online, but loved writing.”

Both had spent years investigating affordable ways to explore Vancouver. Their interests finally converged when Bollwitt posted in January that she needed a project. Lee responded with a suggestion: why not write a book together?

FREECOUVER is a practical, portable print and online publication highlighting unique indoor and outdoor venues that are easily accessible by walking, biking or public transit. The book extends beyond Vancouver to include the North Shore, Tri-Cities, Surrey, Langley and Richmond.

Noting that volunteer participation is key at many of the facilities, Lee and Bollwitt emphasized that although these sites have no entry fee, donations are



usually welcome.

“We encourage people to donate, if they have a couple of bucks, because it keeps those places free for everyone.”

After coffee, we wandered around the block, admiring the Marine Building’s interior and exterior architecture, the Sinclair Centre clock, and historic news clips and photos in the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver. Lee advised me to check out a couple of places I’d never have contemplated, including the UBC Golf Museum and TRIUMF public tour.

“Curiosity might have killed the cat, but not in this case,” joked cat enthusiast Lee.

From parks to museums, libraries, historic houses and so much more, this little book — complete with helpful QR codes — is available at local bookstores and libraries, and online at www.freecouver.com

Ursula Maxwell-Lewis is a Surrey-based travel writer and photographer. Reach her at YouTravelWrite@iCloud.com

Top Left: Gala memories and posters.
Top Middle: ‘FREECOUVER’ authors John Lee and Rebecca Bollwitt.
Top Right: Sinclair Centre. Unique atrium time check.
Middle Right: Famous photographs: Prime Minister Indira Ghandi visiting in 1973.
Bottom Left: Sketches, artwork and abound.
Bottom Right: Fire of 1886 recalled: Fairmont Hotel Vancouver collection.



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TAIWANFEST 26, A FUN WEEKEND.

Article & photos by Lenora A. Hayman.

TAIWANfest Sept 5-7, 2026's opening concert When the Mountains Sing at the QE Playhouse had the Nanwang Sisters of the indigenous Pinayumayan people, from the Taitung mountains, dressed in their colourful embroidered regalia, singing in beautiful harmony. Seventeen Austronesian aboriginal tribes have been discovered there. Zixuan and Slow Train, who were four times winners of the Golden Melody Awards and Golden Bell Awards followed by honouring a variety of cultures and singing in the Taiwanese Hakka language.

There were a variety of Hope Talks. Mimi Sung's Island's Talk: a Historical Conversation Among Scotland, Canada and Taiwan told us of the Scots, Sir Patrick Manson, the Father of Tropical Medicine and William Kinninmond Burton, the Father of Taiwan's Modern Water Supply System. Canadian Dr.George Gushue-Taylor (1883-1954) was the founder and first superintendent of the Happy Mount Leprosy Colony in Taiwan. George Leslie Mackay, a Canadian missionary (21 Mar 1844-2 June 1901) from Embro, Zorra Township, Oxford County, Ontario went to Tamsui in Taiwan, where he practiced dentistry, established churches, a girls' school and the Oxford University College, now Aletheia University in Tamsui. Rev. Hou Su-Tek, on the other hand was the first Taiwanese pastor to dedicate his life serving First Nation communities in Canada. Dr. Mary Welsh (1937-2026) from New Brunswick and General Moderator of the 132nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 2006 was a missionary in Taiwan from 1969-1975,

Taiwanese Canadian authors Julia Lin (Biographer of Shadows of the Crimson Sun) and Wiley Wei-Chiun Ho (The Astronaut Children of Dunbar)

and Ed Lin, Taiwanese, Chinese American

(Crime writer) gave a lively and funny talk chaired by Charlie Smith, the Pancouver editor.

Dr. Leith Davis interspersed her talk Remembering the Jacobites with Scottish music from the live Sybaritic String Band.

Along with Taiwanese food on Granville St. and music on the Pancouver stage we all had a full and fun weekend.

Photos by Lenora A. Hayman.

Top: Authors Ed Lin, Wiley Wei-Chiun Ho & Julia Lin.Center: Dr.Leith Davis & Sybaritic String Band.

Right: Leigh & Carol Pan, Mimi Sung, Derek & Lenora Hayman.

Middle Bottom: Volunteer Gerald Joe with posters of Nanwang Sisters & Zixuan Huang & Slow Train.



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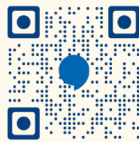
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FINANCIAL NEWS

by Rick C. Singh, Founder, President,
and Financial Advisor,
CPCA (Certified Professional Consultant on Aging)
CRS Financial Wealth Management.

Leaving an inheritance outright to a spouse has some implications if there are children from a previous marriage. You can look after both interests by naming your spouse as a successor annuitant, and children as irrevocable beneficiaries on your RRIF or other investments.

There are times when leaving an inheritance outright to a spouse may not be the best choice. For example, you may want to ensure that children from a previous marriage receive an appropriate bequest after your spouse passes away. Or you may be faced with a situation in which your spouse is physically or mentally incapacitated- or financially irresponsible.

In these cases, enacting a straightforward strategy called the “Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF) successor annuity or Joint Life option” allows you to retain greater control over how your RRIF is handled after your death.

Recently I had to advise one of my clients who is on his second marriage and had previously designated his children as beneficiaries on his investments. However, he got remarried and wanted to make sure that his new spouse is looked after financially after he passes away as he is older

than his new wife. He also wants to make sure that his children from his first marriage will still be able to inherit the remaining assets from his RRIF investments when his second wife passes away. I was able to use a little know strategy of naming his spouse as a successor annuitant on his RRIF and named his children as irrevocable beneficiaries.

How does it work?

When you name your spouse as your RRIF beneficiary, the RRIF can be transferred to your spouse on a tax deferred basis on your death. With some contracts your spouse will assume complete control of the RRIF as the successor owner, and the contract will continue. This means that your spouse will begin to receive an income stream and will be able to exercise their rights under the contract, including the right to change the beneficiaries, adjust the payment stream or cash in the investments.

When you name your spouse as the successor annuitant or Joint Life, he or she also assumes control of the RRIF as the successor owner on a tax deferred basis. However, by designating irrevocable beneficiaries, who are not your spouse, you can preserve the tax deferral and give your irrevocable beneficiaries a say in the management of the assets that will ultimately pass to them.

Naming irrevocable beneficiaries effectively restricts your spouse’s ownership rights, and your spouse will need the written permission of the irrevocable beneficiaries to change the beneficiaries, increase the income stream or cash in the investments. Meanwhile, if the successor annuitant or Joint Life (your spouse) predeceases you or no longer qualifies as your spouse at the time of your death, the death benefit will be paid directly to the irrevocable beneficiaries.

These features make the RRIF successor annuitant or Joint Life option an attractive solution

in certain specific situations outlined in more detail below.

Married with Children from a previous marriage

You may want to provide an income stream to your spouse after your death, but at the same time ensure that children from a previous marriage receive any assets remaining in the RRIF upon your spouse’s death. Naming your spouse as the successor annuitant or Joint Life and your children as irrevocable beneficiaries means your spouse will receive the periodic payments after your death but will need the kids’ consent to cash in the policy, increase the income stream or change the beneficiary designations- thereby protecting their residual interest.

Spouse is Financially Irresponsible

Perhaps you are concerned that our spouse may cash in the entire policy and, as a result, fall short in meeting future living expenses.

Naming your spouse as the successor annuitant or Joint Life and designating irrevocable beneficiaries means that the irrevocable beneficiaries would have to authorize any withdrawals or changes in payments. The irrevocable beneficiaries can ensure that the income stream changes to match your spouse’s needs, and that the investments are not cashed in and spent.

To find out more about estate planning for your RRIF contact your investment advisor or contact Rick at 604-535-3367 (Suite 220-3388 Rosemary Heights Cres. Surrey, BC. V3Z 0K7) or email: rick@crsfinancial.ca for more information on when to consider using the RRIF successor annuitant or joint life option, and irrevocable beneficiaries.



THE PHARMACIST
REVIEW

By Lyle Sunada

Building A Simple Daily Vitamin & Supplement Stack

If you were only willing to take a few supplements every day, which ones would you choose? With hundreds of vitamins, minerals and specialty supplements available, it is easy to end up taking numerous products with considerable overlap. I prefer a simpler approach: **start with a comprehensive nutritional foundation and add only what is missing or specifically needed.** For that foundation, one of my favourites that I personally take is **PhytoMulti by Metagenics.**

PhytoMulti provides meaningful amounts of many nutrients people commonly take separately, including **vitamin D3, vitamin K, vitamin C and vitamin E**, along with a comprehensive **B-vitamin complex**. Folate and B12 are provided in their methylated forms, **methylfolate and methylcobalamin**. For many people, this may reduce the need for separate vitamin D, B-complex

or individual B-vitamin supplements.

Several minerals are supplied in **chelated or well-absorbed forms**. Meaningful amounts of **selenium, iodine and zinc** support normal thyroid function, while chromium supports healthy glucose and insulin metabolism. PhytoMulti also provides meaningful amounts of lutein and zeaxanthin, two extensively studied carotenoids that concentrate in the macula and **support eye health** as we age.

What really distinguishes PhytoMulti from an ordinary multivitamin is its broad spectrum of phytonutrients from pomegranate, **blueberry, grape seed, green tea**, citrus, rosemary and green coffee bean, along with lycopene and resveratrol. This may be particularly valuable for people who don't consistently consume **five or more servings of varied, colourful fruits and vegetables every day**. PhytoMulti demonstrates high antioxidant activity in laboratory testing as reflected by its high ORAC value.

In a small human study, adults taking two PhytoMulti tablets daily for four weeks showed substantial increases in blood levels of several carotenoids. Researchers also observed reductions in **oxidized LDL, myeloperoxidase (MPO) and PAI-1**, biomarkers associated with oxidative and cardiovascular processes.

PhytoMulti doesn't replace fruits and vegetables. Think of it as **nutritional insurance**. Even good eaters have bad days. We get busy, travel, eat takeout or simply don't eat as well as intended. Nutrient content can also vary with growing conditions, freshness, storage, processing and preparation. A comprehensive multivitamin helps provide a consistent nutritional baseline.

If I were building a simple daily supplement stack, I would then address two areas PhytoMulti doesn't provide in significant amounts. Many people don't eat enough fish or obtain enough magnesium from their diet. Metagenics OmegaGenics EPA-DHA Fish Oil provides the important marine omega-3 fatty acids, complementing rather than duplicating PhytoMulti. Magnesium bisglycinate can provide additional magnesium in a well-tolerated form.

This creates a simple foundation:
PhytoMulti + OmegaGenics EPA-DHA + Magnesium Bisglycinate.

From there, supplementation can be individualized. For example, women requiring additional bone support could add Metagenics Bone Builder Calcium, while other supplements can be added based on diet, age, medications, health goals or identified nutritional needs. **Start with a strong foundation, fill the important gaps, and individualize from there.**

Lyle Sunada is a NAMS Certified Menopause Practitioner and pharmacist at Cloverdale Pharmasave with special interests in hormone balancing, natural and integrative medicine.



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HOME SUPPORT NEEDS MORE FUNDING

By Mel Kositsky

The Health Care Needs Home Care campaign is calling for the provincial government to eliminate co-pays for home support. In other provinces home support is considered part of the universal health care system and is provided free of charge without consideration of income.

British Columbia is facing a housing crisis that makes the cost of living more expensive for everyone.

One of the many challenges facing seniors today is the issue of housing for a rapidly, growing population - and it is getting more complicated and expensive to find a place to live. Fortunately, there are still many options available, although limited in some communities.

Among the pressing needs facing seniors housing is a need for increased investment in subsidized "rent-geared-to-income" housing. Many seniors are forced to choose between paying rent and purchasing food or medicine, and there are a rising number of seniors facing homelessness or already experiencing it firsthand. Many seniors are now living in their vehicles.

Affordable housing is cheaper and more effective than putting more money into emergency supports, meagre supplements and homeless shelters, says COSCO BC. (Affordable housing is defined as 30 per cent of net income - and for seniors this is between \$500 to \$800 per month.)

Seven non-profit organizations, including COSCO BC, are spearheading the home care campaign which aims to raise public awareness of the importance of accessible and affordable home support.

The campaign is making headway as seen in the BC Finance Committee's Budget 2027 consultation report. The report recommends that the province expand access to publicly subsidized home support and prioritize a home health model that allows seniors to stay safe at home. (More information is available at healthcareneedshomecare.ca.)

A new systemic review recently released by the Office of the Seniors Advocate shows B.C. is not prepared to care for the most vulnerable seniors today or in the future due to the ongoing, increasing shortage of long-term care beds.

"Our province is at the beginning of a massive increase in the seniors' population and we are not ready to help people age with the care, supports and services they need to stay safe and healthy," said Dan Levitt, BC Seniors Advocate. "We need to plan and invest in more publicly subsidized long-term care beds and assisted living units, home support services, respite for caregivers and increase rigour and

transparency in the waiting and placement processes to better support families."

Over the past 10 years, the waitlist for long-term care in B.C. has ballooned. Between 2016 and 2025, the number of people waiting to be admitted to long-term care rose from 2,381 to 7,212, an increase of 200 per cent. The provincial average wait time has grown by 98 per cent over the past eight years, from 146 days in 2018, the first year that data was collected, to 290 days in 2025.

"Most people are willing to care for an ageing loved one at home, but they need clear information about how the long-term care placement process works, as well as better supports inside the home to ensure the senior is well cared for and the caregiver can avoid burnout," said Levitt.

"Currently, caregivers tell our office that many community-based services can be unreliable and costly. This must change if we want to help people age in place and reduce demand on the long-term care system," said Levitt.

Over time, the long-term care system has gone from 77 beds per 1,000 people (75+) a decade ago to 58 beds today, and this will drop to 41 beds by 2035/36 if beds are built and replaced at the current rate. The Ministry of Health's current ten-year bed expansion plan aims to increase the number of new beds by 10 per cent (2,935 beds) from 2025 to 2030; no additional beds are planned after 2030.

Today, there is a 2,000-bed shortfall and that gap widens and grows over 700 per cent to meet the ministry's projected future long-term care demand of 16,000 beds by 2035/36.

British Columbia is at an important crossroads when it comes to supports for seniors. BC Care Providers Association (BCCPA) recognizes the reality government is facing right now.

BCCPA CEO Mary Polak told the Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services: "We have known for years that the baby boom generation was coming, yet we have not prepared for the scale of need we are now seeing. Seniors' services are under intense pressure, and families, workers, and providers are feeling it every day. In this fiscal environment, it is challenging to maintain the public services people rely on, let alone expand or improve them."

"At the same time, this is not a challenge government can or should carry alone. Across the province, there are experienced non-government operators already delivering the majority of care (approximately two-thirds of long-term care and 90 per cent of assisted living). These are our members, and we see firsthand the commitment, innovation,

expertise, and care they bring to supporting seniors every day.

"BCCPA believes this is a real opportunity to work together with government. Our members have the knowledge, capacity and experience to help build and deliver solutions that are more affordable for government.

"What we need now is stronger partnerships and a shared focus on outcomes. Ultimately, this is not about who delivers care, it is about making sure every senior in British Columbia can access the care they need, where and when they need it. In this submission, we're asking the Committee to help move things forward by recommending initiatives that will make the biggest difference:

fair and sustainable funding, growing system capacity, developing the workforce, and improving access to home and community care."

As B.C.'s population ages, the need for a long-term vision has never been more urgent. By 2036, one in five British Columbians will be over the age of 65, yet our care system is struggling to keep pace with growing demand.

A new survey by BC Care Providers Association (BCCPA) highlights the significant role the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program plays in helping seniors living and care providers address workforce shortages and fill vacant positions across British Columbia. The survey found that any future reduction to the program could have serious operational consequences, including increased reliance on overtime and greater use of agency staff.

The findings come as federal government leaders have signaled a potential change in their approach to the TFW Program, raising concerns about the impact reduced access could have on staffing levels, service delivery, and the quality of care and support available to seniors.

Conducted among 29 long-term care, assisted living, independent living, and home health operators, the survey found:

Among long-term care operators, 40 per cent reported they would experience minimal impact; 40 per cent anticipated a serious impact. The outlook is more acute for assisted living providers: 78 per cent said scaling back the program would have serious operational consequences. Independent living providers reported similar concerns, with 60 per cent expecting a serious impact. Home health providers were evenly split, with 50 per cent anticipating minimal impact and 50 per cent expecting a serious impact.

Seniors Services Society of BC provides information on housing options for seniors (60 years+):

"We are not a housing provider nor are we able to provide housing placements; however, we have experienced and knowledgeable staff who can provide information that will help you find appropriate housing."

"When you are connected to our housing department, trained staff will ask you a series of detailed questions about factors such as health and income to determine your housing needs and eligibility. All client interviews are confidential, and if you are phoning on behalf of a senior, we will always speak with the client before taking any action to make sure that they are directly involved in the decision-making.

"Due to limited resources, Seniors Services Society is only able to help seniors who are 60 years and older and who are either 1) Canadian citizens, 2) Permanent Residents who have been in Canada for 10 years or more or 3) seniors for whom private sponsorship has broken down. We help seniors live independently, not in assisted or supportive housing."

For more information contact housing@seniorsservicesociety.ca.

The SHINE program, funded by the BC Ministry of Health and led by the Seniors Services Society of BC, is a province-wide collaborative initiative designed to facilitate timely access to housing navigation and wraparound services for seniors. It has one goal: to prevent seniors from becoming homeless.

Since its inception in 2019, SHINE has proven to be an effective and essential solution assisting over 20,459 seniors in communities across BC, providing them with the support and advocacy needed to secure and maintain safe and stable housing.



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MAKING GENEROSITY PART OF THE PLAN



To many donors, giving to an organization like Langley Community Health & Hospital Foundation (LCHHF) may seem like a special occasion, a singular gesture of benevolence or a shot of dopamine that exists outside of everyday budgets or long-term financial plans.

But separating philanthropy, such as bequests in a Will or securities, from a longer-term financial plan is a common mistake among legacy donors, according to Tanya Lyn Werk, a Senior Wealth Advisor at IG Wealth Management who works with the Foundation to present seminars in legacy giving.

Over the next year, she'll be busy with seminars that run a gamut of topics from family conflict and estate protection to estate planning and women's relationship to money and wealth. While these sessions, hosted in partnership with Langley Community Health & Hospital Foundation touch on distinct themes, they share one thing in common: Tanya Lyn's insistence to her clients to always give serious consideration regarding generosity and philanthropy as part of a broader financial mission.

"Some people give without considering philanthropy as a component of a written financial plan," she says.

Being specific about the purpose of giving is key, she adds.

"Perhaps it's best for them to leave a legacy for tax purposes while helping causes they have a passion

for. Perhaps annual giving would do well for people who are self-employed and unsure until the last moment. Or perhaps monthly is best," she says.

The Giving Trend is on the Rise

The latest research from the Canadian Association of Gift Planners found that the share of Canadians who have included a charitable gift in their Will doubled from five per cent in 2019 to 10 per cent in 2025. Meanwhile, 44 per cent of those surveyed now say they are likely to leave a charitable gift in their Will, up from about 31 per cent in the last research they released. Tanya Lyn sees the giving trend in her own practice.

"I see a lot of people who are trending toward legacy giving due to uncertainty of longevity and wanting to hold on to their cash flow/investments."

But universally, life serves up constant changes. "So when a client sees how giving can suit them and benefit all parties, they usually take great interest," she says.

Incorporating legacy giving into a long-term plan alongside other important financial goals can help track the ebb and flow of resources and can change as life evolves.

"A solid plan should take your entire life into account and should be reviewed and updated regularly."

Visit LCHHFoundation.com/gift-in-your-will to learn more about charitable giving or to sign up for one of Tanya Lyn's seminars.

A QUICK FALL RESET THAT CAN HELP PROTECT YOUR HOME

As fall brings a return to regular routines, it's the perfect time to ensure your home is prepared for the colder months ahead. To help you get started, the experts behind Intact Insurance's home prevention program share seven practical ways to keep your home safe and winter-ready:

- **Manage overhanging branches:** Inspect your property for limbs that could damage your roof or fencing. Prune them back to the trunk to ensure they withstand winter winds.

- **Upgrade door and window seals:** Worn weatherstripping is a primary source of heat loss. Check all windows and doors, replacing any peeling or damaged material.

- **Seal small cracks and gaps:** Tiny cracks can lead to significant structural damage. Seal all exterior gaps this fall to keep your home watertight.

- **Spot-check insulation:** Drafty rooms or cold interior walls are signs of insufficient insulation. A professional can help you update these areas to save on energy costs.

- **Replace your air filter:** A clean furnace filter ensures your heating system operates at peak efficiency during its busiest season.

- **Secure or store outdoor items:** High winds can turn patio furniture into projectiles. Store items in a garage or use heavy-duty ropes to secure anything left outdoors.

- **Inspect for frost:** Check your attic regularly for frost or condensation. These are early warning signs of insulation gaps or roof leaks that can lead to destructive ice dams, trapping water where it can potentially seep into your home.

Getting your home safer doesn't have to be a major project. By regularly checking up on a few key elements, you can be much better prepared. Find more safety tips at keepitintact.ca.

www.newscanada.com

HOW VOLUNTEERING KEEPS SENIORS HEALTHY, CONNECTED, AND ENGAGED

On October 1, we celebrate National Seniors Day by recognizing the many ways older adults strengthen our neighbourhoods. For many older adults, the secret to rich and purposeful living in their retirement years comes down to a simple habit: volunteering.

The benefits are well documented. In 2020, a landmark 10-year study from the University of Michigan revealed that volunteering just two hours a week yields significant physical and psychological benefits for seniors, even reducing overall mortality risk.

For 92-year-old Desley, a resident at The Wexford Seniors Community in South Delta, the motivation is straightforward: "It makes me feel good, and it helps me feel better." Whether she is running bingo or making floral arrangements for the dining room tables, Desley finds that service is a natural mood-lifter. "When I'm down, I feel better if I do something for someone else," she shares.

At Magnolia Gardens Seniors' Community in Langley, Roger is another familiar face on the volunteer scene. You'll often find him in the

workshop building yard games for fellow residents, though his favourite assignment is serving as Resident Ambassador. "I get to spend a lot of time helping new residents, and I truly enjoy it. It's very hands-on," he says with a laugh. "It keeps me out of trouble!"

Four Perks of Giving Back

1. **Better "Bounce Back":** Tackling a new challenge boosts confidence and emotional well-being, providing the resilience needed to recharge after a setback.

2. **A Natural Brain Boost:** Volunteering is a great mental workout. Learning a new skill, meeting new people, or navigating a project keeps your mind sharp and active.

3. **The Social "Secret Sauce":** Community service is a fast way to expand your network. Volunteering connects you with neighbours who share your interests or appreciate your support.

4. **Leaving a Lasting Mark:** Passing along your skills and wisdom creates a legacy of kindness that inspires others to step up too.



Purpose-Driven Retirement

"The International Council on Active Aging has identified vocational wellness as one of the keys to overall well-being," notes Tanya Snow, Director of Bria Communities. "We all have a deep need to feel purposeful at every age. Sharing your skills, knowledge, and gifts to help neighbours has proven benefits for you as much as it does for them."

This National Seniors Day, take a page from Desley and Roger's book—and consider how sharing your time might enrich your own routine.

For more information about living in Bria Communities call 1.866.969.2742 or visit BriaCommunities.ca



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FINDING THE SENIOR LIVING OPTION THAT FITS YOU

Choosing a senior living community is an important decision for you and your loved ones. The right community should support your needs, fit your lifestyle and offer options as your needs change. Start by considering what would make everyday life easier and more enjoyable. Would you benefit from prepared meals, housekeeping, social activities and a private space? Or might you or your loved one need additional care and support?

Independent Living, Assisted Living and Long-Term Care offer different levels of support. Understanding these options can help you and your family make a choice that fits your needs and future plans.

At Marigold Gardens in Burnaby, residents enjoy private suites, three daily meals, housekeeping, social spaces, outdoor areas and opportunities to stay active and connected. The community also offers funded Long-Term Care and is also conveniently located near public transit, shops, services and other community amenities.

At The Hamlets at Vernon, residents can choose from Independent Living, Assisted Living and Private Long-Term Care. Services include home-cooked meals, activities and outings, fitness programs, housekeeping, professional care and 24-hour emergency support. Located in downtown Vernon, the community is close to shops, restaurants, parks and lakes.



When exploring options, consider more than the level of care. Think about the living space, daily services, activities, location, social opportunities and how the community can support changing needs over time. A visit is one of the best ways to see if a community feels right. Tour the community, ask questions and learn what daily life is like. Most importantly, look

for a place where you or your loved one can feel comfortable, supported, independent and connected. Call today to book a tour: Marigold Gardens 778-907-9859, www.marigoldgardensseniors.ca The Hamlets at Vernon 236-426-1488 | www.thehamletsatvernon.ca

Find the Right Fit for You

Discover senior living at Marigold Gardens and The Hamlets at Vernon, where welcoming communities, engaging activities and personalized support come together to make every day feel comfortable and connected.

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Independent Living

SIX RESIDENTS, ONE HOME: B.C.'S FIRST SMALL-GROUP ASSISTED LIVING ARRIVES IN SOUTH SURREY

Physician-designed Sunnyside Senior Living brings a new kind of Assisted Living to South Surrey: newly built homes with just six residents each

SOUTH SURREY — Imagine Assisted Living that looks and feels like the home you already love: a bright kitchen where meals are cooked fresh, a garden to potter in, and a small circle of neighbours who quickly become friends. That is the idea behind Sunnyside Senior Living, the first community in British Columbia built entirely around the small-group home model.

Instead of a large building with long corridors, Sunnyside's newly built single-family homes on 20 Avenue welcome a maximum of six residents each. Care staff know every resident by name, meals are prepared in-house to individual nutrition plans, and the pace of the day is set by the people who live there.

"Care gets better when it gets personal," says Dr. Chinmay Dalal, Co-founder and Medical Director. "In a six-person home, nobody is a room number. Our team knows how you take your tea, when you like to walk, and when something isn't quite right."

Designed and operated by physicians with more than a decade of experience in senior living, Sunnyside was created for people who need a helping hand but want to keep their independence, privacy and routines. Every resident has a Personal

Service Plan covering support with bathing, dressing and medication management, while housekeeping, laundry, a 24/7 snack bar, Strength & Balance classes, live music, gardening and outings with transportation are all part of daily life. Optional in-home doctor visits mean medical care comes to you.

The small-home model is a proven idea. Research on small-house care models in the United States has linked them to fewer hospital visits, lower infection rates and better quality of life. Sunnyside's homes add walk-in showers, grab bars and safety features throughout, in a quiet neighbourhood minutes from Peace Arch Hospital, Darts Hill Garden Park and White Rock's waterfront.

Sunnyside is now welcoming Assisted Living residents, with Memory Care and Long Term Care homes coming soon and waitlists open.

To book a tour, call (604) 998-7545, email



info@sunnysideliving.ca or visit sunnysideliving.ca. Sunnyside Senior Living, 16722 20 Avenue, South Surrey.

Photo: One of Sunnyside Senior Living's newly built assisted living homes in South Surrey, where a maximum of six residents share a single-family home with personalized care. (Photo: Sunnyside Senior Living)



Sunnyside ASSISTED LIVING



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YOUR HOME. YOUR EQUITY. YOUR CHOICE.

A home becomes much more than a house when you've lived in it for 30 or 40 years.

It's where you raised your family. Where birthdays and Christmas mornings happened. It's the marks on the doorframe showing how tall the grandkids have grown, the garden you've worked on for years, and the neighbour you still stop and talk to at the end of the driveway.

Those things matter.

I've been in the mortgage business for over 40 years, and one of the hardest conversations I see older Canadians having is whether they can afford to stay in the home they love. Sometimes the kids are suggesting it's time to downsize. Sometimes retirement income just isn't going as far as it used to. And sometimes an unexpected expense suddenly makes staying in the home feel impossible.

But before you put up the For Sale sign, you should know that you may have another option.

For many Canadians, much of the wealth they've accumulated over their lifetime is sitting right beneath their feet — in their home.

A reverse mortgage can allow homeowners 55 and older to access some of that equity, tax-free, without having to make regular mortgage payments. You continue to own your home and, most importantly, you can continue living in it.

Is it right for everyone? No. Like any financial decision, there are costs and considerations that need to be understood.

But I've also seen what happens when it is the

right solution.

I've sat across from people who came into my office believing they had no choice but to sell. Then we showed them another way.

I've seen shoulders drop. I've seen the worry disappear from someone's face. And yes, I've seen tears.

Not because they were getting a mortgage.

Because they realized they could stay home.

After more than 40 years in this business, moments like those still mean something to me.

You spent a lifetime building equity in your home. Sometimes, that equity can give something back — the freedom to stay in the place where you built your life.

Before you decide to leave, let's make sure you know your options.

For more information, contact Mark Ingram, 1.604.644.1413, www.ingrammortgage.com

THE NEW WAY TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP AROUND THE HOME

We all need some help, sometimes. Using technology to take care of a task isn't lazy, it's efficient. People live busy, demanding lives, which is why we created labour-saving devices in the first place. What continues to change is just what that

technology's capable of:

It's a meaningful time saver. As anyone who's done laundry by hand can tell you, modern appliances are real time-savers. But they're also still continuously improving. To do laundry with a standard washer and dryer, for instance, you need to time out two chores, not just one, since clothes need to move quickly to the dryer to avoid potential mildew buildup.

But a combo washer-dryer eliminates that step, meaning you can just put a load in and walk away. Some washer-dryers, like the one from Samsung's Bespoke AI line, eliminate the usual drawback of the system—a longer cycle—and can complete a load in as little as 98 minutes. It can also automatically sense how big and dirty the load is, and adjust accordingly.

Your appliances can take on more than they used to. It takes physical work to run a home, but it also takes a significant mental load. Smart appliances are now able to take on some of that brain work, freeing up users in ways they haven't been before. In a smart home, your thermostat can adjust based on your schedule, saving you energy by reducing use when you're not home. A smart fridge can keep track of what you have in stock, and even help suggest recipes or let you know when something's going to expire.

Connecting devices together in a smart ecosystem, like Samsung's SmartThings, lets your home operate as one environment, not a bunch of different appliances. Technology is letting households live with less stress and friction at home, saving time and mental load.

www.newscanada.com

What's your next chapter?

Life doesn't stop at retirement.

Retirement can certainly bring about major life changes - but it can also bring new possibilities. What are you looking forward to? What would you like more of? Who can you talk with that has been where you're about to tread? What could your next chapter look like?

NEXT CHAPTER is a coffee club for anyone nearing retirement, planning for it, or already retired and wondering what comes next. It's a safe place to meet, exchange ideas and experiences, and enjoy good conversation with others at a similar stage of life.



To join the conversation, contact Mark Ingram.

Meet Mark Ingram Next Chapter was created by Mark Ingram, co-founder of the Ingram Mortgage Team. For more than 40 years, Mark and his team have helped families throughout the Lower Mainland with their home financing strategies. The team still handles all types of home financing but Mark has pivoted to concentrate on assisting Older Canadians with their unique financing situations. As some of his family has relocated to the Okanagan and the Interior, the area Mark services has grown as well.



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As retirement approaches, many seniors begin to ask important questions: Is it time to downsize? What can I afford monthly? Do I want to be closer to family, services, or healthcare?

At Garden Park Tower in Abbotsford, BC, we offer a distinctive housing option that provides answers to these questions with peace of mind. Since 1997, our Life Lease program has provided seniors with a secure, community-focused lifestyle designed for independent living.

What is Life Lease?

Life Lease is a housing arrangement where residents make a one-time capital payment in exchange for the lifetime right to occupy their unit and enjoy shared amenities. In addition, a modest monthly maintenance fee covers property upkeep, utilities, and contributions to a contingency reserve. When it's time to move on, residents—or their estates—receive a redemption payment, ensuring capital preservation and facilitating a smooth transition. This model blends financial stability with flexibility, making it an attractive alternative to conventional ownership or rental.

CGAS Life Lease

Why Choose Garden Park Tower? Our community is built around comfort, connection, and convenience. Spacious condo-style units eliminate the hassle of homeownership—no lawns to mow, no costly repairs—just a worry-free lifestyle. Residents enjoy underground parking, exercise facilities, a solarium, a woodshop, a coffee shop, hair care services, and a beautiful garden. Our dedicated maintenance team ensures that every unit

remains functional and comfortable.

Equally important is the sense of community. Garden Park Tower is more than a residence; it's a vibrant community where neighbours become friends and residents have a voice in shaping their surroundings. Security of tenure, affordability, and peace of mind make this a truly unique housing option.

Independent Living with Support Nearby

Garden Park Tower is designed for seniors who are capable of independent living while still seeking access to amenities, social connections, and the reassurance of long-term housing stability. Situated close to shopping, services, and healthcare, it offers both independence and convenience.

If you are considering a move that preserves your capital, simplifies your lifestyle, and connects you to a welcoming community, we invite you to explore Garden Park Tower.

604-743-0232 |
reception@gardenparktower.ca |
www.gardenparktower.ca



PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST FRAUD WHILE SHOPPING ONLINE

Online shopping has become a popular way of shopping, thanks to its speed and convenience. Fraudsters are taking advantage of it, so it's important to stay vigilant when hunting down deals and searching for the perfect gifts online. Here are things to keep in mind:

- Use only secure websites when sharing personal or financial information or buying something online. Look for websites with addresses starting with "https" or with a padlock image in the address bar.
- Keep your computer firewall, anti-virus and anti-spyware systems up to date.
- Don't give your credit card information over email.
- Log out of your online banking website as soon as you're done using it.
- Don't allow your computer or mobile device to remember your password or banking information, like your account number.
- Don't use public Wi-Fi or public computers to do your online banking or shopping.
- If you must use a public computer, clear its history and cache when you finish using it.

Remember that you have a role to play in ensuring your online security. By being careful, you can better protect your money, identity and peace of mind. If you have information about online purchase scams, report it to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre. Also, contact your bank as soon as possible if you find an unauthorized or suspicious transaction on your credit card or bank account. Find more tips to protect yourself against fraud at canada.ca/money. www.newscanada.com

Shell Busey the HouseSmart guy Questions and Answers

By Shell Busey



Please Be Advised

My column is going to make a 180 degree turn starting in the October Senior Newspaper.

See below for details:

1. Reason

To have you the reader ask your questions on any home improvement topic + any topic that will help you with your project and needs included are the following.

2. You can email me at the following email address and I will email you back with the answer.

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How to; what to; where to; why to; who to; making (it just that easy) to get your project completed.

REMOVING BUILD UP AND ODOURS FROM DRAINS

Soaps, shampoos and food substances tend to cling to the sides of the drain pipe between the drain hole and the trap. Eventually this will cause the water drainage to slow and you may notice an odour coming from the drain.

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY SINK TRAP CLEANER

Before retiring for the night place ½ cup baking soda in each sink and basin drain. Add ½ cup white vinegar. Leave overnight, flush down with water in the morning.

Remember: place ingredients in proper sequence in the drain NOT in the basin, sink or a pot.

If this does not solve the problem you will need to take the p-trap apart and soak overnight in sudsy ammonia or Shell Busey's Home Cleaning Formula. Use a bottle brush to scrub the residual from the inside before reconnecting.

REMOVING WALLPAPER

Begin at the top and pull the face of the paper straight down at 180 degrees flat to the wall. Apply a wallpaper removing solution to the backside of the paper. Allow the solution to migrate down the backside between the between the wall and the paper releasing it from the wall. If the paper is heavy vinyl or foil use a wallpaper ripper device called a Paper Tiger to score and perforate the paper vertically and horizontally. Apply the solution directly over the paper to penetrate the perforations to release the paper from the wall. You may require a steam driven wallpaper removing device available through most rental stores.

If you have not purchased a wallpaper removing solution you can make your own by mixing 1 cup of fabric softener to one litre of warm water.



WRITE AS I PLEASE

By Mel Kositsky

“AGEING IS LIVING”

It's a simple phrase that can be interpreted in many different ways. But the message is clear – and it should be embraced by all ages.

“Ageing is living. The opportunity now is to make those longer lives healthier, more connected and full of possibilities to continue contributing.”

Yongjie Yon, PhD, Technical Officer, Ageing and Health, World Health Organization, European Region

Although his work today is based in Europe, Dr. Yongjie Yon remains closely connected to British Columbia and hopes to contribute more directly to healthy ageing in Canada in the years ahead. This summer he spent time visiting family in the Fraser Valley and reconnecting with some of his mentors.

“I have been fortunate to learn from countries and communities in many different settings,” he says. “I would like to bring more of that experience back to Canada and B.C. — while also helping share internationally the very good work that is already happening here.”

The 2026 International Day of Older Persons is on Thursday, October 1. (On December 14, 1990, the United Nations General Assembly designated October 1 as the International Day of Older Persons.)

Dr. Yon sees longer lives as something to celebrate — and an invitation to think differently about how communities are designed.

(Among the many events world-wide that day will be a presentation by B.C.'s Seniors Advocate Dan Levitt, who will be speaking at 11 a.m. at the Langley Senior Resources Society's main hall. It is the 15th anniversary of National Seniors Day in Canada.)

For the past 10 years, Dr. Yon led the Ageing and Health program for WHO Europe as a Technical Officer in the Policy and Governance for Health Through the Life-Course unit at the WHO Regional Office for Europe in Copenhagen, Denmark. He recently moved to the WHO Office for Investment for Health and Development located in Venice, Italy.

Holding a Ph.D. in Gerontology from the University of Southern California, United States, Dr. Yon was a Doctoral Fellow with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. His extensive research and policy portfolio specifically focus on health and public health policies, with a strong emphasis on health and active longevity.

He has published in leading academic journals, covering diverse topics such as ageism, abuse of older persons, age-friendly environments, child maltreatment, intergenerational relations, oral health, housing, road traffic injuries, and health disparities. Before joining WHO, Dr. Yon served as a Policy Analyst on ageing policies for the Government of Canada.

The 2026 United Nations International Day of Older Persons (UNIDOP) will explore one of the defining transformations of our time: humanity is living longer than ever before. Global life expectancy has increased steadily over more than seven decades and is projected to continue rising through mid-century. The following is this year's theme:

“The Age of Longevity: Rethinking Systems for Longer Lives”

“As people around the world live longer than ever before, societies are facing one of the most significant



demographic transformations of our time. Longer lives present unprecedented opportunities, but also require rethinking how health systems, labour markets, social protection, education, housing and public policies support people throughout the life course.”

According to UN statistics, the number of older people (defined as those aged 65 years or older) tripled from around 260 million in 1980 to 761 million in 2021. Between 2021 and 2050, the global share of the older population is projected to increase from less than 10 per cent to around 17 per cent.

Dr. Yon's journey and career devoted to studying “healthy ageing” began in Langley, B.C.

His family made Langley home after immigrating to Canada. Yongjie attended Langley Secondary School and later studied psychology at Kwantlen Polytechnic University's Langley campus, where the late Professor Larry Anderson would profoundly influence the direction of his life.

Larry, himself deeply rooted in the Langley community and a former board member of the Langley Senior Resources Society, introduced Yongjie to the study of ageing and gave him his first opportunity to work in the field, involving him in the first study of its kind across British Columbia examining ageism.

“Larry helped me see that ageing is about much more than getting older,” Yongjie says. “It is about how we value people, how generations relate to one another, and whether our communities enable people to continue participating and contributing throughout their lives.”

That shared interest soon moved from research into community action. Yongjie co-founded the Intergenerational Centre for Action Learning (iCAL) with Larry and his wife, Elizabeth Anderson, creating opportunities for younger and older people to learn from one another and to challenge stereotypes about age.

Community service was another important influence. Through Soka Gakkai International Canada (SGI Canada), a Buddhist community, Yongjie became deeply involved in youth engagement and community action, supporting young people in British Columbia and across Canada to develop leadership and contribute to their communities.

From Langley, his path took him to Simon Fraser University for a Master's degree in Gerontology and later to the University of Southern California's Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, where he completed his PhD. His graduate research, supported by fellowships from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, included work on ageism and the prevention of elder abuse.

He later worked with the Government of Canada on policies affecting older Canadians before beginning an international public-health career with the World Health Organization (WHO).

For more than a decade, Yongjie has worked internationally with WHO. In recent years, he has led WHO/Europe's work on healthy ageing across its 53 member states, working with countries, cities and communities to turn evidence into policy and practical action.

That experience has reinforced a simple message for him: “living longer is a tremendous achievement, but longer lives also need to be healthier lives.”

“There is a lot of discussion today about longevity,” he says. “For me, the important question is healthy longevity. It is not simply how many years we add to life, but whether people have the health, support and opportunities to live those years well.”



One part of his work particularly close to him is the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities, which connects communities around the world working to become better places in which to grow older.

The movement itself has an important connection to British Columbia. The research methodology that helped launch WHO's global age-friendly work became known as the Vancouver Protocol, recognizing B.C.'s role in hosting the international meeting where it was developed.

For Yongjie, age-friendly communities are best understood as ecosystems.

“Housing, transportation, public spaces, health and social services, social connection and opportunities to participate all interact,” he explains. “When those things work together, they support people to remain healthy, connected and independent. And when communities work well for older people, they tend to work better for everyone.”

He believes there is an opportunity to strengthen that ecosystem further in British Columbia — connecting municipalities, community organizations, health and social services, researchers and older persons themselves, while linking local experience with what is being learned internationally.

In 2024, Yongjie returned to Kwantlen to receive its Distinguished Alumni Award for his contributions to healthy ageing. He dedicated the recognition to Larry Anderson, whose encouragement more than two decades earlier had set him on this path.

The **United Nations International Day of Older Persons** is a global observance that recognizes the contributions of older people and addresses the challenges they face in a rapidly ageing world. It highlights their roles as advocates and change-makers in areas like health equity, community resilience, and human rights, countering stereotypes and promoting inclusion.

Rapid growth in the number of people reaching older ages underscores the significance of promoting health, preventing, and treating illnesses throughout the entire course of life. In societies with aging populations, it becomes imperative to adjust to the increasing number of elderly individuals who possess a diverse range of functional capacities. Supportive environments play a pivotal role in assisting older individuals to maintain their activity levels and independence as they progress in age.

Top Left: Yongjie Yon, a World Health Organization specialist on Ageing from Italy, paid a visit to the Langley Seniors Centre with columnist Mel Kositsky

Bottom Right: Yongjie Yon, WHO technical officer on Ageing and Health, met with Kate Ludlam, executive director of the Langley Senior Resources Society, and columnist Mel Kositsky

Top Right: B.C.'s Senior Advocate Dan Levitt met recently with Yongjie Yon, the WHO Technical Officer for Ageing and Health



The Next Chapter

By Mike McCardell

Ashes Day of Fun

Another story of the end of life, but some tell me this is sort of fun.

My mother started smoking when she was young and pretty, like everyone did. In all the family pictures she is smoking. So is almost everyone. It was glamorous. It was normal, encouraged. It was everywhere.

Eventually half a lung was cut out of her chest. I took her to the hospital for the operation. Before she went in, she lit a cigarette. She said she needed it. A few years later half the other lung was cut out. A handful of years went by and she was on a breathing machine. Each forced a tiny expansions of her chest. It was tragic, painful to watch, more painful to experience. And then she died. And here is where it got better, at least for us.

She did not have a religion. She left a note saying no memorial, no service, scatter her ashes anywhere. So, we did. She loved shopping. She had only a half dozen blouses and skirts and pants in her closet, but hunting for the new perfect one was her hobby, her entertainment. When she found something she really wanted, a blouse maybe, she waited for it to go on sale. If it was sold or she missed the sale, she would shrug and start hunting again. It was exciting. It was shopping with a purpose besides buying. It was almost a sport. And she knew before long she would find something else to target her interest.

She lived in New York, a mecca of fancy stores with new things always for sale. My son and daughter were also living there at the time.

After we picked up her ashes, my daughter had an idea. She made a list of the best stores in the city and on a fine day with lots of sunshine the three of us went into Bonwit Teller and Saks Fifth Avenue and Lord and Taylor. We brought some of her ashes. They were happy. They were in a world they knew.

And then bits of Grandma were put to rest where she most loved to be.

When no sales clerks were watching Grandma was secretly sprinkled in front of racks of blouses and pants and dresses and over there near the shoes. All she had to do was look up and see what she loved most. We did that in all the stores, and then on to the big one. Her grandson went into Tiffany's, the original famous one on Fifth Avenue. She would never go in there, it was way too expensive even to look.

But while the security guards were watching her

grandson, he is not the type to shop at Tiffany's, his fingers were by his sides sprinkling Grandma in front of the diamonds.

Then off to the Plaza Hotel, fanciest in the city and where one of the Home Alone movies was shot.

They had a long red carpet from the sidewalk up the front steps and into the swanky lobby. We took the last bits of ash and walked across the carpet following one another like the Beatles on one of their famous albums. And while our feet were marching our fingers were saying good bye to Mom and Grandma.

Then we watched the very rich and famous walk on the carpet, their shoes picking up flakes of a woman who lived in a tiny apartment. Then these shoes carried her into a world that to her would have looked like heaven.

Sadly, as we left a bus passed by us with a large advertisement on the side of a young and pretty woman holding a cigarette. The message was that cigarettes were part of a glamorous life. Grand children said they hoped the young woman's ashes would get a good send off.

mccardell@shaw.ca

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Details on page 3.



WE'RE BACK—AND WE ROCK!

by Diane Tijman, retired educator.

It is an absolute joy to be back writing again. Last February, my daughter had a kidney transplant and I became a kidney donor, but to someone else. To find the best match, we participated in an amazing 12-person kidney exchange involving donors and recipients from across Canada.

Frankly, my daughter was very sick, living with kidney failure, and as you can imagine, we were very worried. After the operation, her will to live rebounded tenfold. Thinking back now, is life grand? Absolutely! Was it worth the pain? No doubt. How are we feeling? Better every day.

Initially, both of us were sore, bloated and very tired. Walking was slower, steps fewer, we slept a lot and were limited in what we could carry. Ha ha! No grocery shopping or heavy housework for us! Other than my daughter's initial nausea, that was the worst of it. Within a few weeks, she showed more energy and enthusiasm than she had shown in years. She takes anti-rejection medication to support her marvellous new kidney and now has the best kidney function in the house!

I'm doing great too. My remaining kidney is adapting



to its increased work load, and my kidney function is moving closer to normal for my age. My stress has gone way down, and I'll soon be back working with student teachers, who give me joy and challenge my brain.

My daughter, on the other hand, is avoiding crowds, sushi, sunshine and travel for a year. No doubt there will be a celebratory family trip next year. As for me, travel is possible now. Stay tuned for that story!

I am so grateful to my family, who were real troopers through all of this. Meals were made, laundry done, and family, cats and plants were happy. Friends were wonderfully kind and attentive, too. Their heartfelt messages, visits, cards and flowers meant so much.

Most importantly, I am deeply grateful to the Kidney Foundation and the brilliant VGH Renal team for their remarkable work—and to our Canadian health-care system. We are incredibly fortunate living here.

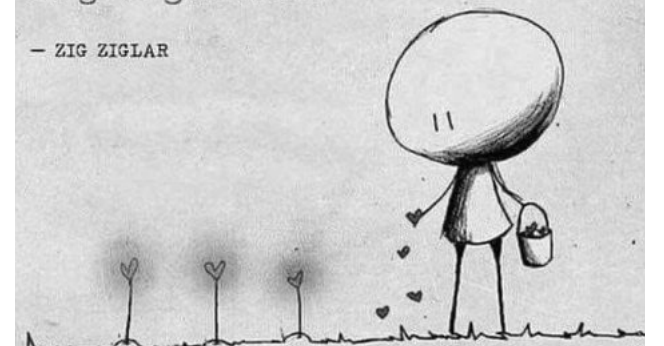
I have learned a lot about the importance of community and connection during these last few years. Our network carried us through a very difficult time and we are profoundly grateful.

My daughter is well. So am I. And I'm told the person



Life is an echo.
What you send out, comes back.
What you sow, you reap.
What you give, you get.
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Remember, life is an echo.
It always gets back to you.
So give goodness.

— ZIG ZIGLAR



who received my kidney is doing well too.

What a gift it is to be back. Life has given us both a second chance to get out there, make memories, help others—and, of course, **rock!**



A YUCATECAN DAYTRIP CENOTE ZACI AND VALLALODID

by Chris Millikan

Holidaying on Mexico's Yucatan one year includes a remarkable Sunday in Valladolid. Just two hours inland from Cancun's beach hustle, this laidback city bedazzles us with its cenote [sen-oh-tay] and unique history.

Our morning begins at Cenote Zaci. Paying small entrance fees, we step warily along a stone ramp and down a narrow staircase to the vast pool. Stalactites and tangled vines hang from bedrock partially covering crystal-clear waters; sunbeams dance on the glassy surface. From rocky overhangs, local boys dive effortlessly into the icy depths. Warming myself up on a bench, I watch my hubby backstroke across the turquoise-blue expanse like an otter...and paddle back along rugged walls!

Such cenotes evolved millions of years ago. After the Yucatan's ancient seabed rose, rainwater percolated through a porous limestone crust, forming extensive caves; collapsing surfaces created these natural sinkholes. Nowadays, ten thousand cenotes exist throughout the peninsula.

Cenotes supplied early Mayan cities with fresh water...and were also believed to link a mysterious underworld with the surface world of light and air. The term cenote itself means 'sacred well,' a place for contemplating natural wonders as well as worshipping gods...and appeasing them. Offerings to rain god Chaac were meant to urge him to provide optimal conditions for growing maize [corn], beans and squash...

Leaving Cenote Zaci behind, we stroll to Church of Saint Servatius. A plaque explains how a mayor beat his predecessors to death there, desecrating the original 1545 church. Ordering it demolished, the bishop's 1705 replacement church features twin belltowers with vertical slits. Riflemen later used them for defense during an 1848 native rebellion. Inside, two battle cannons remain on display. Nowadays at peace, quietly murmured prayers and sweet choir-voices spill from open doorways.

Across in Parque Principal Francisco Canton Rosado, flowering bougainvillea and tropical shade trees border the city park pathways. One leads us to the central plaza's fountain. There, a lovely sculpted

Yucatecan girl pours water from a jug. This slender Mestiza symbolizes the fusion of Mayan and Spanish cultures. Vendors float massive bouquets of multi-coloured balloons above this charming monument...

Relaxing in circular, bright-white kissing chairs, cool breezes tease our faces. Joined side-by-side in quaint intimacy, we reflect on Valladolid's current 'hub city' status. From here, folks launch tours to nearby archeological sites, particularly Ek Balam and World Heritage Chichen-Itza. Some travel into the countryside to find other cenotes...

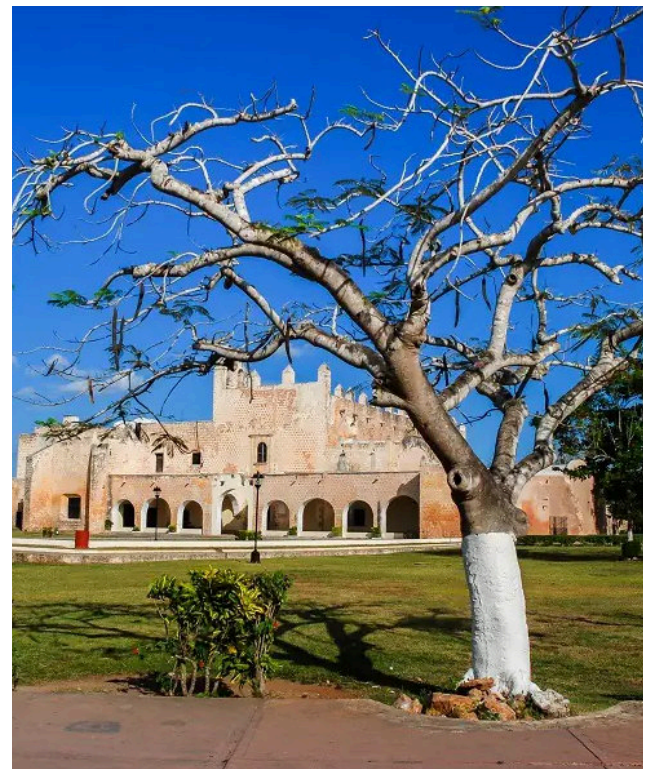
Valladolid's open-air Sunday market stretches for blocks. Wearing fresh-cut flowers in loosely gathered gray hair, smiling grammas tend carts of local handicrafts. Shelves display painted carvings, Mayan calendar plaques...and filigreed silver jewelry. Traditionally dressed, their bright-white cotton dresses feature yokes and hems hand-embroidered with red, orange, yellow and blue flowers. Crisp new huipils fluttering from the park's black wrought-iron fence, tempt passersby like us to purchase them!

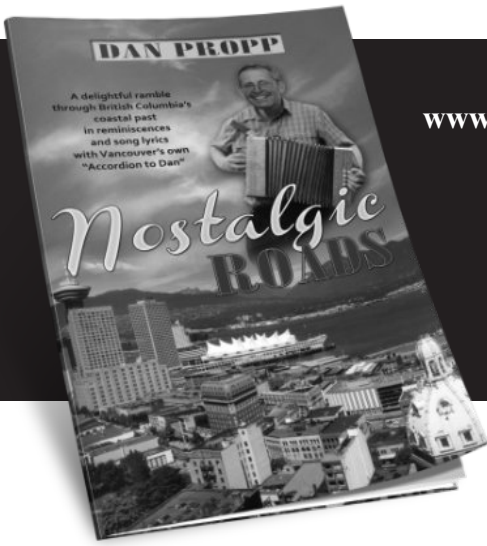
On toward Yucatan's oldest church, we pass old

hotels, open-air bistros and little shops in the heart of the city. Convent of San Bernardino de Siena rises inside thick walls amid a ring of tree-lined avenues. A wide walkway leads us across its grassy courtyard and under an arched corridor into the sprawling monastery. This fortified sixteenth-century sanctuary was built by Franciscan monks atop a cenote. A gilded wooden altarpiece and early Christian frescos in the chapel contrast with its stark, fortress-like nature.

Back in the plaza, a guitar trio on the corner sends rhythmic Yucatecan music into air spiced by a food fair on the street beyond. With our chilled, cinnamon-spiced rice-milk horchatas, we toast this memorable daytrip.

Evening shadows lengthen as we depart Valladolid, invigorated in its ages-old cenote, captivated by enduring culture and delighted with 'old world' encounters.





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By Mel Kositsky

In his retirement, McGregor was a much sought-after speaker and MC for many events from fundraisers for non-profits and charities to political forums. His natural ability for storytelling with or without a microphone in his hand was complimented by his “corny” joke telling ability and natural quick wit.

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He was always the MC for events to raise funds for the horse garden and his memory will be forever inscribed on a plaque on the garden wall – a poem he wrote in July 2006 called “Spirits”.

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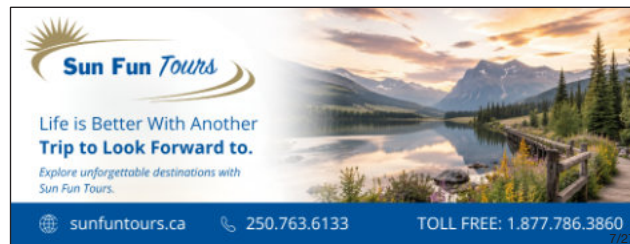
**Stand quietly as you read the names,
Listen closely, through the trees,
The Spirits of the Horse are near,
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J.S. McGregor
July 2006

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