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Fall 2018

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and has 78,000 members.

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Editor's Note

The *Renaissance* summer issue generated responses from our readership, and so did the survey we sent out in August.

To Linda Kremer (District 14, Niagara), who asked for more information on global benefits provider Best Doctors, here's the link: bestdoctors.com/Canada/rto-ero. To those members who wish to connect with Mary Barchiesi's travel group, please email mary.barchiesi@gmail.com. We've also addressed font size and clarity issues brought up by readers.

Please note that letters have been edited for context and space constraints.

I was an active subscriber to *Renaissance* for years. After finding that fewer articles are having any value for me, I let my subscription lapse and relied on my wife's subscription to peruse new editions. However, the new *Renaissance* made me rethink things. This issue is excellent and suggests that the magazine's new direction may have tremendous potential for us seniors once again. The articles and ads are spot-on, relevant to seniors and to Ontario residents. Kudos big-time to the design people — big print, simple but effective layouts, great use of colour, attractive photography, graphics that are modern and powerful. Your layout/design staff should be complimented on making this magazine inviting, effective and attractive.

— Richard Szpin
(District 28, Durham Region)

I read your magazine and was impressed by two articles — "Loneliness is bad for your health" and "Caregivers' guide to balance and happiness." I have a friend who suffers from serious dementia and is confined to a wheelchair at a long-term-care residence. Her husband is an acquaintance who is devoted to seeing her daily and his health is suffering. Your articles encouraged me to email him to ask to meet me for coffee. We both live alone, and I hope he'll accept my invitation, which I would never have considered offering without your prompting.

— Marlene Hewitt
(District 27, Ottawa–Carleton)

I totally agreed with the benefits of intergenerational interdependence ("Bridging the generation gaps"). There is a lot of truth to be said about "It takes a village to raise a child." With our fast-paced lifestyles, families scattered around the globe, and single parents or both parents working out of the home being commonplace, our society could certainly use more helping hands in raising children. We have shied away from fostering the aid that came when people lived in villages and everyone knew each other and lent a hand when needed.

— Barbara Van Sickle, Vernon B.C.
(Barbara's spouse is an RTO member, District 42, mainland B.C.)

I absolutely loved it! First time ever to read every short article. I'm keeping it for future reference.

Thank you for the new format.

— Ruby Jacob (District 15, Halton)



LETTERS WANTED

We welcome all letters to the editor, as we appreciate your feedback on the stories and other content featured in *Renaissance*.

Please send your letters to renaissance@rtoero.org.



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The upside of turning 50

Celebrating the past,
looking to the future

by **Martha Foster**



“There has been no holding back to recognize our half-century of accomplishments. One thing we can say about retirees is that we know how to celebrate!”

—
Martha Foster

There has been no holding back to recognize our half-century of accomplishments. One thing we can say about retirees is that we know how to celebrate!

This is also the year when we instituted our new governance model, which was two years in the making. On February 8, RTO/ERO was incorporated under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act (NFP Act). Our six-member Provincial Executive became the Board of Directors; the President became the board's Chair, and the First Vice-President became Vice-Chair.

On May 29, at our first annual meeting under the NFP Act, the board increased the number of its directors from six to nine. Twelve candidates ran for election, and senators elected the nine directors of the new board, who then elected the Chair and Vice-Chair.

And as you have likely already determined, since I am the one writing this for the *Renaissance* fall 2018 issue, I, Martha Foster (District 41, Elgin), was elected Chair. Rich Prophet (District 3, Algoma) is Vice-Chair.

I am most excited to be working with this enthusiastic group of RTO/ERO members. They all come with a lifetime of experiences, culled from the many diverse aspects of their careers and

outside-of-education collaborations. Once again, we are reaping the benefits of an older, more knowledgeable demographic.

Age definitely has its upside. RTO/ERO is so fortunate to be able to draw from its membership of older, wiser, “road-tested” individuals. We need to ensure that the general population realizes too how retirees can be assets to any organization, project or event. They bring to the table valuable experience in so many areas — experience that can be used to move initiatives forward more quickly, smoothly and efficiently.

Yeah to wisdom and experience.
Yeah to us! ■

Another year is winding down and what a year it has been. We are wrapping up our 50th celebration, highlighted by numerous events and projects across all our districts in Ontario and British Columbia. I have had the privilege of attending birthday parties, cake cuttings and bench dedications. I've attended and participated in 1968-fashion shows, enjoyed cruises and watched the RTO/ERO flag fly over city halls. It has been a wonderful time commemorating our 50 amazing years.

Another highlight of note was the 2018 June Szeman Award for Outstanding Leadership, which honoured 48 devoted members from various districts.

2018 Board of Directors

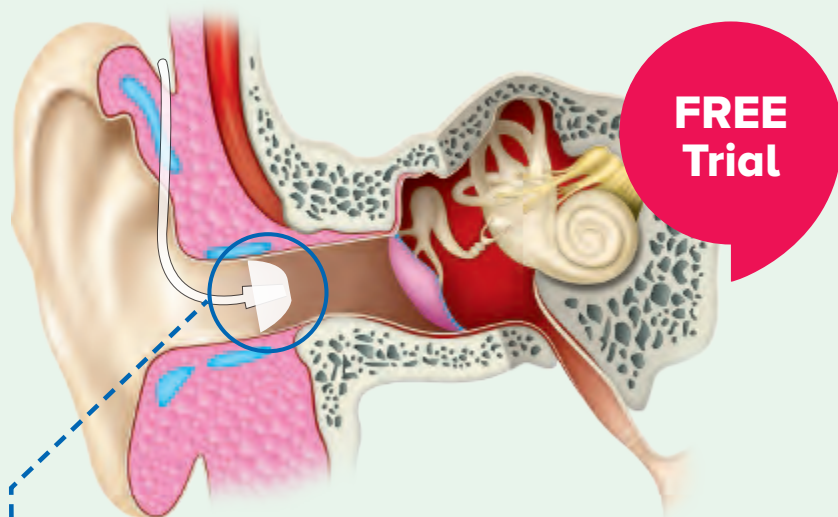
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Pearls of wisdom

Life lessons on faith, perseverance and family

by **Danielle Norris**

My grandmother, Sarah Jane Wilson, is the family matriarch and someone I deeply admire. This past July, we celebrated her 100th birthday in style. The banquet hall was filled with more than 150 guests, including her eight children, 26 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren and extended family, as well as friends. It was a party fit for a queen. The momentous event was filled with music, laughter and love. We offered tributes, toasts and presentations in her honour.

My grandmother loves a captive audience. She stole the show — and the microphone — with her heartfelt speech, leaving guests with wonderful pearls of knowledge and memories as their take-away gifts from the celebration.

My grandmother is a funny, sassy person — and a huge fan of the *Judge Judy*

reality-court TV show. As well, though not an educator by trade, she believed that life is one of the greatest teachers. If you spend even just five minutes around my grandmother, class is always in session. She takes every opportunity to share her knowledge and pass on her life lessons to others.

Herewith are some precious pearls of wisdom from her that I hold close to my heart.

Keep the faith

My grandmother is very religious and raised her children and grandchildren accordingly, with a devout belief system. Her favourite Bible passage — Psalm 23: The Lord is my Shepherd... — is something she has been reciting for as long as I can remember. She continuously reminds

me to have faith and put my trust in God's hands. Her journey through life is so heavily rooted in her faith that it is her anchor, something she holds onto through life's highs and lows.

Life isn't always easy. Make the most out of every situation

Life was different back in her time, and I often think about what it was like for her, when she was growing up in Jamaica, the youngest of six children and coping at age 12 with the loss of her mother. How did my grandmother cope later in life, when she moved her eight children to a new country — Canada? How did she manage having to work long hours cleaning houses to support her family without the help of her spouse? My grandmother exemplified strength, perseverance and determination.

Put family first

Not only was family first a motto in my family, it was the cornerstone we were built on. Growing up, we were all so close that we had family dinners for every holiday and, actually, on almost every Sunday. Those family meals were such a routine part of our lives that we didn't even think about it — it was simply a given. My father and his siblings relied on each other because they had only each other back then. I learned to cherish and appreciate our closely-knit group that helped me develop the character traits that made me the person I am today. Our family has lost some members along the way, but we do our best to honour them and acknowledge their memory at every opportunity.

In spite of our busy schedules and commitments, let's make time for what is really important in our lives — the people we value and care for. Thanks to my grandmother, it is in this spirit of family, faith and perseverance that I urge us all to cherish our loved ones and to show our appreciation of them whenever we can. ■



Danielle Norris (standing, right) and her family celebrate the 100th birthday of Grandma Sarah Jane Wilson (seated, centre).

PHOTO, COURTESY OF DANIELLE NORRIS

Vibrant voices

Our voices deserve to be heard.

by **Jim Grieve**

My grandparents were remarkably interesting and talented people

who had a profound influence on my childhood. My military family moved often. We lived in a different part of the world in each of my first 18 years of life, so my grandparents provided a constant and important bedrock for our family.

Both of my grandfathers worked into their late 70s because they loved the creativity of their work. My amazing grandmothers, who both lived full lives to age 99, were also examples of capable, active and engaged lifelong learners. All four of my grandparents were truly interesting seniors with great life experiences and worthwhile but divergent opinions.

As they aged, I know that there were times, in some social settings, when my grandparents felt somewhat on the periphery of group conversations, even though they had much to contribute.

I'm reminded of the pedagogical stance that this province has formalized in its early years programs — specifically the belief that each young child is capable and competent, rich in potential and life prospects. We should hold this view for people of all ages.

In fact, through our Vibrant Voices initiatives, RTO/ERO and our partner organizations are promoting this positive belief that individuals are capable and competent individuals at every stage of life. As we age, we want to remain engaged and relevant. We want our opinions to be heard and valued. We want to express our view about issues important to us. We want to make sure that all levels of government understand and address issues we care about.

In the 2018 Ontario election, RTO/ERO partnered with the National Association of Federal Retirees (NAFR) to highlight three important issues:

- age-friendly communities.
- the need for more geriatric training.
- eliminating elder abuse.

Our advocacy for seniors' issues will continue with the October 2018 municipal elections in Ontario. As well, along with NAFR and ACER-CART (the umbrella organization linking all of the provincial organizations of retired teachers across

Canada), we'll host a symposium designed to prepare strategies and materials well in advance of the 2019 federal election.

From family rooms to Queen's Park and Parliament Hill, the vibrant voices of seniors deserve to be heard. ■

“As they aged, I know that there were times, in some social settings, when my grandparents felt somewhat on the periphery of group conversations, even though they had much to contribute.”

—
Jim Grieve



RTO/ERO's 50th anniversary was recognized at Queen's Park in Toronto by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario on September 25, 2017.

PHOTO, COURTESY OF JIM GRIEVE



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The process of reconnecting

Moving from
isolation to inclusion

by Sapna Goel

Social isolation is rarely something that happens suddenly in people's lives. Rarely too do people think they will end up being alone. Almost always, when people become socially isolated, it's a process resulting not from one factor but from a series of factors.

"I recently met a woman who is still stunned to find herself among the socially isolated," says Jo-Anne Sobie, executive director of the RTO/ERO Foundation, which supports community programs and initiatives that promote social connections among seniors.

The woman had worked all her life, Sobie notes, but getting divorced in her 50s led to losing the financial security of her husband's pension and becoming estranged from her son. Then she suffered heart failure in her late 50s, resulting in a lengthy hospital stay after which she was unable to work. "Now almost 65, not only is she living in subsidized housing and below the poverty line, she has no way of doing the simplest things nor anyone to call for help," Sobie explains, citing the example of a curtain rod that fell down. "[She said,] 'I spent three weeks trying to figure out how to put it back up. I'm educated, a hard worker, and I can't believe this is my life as I approach 65.'"

Dr. Raza Mirza puts the issue into more context. "Assessing isolation is a challenge because it is so multidimensional," says Dr. Mirza, a senior research associate at the University of Toronto's Institute for Life Course and Aging as well as the network manager for the Toronto-based non-profit National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly (NICE). "Those who are isolated lack not just interaction and relationships with others, but [also] meaningful involvement in the lives of others and within the community at large."

Citing research that involves factors influencing late-life social, mental and physical well-being, Dr. Mirza says that both social isolation and inclusion involve a process.

"Now almost 65, not only is she living in subsidized housing and below the poverty line, she has no way of doing the simplest things nor anyone to call for help."

—
Jo-Anne Sobie

"It is problematic to assume that older adults do not have 'purpose' in their life," he points out. "It is better to reframe the conversation [by] determining how [those

who become isolated] may have temporarily lost their sense of purpose. And so, the intention is to refocus [their] purpose to match their life circumstances." ■

Case study

EARLY INTERVENTION PREVENTS SOCIAL ISOLATION

Through the Hamilton Seniors Isolation Impact Plan (HSIIP), Lucy [not her real name], aged 66, was referred to an HSIIP Hospital Connector by a hospital discharge planner. She was returning home with limited mobility after spending three months recovering from a stroke. Besides being estranged from her only living child, Lucy also had a low income, was behind on filing taxes and facing eviction because she had missed rent payments during her hospital stay.

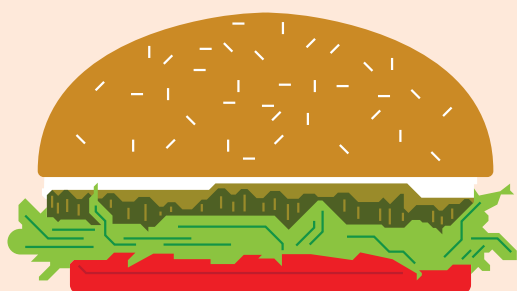
A few days prior to her release, Lucy developed a plan together with the Connector, who provided assistance in the following ways:

- advocated with Lucy's landlord to arrange payment on the missed rent
- assisted her with filing taxes to become eligible for the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)
- helped her find an occupational therapist to assess the safety of her living environment
- registered her with Hamilton's Accessible Transportation Services
- helped her access the city's discounted taxi program

Partially funded by the RTO/ERO Foundation, HSIIP is a collaborative initiative of community groups and agencies working to reduce isolation among seniors in the Greater Hamilton Area.

The No.1 emerging issue facing seniors in Canada?

KEEPING OLDER PEOPLE SOCIALLY CONNECTED AND ACTIVE



2 TIMES



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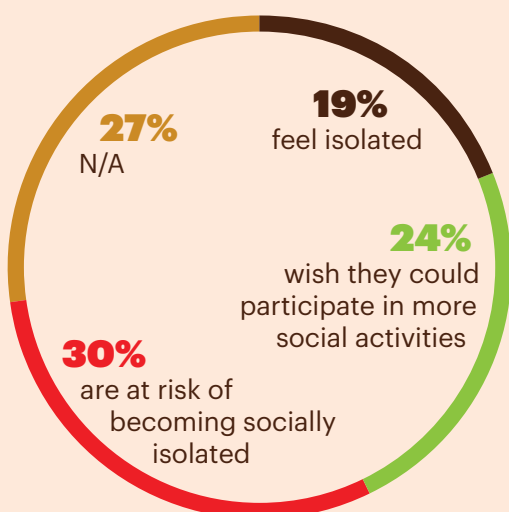


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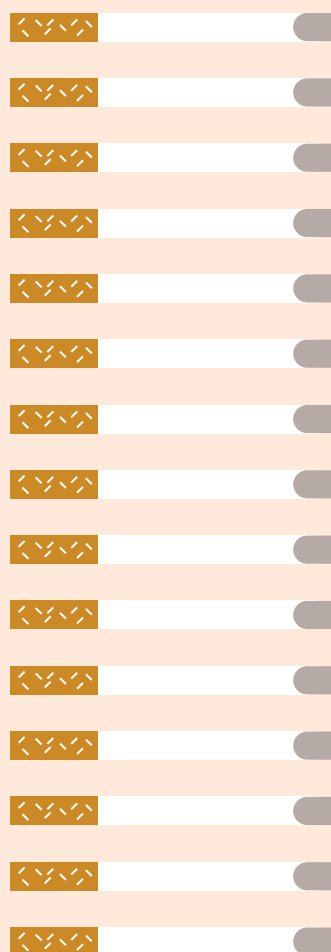


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This October, reach out and connect with aging Canadians in your community. Through the RTO/ERO Foundation's "Engage: End Isolation Campaign," we will send you ideas during the month of October on how to raise awareness and take action on moving Canada's seniors from isolation to inclusion.

Visit embrace-aging.ca to join the challenge.

#engAGE #EndIsolation

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Ageism — how widespread is it?

Age is just a number.

by **Stuart Foxman**

Sometimes, when Bill Courtney (District 17, Simcoe) is on the golf course, on the green, he is asked: “How old are you?” When he says 87, fellow golfers might give him a “way to go” look or ask how he’s feeling. Courtney, who lives in Wasaga Beach, is aware that people mean well. Still, it can be irksome. One reason people react to his age is because they’re surprised he’s still swinging.

“They try to be complimentary in a backhanded way,” says Courtney. “Some people have stereotyped aging as not being able to do activities.”

That’s one type of ageism — and it’s as prevalent as any bias.

Evolving views

Ageism can assume many forms. There are two broad types, according to the Ontario Human Rights Commission. One is the social perception of older persons based on negative attitudes and stereotypes about aging; the other is the structuring of society on the assumption that everyone is young.

Preconceived notions about aging play out in many ways. There are those beliefs that are seemingly innocent, yet still prejudicial, such as assuming Courtney should be on his couch instead of the course. Ageism can also be more insidious, like the viewpoint that people above a certain age are less capable of working, cannot make decision themselves or are a drain on resources.

Consider all the talk about the “silver tsunami” and how this phenomenon of an aging population is to blame for rising costs and service delays in health care. That’s an ageist way to frame the discussion, as if this demographic is the only factor responsible for health-care issues, or as if caring for seniors is somehow less legitimate. The second bucket of ageism — that this is a youth society — can mean that various systems and services fail to account for the needs of older adults, which can be wide-ranging and include physical barriers around access, as well as the assumption that certain conditions are just “normal” when people age.

“They try to be complimentary in a backhanded way. Some people have stereotyped aging as not being able to do activities.”

—
Bill Courtney

Courtney, a past president of RTO/ERO, hopes that views on aging have evolved. His certainly have. When he was young, he associated his grandparents and their peers with sitting around, playing cards and knitting. That’s hardly Courtney’s reality now.

We’ve never seen a crop of seniors like today’s stereotype-busting generation. Even using the blanket term “seniors” misses the point. Lumping together everyone from, say, ages 60 to 100 makes as little sense as putting everyone from ages 20 to 59 in the same category.

Seniors nowadays defy categorization. They’re as diverse in their interests, desires and abilities as any other age group. So, what makes ageism persist? And how prevalent is it?

Most tolerated social prejudice

Some of the best Canadian research in recent years has been commissioned by Mississauga-based Revera, which operates retirement and long-term-care residences in Canada as well as in the U.S. and U.K. Here are some of its findings:

- 63 percent of seniors say they’ve been treated unfairly or differently because of their age.
- 71 percent of seniors agree that society values younger generations more than older ones.



Bill Courtney shows off his moves on the dance floor with Lorraine Séguin (District 45, EstaRiO) at the Spring Senate 2018 event.

PHOTOS BY, KAYLA MCKENZIE

- One in five Canadians say older Canadians are a burden on society.
- More than one in four seniors (27 percent) say they've experienced age discrimination from government, and more than one-third (34 percent) have encountered discrimination from health-care professionals and the health-care system.
- 51 percent of Canadians say ageism is the most tolerated social prejudice when compared to gender- or race-based discrimination.

There has been less research into the roots of ageism than into sexism and racism. Some social scientists offer an interesting theory — many prejudices are triggered by fear of the other. In this case, ageism is a prejudice against our feared future self. What do people fear?

Perception is everything

According to the findings of Revera's research, while Canadians overall have a negative perception of aging, there's a big split by age group. The younger you are, the more likely you are to associate seniors with negative assumptions, such as being unable to get around easily, losing independence, being alone, acting grumpy and being sick or frail.

In contrast, seniors themselves are likelier to associate aging with something positive — being wiser and more self-assured, having more time to do the things you love and being with people you care about and living life to the fullest.

Tackling ageism requires action on all fronts. Policies put in place by governments and the services and products provided by companies and organizations should reflect the needs and wants of seniors. As well, increasing public education and awareness will combat preconceptions. Seniors themselves can do their part by leading the lives they *want* and without conceding to anyone else's

expectations and without setting limits on themselves.

"Some people, as soon as they become a senior, begin to act like one," notes Courtney.

One way to fight ageism is to keep in mind that age is really just a number. Don't be defined by it, Courtney reminds us. "Life [at any stage] is full of fun." ■



Bill poses with his daughter, Mary Anne, at the Spring Senate 2018 gathering.

Tea & Talk

Initiate tough conversations
with an easy, relaxed approach.

by **Stuart Foxman**



At a Tea & Talk in Sudbury this past June, the room was buzzing in preparation for the discussion. About 65 RTO/ERO members were present, and just about everyone knew a story about something that's often swept under the rug — elder abuse. “It was an eye-opener,” recalls Carmaine Hall, RTO/ERO president of District 4, Sudbury.

The goal of Tea & Talk — a program developed by the non-profit Elder Abuse Ontario (EAO) and comprised of modules that include workshops and interactive discussions — is to empower seniors by providing information and resources that promote their dignity and well-being, as well as respect. EAO supports organizations such as the RTO/ERO in delivering Tea & Talk modules across the province, including training sessions for facilitators.

Participants at the two-hour Tea & Talk

modules tackle difficult topics — elder abuse, sexual harm in older adults, ageism and discrimination, caregiving, protecting finances, self-esteem, dating as an older adult, and communication in healthy relationships.

Notes Hall, “Current and former teachers are well aware of the dangers of child abuse. The profession has a duty to report suspicions [on] those. Elder abuse demands attention, too.”

The many faces of abuse

EAO reports that 2 to 10 percent of older adults experience some type of elder abuse or neglect a year. That statistic may be a conservative one, according to Maureen Etkin, EAO's executive director, since the number of seniors in Ontario who fall victim to elder abuse each year is between 40,000 and 200,000.

Elder abuse typically falls within the following main categories:

- **physical abuse:** violence and rough handling that can cause injury, discomfort or pain
- **psychological/emotional abuse:** an action or treatment that lessens a sense of identity, dignity and self-worth
- **financial abuse:** improper conduct done with or without the senior's consent, resulting in a monetary or personal loss for the senior
- **sexual abuse:** sexual behaviour (assault, harassment, contact, comments) directed at older adults without their full knowledge or consent
- **neglect:** failure to meet the basic needs of an older person, such as food, hygiene, medication or medical attention, and safe shelter.

Tea & Talk combats silence and isolation. Whether it's elder abuse, achieving financial savviness or dating again after decades, the sessions get people conversing openly. “Anyone can be abused or be the abuser [quite often a family member],” Hall notes. “Education is critical.”

Etkin points out that Tea & Talk modules enable seniors to get together with their own cohort to learn with and from each other. “This is offered as a bridge to help build stronger relations between peer groups. It also makes you feel you're not alone,” she adds.

If you're an RTO/ERO member interested in learning more about Tea & Talk or you wish to connect with an EAO consultant in your area, call **416-916-6728** or email admin@elderabuseontario.com.

For additional information on elder-abuse signs and prevention, visit elderabuseontario.com. EAO's Seniors Safety Line — **1-866-299-1011** — provides information, referrals and support, 24/7. ■

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Ask questions, choose wisely

More isn't always better when it comes to health care.

by **Alison LaMantia**

Have you ever questioned a treatment prescribed to you by a health-care professional?

Choosing Wisely Canada suggests you should. That's because up to 30 percent of tests, treatments and procedures in the Canadian health-care system are potentially unnecessary.

More conversation is part of the solution to the problem, which is costly, inefficient and stress-inducing, according to the team at Choosing Wisely Canada, an educational campaign that identifies itself as "the national voice for reducing unnecessary health-care tests and treatments."

"We encourage clinicians and patients to share decision making," says Karen Born, knowledge translation lead for Choosing Wisely Canada. "This isn't about feeling like you're challenging or threatening the clinician, but just trying to understand the care that's provided to you."

"Waiting for results, over-testing and over-treatment can lead to anxiety, wasted time, and not to mention potential side effects from unnecessary tests and treatments."

—
Karen Born

As a patient, start the conversation by asking these questions:

- Do I really need this test, treatment or procedure?
- What are the downsides?
- Are there simpler, safer options?
- What happens if I do nothing?

Born says most physicians are open to these questions and actually want their patients to get engaged, which is in the best interest of the system as well

as the patient. "Unnecessary care is harmful and stressful to patients," she says. "Waiting for results, over-testing and over-treatment can lead to anxiety, wasted time, and time away from work and other personal activities, not to mention potential side effects from unnecessary tests and treatments."

An example of potential harm to patients is the increased exposure to radiation due to unnecessary X-rays and CT scans. Unnecessary antibiotic use is another area to be aware of. "If you take antibiotics when you don't need them, then when you do need them, you have to take a higher dose or a stronger antibiotic," Born explains. "People don't want to do that if they don't need to."

Research has shown that most Canadians understand that overuse of the health-care system and unnecessary tests and treatments are harmful, she says. "Patients are becoming more willing to bring in information they've heard and learned. They're more open and willing to ask those questions. A conversation is always healthy and a good thing to do."

Choosing Wisely Canada provides evidence-based information for patients about conditions and treatments online (choosingwiselycanada.org).

Choosing Wisely Canada — an educational initiative that is part of a global movement that began in the U.S. in 2012 — was organized in 2014 by a small team from the University of Toronto, the Canadian Medical Association and St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto.

PHOTO BY FENG YU



Ageism in Canada

More than 4 in 10 Canadians say ageism is the most tolerated form of social prejudice in Canada



25% of Canadians admit to treating people differently because of their age.

Maintaining independence is important to Canadians, regardless of their age, but younger adults are less likely to think independence is important to older adults.



of Canadian adults over 65 have at least one worry about aging

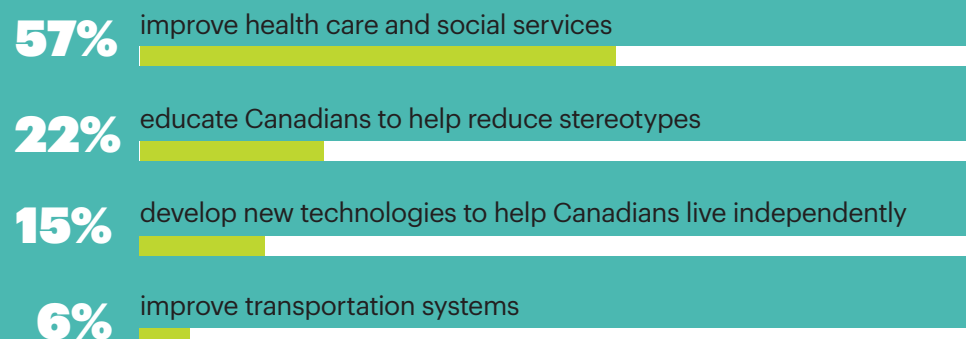


worry about health; this worry decreases with age



worry about independence; this worry increases with age

How to increase the independence of all Canadians



According to projections, by 2045, nearly **10%** of the Canadian population will be 80 and older.

87% of adults over 65 believe that innovation will help solve many worries about aging.

84% say the private sector can do more to improve the aging experience.

“Senior” is a term commonly used in society to describe anyone over 65 — a large and diverse group of people; this general categorizing can lead to stigma and stereotypes.

YOU CAN HELP PREVENT AGEISM:

- Involve older adults in decision making
- Avoid making assumptions about what older adults want or can do
- Maintain open and honest dialogue
- Recognize your own stereotypes and prejudices
- Foster intergenerational relationships
- As you age: Don't accept self-limiting beliefs

Source: Revera Inc., Reports on Ageism (“Innovation & the Aging Experience”; “Independence and Choice As We Age”)

THE HIDDEN RISKS OF INFLUENZA: WHY VACCINATION MAKES SENSE

BY DR. BRIAN AW

Did you know elderly adults make up only 15% of the Canadian population yet they account for up to 70% of influenza-related hospitalizations and 90% of influenza-related deaths? What if I told you that influenza can result in a host of possible serious health consequences such as heart attacks, hospitalization, and even death?

Influenza is a highly contagious viral illness of the nose, sinuses, throat and lungs. A common misconception is the perceived harmlessness of influenza. Although many people may shake off the infection, some will continue to experience the ill effects of influenza for the rest of their lives. In reality, the dangers of influenza are hidden and extend well beyond the symptoms, such as fever, cough and headaches that we would normally associate with the “flu”.

Older adults (65 years of age and older) are at the highest risk of complications due to influenza. Unlike the common cold, studies have shown influenza can lead to serious and potentially fatal health problems such as pneumonia and may be associated with the worsening of pre-existing kidney or lung disease, and can even trigger heart attacks or strokes. Consequently, influenza illness can be especially debilitating for older adults as these complications can lead to disability and a loss of independence. Given the impact that influenza can have among older adults, Canada's National Advisory Committee for Immunization (NACI) highly recommends annual vaccination of adults 65 years of age and older as well as those with various chronic conditions.

As we get older, our immune system naturally and progressively

weakens which makes it more difficult for the body to fight off infections. To make matters worse, older adults typically have underlying diseases such as diabetes, heart problems, and kidney disease which can be worsened by influenza. As a result, the repercussions of influenza among older adults may be long lasting if not permanent.

While influenza vaccination remains among the best ways to prevent influenza, vaccination tends to be less effective in older adults compared to younger adults. Vaccines work by training your body's defenses to identify and fight off foreign invaders. However, when older adults and other people with weakened immune systems are given a vaccine, the immune response often just isn't as robust so they're more vulnerable to infection and the severe consequences of influenza compared to younger adults.

For those 65 years of age and older, there is now a high-dose influenza vaccine available in Canada. Both Health Canada and NACI have recognized this vaccine as having shown improved efficacy for preventing influenza illness that is generally safe and well-tolerated when compared to the standard influenza vaccine. It's time to consider the high-dose influenza vaccine to help better protect older adults in Canada. Ask your doctor today if the high-dose vaccine is right for you.

Remember to protect yourselves and your loved ones by getting your annual flu shot against influenza. Empower yourselves to prevent one of the top 10 leading causes of death in Canada!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dr. Brian Aw has been practicing Travel Medicine and Family Practice for over two decades. He is one of the leading local educators in Travel Medicine and Vaccination and regularly lectures to nurses, pharmacists and doctors across Ontario. He sits on the Examination Committee as the primary Canadian representative for the International Society of Travel Medicine. Dr. Brian Aw is the Medical Director of the International Travel Clinic at Ultimate Health Medical Centre in Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada.

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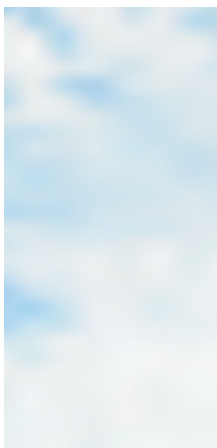
A photograph of a person's foot on a blue yoga mat on a wooden deck. In the background, there is a lush garden with various plants and a metal handrail. The title 'the magic of movement' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

the magic of movement

Getting active is good for mind, body and soul.

by **Charlotte Empey**

photography by **Margaret Mulligan**



W



hen I spoke with **Marlene Wallace and Bob Miner (District 34, York Region) in June of this year**, they were excited about their trip scheduled for August — a 250-mile rafting adventure down the Colorado River

and into the Grand Canyon.

Miner, who turned 82 in November, had a partial knee replacement this past March. Wallace, 75, has had several back surgeries and suffers from arthritis in her knee. If you needed proof of the magic of movement on living agelessly, there you have it.

The couple live an active lifestyle year-round — golf, hiking, biking, workouts at the gym and on their Pilates Reformer exercise equipment at home. Skiing, though, is their passion. Skiing, these residents of British Columbia point out, requires muscle strength, cardiovascular endurance, balance, flexibility and mental alertness — the whole “be well, live well” package.

They ski five days a week from mid-November till April at Whistler Blackcomb Ski Resort in B.C. — they aim to ski the same number of days a year as their ages — and take lessons once a week as part of the Seniors Ski Team, which helps them set stretch goals.

“When you’re in shape, you avoid injuries,” explains Miner. Wallace adds, “The social aspect is equally important. Everyone has a positive attitude. We have potlucks with wine and we laugh a lot — a bunch of old people having a party!”

I can now hear you saying, “But I haven’t been active in a long time...” Well, it’s never too late to start.

Get active at any age

Meet Monika Schneider. Schneider loves to dance. She did square dancing in college and, later on, ballroom dancing.

A retiree in her early 60s, Schneider rediscovered square dancing — the modern variety — two years ago. She belongs to Willowdale Willow Weavers in Toronto, a modern square dance club, and she’s one of the youngest members (several Willow Weavers are in their 90s).

Modern square dancing focuses on individual steps rather than an entire dance. The “caller” strings the steps together and the dancers react to the calls. No two dances are exactly the same. “Modern square dancing is a good physical activity, but it’s also a workout for your brain — plus, it’s a social activity and lots of fun,” notes Schneider.

“I hear lots of reasons why older adults don’t get moving — ‘I’m too old to start now. I’m too frail. I will hurt myself. I will look silly,’” says Maureen Hagan, vice-president of program innovation and fitness development at GoodLife Fitness and canfitpro.

“[But] age is only a number,” she points out. “Ability is an attitude. Fitness is for people who want to feel better and live better, and all you have to do is show up.”

Extensive research confirms that regular moderate activity — 150 minutes a week — helps you maintain or lose weight, reduces the impact of illness or chronic disease, keeps your brain sharp, ups your energy level and allows you to live the life you choose, not the one you think is limited by your age.

It sounds simple. Physical activity + mental workout + social interaction = fitness trifecta. But if you haven’t been active in a while, it may seem to be more than you can manage. Start by thinking about what you loved to do when you were younger — bike riding perhaps, or swimming or bowling or tennis — and try it again.

Or try something new — yoga, Pilates or tai chi, for example — and sign up for a class. Remember, it’s not about Olympic ability. It’s about energizing your mind and your body.

Not sure where to start? Consider walking — “the closest thing we have to a wonder drug,” according to Dr. Thomas Frieden, director of the federal agency Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It’s an apt description, judging from the findings and recommendations in “Walking for Health,” an authoritative special health report published in 2009 by experts at Harvard Medical School.

Walking counteracts the effects of weight-promoting genes, helps curb sweet cravings, reduces the risk of developing breast cancer, eases joint pain and boosts immune function.

“We do not stop exercising
because we grow old.
We grow old because we
stop exercising.”

—
Dr. Kenneth H. Cooper, 87, “Father of Aerobics”

Fit for fun



TAI CHI

This slow-motion, low-impact activity with origins in ancient China improves muscle strength, flexibility and balance.

Find a class through the Canadian Taijiquan Federation (canadiantaijiquanfederation.ca).



DANCE

Dancing ticks all the fitness benefit boxes — improved muscle tone, strength and endurance; better coordination, agility and flexibility; increased cardiovascular endurance; reduced stress; increased brain function — and it's a fun way to make new friends.

MODERN SQUARE DANCING

Ontario Square & Round Dance Federation (squaredance.on.ca); Canadian Square and Round Dance Society (crds.ca)

Also worth trying are Bollywood, tap, modern jazz and belly dancing. Check out your local dance schools and YWCA.



BOWLING

A sport that can trace its history to 4,000 years ago, bowling builds muscle strength and endurance, improves balance and eye-hand coordination and delivers an aerobic workout, plus the social payout.

Find a league via Bowl Canada (bowlcanada.ca).



JANE'S WALK

An annual festival offering free citizen-led walking conversations inspired by activist, author and urban theorist Jane Jacobs, the Jane's Walk tours do not entail a total workout but do involve walking and are a wonderful way to explore your own town.

To find out which Jane's Walk events are taking place in your 'hood, visit janeswalk.org.





👤 Meet Flicia Devaux

Balancing act

Flicia Devaux, 75, practices Sivananda Vedanta, a form of hatha yoga, every day — all 12 asanas, or poses, including the headstand — for 25 years and counting.

While yoga is her fitness focus, Devaux skis too, walks 10k a day and treks 8 to 10k three times a week. “You have to exercise more as you age,” she says, “not less. If you look after your body, your body will look after you.”


Devaux has also observed that while people tell her they admire her commitment, they often add that they just don’t have time. “Do you have time to get your nails done, brush your teeth?” she asks the naysayers. “Then you have time to do something good for your mind and your body. Do the Sun Salutations every morning. They take 10 minutes and are a great workout for the whole body — stretching, flexing and toning the muscles. Come on, you don’t have 10 minutes?”

Staying committed wasn’t easy, however. “I had lots of enthusiasm when I started doing yoga,” recalls Devaux. “But I was still teaching, and some days it was really hard to get motivated. You have to practice yoga on an empty stomach, so I promised myself I wouldn’t eat anything — anything! — until I did my program.”

Devaux’s hero? Tao Porchon-Lynch, a yoga instructor and professional ballroom dancer — she danced her way into Howard Stern’s cold heart on America’s Got Talent in 2015 — who turned 100 this past August.

“Tao Porchon-Lynch says that she greets each day by saying, ‘This day will be the best day of my life.’ She firmly believes that, as do I,” says Devaux. “She reminds me that every day is a gift, and I live life accordingly.”

For more information about Sivananda Vedanta yoga, visit sivananda.org.



“Age is only a number. Ability is an attitude. Fitness is for people who want to feel better and live better, and all you have to do is show up.”

—
Maureen Hagan, GoodLife Fitness and canfitpro

Power in numbers

If you still need a nudge to get moving, Hagen’s advice is to join a physical activity group. Try a spinning or dance class (tap dancing is an excellent high-energy workout and lots of fun) or organize a walking group with your book club friends. There is commitment in numbers, as you are all accountable to show up and support each other. No excuses.

Hagen also recommends setting realistic goals that are achievable in, say, 12 weeks. Then renew those goals quarterly. One such goal might be a charity run or walk, for example. Gather your fitness buddies, create a training schedule and commit to walking — or running — on that 5k or 10k event together.

I’ll leave the last word to fitness guru and “father of aerobics” Dr. Kenneth H. Cooper.

“We do not stop exercising because we grow old,” says 87-year-old Cooper. “We grow old because we stop exercising.” ■



LET’S GET PHYSICAL

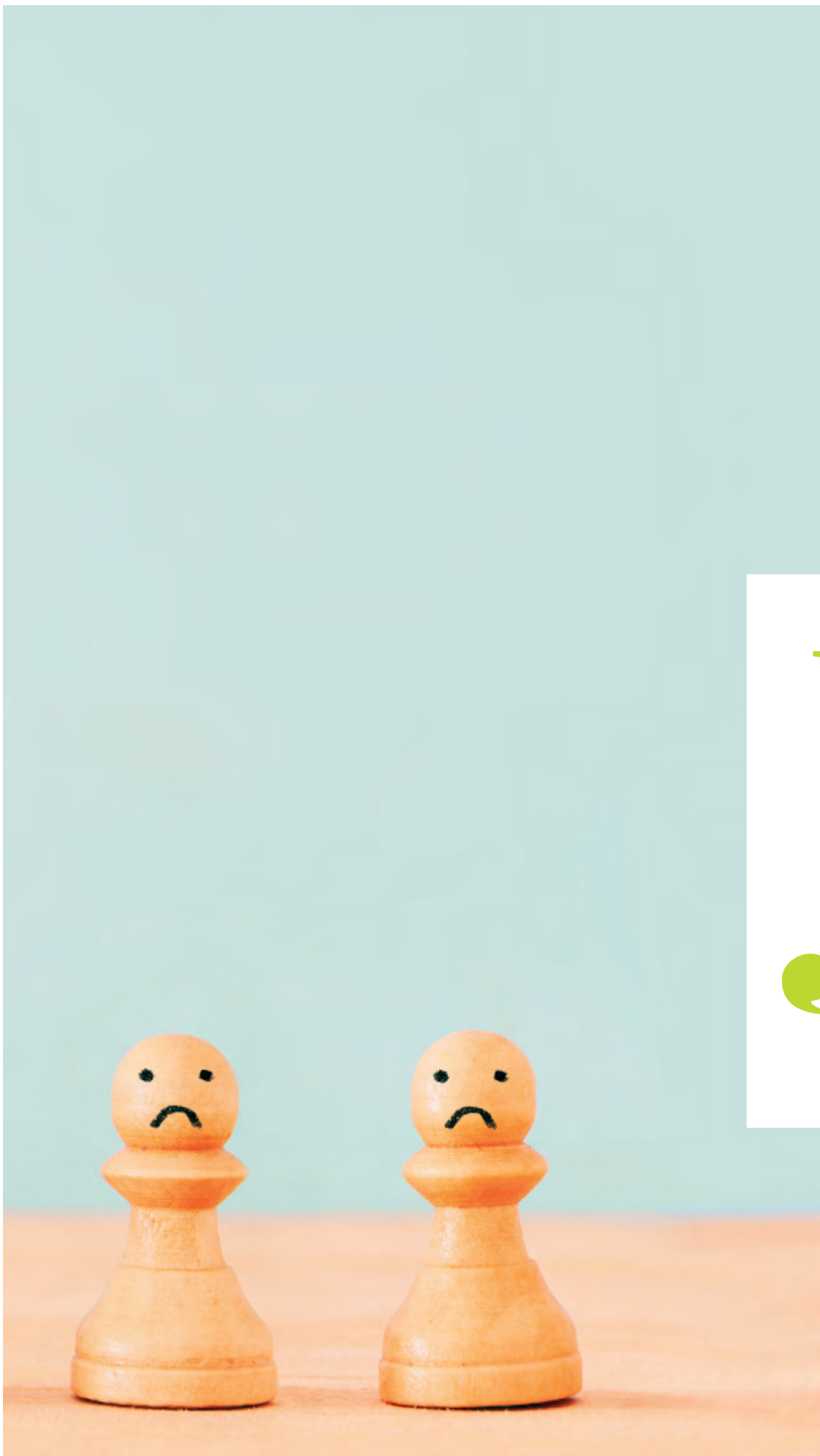
According to the Canadian Psychological Association, here’s how physical activity works wonders for your health.

- *physiological* Physical activity boosts your body’s production of endorphins — chemicals responsible for “runner’s high.”
- *psychological* Regular physical activity increases self-esteem and self-confidence.
- *social* People who exercise regularly tend to have a larger social network, and the face-to-face interactions that come with a group activity seem to have a positive effect on overall health and well-being.
- *neurological* Physical activity helps your brain produce and use more dopamine and serotonin, naturally occurring chemicals that contribute to making you feel happy. People who exercise regularly also have more blood flow to the brain and better brain functioning.

the antidote to ageism:

live by
your own
rules





J

by **Alison LaMantia**
photography by **Tomertu**

an Fine wasn't sure what to expect as she descended the stairs to the basement of the strategy games store to attend her first chess class. Fine, who lives in Toronto, had been wanting to learn chess for a while but had put it off because of timing conflicts with her volunteer

work. As she stepped off the bottom stair, she saw a classroom with eight wide-eyed children staring at her.

"They looked at me like, who is this person?" recalls Fine.

The 60-year age difference was as much as a surprise to her as to them, but it didn't take long for Fine and her classmates to get down to learning chess together. "I've developed a bond with them. They crack me up," she says. "You can be silly with the little ones — they love it. And I think that's what I love — the openness. We learn from each other."

Exploring new opportunities

Fine started chess to try something new and keep her brain active. No stranger to trying new things, she has been singing in a choir and performing improv for almost two decades. She's active in the drama community and has written plays. She volunteers for local and international causes and she travels. Fine also exercises and says that having three grandchildren under four years old keeps her hopping, too. "They are a great reminder to see and experience things as if for the first time."

But although retirement has given her the chance to try new activities, she doesn't recommend waiting. You can start before you retire. "Exploring and setting in motion some hobbies, interests and possible new ventures prior to retirement is an excellent way to make the transition without too much duress," she says, advising also to take opportunities as they come. "Seize the moment. You never know if [opportunities will] come around again. I don't do things in ten- or even five-year cycles anymore because you just don't know."

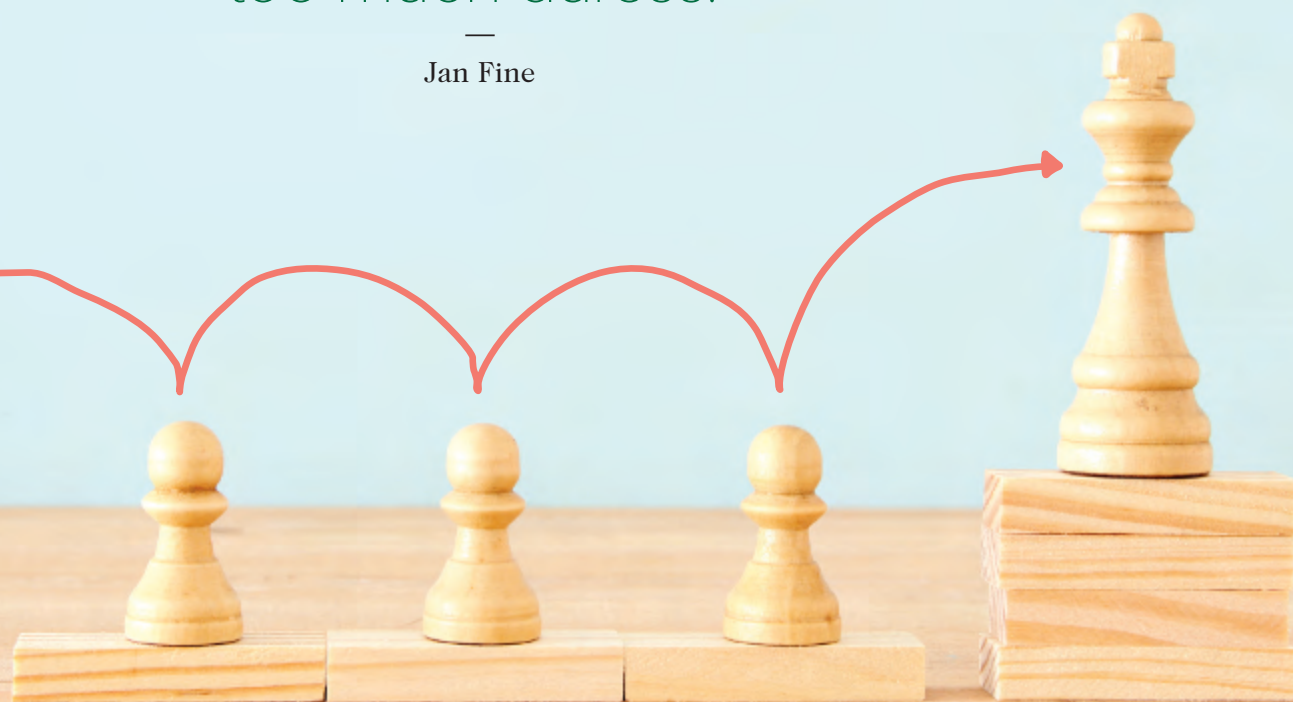
Understanding that time could be limited doesn't need to make you feel old. "Old" is a perspective that can be experienced at any age, and for Fine, it's all in your mind. "Barriers are 'upstairs' [in our heads]. Once [people make] up their mind that they're old, they need to reboot their brain to say no. It's how people redefine themselves as they get older. If you still have fun, there's no reason to age."

Jan
Fine



"Exploring and setting in motion some hobbies, interests and possible new ventures prior to retirement is an excellent way to make the transition without too much duress."

—
Jan Fine



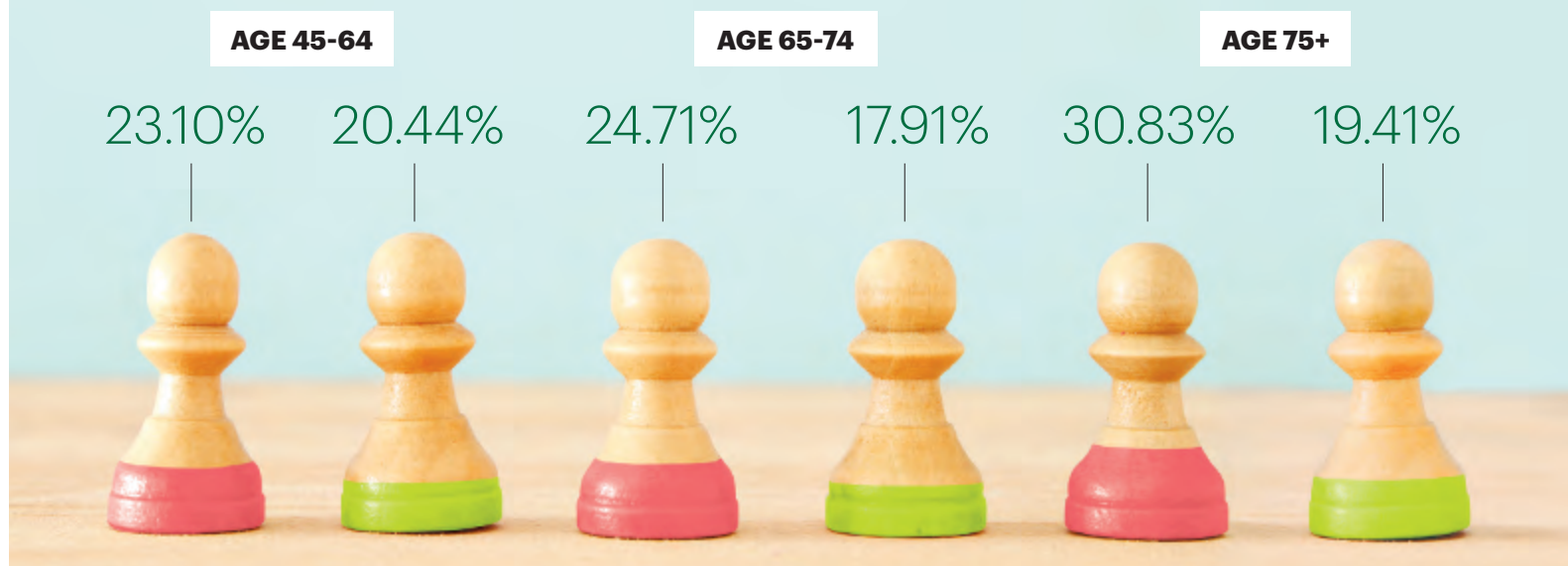
PHOTO, COURTESY OF JAN FINE

Social

WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO REPORT BEING LONELY.

% of respondents lonely at least some of the time.

● Women
● Men



*The youngest adults (aged 45–54 years) reported dissatisfaction with their lives two times more frequently than the oldest adults (aged 75+ years) — 6.0% vs. 2.9%.

Patti Cole



More than a label

Redefining yourself might start with recognizing that your identity is not the work you once did on the job.

That's certainly the perspective of Patti Cole (District 17, Toronto). Since retiring from her role as a secondary-school English teacher with the Thames Valley District School Board, in southwestern Ontario, Cole has been exploring a range of hobbies as well as paid work and new experiences. You need to step up and live life, she says.

And step up she did. In 2015, Cole packed up everything to travel for two years before settling in Toronto. She now sings with North Metro Chorus, which is based in East York, and with the 2018 International Champion Chorus of Sweet Adelines International. She also writes and performs her own music, and her first single was featured in the film *The Gold Fish Bowl*, released in 2017.

As well, Cole performs as a background actor and is a motivational speaker. She served as a multi-poll area manager during this year's provincial election in Ontario, which involved a 17-hour day she describes as "so much fun." Says Cole, "You have to find something that sparks you and [do] not be afraid. Never look left or right. If someone brings you an opportunity, go ahead and take it."

Activities can usually be modified if you have physical limitations. Often, it's your own beliefs that hold you back. "Something that drives me insane is when people make jokes — 'Oh, I'm too old for that' or 'I'm having a senior moment.' Stop saying that you're old!" she says.

Cole doesn't care for the S-word either. "If you call people seniors, you're putting them into a box, a category. Oh, you're retired? You don't count. You're not in the centre of the action."

Redefining ageism

Categorizing people based on age can lead to ageism, which is defined as prejudice or discrimination on the basis of a person's age.

The way people perceive their own aging is noteworthy, according to Dr. Gail Low, an associate professor in nursing at the University of Alberta. "There's evidence in research that negative stereotypes might be harmful to how people see themselves aging," explains Low, who specializes in gerontology (the scientific study of the aging process) and human social development. "It's important to find ways to enhance how people see themselves."

This could include exposing yourself to positive stereotypes about aging — for example, spending time with or learning about older people who embrace and celebrate their appearance and who live dynamic, active lives. "I look at myself as a vibrant woman who is engaged in learning and loving life," says Low. "Why should that change when I'm 75 or 80? I'm still the same person."

Common negative stereotypes include health issues and memory loss, which can lead to the belief that health concerns are inevitable when people get older. According to Low, who is currently researching ageism with her colleagues, there's a lot we don't know yet.

"I'm still trying to understand why being older is seen as a negative thing. To age is human. It's part of our biology. No one will not age. The question is how we want to be seen later in life — as a cliché or stereotype or by our individual merits as a whole person?" ■

ABOUT THE STUDY

The CLSA is a large national research platform based in Hamilton, Ont., that has been following more than 50,000 men and women (who were between the ages of 45 and 85 at the time of recruitment, which began in 2010) for 20 years or until their death. The data presented here was part of the CLSA's first report, released in May 2018.

• Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA), clsa-elcv.ca/doc/2639

Health and physical functioning:

- **95%** of older Canadians rate their own mental health as excellent, very good or good.
- Mental health concerns decline with age.
- Between **86%** and **90%** of participants responded that their physical health is good/very good/excellent.
- **4.9%** of participants experienced a fall in the previous 12 months.
- **97%** of males and **92%** of females said they have no limitations with basic activities of daily living.
- **90%** of participants don't use any mobility aid (wheelchair, walking stick, scooter, walker). Use of aids increases with age. The most common aid is a cane or walking stick, which is used by **8.7%** of respondents.
- More than **90%** of respondents rated their vision as good to excellent, and **89%** rated their hearing as good to excellent.

Financial

- Close to **80%** of retirees said they managed very well or quite well financially.
- **17%** responded: "get by alright."
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under one roof

Multi-generational housing is on the rise.

by **Jennifer Lewington**

illustrations by **Good Studio**

W

hen Anita Minov (District 14, Niagara Falls) wrapped up a 35-year teaching career in Niagara Falls in 2004, she had mapped out her retirement plans — volunteer work at the local hospital, singing in her church choir and a local amateur chamber choir and travelling with her husband, Nick, a lawyer and amateur pilot.

“[Then,] life threw me a curve,” says Minov. “Retirement has not been what I expected.”





First, her husband died in 2007 following a serious illness that was diagnosed only two years after she retired. Five years later, she became a custodial grandparent to two-year-old Abby due to “difficult family circumstances” involving Abby’s mother, the younger of Minov’s two daughters. Meanwhile, Mary Anne, the older daughter, moved back to the family’s four-bedroom home in 2015 to attend Niagara College Canada, which also enabled her to assist her mother in raising Abby, now a peppy eight-year-old.

The bustling Minov household, which includes Dulce, a rescue border collie, and Dini, a white and black rabbit with escape-artist tendencies, reflects a fast-growing trend in Canada — households comprised of multi-generational family members or, sometimes, unrelated individuals.

New factors feeding trend

According to Statistics Canada’s 2016 census, 2.2 million Canadians lived in such households, up from 4 percent in 2001, and multi-generational formations are the fastest-growing type of household in the country, up 38 percent between 2001 and 2016 compared to 22 percent for all categories.

“There are three reasons for the trend — choice, circumstance and culture, in no particular order,” notes Nora Spinks, CEO of the Ottawa-based Vanier Institute of the Family, a national non-profit research and advocacy group focused on promoting the well-being of Canada’s families.

Whether it’s for financial reasons or other factors, generations of the same family may choose to pool resources and share housing and living costs, she says. Sometimes, circumstances may trigger a need for older adults — who are living longer than those in past decades — to move in with their children and assist in caring for grandchildren. Spinks also notes that cultural practices of some Indigenous and immigrant families dictate that aging parents be cared for by the younger generation.

Add to this diversity of living arrangements an important subcategory — the “skip-generation” household, like the Minovs’, in which a child is raised by a grandparent in the absence of a parent. More than 32,000 children live in such households, up 8.3 percent since 2011, according to StatCan.

At 71, Minov is a full-time parent who goes by “Baba,” not “Granny,” in honour of her family’s Byelorussian roots. “[Being a custodial grandparent] wasn’t something I planned on doing in retirement,” says Minov. “Part of it boils down to ‘You do what you have to do.’ I come from a culture where you take care of your family.”

During the school year, Minov drives Abby to her elementary school, which is nearby, every morning except Wednesdays, when a friend fills in. In the afternoon, she returns to the schoolyard, hobnobbing with parents and grandparents until the bell rings at 2:54 p.m. Abby dashes over to hug her Baba before joining friends for 10 minutes on the playground equipment.

Weekdays at the Minovs are hectic. Abby, who has been playing the piano for a year and a half, takes private lessons at her school. For an end-of-year recital, she proudly reports she was the only one who played without needing a music sheet. She has also taken up figure skating, which involves local club activities two or three

times a week. On Sundays, she often visits her paternal grandfather who lives close by.





Support networks are essential

Even when the school year ends, Minov typically organizes summer activities for Abby, which include one week at Bible camp, one week at an outdoor adventure camp and regular swimming lessons.

“There are times when it is exhausting, but there are times when it is rejuvenating,” says Minov, who maintains a busy agenda herself. She volunteers at an orthopaedic clinic, sings soprano with the Niagara-based Choralis Camerata and has served as past president

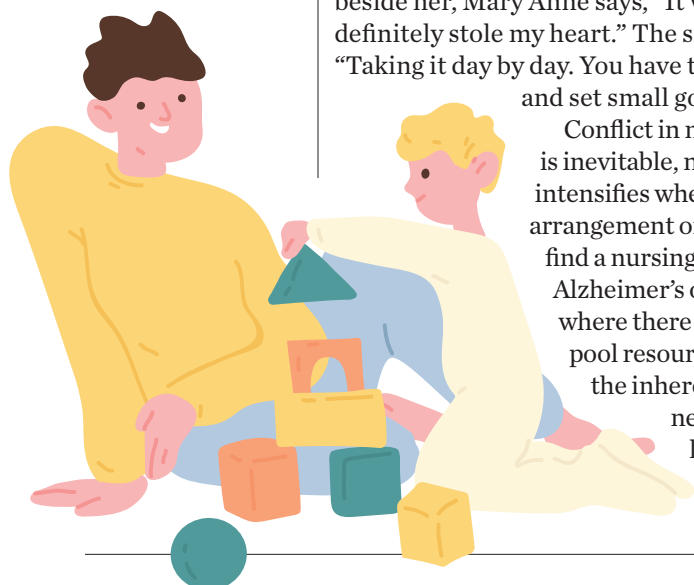
of her local Retired Women Teachers of Ontario/Organisation des Enseignantes Retraitées de l’Ontario (RWTO/OERO).

In her repeat role as a mother, she values the support from a network of close friends and, especially, from Mary Anne, Abby’s tyetya (auntie), who is “a huge help,” Minov points out. Mary Anne prepares family meals, organizes outings with Abby and assists in many other ways. “[Having] another adult in the house affords me more independence,” says Minov.

Mother and daughter are candid about the adjustments required to live harmoniously under the one roof. Their “mother-daughter dynamic,” Minov explains, essentially involves co-parenting Abby, so far as discipline issues and other parental matters are concerned. “We have to be on the same page,” she says, “and it is not any different than any other couple.”

On the back deck of the family home, her niece nestled beside her, Mary Anne says, “It was difficult at first but [Abby] definitely stole my heart.” The secret to a workable home life? “Taking it day by day. You have to appreciate the small things and set small goals for yourself.”

Conflict in multi-generational households is inevitable, notes Spinks, but it often intensifies when circumstances impose the arrangement on families. “Perhaps you can’t find a nursing home and you are dealing with Alzheimer’s or dementia or [a situation] where there is not enough money even if you pool resources,” she says. “It is really about the inherent relationships. The good news and the bad news about living multi-generationally is that you bring your history to the relationship.”



Fast facts

The number of multiple generations, related or not, living together under one roof is on the rise in Canada, according to Statistics Canada’s 2016 census.

HERE’S A SNAPSHOT BY THE NUMBERS

404,000

the number of multi-generational households in Canada (2.9 percent of all family households in the census)

2.2 million

the number of Canadians living in multi-generational households (6.3 percent of Canada’s population), up from 4 percent in 2001

35

the percentage of individuals aged 20 to 34 years old who live with at least one parent, up from 31 percent in 2001

14

the percentage of individuals aged 30 to 34 years old living with at least one parent, up from 11 percent in 2001

12.2

the percentage of multi-generational households in Nunavut compared to only 3.9 percent in Ontario.

50.3

the percentage of grandparents in multi-generational homes who say they have some responsibility for household expenses.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Vanier Institute for the Family



As Mary Anne,
who is 36 years old,
prepares to graduate in

December this year with a college diploma in office administration in health services, the current set-up with her mother and Abby could end if she lands a job elsewhere than Niagara Falls.

It's a possible outcome that matches Canadian trends. "Just because you are living in a multi-generational household today doesn't mean you will be there five years from now," says Spinks.

The same holds true for multi-generational living arrangements for those unrelated to each other.

Bond like a family

In the fall of 2017, peopleCare Communities, which provides living accommodations for seniors, opened a facility in London, Ont., albeit with an unusual feature. In collaboration with the faculty of music at University of Western Ontario (UWO), the Waterloo-based private company offered free accommodation to three students at its Oakcrossing Retirement Living, eight minutes from the UWO campus by car. In exchange, the music students would spend 10–12 hours a week with the elderly residents, sharing a cup of coffee, an evening meal or practising and performing a recital.

According to Heather Gingerich, peopleCare's director of employee and community engagement and herself a Western University music alumna, peopleCare was inspired by successful models in the U.S. "There is so much research supporting intergenerational programming with benefits to the

residents and the students. There are these relationships and friendships you build."

Last fall, before moving with his wife, Suzanne, into Oakcrossing, RTO/ERO member Larry Smyth (District 8, London Middlesex)—a former teacher, vice-principal and principal at elementary schools in Middlesex County—had heard that they could be living alongside music students. "It was in the back of my mind that there would be people here other than old fogies," Smyth says, laughing. "I think it is a good idea. You tend to become too isolated with your own age group."

Mary Louise Butler, a retired Lambton County teacher who moved into Oakcrossing the same time the Smyths did, notes that the three Western students put on "really entertaining programs" through the academic year. "It is really wonderful to have the young people here with us and to see that they cared so much."

Meanwhile, Kristal Daniels, who is pursuing a master's degree in music vocal performance at Western, opted to live with seniors because she knew she would be far from her own family in the township of Cherry Hill, New Jersey. "I wanted to make quality relationships and be part of a family, figuratively," says Daniels, an aspiring opera singer. "I wanted to be able to live with and like the people I am living with and actually make a difference where I am not just a face you say hello to once in a while."

"I wanted to make quality relationships and be part of a family, figuratively. I wanted to be able to live with and like the people I am living with and actually make a difference where I am not just a face you say hello to once in a while."

Kristal Daniels

While at Oakcrossing—she leaves when she graduates next year—Daniels sees herself as a "conduit for memories" for residents. "If you are practising or performing, they hear a melody and [somehow] it takes them back to [another time]. They share that story with you and you think, Hey, you were exactly me a long time ago."

Back in Niagara Falls, Anita Minov reflects on her role in highlighting multi-generational living. "I don't look at myself as a trendsetter. I did what I felt I wanted to do—not that it was expected of me but that I wanted to do it."

The last word belongs to Abby, however. "[Baba] is the best and I love her. She takes care of me!" ■



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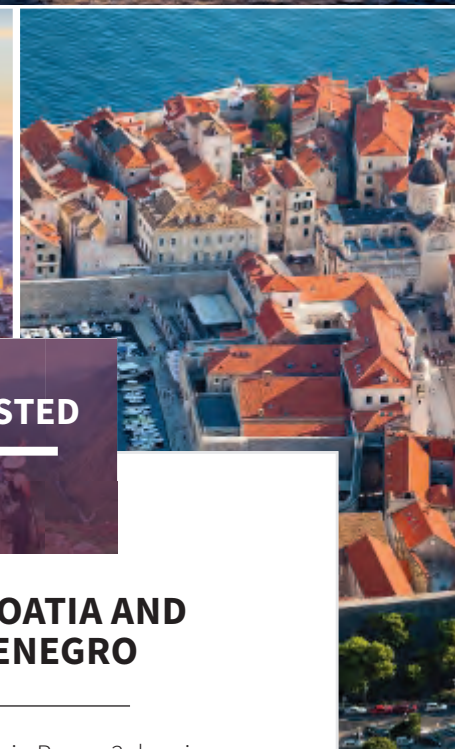
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1. <https://www.hear-it.org/teachers-are-higher-risk-noise-induced-hearing-loss> | 2. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/school-noise-levels-causing-teachers-hearing-loss-1.1184350>

Nevada or bust

Sun, dust — and a life-changing experience

by **Alison LaMantia**

Imagine camping in a desert for a week with 70,000 other people.

Everything you need to survive you've brought along. There's nothing for sale. You get around by bike and you cope with intense sun, heat and dust storms. As well, you're making connections with people from all over the world, taking in mind-blowing art installations and enjoying diverse entertainment. You become part of a gift economy — a pop-up supportive society that exists to ensure the success of its members. And when you leave, you take everything with you. The only traces of your having been there are the photos, the memories and the new friendships. Welcome to Burning Man.

Lynda Palmer and Ann Spicer (District 7, Windsor and Essex County) attended their first Burning Man event in 2015 and returned in 2017. It was something Spicer had been wanting to do since retiring in 1998. Her excitement peaked when she learned that Palmer too was after the same goal. And so, the two women purchased tickets to attend Burning Man and began preparations.

Driving in Palmer's van from Windsor, Ont., the duo travelled across the U.S. to the Black Rock Desert in northwest Nevada. They took their bicycles, bedding, clothing, coolers and emergency equipment. They purchased food, water and ice when they got close to the desert.

To anyone else considering the Burning Man adventure, Spicer says: "Do it." Her advice: "Prepare and then relax and enjoy the whole experience. There were all kinds of things happening that we didn't anticipate, but none of it was dangerous, so it just added to our adventure. We knew that we would be hot and dusty, so we just accepted the discomfort and ignored it. We ate simply but well, and we enjoyed our young neighbours on both trips. And I think our young neighbours enjoyed us." ■

Find out more about Burning Man at burningman.org.



Personal style is timeless

How your unique personality makes your style ageless.

by **Kimberly Brathwaite**

Whether you are 45 or 85, your style choices should be based on your personality. What other people are wearing should not dictate what works for you.

This is the style principle that image consultant Vivian Singh (District 39, Peel) and former RTO/ERO executive director Harold Brathwaite live by.

“Age is a state of mind. If we can forget about the number and focus instead on being the best version of ourselves, that’s half the battle,” explains Singh. “I often hear women say, ‘I’m too old to wear that.’ It’s not what you wear, but how you wear it.”

Singh, who retired in 2008 after a fulfilling career in education, always had a keen interest in fashion. She took a course at the International Image Institute, which is based in the Toronto

area, and then launched her own business in Mississauga, Haute Image Consulting, where she is the managing director.

Meanwhile, Brathwaite, who’s no stranger to RTO/ERO members, is also known for his diplomacy and intelligence, as well as having a great sense of style. As someone who has observed ageism stereotyping when it comes to fashion, he references a particular clothing brand that designs pants with lots of pockets along with big hats and a certain look in shoes, all of which cater to a perceived “tradition” that this is what older adults should be wearing.

“I refuse to wear that [style]. It’s so stereotypical,” says Brathwaite. “You have to question yourself from time to time to make sure you don’t [automatically] accept these ‘traditions.’”



Vivian Singh, owner, Haute Image Consulting

Style tips

SKIN CARE

Cleanse and moisturize every morning and before bedtime.

DECLUTTER AND REFRESH

Do a closet review and get rid of clothes that you haven’t worn in the last two to three years. Make a list of items you need to freshen up your wardrobe.

HAIR

Update your hair style and colour.

THINK OF YOURSELF

Buy clothes that bring out the best in you. Avoid dressing like a teenager or wearing clothing that’s too provocative.

MADE TO MEASURE

Make sure you have a good tailor to ensure that your clothes are well fitting.

UNDERGARMENTS

Get a fitting for undergarments — the right lift and support will add a longer look to your upper body.

ACCESSORIZE

Complement outfits with appropriate jewellery, scarves, shoes and handbags.

“Age is a state of mind. If we can forget about the number and focus instead on being the best version of ourselves, that’s half the battle.”

Vivian Singh



BEFORE



AFTER

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PHOTOS, COURTESY OF VIVIAN SINGH



Harold Brathwaite, former RTO/ERO executive director

Bring out your best self

Brathwaite says it's important to keep up with modern trends but not appear sloppy or carelessly put together. When he was still working full-time, he always dressed in a professional manner and wanted to communicate to his students that they too should present themselves in appropriate clothing.

"It's not that I give all of the attention to clothes. It's the whole persona that matters," he explains. "I realize that the body I have in my 70s is not the same body I had in my 30s. [Still,] I have to maintain and look after it."

The key to looking stylish is aiming to always look your best, notes Singh. "Looking updated shouldn't be a chore and it shouldn't be costly. It should be fun," she says. "Take the time to learn what styles, fabrics and colours enhance your appearance, either by finding the resources and knowledge you need to make the change or by finding a styling professional who can show you the way." ■

"It's not that I give all of the attention to clothes. It's the whole persona that matters. I realize that the body I have in my 70s is not the same body I had in my 30s. I have to maintain and look after it."

Harold Brathwaite

PHOTO, COURTESY OF HAROLD BRATHWAITE

'60s cocktails make a comeback



WHISKY SOUR

- 2 ounces whisky
- ½ ounce fresh lemon juice
- ½ ounce simple syrup (see recipe below)
- slice of lemon or lime
- 1 maraschino cherry

To a cocktail shaker filled with ice, add the liquid ingredients and shake vigorously. Strain into a chilled sour glass filled with ice. Garnish with the lemon or lime slice and the cherry.

SIMPLE SYRUP

- 1 cup water
- 2 cups sugar

Bring water to a boil. Stir sugar into the boiling water to dissolve, stirring constantly. When sugar has dissolved completely, cool syrup. Store in an airtight jar for up to 1 week.



NON-ALCOHOLIC JUICY JULEP

- ice
- 30 ml pineapple juice
- 30 ml orange juice
- 30 ml freshly squeezed lime juice
- ginger ale, to top off
- 1 teaspoon mint leaves, crushed or finely chopped
- mint sprig for garnish
- lime wedge and/or pineapple slice for garnish (if desired)

Add ice to tall glass. Pour in pineapple, orange and lime juices. Top with ginger ale and stir in mint leaves. Garnish with mint sprig, lime wedge and/or pineapple slice. Serve immediately.



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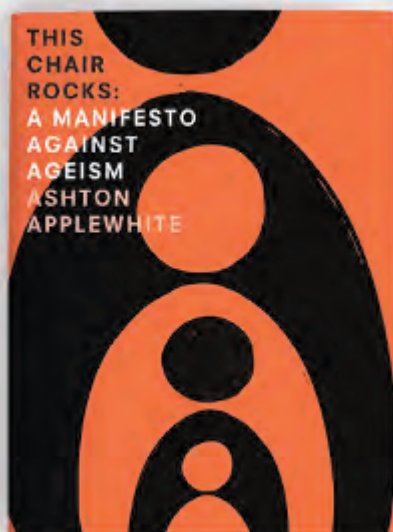


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Books, Movies and Music

What novel or film changed your perception on aging and ageism?



This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism

Brooklyn-based writer and activist Ashton Applewhite offers an eloquent, well-researched exposé of the prejudice that feeds age bias, and a passionate argument to mobilize against it.

"I didn't realize how much we contribute to ageism ourselves. We grow up with a preconceived idea of what 'old' looks like, and then presume that 'old' should act in a certain way. In reality, being 'older' is quite liberating if we only let go of what we grew up believing our later lives should look like."

— Jo-Anne Sobie, executive director, RTO/ERO Foundation



Still Alice

Cognitive neuroscientist Lisa Genova's book, which also produced a film starring Julianne Moore, focuses on the rare genetic form of Alzheimer's disease that affects people when they are younger.

"It is a very honest portrayal of what it is like to face aging much earlier and faster than one ever anticipated one would, and how one can maintain grace and meaning despite decline."

— Dr. Nicole D. Anderson, associate professor, departments of psychology and psychiatry, University of Toronto; senior scientist, Rotman Research Institute, Baycrest Health Sciences; lead on an RTO/ERO funded grant

On Facebook, RTO/ERO members shared books, movies and songs that changed their viewpoints on life and ageing.

Book *La Condition Humaine* (The Human Condition), by André Malraux; published in 1933.

Song "Keep on the Sunny Side," by Mother Mabelle and the Carter Sisters; recorded in 1928.

Movie *Away from Her* (2007), starring Julie Christie and Gordon Pinsent; a husband copes with his marriage that drifts out of the memory of his wife with Alzheimer's; inspired by "The Bear Came Over the Mountain," a short story by Alice Munro.

Here are more recommendations for your book/film watch list:

Dr. Rochon: *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, "a light-hearted movie that highlights the idea of finding purpose and a fulfilling quality of life as we age."

Dr. Anderson: *Harold and Maude*, "It's a bit 'out there,' but I love [this] story of a socially awkward and lonely teenage boy who meets a free-spirited older woman... [and the] message that older people, women in particular, can be attractive and exciting, and for Maude's example of believing in and valuing oneself for who you are, as you are, regardless your age."

Share how a book or film changed or added to your perspective on ageism on facebook.com/rto.ero.

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Katy Flaherty - Author of: where we are going

John Jansen in de Wal was born, raised and educated in The Netherlands, where he earned certificates in Elementary and Religious Education. Being adventurous he travelled to Canada where he worked as a labourer in several trades, while gaining Ontario Teaching and later, Principal Certification, a B.A. and B.Ed. After a full and satisfying career in education he retired to write.

John is a member of the Writers Union of Canada and The Ontario Poetry Society. He took courses, workshops and seminars; learned copy editing, cover design and lay-out. His works have appeared in books, anthologies and magazines. He has self-published chapbooks of his stories and poetry. John enjoys travel, photography and performing his poems and stories. He is the father of four, grandfather to ten, and grandpa to one.

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Celebrated Centenarian

Kay Jeffery shares some insights into the life of friend and fellow retired teacher Jeanne Rutherford.

by **Stefanie Martin**



Jeanne Rutherford poses with her landscape paintings.

Jeanne Rutherford was a school teacher with the Etobicoke Board of Education.

Born on August 3, 1917,

Jeanne Rutherford celebrated her 100th birthday in August last year and she has a lot to celebrate! In addition to having been a dedicated teacher with the Etobicoke Board of Education for 27 years and a volunteer at the Etobicoke General Hospital for 28, Jeanne is a mother to one (daughter Marilyn), grandmother to three grandsons, and great-grandmother to three great-grandsons. At the 2018 RTO/ERO Spring Senate, this remarkable centenarian celebrated yet another achievement, as one of only three members to receive the RTO/ERO Distinguished Member Award.

Jeanne taught junior and senior kindergarten at Dixon Grove Junior Middle Public School and retired in 1983. She has been an active member of RTO/ERO since 1988, serving on the District 22, Etobicoke and York Executive until 2015.

Jeanne has many talents beyond teaching. She acted in several plays during her high-school years and was valedictorian at her graduation. She sang and played the piano. Jeanne also has an artistic bent and, later in life, has been painting landscapes. As well, she has a keen interest in country music, loves travelling, golf and the theatre.

In 2012 Jeanne broke her pelvis, and three years later, had a stroke. She was told she would never walk again. Jeanne has proved everyone wrong. She has modelled in several fashion shows for Rendezvous Club and, most recently, just a couple of months after turning 100 years old, she modelled with her walker in the ZoomerShow in October 2017.

Jeanne continues to reside at Tapestry at Village Gate West retirement home in Etobicoke with help from her caregivers and friend Kay Jeffery — and continues to remind us all that there is much to look forward to in life. ■

PHOTO, COURTESY OF KAY JEFFERY

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