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FEBRUARY 2023

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EMERY

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Club events in Victoria, Vancouver & Nanaimo are postponed until further notice. Join our monthly newsletter and stay informed. www.seniorlivingmag.com/travelclub

55+ LIFESTYLE SHOW

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Cover PRUDENCE EMERY

Though the hats she wears may change, the extraordinary life she leads continues to delight.

Photo: Leanna Rathkelly

INSPIRED

55+ lifestyle magazine

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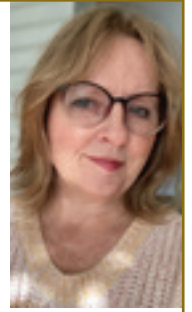
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THRIVE BEYOND 55

by BARBARA RISTO, PUBLISHER



As we head into February, we are reminded of the many loves in our lives – people, pets, places and even possessions.

This year started out with some big changes for me. One of my dearest friends passed away at the end of 2022. It left a hole in my heart and my social calendar.

As I worked through the feelings of loss, I realized I've hung onto more than just people. I'm also attached to some possessions. Like the people in my life, these items have provided comfort and security and contributed to my well-being.

It's not bad to surround oneself with loving people or lovely things. The difficulty is knowing when to let go. Sometimes that decision is out of our control, as when someone's life ends. But other decisions are often delayed or avoided, simply because we have an attachment that we don't want to disrupt.

For me, it took looking around my living room at some very worn furniture to realize that – just as I found the capacity to say goodbye to a human friend – I needed to bid farewell to a much-adored sofa, which, for over 20 years, had witnessed me and held me comfortably in its embrace.

Life is a process of change. Nothing stays the same. Saying goodbye to a friend or a beloved possession may leave a hole in our lives, but it also opens the door to welcome someone or something new.

It's a little easier to find a new couch than a new friend, but the first step is accepting that it's time to move on, to make a choice, and take action.

A week or so after I made the decision to let go of my old couch, I happened upon a new sofa that met every criteria I had set for a replacement. It was as if the universe had been waiting for me to make the decision, so it could get to work on a solution that was better than anything I had imagined.

Love and loneliness are like the furniture of our heart. Similar to choosing a sofa, we need to be willing to give up the familiar frayed feeling of loneliness so that love can move into the open space.

Few circumstances prevent us from reaching out in search of companionship and interaction. Today, thanks to the internet, we don't even need to leave our house to engage with someone.

As we contemplate the arrival of Valentine's Day, perhaps it's time to consider some new actions... some meaningful ways to put ourselves into contact with interesting, like-minded people.

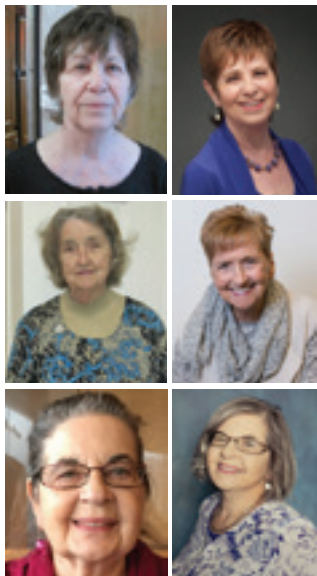
How about attending a reading at a local bookstore or joining a hiking group? A Toastmasters event? An investment seminar? An art class? Perhaps there's a yoga or tai chi group that meets regularly? How about trying line dancing or Zumba? Learn a new language just for the fun of it. Volunteer at the SPCA.

Most people, when asked how they met their best friend will say, "Oh I was just doing this or that, and they showed up... and the rest is history."

How many priceless relationships are you willing to pass up by not making yourself available for that chance encounter?

Nothing signals the body that all is well as when you take a step in a new direction. Changing it up brings a fresh perspective, renewed energy, and opens the door to new possibilities.

Be your own Valentine this year. Do something for you. Your life will thank you in countless ways. |



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Prudence with the book she
co-authored with mystery
novelist Ron Base.
Photo: Ann Nolte

PRUDENCE EMERY: DEFYING EXPECTATIONS

by JOHN THOMSON

Slightly inebriated from the champagne she consumed the night before, Priscilla Tempest, the newly installed Press and Public Relations Officer at London's prestigious Savoy Hotel scrambles up to the seventh floor. She stands aside as the lifeless body of international arms dealer Amir Abraham is wheeled out of Suite 705.

Hotel manager Clive Banville, anxious for answers, asks the hotel's housekeeper if she noticed anything suspicious. Yes, the housekeeper replies, she saw someone rushing down the hall, someone who looked a lot like Her Royal Highness, Princess Margaret.

Blimey. What the heck is going on at the Savoy? Royalty, secrets and scandal!

And so begins Prudence Emery's tale of murder and intrigue at one of London's most esteemed addresses. Released in Canada in 2021, Pru's inaugural novel *Death at the Savoy*, co-written with fellow Canadian Ron Base, recently hit the American market. The audiobook is already out. *Scandal at the Savoy*, the second in the series, will be released in March 2023 and a third, *Princess at the Savoy*, is in the works. It's quite an accomplishment for the gregarious Nanaimo-born octogenarian now living in Victoria.

"I'm 86 years old, right?" Pru exclaims. "So, it's kind of a third career for me. Who knew at age 86 I could be doing this?"

Prudence knows the setting well. Hired in 1968 as the Savoy's Press and Public Relations Officer, the author spent six years catering to the needs of the hotel's illustrious guests: the Burtons, Leonard Bernstein, Bob Hope, Liza Minnelli, Noel Coward and others. Truth be told she never saw Princess Margaret fleeing a crime scene or anywhere else for that matter and, yes, the lead character, Priscilla Tempest, is patterned after Pru herself.

Prudence first documented her life at the Savoy in her 2020 memoir *Nanaimo Girl*, a breezy account of her life before and after her Savoy experience, including growing up as a rebellious young woman on Vancouver Island, partying in swinging London in the 1960s, and beginning in 1975, working as a freelance publicist for the international film industry.

Pru has had a rich and colourful life, but it's her six years at the Savoy that attracted the attention of her writing partner, veteran journalist Ron Base. They first met decades ago when Prudence was a freelance publicist and Ron was writing movie reviews for *Maclean's* and *TV Guide*. Pru's job was to get columnists and their readers interested in upcoming releases.

"She had a budget to bring reporters in from newspapers and magazines," says Ron. "She wanted somebody to interview Oliver Reed, so it was 'Ron, get on a plane, come to Montreal and interview Oliver Reed.' She got me to all kinds of movie sets."

Eventually, the two lost touch. Ron became the *Toronto Star's* full-time movie reviewer while Prudence continued promoting new releases. Years later, after Ron left the *Star*, he created his Sanibel Sunset Detective series, a collection of mystery novels which take place in and around Florida's Sanibel Island. Intrigued by Pru's entry into the memoir field, he picked up a copy of *Nanaimo Girl*.

"I was knocked out by the writing," says Ron. "It turned out to be a rollicking, well-written memoir but what really knocked me out was the years she spent at the Savoy. And I'm thinking as I'm reading this, my God, this would make a terrific mystery."

As the author of 13 mystery novels, Ron knew something about the genre.

"I got on the phone with her and said how would you like to write a mystery novel? You know about the Savoy, and I know something about Colonel Mustard in the library with the candlestick. I can add that and off we went."

Prudence was surprised but intrigued.

"My first thought was I know nothing about murder and mystery," she says. "My first reaction was I don't know how to do this and still I said yes, like all my jobs."

She said yes to a lot of jobs. She admits she can be a bit impetuous, perhaps even reckless.

"My whole life has been a sheer lack of direction," she says. "I had no plans at all. Every job I got I never applied for, things just happened for me."

Like when she got a job at Montreal's Expo '67 ushering

Snapshot

with Prudence Emery

If you were to meet your 20-year-old self, what advice would you give her?

"You could say [the 20-year-old] refuses to say follow your dreams because everybody says that. I'm pretty happy with what I did. My philosophy was to defy expectations and have a rip-roaring good time."

Who or what has influenced you the most and why?

"I haven't a clue. I'd go back to my life in London when I had this romance with a much older man. He was a journalist, and he wrote screenplays. He introduced me to my first film set. They were filming one of his stories. He also introduced me to parts of London I wouldn't have known about."

What are you grateful for?

"Laughter and life. I like to make people laugh. I used to say why take life seriously when you never get out of it alive? I did come from a slightly batty background but in the end, they were a generous and supportive family."

What does success mean to you?

"Comfort, mentally and physically, and a huge range of friends. Being published is a miraculous surprise. There again, it was the sheer lack of direction. I never thought I'd be writing. People say I'm a writer. I find it hard to believe and I guess I have to accept it."

TOC PHOTO | Prudence with French singer Sacha Distel and British singer Petula Clark 1958.



VIPs around, whetting her appetite for public relations work.

"I kind of straddled public relations and Visitor Services."

Or when she was approached by hotelier and Savoy Group managing director Hugh Wontner about a job at the hotel.

"[Mr. Wontner] said 'What are your plans?' and I said, 'Well, I'm going skiing in Bavaria, I'm meeting my friend Christine and then I'm going back to Montreal,' and he said, 'Would you care to become press and public relations officer at the Savoy?'"

I said, 'Oh, okay.' There's no way I would have walked into the Savoy and say I want to work here. I'd never even been to the Savoy."

Or when she produced *Hattie's Heist*, at age 77, a 20-minute comedy she wrote and co-financed.

"You know, I haven't a clue. I just had the feeling I wanted to do it. The idea of old ladies robbing a bank appealed to me and so I wrote a short version, and the director extended it to a longer version. They were all very enthusiastic. It was great fun."

Doing her own thing has come easily to the Nanaimo native. She was born into wealth and privilege and expected to follow convention. She didn't.

"Daddy came from a very well-off family," she says, and decorum was the name of the game.

"My parents sent me away a lot. When my sister was born, I was sent off to Victoria to live with another family, then again in Grade 6 to a Strathcona girls boarding school. I was away from the family environment more than I was in it."

As a young girl, she was asked to sing in front of family friends.

"Daddy would always make me do things I didn't want to do," Prudence recalls. "He'd drag me off in my burgundy velvet dress

with the lace collar and I'd have to sing at parties. He encouraged me to be an entertainer."

She admits she was angry and resentful, but, in fact, performing for an audience was good training for the future.

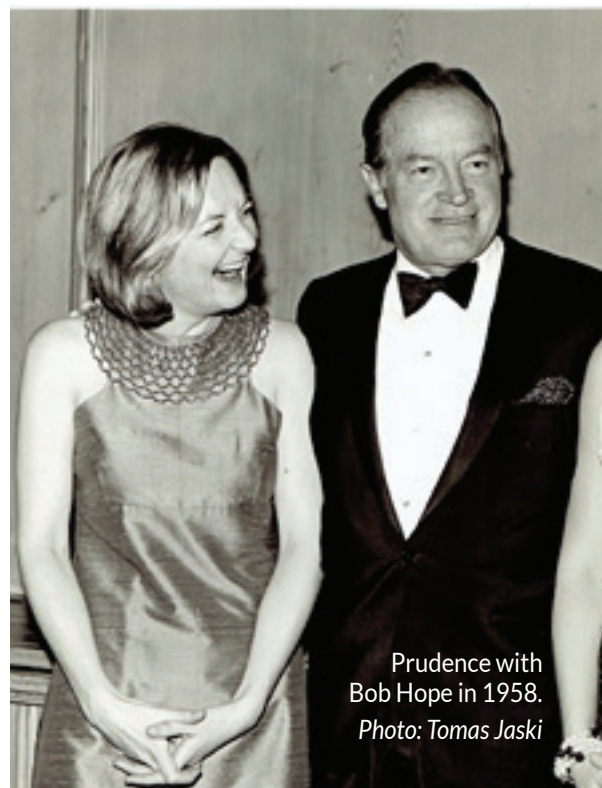
"I like to make people laugh and I think that came from him wanting me to entertain."

She says she was a brat at home, competing with her sister for attention and hanging out with her guy friends, Squarehead, Sunny and Rags. By the time she was sent off to yet another boarding school at 14, Crofton House in Vancouver this time, her rebellious streak was taking root.

"That's why quite a few girls get sent to boarding school because they're brats and the parents always hope that the school will smooth them out and turn them into young ladies."

When asked if boarding school smoothed out the edges, Prudence laughs uproariously. "Let's just say I knew how to use the correct knife and fork."

Prudence not only learned proper etiquette but managed to turn a negative into a positive. Being brash, bold



Prudence with Bob Hope in 1958.
Photo: Tomas Jaski

and fearless can be advantageous when trying to make an impression, and adopting a softer, carefree persona can open doors.

“I would say that’s right for a certain period in my life,” Prudence says.

It was the start of the swinging sixties and Prudence was studying commercial art in London. Initially, her father paid all her expenses but by year two, the money dried up and Pru had to leave art school and fend for herself.

“It was the best thing to happen to me,” she says. “I learned how to support myself. I was a barmaid and sometimes worked in the kitchen and I met lots of fascinating people.”

She held several casual jobs, kept up a social life, and by her own admission, “had a rollicking good time.”

Flamboyance is another trait that has served her well. Stickhandling publicity for Canadian and international movie productions after her time at the Savoy, a total of 120 in her career, meant cajoling, pleading and stroking the egos of high-priced stars. Meeting powerful personalities head on is not a job for the meek or timid.

“Some were dreams and some were awful,” she recalls. “The actors and the crew want to get on with their jobs, and there’s me dragging actors off to do interviews and a lot of them don’t like doing it,” she says. “That’s the business. You need a good sense of humour and the ability to get along with people.”

Prudence retired from the film business in 2009 and nine years later she wrote *Nanaimo Girl*, which brings us back to the birth of *Death at the Savoy* and her new career.

“It gave us a great opportunity to rekindle a friendship,” Ron says of the collaboration. “We spent lots and lots of hours on the phone talking about our various misadventures and people we knew. Occasionally, we even talked about the book,” he laughs.

They established a loose schedule – “it wasn’t like Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. It just went along,” says Pru – and because they lived in different cities, they communicated by e-mail.

“I did an outline and she played around with it a bit,” says Ron. “I sent her a couple of chapters, she would edit them, send them back again, and I’d re-work them.”

“I anglicized his writing, put in quotes and added characters,” says Prudence. “Mountbatten says something is ‘garbage’ and I changed it to ‘rubbish’ because the English always say rubbish. They wouldn’t say garbage. Ron is the nuts and bolts and I’m the champagne and caviar,” she adds.

Ron says he was initially nervous about working with another writer.

“That’s what I wondered about when we set out to do this because I had never done it before. I had always written alone. We came to pretty easy agreements on stuff. She’s very easy, she’s very sharp and she’s very intelligent. It turned out to be a joy with Pru. It really did. These novels require the two of us,” he says. “Without one, there is no other.”

Their collaboration extended beyond writing, too. Ron suggested she employ her movie-biz contacts to promote and distribute the book. Prudence continues the story.

“Knowing I worked on three films with Sophia Loren, Ron said why don’t you send it to Sophia? I said there’s no way Sophia’s going to endorse it. He said do it anyway, so I sent it to Eduardo Ponti, her son. His wife, Sasha Alexander, read it and phoned me to say could she option it and that’s how it got optioned for a film. My feeling is it would be a series.”

While the idea of turning the novel into a film or TV series is making the rounds, Ron and Prudence are finishing their third book in the series, *Princess at the Savoy*, with no end in sight to the collaboration.

Flush with success, Prudence recalls her girlhood mantra, a testament to carving your own path.

“I’m never going to get married. I’m just going to have lots of lovers and live a fabulous life painting and writing.”

And in a way, it came true.

“It did, didn’t it? Isn’t that amazing!” |

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SWEETHEART SITES OF SEATTLE

by JANE CASSIE

It's that time of year again – when chocolate boxes are carved into hearts, roses brim from corner grocers, and cupid comes out of hiding. So, how are you going to celebrate the big day of romance? What love-struck surprise can you conjure up for your Valentine? What about heading to the Emerald City of Seattle? Here are just a few sweetheart sites that this Pacific Northwest jewel has to offer.



A TREASURE TROVE FOR TWO

Although Seattle's downtown core is a mish mash of past and present, it all works together harmoniously. New-age high rises hover above Gold Rush landmarks, trendy boutiques snuggle between flagship department stores and government headquarters brush up to corporate conglomerates. There are countless cozy espresso bars where you can escape the drizzly weather, ethnic-varied restaurants to appease the most discerning palate and so much cultural diversity, it'll make your head spin. This destination that's embraced by the glistening Puget Sound and backed by snow tipped peaks is so picturesque, it'll tug on any heart strings.

MAKE SOME MUSIC TOGETHER AT MUSEUM OF POP CULTURE (MoPOP)

This massive Frank O. Gehry architectural wonder, dedicated to contemporary popular culture, was founded by Microsoft co-founder, Paul Allen in 2000. It features dozens of exhibits and is jam-packed with opportunities to get both of your hearts thumping. You'll be mesmerized by the amazing acoustics of Sky Church, where musical greats become giant-sized on the monster video screen, take a step back in time with Jimi Hendrix and his 'Evolution of Sound,' and unleash innate musical talents when performing that special song for the one you love. Plunk away on the keyboard, strum on a guitar or serenade each other with a golden oldie.



CHARGE UP YOUR IMAGINATIONS

Instead of sounds, sci-fi may be more your thing. If so, you won't have to stray too far. Right next door is the Science Fiction Museum, a mind-boggling exhibit that's devoted to thought-provoking ideas. There's everything from literature and media to future visions for humanity. Their Hall of Fame pays homage to the creative practitioners – writers, artists, publishers and filmmakers and others who have given life to this imaginative world. On your journey you'll come face to face with monsters, robots and aliens – just to throw a little Halloween into this Valentine's Day.

PHOTOS | (Top) Preparing to go underground.

(Middle) Pike Place Fish Mongers.

(Bottom) Enjoying Pan Pacific's room service.

TOC Pike Place Market.

TAKE YOUR LOVE TO A HIGHER LEVEL

The futuristic-looking Space Needle has been Seattle's well-known icon since the World's Fair in 1962. From its lofty 204-metres-high observatory, your hearts will palpitate when checking out the stunning panorama that includes everything from the city's bustling downtown hub to the pinnacle of Mt Rainer. Even when the clouds roll in, the ethereal effect will initiate some loving Valentine vibes. You can also share the vista while wining and dining by candle-light. This landmark's SkyCity rotating restaurant dishes up culinary classics that match the 360-degree rotating view.

OR GO UNDERGROUND!

For a step back in time, stroll the cobblestone streets of Pioneer Square, where an iron pergola, Tlingit totem pole, and Romanesque brick buildings are remnants of Seattle's past. Check out art galleries, cafés and antique shops – the eclectic area definitely encourages lots of handholding. And don't forget to check out what also lies beneath the streets. Bill Speidel's Underground Tour is a cheesy but entertaining guided tour of the hidden subterranean passages that were once the main roadways of downtown Seattle.

PLOD THROUGH PIKE PLACE MARKET

Chocolates, flowers, jewellery, oh my! You'll find every Valentine favourite at this queen bee of farmer's markets. But watch out for those flying fish! This venue has been a Seattle institution since 1907 and beneath

open-air tents, merchants, craftsman and farmers line up year-round. Aside from the original Starbucks, you won't find any chain stores here – and all is sold on a first-come basis, so for the freshest and finest, get there early. You won't be disappointed!

GO FOR SOME PAIRED PAMPERING

Seattle is home to several sensational spas, many of which offer Valentine specials. From hot stones and body wraps to massages and facials, they are designed to relax, restore and regenerate. And under proficient and gentle hands, you'll drift in and out of trance-land and succumb to Utopian joys while lying side by side.

A SECLUDED SANCTUARY: THE PAN PACIFIC HOTEL SEATTLE

This elite award-winner occupies a prime location near the city's core. Instead of being squeezed next to downtown high rises that brim from Seattle's bustling vortex, you'll be idyllically distanced from the percolating crowds. It's just four blocks from the Pike Place Market and Pine Street shopping, six blocks from the Convention Center and the Space Needle, and minutes via streetcar from Lake Union's enticing restaurants, all of which you'll want to take in during your Valentine's Day veycay to Seattle. |

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Peace Country & Rockies-June-10th Days
Discover Croatia, Collette Vacations and Teresa - Sept 21- Oct 2, 2023
Cascades Fall Foliage-Oct 10-13th-4 Days
Tulalip and Leavenworth - Dec - 4 Days

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Anthony Hopkins in Armageddon Time, playing Feb 3 & 4 at Cinecenta

MORE TIME TO MAKE BETTER CHOICES

by LAURIE MUELLER

“I have friends who understand my jokes and I have company at mealtime. I’m a part of the organizing committee for the charity down the street and I get my game of scrabble in every Thursday afternoon.”

Norma walked into the Executive Director’s office for a tour of the Independent Living Residence for people 55 years and older, and being the forthright person she is, announced she was very lonely in her apartment and that she wanted to move in right away. She had to go on a waiting list.

The top reasons people choose retirement living says Maureen Fakaro, General Manager of Verve’s Gilmore Gardens in Richmond, are a health scare or diagnosis, loneliness and isolation, or mobility challenges that make it difficult to take care of the daily activities such as cooking, cleaning, laundry or driving.

And yet, waiting that long can mean you are missing out on living your life to its fullest. When the structure of a career is over, when children are grown and are busy with their own families and careers, many people become restless and lonely. With the structure of their younger years gone, they often need to find other ways to thrive.

Don’t wait until you are ill or frustrated to investigate the retirement residences in your area.

“If you are trying to plan when you are in crisis,” says Shelly Pendlebury, Regional Director of Sales and Marketing at Amica Senior Lifestyles, “that makes the choice very difficult, and people often make the wrong choice. We get calls from a daughter who has only five days to find a place for her mother to live when she is released from hospital after having a fall.”

Start looking when you start having an inkling that things are not going well. It is difficult for a person to put their hand up and vocalize, “I’m lonely” (as not everyone is a Norma!). Loneliness, helplessness and boredom can shorten a person’s lifespan significantly.

Both Fakaro and Pendlebury see people in their retirement residences who, before they moved in, were bored and depressed with no purpose, living on their own (or with a spouse) in their home. Moving into the building with so many others who became their community, these same people found a renewed enjoyment in life. One resident said to Maureen, “I should have moved in here years ago, it’s so much fun!” Like Norma, she wanted to laugh and have conversations with others, to inspire and be inspired by others.

Waiting until you must move is also a problem because downsizing from a home you have lived in for many years is a

large task. Make sure you leave enough time to downsize before the completion of your house sale. The work of downsizing, making decisions regarding sentimental objects, prized possessions and things that have been a part of the family for decades is stressful and emotionally draining. Give yourself time to go through this process, even if you decide to hire a professional downsizer.

When thinking about moving into a retirement residence, talk to the people in your life who you trust, who know you and who will enter a heart-to-heart conversation about the decision you are making, advise Fakaro and Pendlebury. Someone who will listen and ask you questions about the details of the place(s) you are looking at. It may be a family member, your best friend, someone in your faith community, your doctor, or financial advisor.

Many residences have waitlists and therefore getting your name on one or three of them early can help ensure that when you are ready to move, there will be a suite available for you.

Allow yourself to be seduced into a tour and a free meal. Chat with the residents you meet. Find out the general atmosphere of the place. Which ones feel like home to you? Delaying your decision about which retirement residence you may want to move into can mean you have missed out on opportunities, your health may decline, or your spouse’s health may decline, and you become ineligible to reside in the place of your choice.

You don’t need to visit all your options in one week. Take a few months to go through your list. Enjoy the process. You can never be too young to start looking. Get your name on the waitlist of the residences you feel at home in. You don’t need to move in the first time they call you with a vacancy.

Marion was depressed. Her husband had been dead five years, her friends had moved out of the neighbourhood and the garden had become too much work. Every time she visited her two best friends in a downtown Victoria retirement residence, she would hear about all the fun they were having. There was a lot of laughter.

It took a few months before Marion finally booked a time to talk to the staff at her friends’ residence. Her two daughters encouraged her to move in for at least a month and see how she liked it. They volunteered to look after her house while she did this.

Joanne and Tony, her friends already living in the residence, were happy she became their neighbour. Each day, they saw a change in Marion. In the end, she made a commitment to stay at the residence and her daughters took on the task of cleaning up her home and putting it on the market.

Marion never looked back. |

bc senior housing directory

BURNABY

Rideau Retirement Residence ■●

604-291-1792; 1850 Rosser Ave;

Capacity: (I/A) 136 units

Price: \$2880+

Amenities/Services: studio, 1 & 2 bdr suites; fitness & recreation; near park, shops & services; walking distance to Senior Center; safe, affordable location; feel loved & respected; 24hr emergency response; meals + housekeeping included; library & lounges.

CAMPBELL RIVER

Berwick by the Sea ■●

250-850-1353 / 1-844-418-1353; 1353 - 16th Ave.

www.berwickretirement.com

Capacity: (I) 130 units; (A) 30 units; private Price: call for rates

Amenities/Services: ocean view; housekeeping; linens; wellness program; theatre; fitness centre; games room; transport; rooftop lounge; coffee lounge; chef prepared meals; 24hr emergency response.

CHILLIWACK

Columbus Manor Chilliwack ■

604-250-6444; 8980 Edward St,

www.colchar.org

Capacity: 54 units; private

Price: \$890+

Amenities/Services: free laundry equipment; pay parking available. +\$120 per month for 2nd person in 1-bdrm suites.

COMOX / COURTENAY

Berwick Comox Valley ■●

250-339-1690; 1-866-1690; 1700 Comox Ave.

www.berwickretirement.com

Capacity: (I) 170 units; (A) 35 units

Price: call for rates

Amenities/Services: in heart of downtown Comox; housekeeping; linens; wellness program; transportation; rooftop garden & lounge; theatre; fitness centre; games room; bistro; pub; coffee lounge; chef prepared meals; 24hr emergency response.

housing directory legend

We use three housing categories to define residences:

Independent/Supportive Living (I) ■

Includes a combination of housing and hospitality services for retired adults who are capable of directing their own care.

Assisted Living (A) ●

Offers housing, hospitality services and personal assistance to adults who can live independently but require regular help with daily activities. By law, all Assisted Living residences must be registered with the Assisted Living Registrar of BC.

Residential Care (C) ►

Sometimes called Complex Care, these units also provide care and supervision for retired adults who are no longer capable of directing their own day-to-day activities. Complex Care settings typically provide a combination of housing and hospitality services, as well as extensive support services.

The **Housing Directory** on INSPIRED Magazine's website also has senior housing options:
www.seniorlivingmag.com/housing

Nova Pacific Care - Stevenson Place ■

250-339-7012; 1683 Balmoral Ave.; www.novapacific.ca

Capacity: 33 units

Price: \$3400+

Amenities/Services: boutique Independent retirement living with spacious 1 & 2-bdrm suites; full kitchen; evening meals; weekly housekeeping & activities; 24/7 monitoring; in beautiful Comox right by a shopping centre, park & marina.

DELTA

Columbus Lodge Delta ■

604-250-6444; 8850 118A St.

www.colchar.org

Capacity: 31 units; private

Price: \$1670+

Amenities/Services: continental breakfast, chef prepared lunch, dinner; free laundry equipment; hydro included; activities; regular bus trips; emergency pendant included. +\$700 for 2nd person in 1 bdrm suites (covers meals).

Waterford, The ■►

604-943-5954; 1345 56 St.; www.WaterfordSeniors.ca

Capacity: (I) 106 units; (C) 36 units

Price: \$4300+

Amenities/Services: daily fitness & social activities; Red Seal chef prepared meals; housekeeping; courtesy shuttle; bus outings; hair salon; guest suite; close to amenities. Independent living or licensed 24-hour care centre; pets allowed.

Wexford, The ■

604-948-4477; 1737 56 St.; www.WexfordSeniors.ca

Capacity: 65 suites

Price: \$4400+

Amenities/Services: daily fitness & social activities; Red Seal chef prepared meals; housekeeping; courtesy shuttle; bus outings; hair salon; fitness centre; rooftop garden; private dining room; pets allowed.

DUNCAN

Nova Pacific Care - Wedgwood House ■

250-746-9808; 256 Government St.; www.novapacific.ca

Capacity: 40 units

Price: \$3200+

Amenities/Services: boutique Independent retirement living with spacious 1, 1+ den & 2-bdrm suites; full kitchen; evening meals; weekly housekeeping & activities; 24/7 monitoring; on-site; downtown near shops, seniors centre, medical, dental.

KAMLOOPS

Berwick on the Park ■●

250-377-7275; 1-866-377-7275; 60 Whiteshield Cres. S.

www.berwickretirement.com

Capacity: (I) 147 units; (A) 25 units; private

Price: call for rates

Amenities/Services: valley view; housekeeping; linens; wellness program; transport; games room; fitness centre; library; theatre; gardens; pub; bistro; coffee lounge; chef prepared meals; 24hr emergency response.

LANGLEY

Harrison Landing ■●

604-530-7075; 20899 Douglas Cres.;

www.harrisonlanding.com

Capacity: 67 units

Price: \$2800-\$3600

Amenities/Services: breakfast bar; 2 meals; Red Seal chef; light housekeeping; pub nights; socials; bingo; dining & fireside lounges; outdoor patios; recreation & wellness areas; fitness; bus; 24/7 security and pendant calling systems; F/T nurse & 24/7 care aide.

Harrison Pointe ■●

604-530-1101; 21616 52 Ave.;
www.harrisonpointe.ca

Capacity: 138 units
Price: \$2800-\$3600
Amenities/Services: breakfast bar; 2 meals; Red Seal chef; light housekeeping; pub nights; socials; bingo; dining & fireside lounges; outdoor patios; large rec hall; wellness areas; fitness; bus; 24/7 security and pendant calling systems; F/T nurse & 24/7 care aide.

Magnolia Gardens ■▶

604-514-1210; 5840 Glover Rd.; www.MagnoliaSeniors.ca

Capacity: (I) 115 units; (C) 40 units
Price: \$2900+
Amenities/Services: daily fitness & social activities; Red Seal chef prepared meals; housekeeping; courtesy shuttle; bus outings; hair salon; guest suite; close to amenities. Licensed 24hr residential care centre.

Sunridge Gardens ■

604-510-5091; 22301 Fraser Hwy; www.SunridgeSeniors.ca

Capacity: 145 suites
Price: \$2795+
Amenities/Services: daily fitness & social activities; Red Seal chef prepared meals; housekeeping; courtesy shuttle; bus outings; hair salon; guest suite; close to amenities; theatre; courtyard gardens; pets allowed.

Village Langley, The ●▶

604-427-3755; 3920 198 St.

www.verveseniorliving.com/thevillagelangley
Capacity: 75 suites (AL/C)
Price: \$8200+
Amenities/Services: Canada's first true dementia village; private rooms with ensuite bathrooms in a cottage style house in a safe secure setting; café & bistro; salon; activities; entertainment; around the clock dementia support.

MAPLE RIDGE

Columbus Christopherson House ■

604-250-6444; 11797 Burnett St.; www.colchar.org

Capacity: 19 units; private
Price: \$2010+
Amenities/Services: close to bus; regular bus trips; basic cable; continental breakfast; chef prepared lunch & dinner; activities; hydro; free laundry equipment; emergency pendant included; pay parking; +\$700 for 2nd person in 1 bdrm suites (covers meals).

Columbus Kilmartin Gardens ■

604-250-6444; 11821 Burnett St.; www.colchar.org

Capacity: 22 units; private
Price: \$1170+
Amenities/Services: close to bus service; hydro included; all are ranch style one bedroom units; coin laundry; pay parking available; +\$145 for 2nd person.

NANAIMO

Berwick on the Lake ■●▶

250-729-7995; 1-877-525-3111; 3201 Ross Rd.

www.berwickretirement.com
Price: call for rates
Capacity: (I) 120 units; (A) 28 units; (C) 36 units; private
Amenities/Services: lakeside; housekeeping; linens; wellness program; transport; fitness centre; coffee lounge; bistro; craft room; library; theatre; games room; gardens; chef prepared meals; 24hr emergency response.

NEW WESTMINSTER

Dunwood Place ■

604-521-8636; 901 Colborne St.

Capacity: 191 units
Price: 30% of monthly income
Amenities/Services: studio & 1 bdrms; large patio for barbecues etc.; large lounge with view of Mt. Baker; workshop; tenant gardens; bingo; karaoke; cards; church services & bible studies; cafe with patio and garden; 2 libraries.

Thornebridge Gardens ■●

604-524-6100; 649 - 8th Ave.; www.verveseniorliving.com

Capacity: (I/A) 143 suites
Price: \$3655+
Amenities/Services: studio, 1/1 bdrm & den, 2 bdrm; 2 full meals per day in dining room, plus a continental breakfast & daily snacks; weekly housekeeping; 24 hr emergency pendant / response by qualified on-site staff; activities & outings.

PARKSVILLE

Berwick Parksville ■

250-937-0989/ 1-888-441-6209; 180 Jensen Ave E
www.berwickparksville.com

Capacity: 188 units;
Price: call for rates
Amenities/Services: ocean views; pickle ball courts; fitness centre; top floor lounge; craft room; poker room; theatre; wellness program; games room; transportation; pub; coffee lounge; chef prepared meals; 24-hr emerg response.

PRINCE RUPERT

Columbus Kaien Place ■

604-250-6444; 550 - 5th Ave E
www.colchar.org

Capacity: 26 units; private
Price: \$705+
Amenities/Services: coin operated laundry; activity room; free parking; +120 for 2nd person in 1 bdrm suites.

Columbus Wayne Place ■

604-250-6444; 630 Wayne Place
www.colchar.org

Capacity: 25 units; private
Price: \$705+
Amenities/Services: coin operated laundry; activity room; free parking; +120 for 2nd person in 1 bdrm suites.

QUALICUM BEACH

Berwick Qualicum Beach ■●

250-738-6200; 120 First Ave. W;
berwickretirement.com

Capacity: 94 units
Price: call for rates
Amenities/Services: downtown Qualicum; ocean view; housekeeping; linens; wellness program; theatre; fitness centre; games room; rooftop lounge; transport; pub; bistro; coffee lounge; chef prepared meals; 24hr emergency response.

Nova Pacific Care - Hawthorne Place ■

250-752-4217; 750 Memorial Ave; www.novapacific.ca

Capacity: 33 suites;
Price: \$3325+
Amenities/Services: boutique Independent retirement living with spacious 1 & 2-bdrm suites; full kitchen; evening meals; weekly housekeeping & activities; 24/7 monitoring; in quaint Qualicum Beach near shops, services, medical, dental, etc.

RICHMOND

Verve Courtyard Gardens ■●▶

604-273-1225; 7051 Moffatt Road;
www.verveseniorliving.com/courtyard-gardens

Capacity: (I/A) 108 suites; (C) 31 suites
Price: \$5277+
Amenities/Services: 1/1+den & 2 bdrm suites; 3 full meals/day; weekly housekeeping; 24 hr emergency pendant/response by qualified on-site staff; weekly wellness consultations; activities & outings.

Verve Gilmore Gardens ■

604-271-7222; 4088 Blundell Road
www.verveseniorliving.com/gilmore-gardens

Capacity: (I) 118 suites
Price: \$3630+
Amenities/Services: all-inclusive independent living; studio, 1 bdrm, 1 bdrm+den & 2 bdrm suites; dinner & continental bkfst daily, lunch optional, daily snacks; weekly housekeeping; activities & outings; 24 hr emergency response.

SIDNEY

Amica Beechwood Village ■

250-655-0849; 2315 Mills Rd.;

<http://amica.ca/beechwood>

Capacity: 106 units

Price: \$3600+

Amenities/Services: studios, 1 & 2 bedroom suites, premium patio suites; 24 hr staff & emerg pendant; assisted living services; all meals; basic cable; weekly housekeeping & linen service; activities & fitness programs; bus outings; respite & short term stays.

Legion Manor ■●

250-652-3261; 7601 East Saanich Rd.;

www.legionmanorvictoria.ca

Capacity: (I)78 suites; (A)68 suites

Price: \$3025+

Amenities/Services: affordable housing suites at \$905; fitness classes and activities; entertainment; outings; situated on 5 acres in the beautiful Saanich Peninsula & close to all amenities.

VANCOUVER

Amica Arbutus Manor ■●

604-736-8936; 2125 Eddington Dr.

www.amica.ca/arbutus-manor

Capacity: 114 units

Price: \$5300+

Amenities/Services: 24/7 licensed practical nurse on-site; 3 meals; daily activities & entertainment; weekly housekeeping; flat linen laundry; cable; personal emergency response system. Located on 4-acres; courtyards; near shopping, parks, bus.

Amica Edgemont Village ■●▶

604-929-6361; 3225 Highland Blvd. North Vancouver

www.amica.ca/edgemont-village

Capacity: 131 suites

Price: \$4800+

Amenities/Services: 3 meals; 24/7 on-site nursing; personal emergency response system; weekly housekeeping & flat linen service; daily activities; bus excursions; entertainment; beautiful inner courtyard; theatre; craft kitchen; near shops and amenities.

Amica Lions Gate ■●▶

778-280-8540; 701 Keith Rd.;

www.amica.ca/lions-gate

Capacity: 130 units

Price: \$8278+

Amenities/Services: all meals; bistro; theatre; 24 hour on-site nursing staff & emergency call system; utilities include heat, hot water, internet; daily suite tidy; weekly housekeeping, flat laundry service; daily activities & events; short term/respite stays.

Amica West Vancouver ■●▶

604-921-9181; 659 Clyde Ave., West Vancouver

www.amica.ca/west-vancouver

Capacity: 121 suites

Price: \$5000+

Amenities/Services: 24/7 nurse on-site; 3 meals; daily activities & entertainment; weekly housekeeping & flat linen service; cable; personal emergency response system; swimming pool; courtyards; near shopping, parks & bus; short term/respite stays.

Columbus Millennium Tower Vancouver ■

604-250-6444; 1175 Broughton St.

www.colchar.org

Capacity: 55 units; private

Price: \$1006+

Amenities/Services: dining room service at additional cost; coin operated laundry; secure underground pay parking; basic cable included; West End Vancouver. +\$175 for 2nd person in 1 bdrm suites.

Columbus Tower Vancouver ■

604-250-6444; 5233 Joyce St.

www.colchar.org

Capacity: 81 units; private

Price: \$830+

Amenities/Services: next to Sky Train; free laundry equipment; pay parking.

Southview Terrace ■

604-438-3367; 3131 58 Ave E.;

www.southviewterracesa.ca

Capacity: 57 units

Price: Call for rates

Amenities/Services: Southview Terrace offers 1 & 2 bdrm apts. Rent incl lunch & dinner; utilities; cable; phone; housekeeping; flat laundry; 24hr emergency response; activities; & more; located beside Champlain mall.

Verve Granville Gardens ■●

604-563-3540; 1550 West 49th Avenue

www.verveseniorliving.com/granville-gardens

Capacity: (I/A) 62 suites

Price: \$4800+

Amenities/Services: studio & 1 bdrm suites; 3 chef inspired meals/day; 24 hr snacks; weekly housekeeping; 24 hr emergency pendant/response by qualified staff; outings & shuttle service; engaging activities & live entertainment.

VICTORIA

Abbeyfield House St. Peters ■

250-590-9330; 1133 Reynolds Road.;

www.abbeyfieldstpeters.org

Capacity: 12 units

Price: call for rates

Amenities/Services: spacious studio suites with private patio & beautiful gardens; bright spacious common areas; Fresh nutritious meals; non profit family style; 30% of income for housing portion; guest suite; near shops, medical, churches, bus service.

Amica Douglas House ■●▶

250-383-6258; 50 Douglas St.;

www.amica.ca

Capacity: 102 units

Price: \$3900+

Amenities/Services: full kitchens in independent living, spacious suites & assisted living services; licensed residential care with nurses on duty 24/7; located in James Bay. Respite & short term stays.

Amica Jubilee House / Presentation Centre Hillside Mall ▶

778-535-6093; 1900 Richmond Rd - Opening Fall 2023

Amenities/Services: Long term care / Memory care; studios, 1 bedrooms.

Amica on the Gorge ■●▶

250-220-8000; 994 Gorge Rd. W.;

www.amica.ca

Capacity: 166 units

Price: \$3600+

Amenities/Services: Gorge waterway Continuum of Care - Independent Living, Assisted Living, Long Term Care, & Memory Care; 3 meals a day; bistro; weekly housekeeping; linen service; activities included.

Amica Somerset House ■●

250-380-9121; 540 Dallas Rd.;

www.amica.ca

Capacity: 135 suites

Price: \$4400+

Amenities/Services: Independent and Assisted Living; ocean-front studio, 1 and 2 bedroom suites with balconies; includes meals; bistro; weekly housekeeping; activities and fitness programs; theatre; pool; bus shuttle; newly renovated.

Berwick House ■●▶

250-853-5492; 1-866-721-4062; 4062 Shelbourne St.

www.berwickretirement.com

Capacity: (I) 99 units; (A) 35 units; (C) 37 units; private

Price: call for rates

Amenities/Services: housekeeping; linens; wellness program; transport; fitness centre; library; theatre; games room; gardens; bistro; coffee lounge; chef prepared meals; 24hr emergency response.

Berwick Royal Oak ■●▶

250-386-4680; 1-866-721-4680; 4680 Elk Lake Dr.

www.berwickretirement.com

Capacity: (I) 201 units; (A) 25 units; (C) 27 units

Price: call for rates

Amenities/Services: housekeeping; linens; wellness program; transport; fitness centre; library; theatre; games room; gardens; coffee lounge; bistro; pub; chef prepared meals; 24hr emergency response.

Cridge Village Seniors' Centre, The ■●
 250-384-8058; 1307 Hillside Ave; www.cridge.org
Capacity: 38 units (I); 38 units (AL) **Price:** \$2625+
Amenities/Services: beautiful heritage building; walking paths; excellent food; modern addition; grand lounge; extensive recreation programming; common areas; visiting pets; subsidized (AL).

Nova Pacific Care - The Camelot ■
 250-384-3336; 455 Kingston St.; www.novapacific.ca
Capacity: 34 units **Price:** \$3200+
Amenities/Services: boutique Independent retirement living; spacious 1, 1+ den & 2 bdrm suites; full kitchen; evening meals; weekly housekeeping & activities; 24/7 monitoring; in James Bay close to banks, salons, medical, dental, shops, arts & entertainment.

Ross Place Seniors Community ■●
 250-381-8666; 2638 Ross Lane; www.rossplace.ca
Capacity: 182 units **Price:** \$2700+
Amenities/Services: proudly owned by VRS, a non-profit organization, our dedicated team strives to provide seniors with a safe & secure environment, quality home-cooked meals, & opportunities to stay active & meet new friends.

Sunrise Senior Living of Victoria ■●▶
 250-383-1366; 920 Humboldt St; www.sunrisevictoria.com
Capacity: 93 units; private **Price:** \$5800+
Amenities/Services: Age in Place community; assisted living; long term care, memory & palliative care; secure environment; 24/7 nurse & care; emerg call system; nutritious meals; walking club; activities; lovely gardens & patios; bistro; library; hair salon; pet friendly.

Victorian, The ■
 250-477-1912; 1773 Feltham Rd;
 www.atriaretirement.ca
Capacity: 94 units **Price:** \$2800+
Amenities/Services: 3 chef prepared meals/day; housekeeping; shuttle bus; all day cafe; life line; 24/7 on duty personnel; calendar of activities; exercise classes; games room; library; residents' computer; pets welcome.

Victorian at McKenzie, The ■
 250-381-9496; 4000 Douglas St; www.victorianatmckenzie.ca
Capacity: 117 units **Price:** \$3200+
Amenities/Services: 3 chef prepared meals/day; housekeeping; shuttle bus; all day cafe; life line; 24/7 on duty personnel; calendar of activities; exercise classes; games room; library; residents' computer; pets welcome.

Wellesley of Victoria ■●
 250-383-9099
 Community Relations Manager Jeff Nahnybida 250-514-5114
 2800 Blanshard St; www.retirementconcepts.com
Capacity: 204 units (I & AL) **Price:** \$2900+
Amenities/Services: salon; store; bistro; housekeeping; room for private functions; library; recreation; shopping shuttle; rooftop gardens; patio; theatre; AC; secure parking; pets allowed.

WHITE ROCK

Amica White Rock ■●▶
 778-545-8800; 15333 16 Ave. South Surrey;
 www.amica.ca/white-rock
Capacity: 160 suites **Price:** \$5500+
Amenities/Services: 3 meals; bistro; housekeeping; linen service; recreation programs; 8,000 sq ft roof top terrace; ocean & mountain views; pool; theatre; library; craft kitchen; fitness centre; bus; in-suite laundry; balconies; near medical centre; downtown.

housing directory legend

- Independent/Supportive Living (I)
- Assisted Living (A)
- ▶ Residential Care (C)

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MAKING FRIENDS IN RETIREMENT LIVING

by VERENA FOXX

“I moved into a retirement home because I don’t like to be alone,” says Jo-Ann De Jong, 89, who made the transition to a retirement community just six months ago.

She’d been living in her 1,200 square foot condo on the Gorge in Victoria, when she realized it was time to make a move, make new friends, and have new experiences.

“I didn’t want to be dependent on the kids,” says Jo-Ann, “so I shopped around Victoria with a friend, and we looked at all kinds of possibilities.”

She finally settled on and downsized into a one-bedroom, 700-square-foot apartment with her own kitchen and balcony at The Wellesley.

“It’s a joyful place, and I’ve made lots of new friends, with both residents and staff.”

The lively octogenarian who still travels to California annually, now gets her nails done at her residence every six weeks. She enjoys her bridge companions and likes participating in chair exercises at her new home base, where she’s built a community of friends around her.

Jo-Ann even talked the residence into purchasing a ping pong table, and then she inspired a small group of residents to regularly play with her.

“It’s better when residents make the decision to move before a decision has to be made for them,” says Jeff Nahnybida, Community Relations Manager of the Retirement Concepts group.

“We offer independent living and assisted living facilities, and we have a sister long-term care property for further needs and support.”

Nahnybida explains that the average age of residents now moving in is 85.

“Of course, we also have residents from their late 50s up to 105,” he says, “but usually newcomers in Victoria are in their 80s.”

People choose this lifestyle for several reasons. Loneliness and the desire for more socialization are very common factors, adds Nahnybida.

But, he says, so are those no longer wanting to do meal preparation and housekeeping.

“It’s about making that day-to-day lifestyle easier.”

Mike Garisto, President of Columbus Charities Association, a non-profit organization that provides affordable housing to seniors across BC in eight properties from the Lower Mainland to Prince Rupert, agrees.

“People who have lost long-term partners (widows/widowers) come to us because they are lonely. They are looking for companionship.”

“Others, who no longer want to cook and care for themselves, also come to live in our residences,” he adds.

For many, it’s also peace of mind and personal security that drive their decision.

Mike says the age range of Columbus residents is 75-95, and on average residents move in at age 83.

Eighty-four-year-old Billie (Wilhelmina) Holloway, who moved into Columbus’ Maple Ridge property one year ago, says she came for more of a social life.

“I’m widowed and divorced and just moved back to Can-

OUR LIL' SECRET

Photo by Steve Ogle

NOW YOURS

#FindingAwesome

NKLT.TRAVEL/NORDIC

ada from the US,” she says. “I initially lived with one of my daughters and her family, but I felt I was interrupting their lives too much, so I decided it was time to move to a retirement community. And I was lonely.”

She chose a residence that came with a kitchenette and three sit-down meals a day in the dining room.

Billie agrees it takes time to get to know a whole new community. “But I just met a new resident this week who likes to play crib as much as I do,” she

says, “so I’m happy about that.”

She adds that there are plenty of opportunities to meet other residents during regular bus outings, at bingo and at in-house movies. She was looking forward to taking part in Karaoke nights.

As one of the younger ones in her residence, Billie says she gets out and walks to the local Senior Community Centre, and occasionally goes shopping in her neighbourhood. One of her daughters lives close by and takes her to appointments.

“You can make friends and enjoy all the activities if you want to,” she adds. “The staff are absolutely wonderful and are always willing to add new ideas for social activities.”

Dianne Schroeder, also in her early 80s, decided to move back to Victoria from Comox, where she’d been renovating homes and was an active gardener for the past decade.

“I didn’t want to move into a condo, and I didn’t want to buy another house at Victoria’s current prices, so I looked into a retirement home situation instead.”

She had known several people who had lived at The Wellesley over the past 25 years, so she had always been drawn to that property.

“I’m glad I did it,” says Dianne, of moving into her one-bedroom suite. “My chihuahua crossbred dog, Max, came with me. That was important.” Getting out to walk Max daily is a vital part of Dianne’s daily routine.

Jeff says dogs and cats are allowed in the Victoria property if residents can look after them. Those living in assisted living can have pets visit but not stay with them, he explains.

Dianne, an avid reader, says that while she is very happy spending time in her suite, she made new friends when she joined a weekly Current Events discussion group with 12 other residents. They enjoy lively and informed discussions about global affairs and national and local news events.

She also looks forward to meeting up with fellow residents at the bi-weekly Happy Hour that includes music and entertainment.

“It was the Open House that brought me in,” concludes Jo-Ann. “There are so many opportunities to meet other residents in the large variety of activities that are offered. If you want to make friends, you can.”

“And there’s an Ambassador Programme on arrival,” adds Dianne. Residents are introduced to their new home, neighbours and community.

“It’s easy to meet people if you want to,” they all say. |



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FOREVER FIT

by EVE LEES



INTERMITTENT FASTING

Intermittent Fasting is a popular weight loss method that focuses on ‘when’ you eat. This can include meal skipping, eating only within a window of time during the day, eating every other day, or alternating a set number of fasting days with eating days. Evidence shows when we restrict meals, there’s less likelihood of a rise in insulin and other hormones contributing to weight gain.

Hundreds of studies done on animals (rats) show Intermittent Fasting benefits. Human clinical trials are fewer and short-term but also find several benefits in lowering the risk of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancers and neurological disorders.

One benefit is the potential for improved insulin response: insulin levels decrease without constant food intake, allowing fat cells to release their stored sugar to be used as energy. So, we can lose weight if we lower our insulin levels. However, Intermittent Fasting can’t take sole claim for this process.

Two recent studies were completed in 2022, including a long-term one that lasted a year. Both confirmed many past researched benefits. However, the results across the board, including insulin response, were no more impressive than following a calorie-restricted diet. Therefore, it’s suspected the benefits of Intermittent Fasting are likely due to calorie restriction.

Can Intermittent Fasting lengthen lifespan? Animal studies show mixed results and human studies on Intermittent Fasting were too short for evidence of long-term effects. The jury is still out on calorie restriction for longevity.

An internet surf finds plenty of encouraging reports on Intermittent Fasting, but it’s wise to verify a report’s credibility. Notice how current the information is, that the studies cited also include relevant contradictory studies, and be careful if the source is also selling products. Most important: a credible, unbiased source will mention the possible side effects or cautions.

Fasting can be potentially harmful. It’s not recommended for pregnant and breastfeeding women, young children, people taking medications, and those with hormonal imbalances or immune deficiencies, particularly after organ transplants.

People with eating disorders or dementia have other challenges that can be exacerbated by fasting. And while people at risk for diabetes may benefit from the improved insulin response of a lower-calorie diet, those with advanced diabetes or taking medications for it should be medically supervised – or avoid fasting.

Athletes or anyone doing high-intensity activities should also be careful when fasting. Perhaps limit your more intense training sessions to your non-fasting days. You need the fuel!

Adults of advanced age should also exercise caution with Intermittent Fasting. There isn’t enough evidence of the risk for older adults, as the trials involved young or middle-aged adults. If you have only marginal weight loss needs, losing more weight can negatively affect bones, the immune system, and energy levels. While these risks apply to everyone, they are amplified in older individuals. In addition, older adults who must take medications with food could find it challenging when fasting. And those taking heart or blood pressure medications may risk dangerous imbalances in potassium and sodium.

If any of these cautions apply to you, but you still want to try Intermittent Fasting, talk with your doctor. If it’s determined you can follow the diet, your doctor and/or a Registered Dietitian can design a plan and monitor your progress.

Use common sense with Intermittent Fasting: avoid over-eating yet get enough calories (don’t skip meals) on non-fasting days – especially if you exercise intensely! And focus on those nutrient-rich whole or ‘unchanged’ food sources rather than the nutrient-poor, ultra-processed foods.

No single eating plan or ‘diet’ is best for everyone because we are all different with unique needs. For relatively ‘healthy’ people, however, Intermittent Fasting can be a safe option for weight loss. A diet will only work if you can stick to it. So perhaps Intermittent Fasting is the diet plan that will work for you. |

Eve Lees has been active in the health & fitness industry since 1979. Currently, she is a Freelance Health Writer for several publications and speaks to business and private groups on various health topics. www.artnews-healthnews.com

THE SUNSHINE VITAMIN

by NANCY J. SCHAFF, RN

I recently had blood drawn for analysis in preparation for a wellness visit with my doctor and discovered that my vitamin D level was low. Why should we know and be concerned about our vitamin D levels?

Too little vitamin D can decrease the calcium and phosphorus levels in the blood, which leads to calcium being removed from bones to maintain stable blood levels. This loss can cause rickets in children and osteomalacia, a softening of the bones, or osteoporosis in adults.

On the flip side, too much vitamin D can cause excessive amounts of calcium to be deposited in the body, which leads to the calcification of the kidney, the heart, the lungs, and blood vessels.

Vitamin D, a workhorse nutrient, is essential for our health. Researchers recognize that Vitamin D presents several benefits to the human body. Its functions are fortifying bones, absorbing calcium, and strengthening immunity.

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin crucial for efficient calcium absorption, which helps us build and maintain strong bones. It also improves muscles' function, improving our balance and decreasing the likelihood of falling and suffering a fracture.

According to new research, vitamin D levels can significantly affect the brain. The results of a study recently published state that vitamin D promotes the growth of brain cells, enhances connections between brain cells, and protects against age-related brain shrinkage, which slows or stops dementia.

Symptoms of bone pain, muscle weakness, fatigue and mood changes may be signs of vitamin D deficiency. This

vitamin deficiency is linked to a higher risk of depression, especially with seasonal affective disorder (SAD). Research evidence shows a relationship between mood and vitamin D levels.

Vitamin D is often called the sunshine vitamin because our bodies can make it when exposed to ultraviolet light. Most people get vitamin D through sun exposure. Professionals suggest five to 30 minutes of daily sun exposure on the arms, face, legs, and hands without sunscreen usually leads to enough vitamin D.

In Canada, we don't get as much sun as we need to produce adequate vitamin D. My doctor explained that this lack of sunshine is the likely cause of my low levels of the sunshine vitamin.

Factors that reduce how much vitamin D our body makes from sunshine include the season, time of the day, smog, cloud cover, sunscreen use, limited outdoor time, skin exposure to sunlight, and the amount of melanin in one's skin. This natural pigmentation darkens the skin, making vitamin D absorption take longer.

Older Canadians need more vitamin D because the skin's ability to make vitamin D decreases as we age. Osteoporosis Canada recommends routine vitamin D supplementation for Canadian adults year-round.

Besides sunshine, we can attain vitamin D through the foods we eat. Very few food sources of vitamin D make it nearly impossible for adults to get sufficient vitamin D from diet alone. Only a few foods contain vitamin D naturally, such as egg yolk and fatty fish like salmon, swordfish, sardines, and tuna.

The significant sources of vitamin D are fortified foods. In Canada, vitamin D must be added to certain foods, including cow's milk and margarine. Foods such as yogurt, cheese, and goat's milk may have added vitamin D. Orange juice, cereals, and oatmeal are usually fortified with vitamin D. Read the nutrition facts table to see if vitamin D is listed as an ingredient.

Men and women relying on sourcing vitamin D through diet and sunshine alone typically don't exceed 288 IU a day on average. That's why many people take vitamin D supplements.

Most Canadian adults would benefit from a vitamin D supplement of at least 800-2,000 IU daily. Health Canada recommends choosing a supplement with a Natural Product Number (NPN) that meets Health Canada's safety standards for natural health products.

Vitamin D supplements come in many forms, including liquid, capsules, and chewable. Vitamin D3 is recommended and is the most common form available over the counter in pharmacies. Supplements may be taken weekly or monthly if it is more convenient than daily.

Everyone should get their vitamin D levels checked at their annual checkup. If more sunshine vitamin is needed, follow the doctor's recommendations about how much vitamin D is right for you. |

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FEBRUARY LOVE



February, the shortest month of the year, can also be the coldest for those of us living north of the equator. Since it's cold outside, let's do something to warm hearts even though our hands and feet may be chilly!

Isn't it great that February holds not just one day of love, but three (plus Family Day as a bonus)!

Some people celebrate Valentine's Day only as a time to pay tribute to their romantic loved one and so the day before, called Galentine's Day, is to celebrate the other people you love and like. There is also February 17th designated as Random Acts of Kindness Day to just do something nice for someone else whether you know them or not. Some years, there have been people standing on a downtown street giving out free hugs to an amazing number of people.

My mother taught me that Valentine's

cards were to be sent to both people you loved and liked, but that they were to be sent anonymously. Sporadically over the years, I have done that, but shhh don't tell! Some people still wonder who sent them the card, so don't give away my secret. I've been known to walk up to a person's fridge where the card was stuck and say, "Oh this is pretty, who sent it to you?" And then listen to the person's guesses about who it could have been.

Sometimes people knew right away it was me. I don't know how they figured it out as I used cutout words from a magazine and no handwriting at all!

Random Acts of Kindness Day started in 1995 by a society of the same name. I didn't know about it until a group of employees from a neighbouring business to where I worked arrived at my office door with flowers and candies for me. "For me?" I asked incredulously. "Yes, you. Thank you for what you do."



Living
on purpose

by LAURIE MUELLER

It was surprising and heartwarming. Another year, the car in front of me paid for my Starbucks order at the drive-thru.

There are, of course, other ways to show love and kindness in this cold short month. Here are some suggestions:

- Give blood
- Donate to the foodbank
- Donate to your local thrift shop (this one is doing both your closets and you a favour along with the happy recipient)
- Make a batch of cookies and share them with a group of friends
- Take someone to lunch – or make lunch and take it to their house to share
- Write a letter to someone you haven't seen for a long time and mail it along with a Valentine or hand-drawn heart.
- Give to a local charity or one in another area of the world.
- Support someone or something through a Go Fund Me campaign. <https://www.gofundme.com/en-ca>

Another one of my favourite ways to celebrate friendship in this chilly month is to have a Valentine's tea. Invite several of your favourite people and treat them like royalty. Let them know you think they are special.

You may be chilly in February but by helping others feel special, I guarantee it will warm your heart! |

Laurie Mueller, M.Ed is retired and lives in Victoria with her husband, Helmuth. She recently published *The Ultimate Guide on What to Do When Someone You Love Dies* on Amazon. To reach Laurie: laurie@lauriemconsulting.com or www.lauriemconsulting.com or on Facebook.



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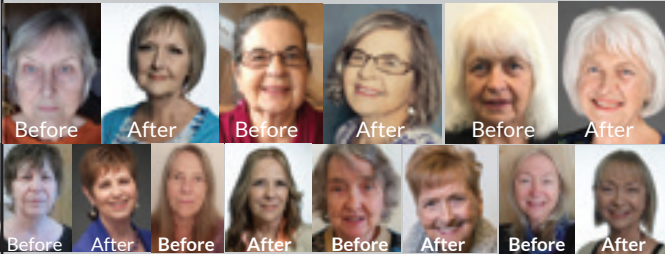
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