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We asked Zoomers to review the Ancestry® family history subscription and DNA testing service and share their experiences researching their heritage, learning about their ancestors and finding new family connections.

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Ami knew little about her parents' backgrounds, particularly her father, who died when she was an infant. But Ancestry® uncovered her father's origins to the 17th century and that there were several variations of her paternal family name.

 *"Adding the hints was helpful to increase the family tree."* ~Pearlann, Edmonton, AB

The leaf symbols are hints that Ancestry® has found potential record matches about an ancestor to add to your tree. It's a loop

of discoveries—the more you grow your tree, the more hints you get.

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"It is a helpful source to confirm details that you might not have known about a relative." ~Pearlann, Edmonton, AB

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Total gift to charity:	\$2.7 Million
Annual tax savings:	\$21,465
Net cost to donors:	\$678,025

“A unique charitable donation that maximizes the impact of your generosity and reduces your taxes”

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Total to charity:	\$1 million
Total to family:	\$1.7 million

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Mark Halpern can be reached by phone at 416-364-2929, or by email: Mark@WEALTHinsurance.com

WATCH “The New Philanthropy,” Mark’s talk at Moses Znaimer’s ideacity conference: www.ideacity.ca/video/mark-halpern-the-new-philanthropy

December 22/January 23

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SPOTLIGHT



Carolyn Abraham is a Toronto-based journalist whose award-winning work explores the human stories behind scientific developments. The former medical reporter for the *Globe and Mail* is also the author of *The Juggler's Children* and *Possessing Genius*, a bizarre saga about Albert Einstein's

brain that she is making into a feature documentary. For this issue, Abraham delves into the social implications of extreme longevity in "The Rise of the Centenarian".



Ivy Knight, who has been published in the *New Yorker*, *New York Times*, *Food & Wine* and *Rolling Stone*, spent a decade working in professional kitchens before she became a journalist. On a recent trip to Edmonton, she met with the Gee family at the Commodore, the

restaurant they've been running since the 1940s. In "A Toast to the Family Diner" she explores the history - and legacy - of what the local eatery means to the community.

PHOTOGRAPHY: STACEYNEWMAN (KNIGHT); GYZELE/GETTY IMAGES (BOW); STEPHENROUSE (ABRAHAM); THE VOORHES/GALLERY STOCK (LEAF)



Queen Elizabeth II with Prince Charles and Princess Anne at Balmoral, 1952

Moses Znaimer

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Bet on yourself

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VIA EMAIL

I've always enjoyed the magazine for its varied, well-written content: best punch per pica of any mag!
—Gary Lyon

I loved your recent article "At Home with Marilyn Lightstone" (Oct.-Nov. 2022)! The article was beautifully written, so dramatic and poetic. The accompanying pictures gave us good insight into Marilyn, the person and the artist.
—Nina (Opolsky) Pollock

Hats off to Leanne Delap for her excellent article on the delightful Marilyn Lightstone, who is an integral part of my days.
—Anthony McNaughton

YOU TOLD US



VIA FACEBOOK

Peter G Goral
What a great story on the beautiful Marilyn Lightstone "A Force of Nature" indeed.

VIA INSTAGRAM

1lizma I think King Charles III will do an excellent job and be a very solid King. He's trained his entire life for this job and he's going to have help from the King's Consort and from Prince William.

VIA INSTAGRAM

mary.annneville One of my favorite magazines Zoomer it's brings pleasure reading great stories. Love everything on the Royals
1w 2 likes Reply ...

Zoom In



VIA INSTAGRAM

wreckedbeauty2000 Have long followed you on social media @zoomermag but because I wanted to have a hard copy of a piece @jadedjournalista wrote about charm bracelets some time ago, I subscribed — and this month's edition is jam-packed with terrific book stuff. Looking forward to tucking into this with a cup of tea. Plus @marilynlightstone's shoot is gorgeous. 🌟🌟🌟🌟

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ON THE COVER

Sigourney Weaver, photographed by Craig McDean/Art + Commerce, on location in New York City. Beauty note: Pump up hair with L'Oréal Professionnel Tecni-Art Full Volume Mousse; lips get a subtle touch with Clarins' Joli Rouge Brillant Lipstick in Sandy Pink. Styling, Jason Rider; hair, Serge Normant; makeup, Brigitte Reiss-Andersen; set design, Stefan Beckman; Coat, Celine by Hedi Slimane; blouse, Loro Piana





WHEN I WAS HIRED IN 2008 AS FOUN-
DING EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF THIS MAGAZINE, targeted at Canadians 45 years and older, there was a lot of incoming flak that I was too young for the job. I would half-joke that I should get a bonus for having to constantly assure readers and other stakeholders that I was, indeed, old enough. Fifteen years in, as I approach and, God willing, celebrate another milestone (read: huge) birthday in January, no assurances are necessary.

I've never minded getting older, but there is a certain type of pressure, if only self-imposed, that comes with having a birthday around the turn of the year. As Halloween costumes and candy give way to Christmas music in elevators, a familiar sense of low-grade, but persistent, disappointment in myself begins to stalk every waking thought. By the time Christmas Day rolls around, a great deal of joy has been leached out of my season as I ruminate on what I didn't manage to accomplish that year – all the to-do lists and resolutions – and how I might craft the perfect ones for next year.

Zoomer's raison d'être is to help you navigate aging, to be your guide through a profound process that is at once daunting and exhilarating. Reinvention writ large or in smaller increments is an important part of it, whenever and however you choose to experience it. Like love or luck, it cannot be forced. And we should also remember that successful aging is also about staying the course. In our cover profile, 73-year-old Sigourney Weaver ("Dream Weaver") reveals that her long career was about endurance, and simply keeping on. The same can be said of 74-year-old King Charles III and 72-year-old Princess Anne ("A House, United") as they step into a new royal age. And, not to be outdone, 76-year-old Cher was recently snapped with a new 38-year-old paramour. She has been dating much younger men for decades, and, in

this issue, we also explore this romantic configuration ("An Unfair Affair").

The stay-the-course attitude is underlined in our comprehensive report examining why there is a growing demographic of people aged 100 and older ("The Rise of the Centenarian"), and its implications for society. In what I consider the soul of this issue, three centenarians recount their resilient lives with happiness and a contentment with who they are and where they are – literally and figuratively. That seems like a good note to take.

The first thing I see in the morning and the last thing I see at night is the stack of 10 books by my bedside that I vowed to get to as my 2022 must-do. It was brought on by a flurry of excitement around the successful launch of ZED: The Zoomer Book Club. Ten doesn't seem like a heavy lift for 365 days, but I used to be a voracious reader of novels and memoirs in the days when my short-form reads were the copy I would edit during my day job, before Twitter, Instagram and doom-scrolling the *Daily Mail's* "entertainment news" feed fractured my attention span (but how else would I have found out about Cher?). Of course, the most forlorn of these forsaken books would have to be Johann Hari's *Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention – and How to Think Deeply Again*.

Another one is a novel by my brilliant cousin, who managed to write it while holding down a job as immersive as mine, with a husband and two kids to boot. I've been meaning to re-read it to garner inspiration to complete the long-gestating tome I have been threatening to write. But here was the conversation with a friend at a Christmas dinner a few years ago.

"What are you doing?" he asked. "Writing a book," I replied. "Neither am I," was his rejoinder.

Maybe this year.

Suzanne

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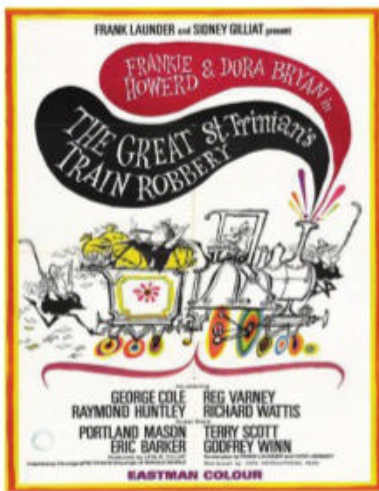
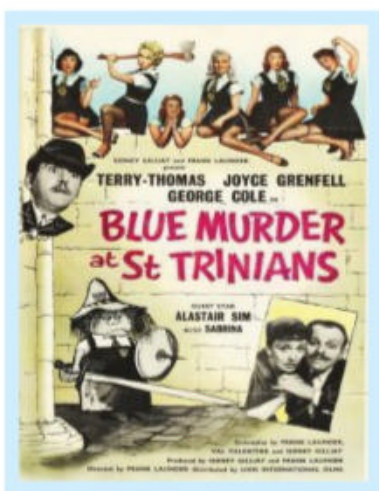


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DECEMBER ON VISION IS FESTIVI-TV!

GREAT HOLIDAY MOVIES+MUSIC

Moses Znaimer, VisionTV's executive producer, dug deep into the movie vault to find these delicious, rip-roaring gems based on the comics of Ronald Searle, that he recalled from his youth in Montreal where they were broadcast on Boxing Day. Now they're a Vision tradition you won't see anywhere else on TV!



What better way to lift your holiday spirits than with a good sing-along! Join hosts Marilyn Lightstone, *The New Classical FM's* Kathleen Kajioka, and Jaymz Bee, live from Zoomer Hall, for musical specials featuring your favourite seasonal hits!

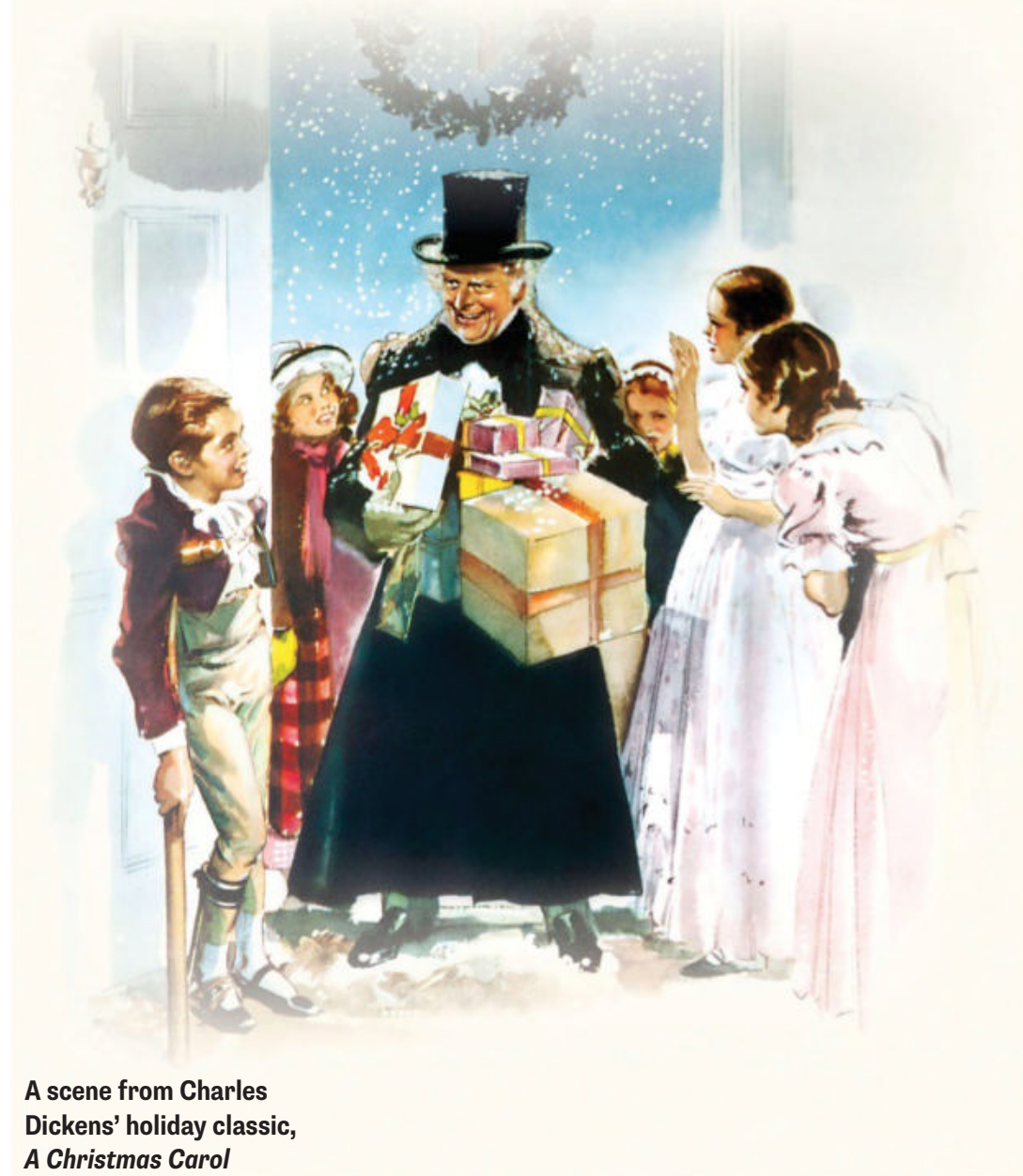
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Zoom In

Focus



A scene from Charles Dickens' holiday classic, *A Christmas Carol*

SCROOGED AGAIN

In a world of uncertainty, Christmas movies offer comfort

AFTER A LONG YEAR FULL OF WAR, polarizing politics and climate catastrophes, solace-seeking viewers will get their usual dose of positivity when yet another iteration of the Christmas-loathing curmudgeon Ebenezer Scrooge comes to Netflix. This animated Scrooge is voiced by Luke Evans, following in the big cartoon footsteps of Alan Young in *Scrooge McDuck* (1947), Jim Backus in *Mister Magoo's Christmas Carol* (1962) and Alastair Sim in *A Christmas Carol* (a 1971 cartoon so scary, it actually premiered on Halloween). Charles Dickens' timeless novella works equally well for the religious and the secular. *A Christmas Carol's* messages about goodwill and social equality are as poignant in 2022 as in 1843, perhaps even

more so, as the *Scrooges* show no signs of slowing. Michael Caine, Kelsey Grammer, Jim Carrey, Christopher Plummer and even Vanessa Williams have put recent twists on the grumpy miser who, no matter what era or form, learns the true meaning of Christmas is joy, compassion and generosity. But if you got the syrupy sweet point long ago, it's fine to skip the Christmas mush in favour of less likely holiday hits. *Die Hard* comes to mind, as does Tim Burton's *Edward Scissorhands*, the very R-rated *The Ref*, starring Denis Leary, and – my personal favourite – *Gremlins*, starring Gizmo. How does a black horror comedy about a fuzzy *mogwai*, who hatches evil goblins if you feed him after midnight, become a beloved holiday tradition? It's a Christmas miracle. —Rosemary Counter



The Rolling Stones
celebrating Christmas while
on tour in Australia, 1965

THIS WAY UP

THE PEAKS AND
VALLEYS IN THE JOURNEY

By Mike Crisolago

(AND DOWN)

Former Rolling Stone Bill Wyman, 86, says the band still exchanges Christmas gifts, and Keith Richards, 78, always gives scented candles. They smell like whisky and cigarettes, but it's the thought that counts.

"When I said it's great to have the whole family together again for the holidays, this isn't what I had in mind" The HereAfter AI app allows you to converse with voice clones of the dearly departed, created from digital recordings.

"Man! I feel like a-tourin'!" Shania Twain, 57, who tearfully announced a series of farewell concerts in 2015, kicks off her *Queen of Me* world tour in April, which includes 17 Canadian dates.

Meanwhile, former Journey frontman Steve Perry, 73, releases his first original Christmas song, "Maybe This Year" The news delighted fans, and goes to show why they don't stop believin'.

It's nothing but blue skies for this golden parachute club A group of eight octogenarians broke the world record for the most people over 80 skydiving at the same time.

They're having the Mari-times of their lives A survey shows Atlantic Canadians plan to outspend the rest of the country during Christmas.

DOWN

Yet another reason to reach out to seniors this holiday season Researchers in Hong Kong find that loneliness can accelerate a person's biological age faster than toxic habits like smoking.

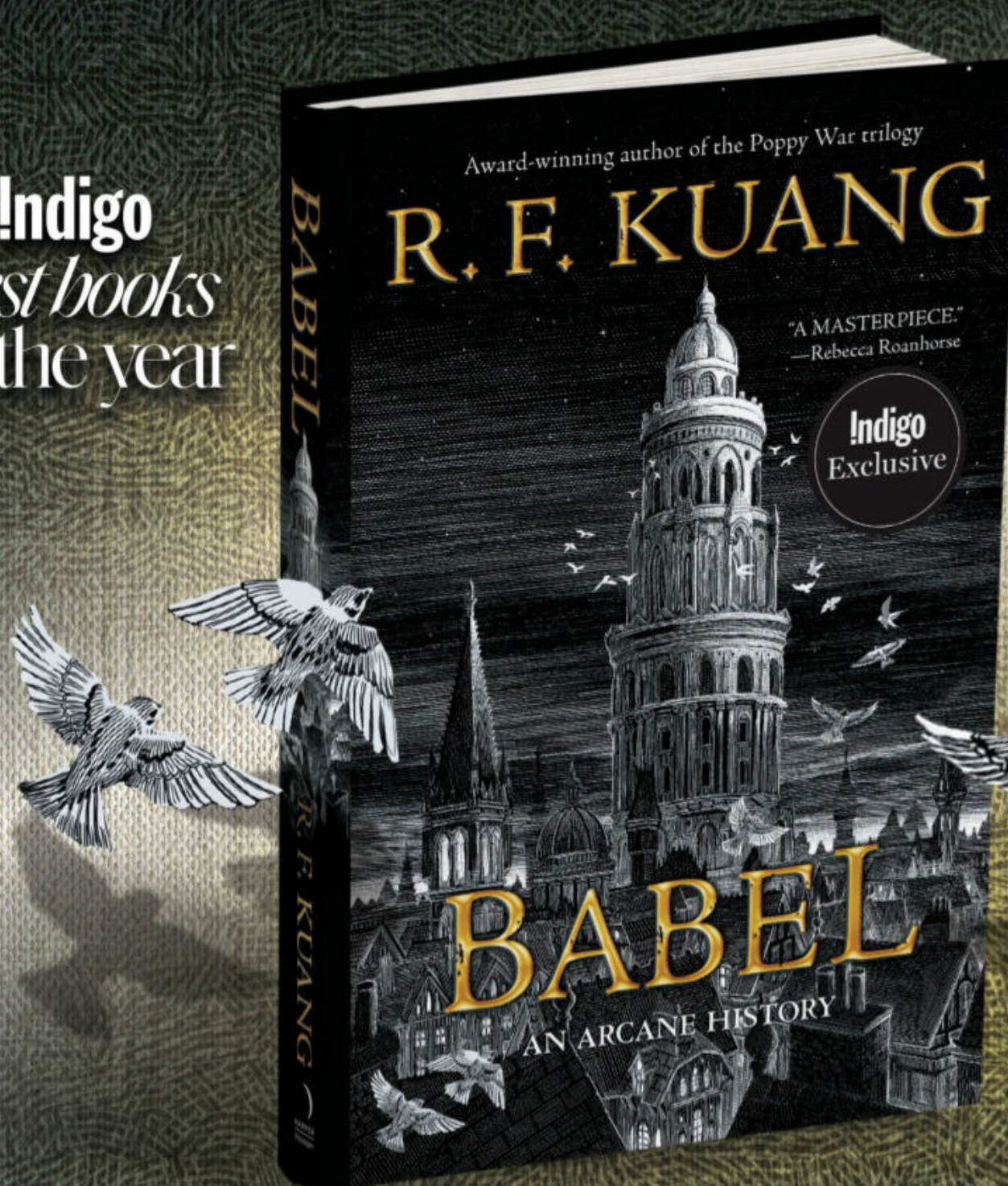
Thankfully, Santa doesn't fly coach Travel industry experts warn of impending flight disruptions in Canada during the Christmas break.
—Mike Crisolago



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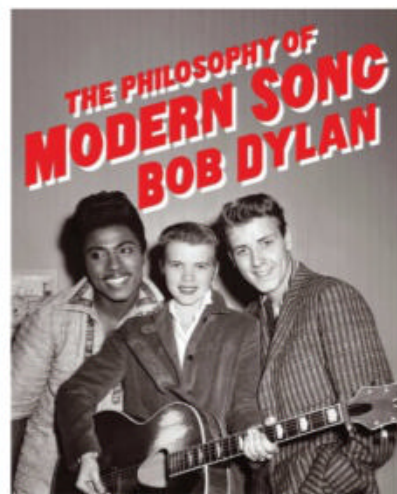
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!Indigo

good tidings

OPEN
ME

We'd be thrilled to
unwrap any of these
deluxe coffee-table
tomes this season
By **Nathalie Atkinson**



➤ PHILOSOPHER KING

"Like any other piece of art, songs are not seeking to be understood," Bob Dylan, 81, writes in **The Philosophy of Modern Song** (\$55), his first new book of writing since he published his impressionistic reminiscences in 2004's *Chronicles: Volume One* and won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2016.

The voice of a generation offers incisive and witty personal reflections on ideas contained in songs by artists like The Who, the Eagles, Bing Crosby, Hank Williams, Perry Como and Nina Simone. Each of the 66 chapters hinges on a particular recording of a song (only four from female artists) and mirror Dylan's eclectic taste as he explores the art and craft of songwriting through freeform riffs, thematic analysis and digressions about performance and the nature of authorship. A third of the print edition is made up of musician photographs, while the audiobook essays are narrated by Dylan and an all-star cast that includes Helen Mirren, Rita Moreno, Sissy Spacek, Jeff Bridges and Alfre Woodard. Be sure to ask Santa for both editions.

➤ LONDON CALLING

English model and photographer icon Pattie Boyd, 78, embodied the spirit

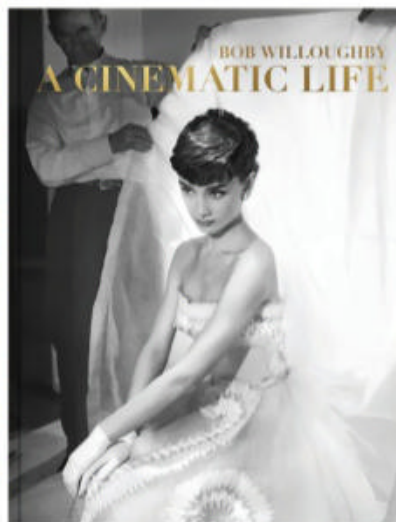
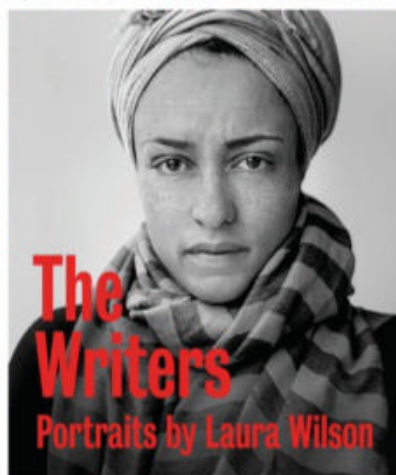
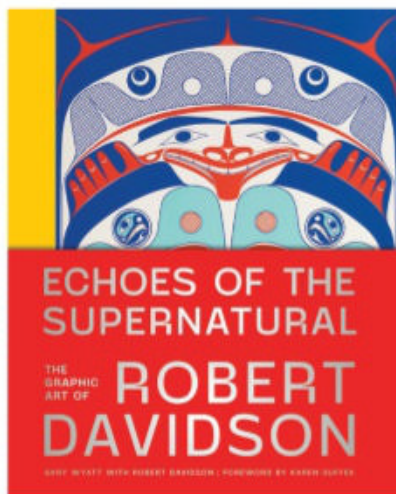
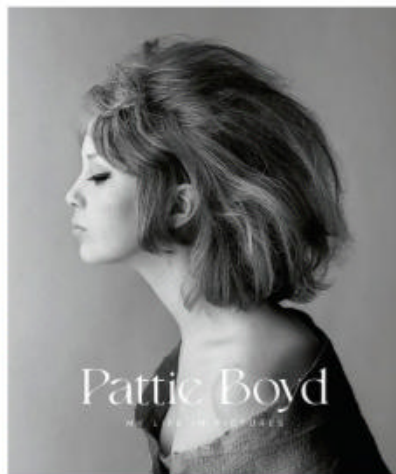
of Swinging London, and was the muse for some of the greatest musicians of her generation – including her adulterous first husband, Beatles guitarist George Harrison. Later, she married Harrison’s best friend, Eric Clapton, and inspired both “Wonderful Tonight” and the unrequited love song “Layla,” one of the legendary classic rocker’s biggest hits. In **Pattie Boyd: My Life in Pictures** (\$64.95), she shares her personal visual archive for the first time; from honeymoon snaps to letters and diary entries, it’s a sumptuous record of ’60s and ’70s counterculture, where she opens up about her memories of lovers and friends like Twiggy, Billy Preston and David Bailey.

➤ THE PAST IS PROLOGUE

A carver of masks and totem poles, as well as a performer and teacher of traditional songs and dances, Robert Davidson is a prominent figure in the renaissance of Haida art and culture, and one of the most acclaimed and influential artists in Canada. **Echoes of the Supernatural** (\$60) celebrates this driving force in the resurgence of Haida culture in the aftermath of colonization. Written with Gary Wyatt, a leading dealer in First Nations art, this is the first comprehensive retrospective of Davidson’s half-century career and multidisciplinary practice, which addresses urgent contemporary political and social issues.

➤ RUNWAY REALITY

British fashion photographer and industry insider Robert Fairer has given the “unseen”



treatment to designers Alexander McQueen, Marc Jacobs and John Galliano over the years. In **Karl Lagerfeld Unseen: The Chanel Years** (\$107), his lens reveals the inner workings of one of the most influential designers of the modern era, who died in 2019 after 36 years as the head of Chanel and 54 years at Fendi. Behind-the-scenes photographs chosen from tens of thousands of images from the mid-1990s to 2006 immortalize not only Lagerfeld’s voracious curiosity and vast range, but also the supermodel and celebrity-fuelled golden era of fashion. Consider it your cheat sheet for next year’s Met Gala theme, “Paradise Now: The Extraordinary Life of Karl Lagerfeld.”

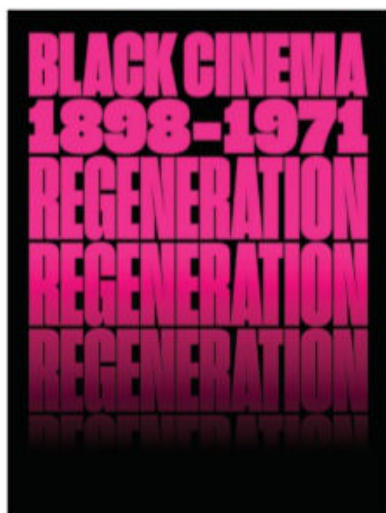
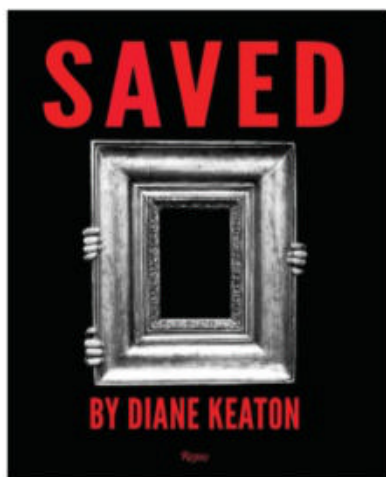
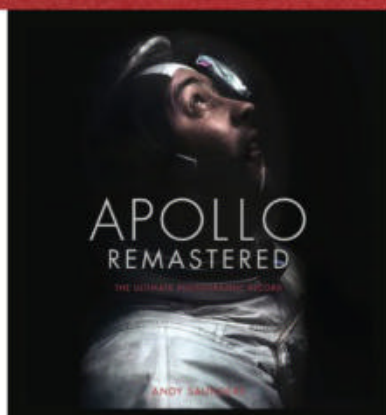
➤ **THE NATURAL** Dust-jacket author photos tend to drain their subjects of personality, but acclaimed Dallas-based photographer Laura Wilson immerses herself in a writer’s setting to restore their character for clients like the *New Yorker* and *Vanity Fair*. The 38 dynamic portraits featured in **The Writers** (\$58.50) take a cue from *LIFE* magazine’s signature photo essays, and reveal noted authors like Zadie Smith and Edwidge Danticat at their most relaxed, Richard Ford kayaking in Maine, Michael Ondaatje hiking in the Petaluma woods in California and Margaret Atwood doing yardwork around her Toronto home.

➤ **STAR POWER** Widely credited with inventing the photojournalistic genre of film stills, American

photographer Bob Willoughby’s on-set images document the making of more than a hundred epochal movies, from *Ocean’s Eleven* and *The Graduate* to *Rosemary’s Baby* and *Klute*. The 200 black-and-white candid shots in **Bob Willoughby: A Cinematic Life** (\$88) artfully chronicle off-duty Hollywood: a doe-eyed Audrey Hepburn, a lifelong friend, and informal yet glamorous shots of stars James Dean, Elvis, Elizabeth Taylor and Marilyn Monroe, many of them accompanied by Willoughby’s personal anecdotes.



➤ **PORTRAITS OF AN ARTIST** The long-awaited monograph from African American artist Amy Sherald – best known for her official 2018 portrait of First Lady Michelle Obama for the National Portrait Gallery – explores how her work addresses issues of race and injustice in America. In **Amy Sherald: The World We Make** (\$76), she paints skin tones in grey scale as a way of challenging the concept, assumptions and constructs of identity, and the book includes a salient conversation between the artist and award-winning cultural critic Ta-Nehisi Coates. ➤



➤ **THE FINAL FRONTIER** NASA's latest James Webb Space Telescope delivers the deepest and sharpest infrared images of the distant universe to date. Thanks to the **Apollo Remastered** (\$95) project, we can now look back on the space race with newfound awe. Science writer Andy Saunders, an acknowledged expert on NASA digital restoration, spent years digitally remastering all 35,000 still photographs taken during the Apollo missions. His curation is the definitive record to mark the 50th anniversary of humankind's last steps on the moon – all so stunningly crystal clear, it's as if they were taken yesterday.

➤ **THE ART OF LIBATIONS** "Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful," designer William Morris said. **Cocktails, A Still Life** (\$30) is both. Authors James Waller and Canadian drinks expert and historian Christine Sismondo combine recipes with the engrossing lore behind 60 cocktails, each illustrated by Todd M. Casey with evocative oil paintings.

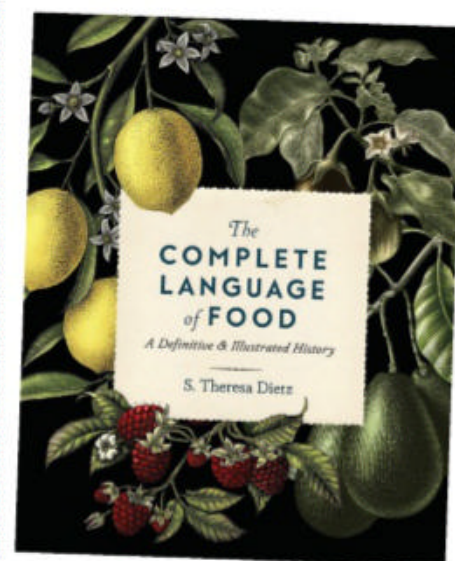
➤ **PERSONAL HISTORY** It's not *The Godfather*, *The First Wives Club* or even *Annie Hall* that have made actress Diane Keaton the celebrity queen of a new social media generation. The 76-year-old icon has recently been the inspiration for TikTok's viral coastal grandmother, based on her character in Nancy Meyer's *Something's Gotta Give*. Beyond her idiosyncratic taste in interiors and hats shared in video posts, Keaton's magpie tendencies are on full display

in **Saved: My Picture World** (\$75), her follow-up design book to 2017's *The House that Pinterest Built*. Told through collages, collected graphics and a lifetime of her own photographs – ranging from the passersby on Hollywood Boulevard to the pigeons in London's Trafalgar Square (a regular haunt while filming Warren Beatty's *Reds*) – it's a visual autobiography as quirky as its author.

➤ **REEL TO REAL** The elaborate tome **Regeneration: Black Cinema 1898-1971** (\$75) commemorates the landmark exhibition at the newly opened Academy of Motion Pictures Museum in Los Angeles. An exploration of seven decades of Black participation in the history of cinema, it's both an education and a correction, and includes interviews with contemporary Black filmmakers such as Ava DuVernay, Barry Jenkins and Julie Dash, who give contemporary context to the filmography and chronology. It's an essential resource that restores the legacy of pioneering Black filmmakers and performers during the Jim Crow era and after, with a foreword by Academy Award-winner Whoopi Goldberg.

➤ **MEMENTO MORI** During his stint as the creative director who rejuvenated storied French fashion house Lanvin, and later, with his namesake collection, Alber Elbaz was a red carpet favourite of Meryl Streep, Sarah Jessica Parker and Beyoncé. A lively runway tribute by dozens of international luminaries

like Rick Owens, Valentino and Jean Paul Gaultier made for a unique memorial celebration of the Moroccan-born Israeli fashion designer, who died of COVID-19 last year at 59. **Love Brings Love: A Homage to Alber Elbaz** (\$85) translates that heartfelt experience to the page with sketches that commemorate the universally beloved designer's life and work, while also showcasing his musings and creativity.

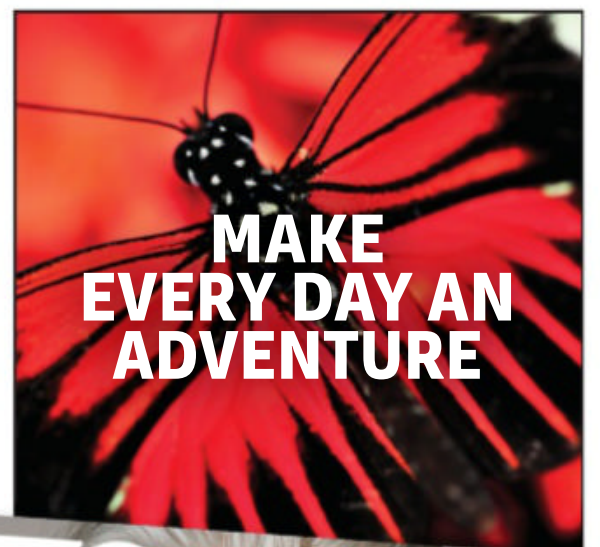


➤ **FOOD FOR THOUGHT** S. Theresa Dietz, who has previously written comprehensively about flowers, brings her powers of observation to what we eat with **The Complete Language of Food** (\$32.99). Organized alphabetically by scientific name, the handsome reference book includes fruit, vegetables, herbs and even medicinal plants. It's an encyclopedic guide to the facts and folklore behind common foods – even their spiritual properties and symbolic meanings – and a thoughtful and mouth-watering exploration of the edible world. [Z](#)

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THE FINAL CUT

How movies tackle a most difficult subject

Given that it's a non-negotiable, milestone event in everyone's life, it's not surprising that death is frequently explored in movies. What is perhaps surprising is the thematic breadth the subject can take. For every flat-out weepie like *Terms of Endearment* and *The Fault in Our Stars*, there are ribald comedies like *Beetlejuice*, *An American Werewolf in London* and *Death Becomes Her*. And there are titles like *Ghost* and *The Sixth Sense* – heck, Ingmar Bergman's towering *The Seventh Seal* from 1957 – plumbing death's unfathomable mysteries via elements of fantasy.

If there's one thing linking all movies about death, though, it's the concept that life is precious, every moment an incalculable gift. Two new, forthcoming films join the canon making that point, albeit in suitably different ways. The gentle drama *Living* finds great English actor Bill Nighy (73 on Dec. 12) as a '50s-era civil servant living a rigidly proscribed, workaday life, until a terminal diagnosis propels him to unlock meaning from his beige existence while he still can.

A remake of Akira Kurosawa's seminal *Ikiru* from 1952 – with a screenplay by 68-year-old

Nobel Prize-winning novelist Kazuo Ishiguro, no less – *Living* is a tender-hearted reminder that work is no substitute for existential joy. Also, that passion trumps bureaucracy every time. It's in theatres Jan. 13.

At the other end of the spectrum is *Spoiler Alert*, in theatres nationwide Dec. 16. In addition to exploring the impact of death on a madly in-love couple (see also *The Fault in Our Stars*, *Ghost*, *P.S. I Love You*), *Spoiler Alert* fits neatly into the newly minted and very welcome category of gay rom com, which includes last fall's delightful *Bros*.

An adaptation of Michael Ausiello's 2017 memoir *Spoiler Alert: The Hero Dies*, which chronicled the author's

photographer-husband's death due to cancer, *Spoiler Alert* was written for the screen by well-known sex columnist Dan Savage, 58, alongside David Marshall Grant, 67. It stars *Big Bang Theory*'s Jim Parsons, 49, and Sally Field, 76.

Astute readers will note that director Michael Showalter, 52, is on very familiar ground here, having helmed 2017's acclaimed *The Big Sick*. Showalter also co-wrote and directed the fabulously oddball 2015 comedy *Hello, My Name Is Doris*, starring the incomparable, aforementioned Field. As in life, connections forged in the movies sometimes last forever. And like the movies, they help distract us from the grievous reality we all face. —Kim Hughes



Spoiler Alert*'s Ben Aldridge, Jim Parsons, Sally Field and Bill Irwin; (above) Bill Nighy in *Living





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SOUND

Notable Canadian artists strike a chord with their latest projects

BITES



Rediscovering BRUCE COCKBURN

A new album takes a deep dive into the legendary folk artist's archives

BEING A BRUCE COCKBURN fan is an uncommonly rewarding designation. And not just because the singer-songwriter, guitarist and Officer of the Order of Canada has been steadily producing reliably excellent albums since the '70s. Cockburn is also a musician magnet, meaning his stuff is routinely covered by a wide cross-section of others, from Jimmy Buffett to jazz guitarist Michael Occhipinti – a personal favourite of Cockburn's – imbuing his catalogue with variety and vitality.

Now Cockburn, 77, has issued *Rarities*, a deep dive into the archives featuring 16 "rarely heard and newly mastered recordings," including, among other gems, "Bird Without Wings," a Cockburn demo dating to 1966; "Twilight on the Champlain Sea," featuring folk star Ani DiFranco and previously released only in Japan; plus

Cockburn covers of artists like Gordon Lightfoot and Pete Seeger heretofore only available on compilation albums.

For the faithful, *Rarities* is both a treasure trove and further proof of our man's ability to capture lightning in a bottle with dazzling regularity. The set also tees up a new, as-yet-untitled album, recently cut in Nashville with long-time Cockburn collaborator Colin Linden, due for release in May and followed by extensive touring, COVID permitting.

"It means quite a bit to me to have these songs get out," Cockburn says in an interview with *Zoomer*, from San Francisco, where he lives with wife M.J. Hannett and their 11-year-old daughter, Iona. "Some of them are live versions of things that have been out already. But with the really obscure and old songs, it'll be interesting to me to see how people respond."

PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY BRUCE COCKBURN



Nerds will note that tracks on *Rarities* surfaced on 2014's *Rumours of Glory* limited-edition box set, released in conjunction with Cockburn's highly candid 2014 memoir of the same name. But as Cockburn notes, the box set "was quite expensive and we only made a few hundred copies. The *Rarities* package included in that set seemed like a nice thing to put out there for more general consumption. I mean, I write this stuff so people will hear it."

For Cockburn's many avid, marquee song interpreters, meanwhile, *Rarities* offers a new batch of options for exalting their own shows and recordings. It's happened before, repeatedly. Indeed, you know you're an incomparable songwriter when Deadheads – Grateful Dead devotees and possibly the most scrupulously

detailed fans in the rock canon – mistake your song for a Jerry Garcia original.

"I did a livestream performance from the headquarters of *Relix*," Cockburn chuckles, referencing the legendary music magazine founded by Deadheads in 1974. "The office was full of young Grateful Dead fans. I sang 'Waiting for a Miracle.' They were shocked to learn that song was mine and not Jerry Garcia's." (The late Dead leader covered the song with his Jerry Garcia Band side project.)

"On stage, I have jokingly thanked Barenaked Ladies for letting me do 'Lovers in a Dangerous Time,'" he continues, when asked if some listeners mistake their hit version of his song – cut in 1991 and still in rotation today – as theirs. "I don't think people are too confused about that one," Cockburn says of the track, crowned the 15th greatest Canadian song of all time by CBC Radio One. "It was pretty high-profile for me, too." —Kim Hughes

PHOTOGRAPHY, LILIANA REYES

Crooning with MICAHA BARNES



The veteran musician lands a new record deal and a coveted TV gig

MUSICAL MULTI-TASKER MICAH Barnes has long juggled his own career with helping others, but this year he's doing both in a big way. The one-time member of The Nylons, whose 2020 solo album, *Vegas Breeze*, debuted at No. 1

Zoom In Music

on the Canadian iTunes Jazz Chart, has recently signed with Universal-distributed Alma Records and landed a plum gig as music director for the 2023 season of the TV show *Canada's Got Talent*.

"I have fallen in love with the job," he enthuses in an interview with *Zoomer*. "I'm now in the business of making Canada fall in love with different singers."

The Vienna-born, Toronto-raised singer-pianist will likely draw on his experience as vocal coach for CBC's 2008 talent show, *How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?* "That was the deepest learning curve of my coaching career, because I worked under Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical director [Simon Lee] and they don't screw around," Barnes laughs.

Besides cutting three full-length albums and a couple of EPs, and performing regularly onstage, Barnes has a thriving coaching business called Singers Playground, which readies young artists for the studio, the stage or an audition. "That's kind of my jam," says Barnes, counting among his alumni JP Saxe, whose "If the World Was Ending" was nominated for Song of the Year at the 2021 Grammys.

In September, he signed to Alma, a label owned by noted producer, arranger and musician Peter Cardinali – whose credits include Dusty Springfield, Anne Murray, Rush and *The Care Bears*. Barnes is fired up about this new chapter late in his career. "We're very early in the planning stages, but the label and I are excited to roll up our sleeves and include songs that my Nylon fans will find familiar. We're definitely looking at jazz arrangements of '60s pop classics, although I am doing some songwriting for the album as well."

"I definitely write from the perspective of being a grown-up and all the different challenges that we face as we become mature humans," he says. "So I don't try to write songs about partying in the club," he adds, with a laugh. —Karen Bliss



Touring with RAINE MAIDA & CHANTAL KREVIAZUK

On working and playing together as one
of Canada's leading musical couples

SINGER-PIANIST CHANTAL Kreviazuk and alt-rocker husband, Raine Maida of Our Lady Peace, are back at it this December, playing shows on their *Forgive Me* tour that includes songs from their duo album, *I'm Going to Break Your Heart*.

"We're really focused on putting out new material. We're in the studio now. We're writing a book together and really just focused on the continuation of the journey," says Kreviazuk, a two-time Juno award winner, in an interview with *Zoomer*. "Obviously, we're always evolving as individuals and as a couple. That's how the material is reflecting."

While Kreviazuk and Maida, who have been married for 23 years and have three sons, have co-written songs for her albums and for other acts, their first true collaboration came in 2014 in a creative partnership they called Moon Vs Sun. Part of this included the 2019 release of an intimate and revealing documentary, *I'm Going to Break Your Heart*, chronicling the challenging process of making their first album, while attending couples therapy to resolve communication issues.

"It was definitely us figuring out what our sound is," Kreviazuk says. "When we go in [the studio] together and collaborate together, it's kind of dreamy because we know what we are together, if that makes sense. So everything from that place, that leaping pad, is quite natural. I don't want to say it's easy, because it's never easy to collaborate with your spouse," she laughs.

"[Doing shows] with my husband is incredibly meaningful and rewarding," Kreviazuk says. "For me, there's nothing like it that I've been a part of and I think Raine feels the same way. Would I like to do that show every night of my life if I could? I would love to, but the reality is I'm not there yet. The nice thing about the show with Raine is that we play our songs that we have in our separate journeys and so that ties it together."

Their *Forgive Me* tour 2022 includes dates at Ottawa's National Arts Centre (Dec. 1-2), Toronto's Paradise Theatre (Dec. 10), St. Davids, Ont.'s Ravine Vineyard (Dec. 14) and The Studio at Hamilton Place (Dec. 16). —KB

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Experiencing

JILLY BLACK

The multi-hyphenate talent's new music focuses on emotional strength

R&B POWERHOUSE and Canada Walk of Fame inductee Jilly Black is a ubiquitous presence in this country, on radio, TV, stage and online, so it's surprising to learn *Three Rocks and a Slingshot* is her first studio album in 13 years.

"Yeah, it's hard to believe that it's been this long as far as a studio album, but the beauty about the type of artist that I've always been is about entertainment and connecting with people using my gift," Black tells *Zoomer*. "I realize that my voice has many sides and that's what's been inspiring. It's been my motivator to say, 'Hey, Jilly, people pay attention when you open your mouth, whether it's in melody or whether it's speaking. So let's really use that to continue to be rich.'"

Funny and engaging, Black is often called upon to host award shows and emcee events. Athletic and determined, she competed in this summer's gruelling *Amazing Race Canada*. Outspoken and tell-it-like-it-is, she will talk candidly and publicly about injustice and anti-Black racism. A solid actress, she appeared in *Da Kink in My*

Hair, *Coroner*, *Diggstown* and in other on-screen roles, before tackling the lead in the civil rights era stage musical *Caroline, Or Change*.

Those who follow Canada's Queen of R&B Soul on social media know about her daily routine, The Power of Step, a virtual aerobics and personal transformation coaching business she started during the pandemic, now with added in-person monthly pop-up classes. It's a spinoff of a business she launched four years ago, 100 Strong and Sexy, her self-described "health, wellness and lifestyle organization." At its core, it's a get-up-off-your-ass community and exercise and nutrition challenge and overhaul for women, especially of colour.

At 45, this most-hyphenated creative force keeps taking on new roles and goals. That said, the woman who looks like she always has it together almost fell apart five years ago when her mother – a single parent who raised nine children – died. Like many of us who have lost a parent, her life was suddenly separated by before mom died/after mom died.

"That 100 per cent happened with me," Black says. "When mom ended up passing, my emotional priorities instantly changed. I often say mom's last breath became my first full breath. When you witness somebody take their last – and the most important person to you – you start realizing that certain conversations do not merit my breath and there are all the other decisions that need to be made."

"My mom used to say the wealthiest place on Earth is the cemetery, because there are people who died with books and with recipes and with degrees, with conversations they didn't have – dreams are in the cemetery. And so I started writing this album the year before she got sick."

"Whether one person streams it or buys it or it totally goes viral, this album, *Three Rocks and a Slingshot*, is to honour my mom's life and her courage."

Released independently, *Three Rocks and a Slingshot* is the follow-up to 2009's *The Black Book* and includes her 2019 hit "Follow Your Love," plus many deep-down revelations, like the pure conviction expressed in "Half Empty," the resilience of "No Relation" and the I-can-take-it "Mi No Fraid."

"It's an ode to a Bible tale, David and Goliath," the singer-songwriter says of the new album's title. "A little boy has to go up against the giant. And for me, the giants I have been going up against systemically are racism, the music business, ageism, so many different things," Black says. "And then the internal giants: my limiting beliefs, the inner saboteur."

"I always knew and know I have the talent. I've never questioned my talent," she clarifies. "What's been a giant is resources now for independent artists: How do I do this on my own when I've been a child star? I got my first record deal with Sony when I was 14. I only knew the record business."

Diversification has been key, but all offshoots of her big personality. She's never been a David; always a Goliath. —KB

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GET YOUR (NEW) GAME ON

Every Sunday morning, Jan Dekker, 78, plays pickleball for free at Toronto's St. Lawrence Community Centre, where the court is reserved at 10 a.m. for people aged 60 and over. He's at a pickleball court somewhere in the city four times a week. He's even played the popular 1960s paddle game on cruise ships. "It's addictive," Dekker admits. He enjoys both the socializing and, along with the other sports he plays, the workout that helps keep his blood sugar levels stable.

Now there's evidence that Dekker's preferred form of exercise provides major health benefits. Research published in the *International Journal of Research in Exercise Physiology* found significant improvements in cholesterol, blood pressure, oxygen intake and metabolic responses after six weeks of participation in pickleball. The study concluded that it is a "feasible alternative to traditional exercise modalities for middle-aged and older adults."

The study also found that regular participation in pickleball improves cardiorespiratory fitness – as do other forms of aerobic exercise including swimming, cycling and fast walking – and it has a positive effect on key cardiovascular disease risk factors.

"It's a great pastime for older people," says Dekker, a retired engineer. "You don't have to move as fast as tennis, it's not as hard on the joints, and you don't have to show up with a partner because there are always people there to play with." –Judy Gerstel



SLEEP RIGHT

Get a good night's sleep for beauty, sure, but also for your brain. This past September, insomnia landed in the crosshairs of researchers at Université de Montréal, Concordia and McGill who, after analyzing data from more than 26,000 participants aged 45 to 85 enrolled in the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging, found that it increased risk of memory decline and dementia. But the good news, say the study's authors, is that sleep disorders like insomnia can be treated and that treatment might help prevent cognitive decline. In addition, they suggest that adverse cognitive effects may be halted by improving insomnia symptoms.

Insomnia is defined as trouble falling asleep, staying asleep or waking too early at least three nights a week over a period of three months, and that affects your daytime functioning. Compensating with a sleep-in, a longer nap or an earlier bedtime the next night can only make matters worse, says neuropsychologist Dr. Maude Bouchard, clinical lead for the Montreal-based sleep-aid app HALEO. "Unfortunately, while this can help to get more sleep in the shorter term, these behaviours can exacerbate insomnia."

Instead, through cognitive behavioural therapy for insomnia (CBT-I), which helps develop better – and medication-free – sleep habits, app users learn to improve their "sleep drive" by keeping a strict sleep schedule. "This will result in what we call a sleep rebound, a deeper sleep that will help to recover from previous sleep debt." –Tara Losinski



GLASS HALF FULL

Expecting that good things will happen can help you live longer. A Harvard study co-authored by Canadian clinical psychologist Dr. Claudia Trudel-Fitzgerald found that being highly optimistic is linked with longer life and living past 90 in women across racial and ethnic groups. "Optimistic people tend to engage in healthier behaviour and have better social relationships than less optimistic people," says Trudel-Fitzgerald, assistant professor at Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières. But there's also a biological perspective. "People who are more optimistic may have a lower level of inflammation and healthier levels of blood pressure."

Optimism is a fountain of youth, says Nikki Jameson, 66. "Life starts to get more difficult but optimism is a lifebuoy." Jameson returned to Ottawa after retiring from Global Affairs Canada. She started taking courses at the Centre for Applied Neuroscience for her own health and happiness and now works as a life coach for seniors. Optimism, she says, "gets the juices flowing instead of stagnating. It's being open to possibility and anticipating good things in life, expecting that good things *will* happen, not just that they *could* happen."

About 30 per cent of optimism is an inherited characteristic, but optimism can be learned, says Trudel-Fitzgerald. Do try this at home: "Imagine what would be your best possible self in five, 10 or 20 years. And then, think of what you would have to do to achieve these goals." –JG

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Zooming Later In Love

A DIVORCÉE AND single mom, Virginia (Ginny) Olsen never planned to get married again, let alone to her neighbour just a few doors down. But a decade ago, she did. Here's how Olsen, 58, and her now husband, Don Dinn, who turns 80 in January, went from polite hellos while passing on the sidewalk to walking down the aisle all over again.

Ginny Olsen: I'd moved into my new house and been divorced for about three years when I properly met Don. Before then, I'd wave to be neighbourly, of course, but I didn't really know him at all. **Don Dinn:** I've lived in my house in Halifax for more than 40 years and have been married twice. Both my wives died of cancer, and I'd been alone for a few years.

GO: We were brought together by a collusion of neighbours. My next-door neighbour and good friend started asking, "Do you know Don? He's *very* nice." Her parents, meanwhile, were telling Don about me. This is a very close-knit, multi-generational community. I wasn't sure at first. There's a big age difference between us, and I didn't know if we'd have anything in common. He's an engineer and I'm an environmentalist. We're very different. But then my friend said he had a canoe, because she knows I love canoeing, and I thought anyone who canoes must be pretty nice.

DD: I'd been working hard on that canoe and fixed it up really well.

GO: Don is so great at fixing things. One time my dishwasher broke and the same day we went and bought a new one and he installed it and it was working by dinner. I was absolutely blown away. He just gets stuff done.

DD: I usually do, but I was cautious too,

so I took my time to finally ask her on a formal first date. It was a double date with my friends to see a Johnny Cash tribute. Ginny and I hit it off, went on more dates, travelled together.

GO: On our second date, he asked me to dance, and surprised me with the Tennessee Waltz. He's an amazing dancer. Right there I thought, a man who can dance *and* fix things? *What more could a woman ask for?* By the way, I asked Don last night what attracted him to me and he had a hard time answering.

DD: Because it was a shower of all kinds of things! She's so chatty, has all kinds of new and interesting ideas, and we have so much to talk about. I love that we're so different. That she lived down the street was just a lucky fluke.

GO: We started dating in June, got engaged in December, and got mar-

Never Say Never

How two Haligonians went from friendly waves to tying the knot



(From far left) On their wedding day; the engagement ring; "The Tennessee Waltz" on '50s vinyl

ried the following June. It was fast, but let me tell you, I've never felt more certain of anything in my life. Though I thought I was certain I'd never get married again, I noticed I was really hoping he'd propose. Then he asked me for my ring size and I asked why and he said ... What did you say? **DD:** "Because I'm going to get you a friendship ring."

GO: I said to my girlfriends, "He'd better not get me a friendship ring."

DD: I could tell she was concerned and knew something was coming but wasn't sure what. I was waiting for the ring to arrive and I was planning to propose after a neighbour's Christmas party.

GO: He can't keep a secret, though. He blurted it all out empty-handed in the kitchen the day before. Then the ring arrived, and he proposed again. We got married at the local canoe clubhouse, by the lake, with about 60 people and all our friends and neighbours. My 12-year-old son and I, 'cause we're a package deal, plus two cats, all moved into Don's house. It was a very easy move. —As told to Rosemary Counter

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It's All Relative(s)

Finding family, even four times removed **By Libby Znaimer**



AS THE CHILD OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS, I grew up in Montreal without extended family: no grandparents, one aunt who lived on the other side of the world in Africa and no cousins my age. My father's first cousin sponsored our family's immigration to Canada, and I recently learned that made him my first cousin, once removed. I still don't understand kinship connections beyond that, so I have no idea what fourth cousins are. But I have hundreds of them! And I recently took the opportunity to meet up with a few.

Last spring, my brother Moses (the founder and CEO of ZoomerMedia) received an invitation to a family reunion from someone whose name we did not recognize. We get inquiries from potential long-lost relatives from time to time. Usually, he forwards the email and I resolve to follow up, "when I have time," before it gets forgotten in a very long queue I am reluctant to clear. But this time I was familiar with the details.

The Hertz family reunion was taking place in Saint Paul, Minn., at the end of the summer. That took me back. I worked as a reporter at KSTP-TV (Channel 5 Eyewitness News!) in Minneapolis-Saint Paul in the early '80s. (How I landed there is another story.)

Back then, I got a call from Mark Hertz, who told me he had an ancestor named Zneimer (the American spelling) and we were undoubtedly related. After hesitating a bit, he added: "We're Jewish ... are you?" Mark has passed away, but his son Fred, a prominent lawyer-mediator who lives in California, was one of the organizers of the reunion. He remembers his dad telling him: "We found another cousin,

in, and she's like a celebrity, she's a local newscaster, and she's our cousin!"

I got together with Mark and his family a few times. I have vague memories of a trip to a cemetery and a backyard barbecue. I was eager to reconnect, especially since I am planning a roots tour of my own to Poland, where my mother was born, and to Latvia, where my father was raised in Kuldiga. My husband Doug thought the family reunion would be a fun adventure, and he was keen to come, too, so we flew to the U.S. at the end of August.

The Hertzes have been in the United States for six generations – the family includes both amateur and professional historians. One cousin keeps an extensive database that goes all the way back. "Now a



question for all," he wrote in a reply-all response to my first email about the reunion invitation. "Do we know how Libby is connected to our Zneimer family?"

The Hertzes descend from six brothers who came over from Latvia, starting in 1882. Once settled, they brought their parents over. Their father was Iser Hertz and their mother was Frieda Zneimer, who was born in 1842 in Kuldiga, the town my father came from. She may have been his great-aunt.

Fred's sister Deborah is the Chair of Jewish Studies at the University of California, San Diego. She does not believe the Hertzes were fleeing persecution – she thinks they were the


less successful members of the family looking for a better life.

And they found it quickly, after establishing a business manufacturing men's accessories. On the second day of the reunion, we boarded a pink party bus for a tour of Hertz homesteads.

In between stops, there were lively debates about family history. Fred's grandfather's first wife allegedly had an affair with his brother and a child by him. That led to a divorce, and the court took the kids away from their mother. This happened in 1916! "But the major family crisis was when my uncle married a Catholic in 1944," said Fred. "Then it was a reason to be shunned."

A couple of the Catholic cousins were on the bus. So were the grandchildren of two of the six Hertz brothers, who became estranged after a business dispute. Zachary and Michael were meeting for the first

time, though they grew up within a few miles of each other.

There are four generations in the reunion photo (above), from Fred's 99-year-old mother, Lorraine, to two-year-old Sender. Looking at it hit me hard; this is what my family lost. I am delighted with my Hertz cousins, even though we don't know where I fit in. "One of the things my father was passionate about was connecting to family," said Fred. "So if someone calls me to say, 'I'm your fourth cousin,' my response is, 'Great! When are we getting together?'" 

Libby Znaimer (libby@zoomer.ca) is VP of news on AM740 and Classical 96.3 FM (ZoomerMedia properties).

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FINANCIAL FORECASTS

AS 2022 DREW TO A close, with global economies facing fierce economic headwinds, and high food and energy prices forcing many households to cut back on non-essential spending, economists dusted off their crystal balls to prognosticate how next year would unfold. In her Fall Economic Statement in November, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland predicted that we could be in for a “mild recession in the first quarter of 2023.” She noted, however, that “compassionate” and “responsible” government spending policies will help us weather the worst of the coming storm. Forecasters from Canada’s major banks generally agreed with the finance minister.

Freeland, on her way to the House of Commons, forecasts a stormy 2023.



Scotiabank predicted that a global recession in 2023 was “inevitable,” but felt that the financial blow would be less severe in Canada and the U.S. than in the U.K., Europe and Asia. TD postulated that the economy would slow, noting that higher interest rates (the

Bank of Canada raised its rates to 3.75 per cent in October) could see the average household allocating \$1,600 toward debt payments, which could cause a “significant slowdown in consumer spending.” While CIBC also predicted a slowdown, they remained hopeful that our economy was strong enough to avoid an “outright deep recession.” Finally, BMO anticipated that “a serious chill” was coming and contemplated whether 2023 might be the “year of living frugally.”

Public Affairs

On policy, personalities and politics
By Peter Muggeridge

FALLING BEHIND

WHEN Colleen Frank, 72, was threatened with eviction from her Chilliwack, B.C., apartment, she felt she had “no options left” but to turn to a crowdfunding site to raise the necessary cash. So Frank set up a GoFundMe page, pleading with donors that she “urgently needs financial help” to pay her rent and remain in the building she has lived in for 23 years. With the cost of living skyrocketing and a severe shortage of affordable rental units (especially in larger cities), Frank’s experience is becoming all too familiar for low-income seniors, not only in B.C., but across the country. A recent report by Isobel Mackenzie, B.C.’s seniors advocate, found that while market rents in the province have increased by 50 per cent over the last 10 years, government

benefits for seniors (CPP, OAS and GIS) have only increased by 25 per cent. “Seniors I speak with tell me their pension incomes are not keeping up with rising costs and they are paying too much for rent, groceries, dental care, home care, house repairs and other essentials,” says Mackenzie. Bill VanGorder, CARP’s chief operating officer, says he’s hearing “similar concerns from seniors across the country.” To stop seniors from falling further behind financially, he feels

governments should explore the concept of paying low-income seniors a “living wage” – a minimum income necessary for individuals to afford basic needs, like food and shelter.



BLAME GAME

PIERRE POILIEVRE, the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, is never one to let a good political crisis go to waste. It’s why the Opposition Leader continually blames the current economic malaise on “reckless” Liberal spending policies, and dubs the increasing cost of living as “Justinflation.” While Poilievre’s claims won’t stand up under close economic scrutiny, they generate a lot of noise. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is well aware that more bad economic news could inflict severe and lasting damage on his government. Trudeau has tried to defuse the strategy by arguing that Poilievre’s “buzzwords, dog whistles and careless attacks” won’t bring down food and energy prices. But the impact of his government’s \$4.6 billion package of inflation-busting policies announced in September – which include the doubling of the GST tax credit for six months (worth an average of \$225 for seniors) and a \$500 top-up for low-income renters – has been underwhelming. If Poilievre’s message continues to resonate with the public (an October Nanos poll found him to be the “most trusted federal leader to reduce inflation”), Trudeau will have to double down on his promise to make life more affordable, perhaps following the lead of provincial premiers in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador, who have started mailing “relief cheques” directly to their residents.

PHOTOGRAPHY, DAVID KAWAI/BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY IMAGES (FREELAND); EVGENY BABAYLOV/GETTY IMAGES (STORM CLOUD); ARTUR WIDAK/NURPHOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES (POILIEVRE); DAVE CHAN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES (TRUDEAU); MITSTUDIO/ADOBE STOCK (ILLUSTRATION)

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- ✓ Fought to raise CPP amounts
- ✓ Fought for increased fines and penalties for Ontario long-term care homes that failed inspection
- ✓ Fought for one-time payments worth \$7.4 billion to alleviate financial hardship of GIS recipients who received CERB
- ✓ Fought for high-dose flu vaccine availability at no charge (Ontario, Yukon, NB, PEI)
- ✓ Fought for negotiated settlement between Ontario government and optometrists
- ✓ Fought to create separate Ministry of Long-Term Care in NS

CARP DEMANDS FOR 2023!

- ☐ Significantly more funding for home care
- ☐ Transform long-term care from institutional model to person-centered model
- ☐ Drastically cut wait times to match best performers in OECD (e.g., Germany, Netherlands)
- ☐ Make vaccines more accessible by funding shingles vaccine and high-dose flu shots for everyone over 50
- ☐ Fund fitness for seniors
- ☐ Boost OAS by 10% for those over 65 (not just over 75)
- ☐ Increase CPP Survivor's Pension by 25% for those 65+
- ☐ Eliminate mandatory RRIF withdrawals
- ☐ Protect pension investments by insuring 100% of liabilities
- ☐ Create more opportunities for co-housing and other affordable housing for seniors

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GREEDFLATION, AISLE FOUR

Here's a recipe
for putting those
grocery profits into
the mouths of those
who need them most
By Armine Yalnizyan



g

GREEDFLATION IS THE WORD
of the moment. How big a thing is it,
and how should we deal with it?

Inflation has been pinching everyone's nerves since spring, and nowhere is the pain more acute than at the grocery checkout. The headline number for the Consumer Price Index fell marginally from seven per cent to 6.9 per cent in September, but food prices rocketed by 11.7 per cent, the fastest rise in four decades.

Dietary basics are escalating fast-

est, hurting those on low and fixed incomes the most: Bread costs 17 per cent more than last year; cooking oil, 20 per cent more; and pasta, 30 per cent more.

Yet a mid-October announcement from Loblaw Companies Ltd. (which operates No Frills, Zehrs, Real Canadian Superstore and Loblaws) – that it was freezing prices on 1,500 No Name products until the end of the year – was roundly panned. That's because prices had already risen dramatically on many products; public trust never returned after the bread price-fixing scandal and there are no price caps on anything else Loblaw sells.

Most importantly, price caps don't cap profits, which are up at Loblaw, Metro and Sobeys, the grocery conglomerates that account for 60 per cent of grocery sales. (Walmart and



17%



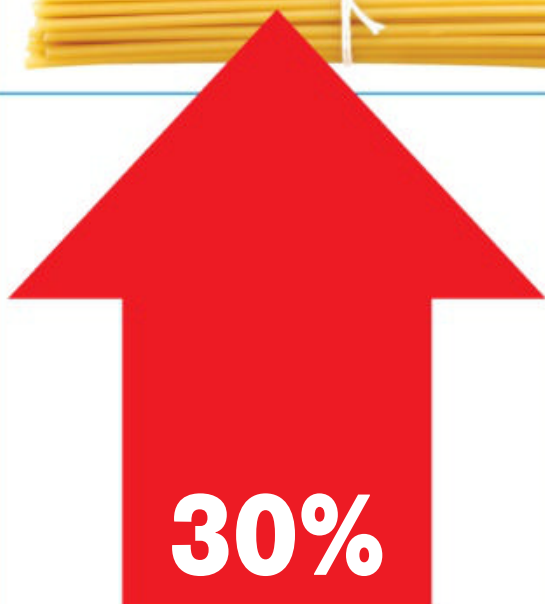
20%

Costco bring the share of the big players to 75 per cent of the Canadian market.) In a sector where the largest companies are gobbling up smaller competitors at an alarming pace, grocers made \$1.5 billion in the first two quarters of 2022, almost twice as much as the \$800 million they made in 2019.

The court of public opinion has entered the charge of greedflation – in other words, excessive profits made by companies riding the big wave of inflation. Guilty, or not guilty?

After weeks of debate in Parliament, the New Democratic Party pushed the federal government in late October to task the Competition Bureau with finding the answer. The bureau's mandate is to “advocate for and protect consumers” and “ensure that business continues to prosper in a competitive and innovative marketplace.” The Competition Act goes further, saying the law's purpose is “to provide consumers with competitive prices and product choices.”

The bureau will investigate how competition affects food prices, but the law does not give it the power to force companies to disclose data on how prices are set. Jennifer Quaid, an associate law professor at



the University of Ottawa, told me: “Without being able to compel information, the data gathered is uneven or even impossible to obtain.”

The process is unlikely to decouple alleged greedflation from legitimate price increases across thousands of products. How much of a product’s price increase stems from rising commodity prices (such as flour); fuel costs (for production and transportation); labour costs (for farming, manufacturing, transporting, warehousing, stocking and monitoring inventory); or real estate and utilities costs?

Factor in droughts, floods, fires and hurricanes that slash crop yields. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has also reduced global supplies. The region produces 30 per cent of the world’s wheat exports, and an outsized share of exported commodities like corn, fertilizer, oil and gas. Less supply means higher prices if people don’t cut down on what they eat.

Profit margins at grocery conglomerates also depend on the mix of what we buy. During the pandemic, Canadians bought more fresh and frozen prepared foods, categories with higher markups. We’re eating out less, and spending more on groceries. More sales mean more profits, even if profit margins don’t increase.

If it’s sounding impossible to decipher how much greedflation there is without grocery chains literally telling us, that’s because it is.

So why not short-circuit the


problem by taxing excess profits, the way Europe is approaching soaring energy prices? Our governments could capture a portion of windfall profits during these extraordinary times from all companies, not just energy companies or grocery conglomerates, by:

- > **Identifying the threshold that captures the big players (say, \$1 billion in net income)**
- > **Defining excess profit (say, 20 per cent higher than the average of the past four years)**
- > **Taxing the excess at a higher rate (Europe settled at 33 per cent)**

Then they could recycle those funds by helping the non-profit sector deal with record-high demand for food banks and shelter, and ensuring that affordable housing builds don’t get stalled by spiking borrowing costs. In short, help those struggling to choose between heating or eating, or even between food or shelter, rather than passing on the windfall as dividends for shareholders.

Yes, some retirement incomes depend on those dividends. But last year, six million people struggled with food insecurity in Canada, even before food prices soared. Some of the most vulnerable are seniors on a fixed income who have no stocks or bonds to pay dividends.

The next few months will be extraordinarily difficult. They could be made easier by diverting windfall profits to help those hardest hit by rising food costs.

Timely, targeted, temporary programs that help generate funds from windfall gains and use them for the most vulnerable are not only possible, they are imperative. 

Armine Yalnizyan is an economist and the Atkinson Fellow on the Future of Workers. You can read her business columns at the Toronto Star and follow her on Twitter @ArmineYalnizyan.



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M R G
TRAVEL



Dream Weaver

Sigourney Weaver has played everything from action heroes to women on the fringe. At 73, with four movies on the go, she continues to craft her own unique Hollywood success story **By Johanna Schneller**
Photography by Craig McDean / Styling by Jason Rider

CRAIG MCDEAN/ART + COMMERCE



GARDEN VARIETY
Contrasting an embellished topper with a poetic blouse adds drama. Coat, Christopher Kane; blouse, Alberta Ferretti; pants, Salvatore Ferragamo



T WAS HER CRAZY LONG LIMBS THAT HOOKED ME.

In October 1984, I was on my first proper date with the man I'd eventually marry. I'd just moved to New York to work for *GQ* magazine, and I'd scored tickets to *the* show on Broadway, *Hurlyburly*. Written by David Rabe and directed by Mike Nichols, it was about Hollywood louches, and starred William Hurt, Christopher Walken, Harvey Keitel, Jerry Stiller, Judith Ivey, Cynthia Nixon and – most thrillingly for me – Sigourney Weaver.

“That’s a head-spinning first date,” Weaver said, when I mentioned this during a phone interview in September. Yes it was.

I’d already seen Weaver on screen, towering over Woody Allen at the end of *Annie Hall* (she’s 179 cm tall, nearly 5’11”); as an embassy officer in *The Year of Living Dangerously*, over which I swooned; hilariously possessed in *Ghostbusters*; and kicking extraterrestrial ass in *Alien*.

With *Alien* (1979), Susan Alexandra Weaver – who grew up in Manhattan and coolly re-christened herself Sigourney at 14 after reading the name in *The Great Gatsby*, because she hated being called Susie – had given women everywhere a huge gift: the first female action hero. Ellen Ripley, the last survivor of the starship *Nostromo*, was formidable, brave and fierce, but also skilled, competent and great at her job. Before her, “woman action hero” meant Jane Fonda’s space bimbo in *Barbarella*, Linda Carter in hot pants as *Wonder Woman* or the bouncy curls (and chests) of the original *Charlie’s Angels*.

But Ripley was a revelation. When, in the final scenes of *Alien*, director Ridley Scott gave us a long look at Weaver – clad in a white tank top and teeny bikini panties, reaching up to the ceiling to flip a batch of switches – he wasn’t objectifying her, he was searing her image as a pillar of female strength into pop culture. After the sequel *Aliens* arrived in 1986, news stories abounded about how Ripley inspired young women to pursue careers in science and engineering. Weaver starred in two more sequels, in 1992 and 1997, allowing Ripley to mature over 18 years. And because the four films together grossed US\$559 million worldwide, Weaver proved that female heroes could win at the box office, too.

Weaver’s limbs were even more resplendent on stage in *Hurlyburly*. She took up space. If her castmates weren’t so high-powered, she would have crowded them out just by crossing her legs or flinging her arms over the back of the sofa. I saw her around New York from time to time, out at the theatre with her equally elegant parents: her mother Elizabeth, an English-born actress, and her father Pat, a television executive who was president of NBC in the 1950s and created *The Today Show*. “My mother was quite an athlete,” Weaver says. “I think she was the first jogger in New

York City. She used to run up and down FDR Drive, and cars would slow down and ask if she was all right. They thought she was being chased.”

I roared over the two *Esquire* photo essays Weaver did in the mid-’80s with playwright Christopher Durang, whom she met in a singing class at the Yale School of Drama (she graduated in 1974; they’ve remained friends and collaborators for nearly 50 years). In one piece, Weaver and Durang dressed up in safari clothes and pretended to be on a hunt. In another, they donned evening wear and ate blinis smothered in sour cream at the Russian Tea Room. (“I’m so sensuous! I’m so sensuous!” Weaver exclaimed in the latter.) She was everything I longed to be: a New York woman, a force, but also wickedly funny and mischievous.

Despite meeting Durang there, Weaver struggled at Yale. “Instructors discouraged me from pursuing acting,” she says. “All I wanted was to be part of a great theatre, like the one in Stratford, Ont. I used to go up there to watch Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy. It was always my dream to be an actor in a company like that.”

Though she landed steady work on stage right away – at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, the Yale Repertory Theatre and New York’s Public Theatre, among others – her instructors’ faithlessness still stung. “I decided that secretly, in my head, I’d create my own repertory theatre, and stealthily jump from small to big parts, from comedies to dramas,” Weaver says. “It’s been very entertaining to me, as well as fulfilling. It’s like a wonderful sense of lemon sherbet in the back of your mouth.”

She certainly pulled it off. She’s been nominated for three Oscars – best actress in 1987 for *Aliens* and in 1989 for *Gorillas in the Mist*, where she played a watchful Dian Fossey; and best supporting actress, also in 1989, for her comically villainous boss in *Working Girl*. (At least she lost to great women: Marlee Matlin in 1987 and, in 1989, best actress Jodie Foster and supporting actress Geena Davis.) Weaver’s co-stars in *Working Girl*, Melanie Griffith and Joan Cusak, were also nominated, but Weaver nearly steals the movie with a single scene. Her leg in an enormous cast from a skiing accident, she nevertheless reclines, in a peignoir, in a Swiss hospital bed, hosting a party (“Hi, ►



BRANCHING OUT

A clean silhouette delivers minimalist ease. Coat and pants, Salvatore Ferragamo; sweater, Hermès. *Beauty note:* Give natural waves a boost with Alterna Caviar Anti-Aging Multiplying Volume Styling Mousse (alternahaircare.com).

Schatzi!”), swilling champagne, all while cooing orders over the phone to her assistant (Griffith), back in New York.

Weaver injected humour into her dramas – watch how, in Ang Lee’s *The Ice Storm*, her chilly Connecticut swinger dismisses her lover’s (Kevin Kline) inane chitchat with a single sentence: “I *have* a husband” – and threw herself into her comedies, such as the space spoof *Galaxy Quest* and the mother-daughter grifter caper *Heartbreakers*. If you haven’t seen *Heartbreakers*, put down this story and go watch it. When her character gives the cigarette executive (Gene Hackman) she’s conning mouth to mouth, and then emits a tiny cough and a cloud of smoke, I die every time. And every fledgling comedian should study her rendition of “Back in the U.S.S.R.,” delivered in a broad Russian accent.

In 2009, she teamed up again with her *Aliens* director, James Cameron (a patron of that stealth repertory company she created), to make *Avatar*, which is still the No. 1 film of all time, grossing nearly US\$3 billion worldwide. Her character, Dr. Grace Augustine, dies defending the Na’vi, a race of blue, 10-foot-tall humanoids, who live on the moon Pandora, against human exploitation.

Most recently, Weaver (who is fluent in French and German) slayed me in the French series *Call My Agent* as a hyper-entitled version of herself, swanning into Paris and imperiously upgrading to a deluxe hotel suite that her agency can’t afford – then ordering up an elliptical machine, so she can work out on the balcony with a view of the Eiffel Tower. Having a sense of humour about yourself is “the key to everything,” Weaver says now. “Don’t you think so?”

It’s that rare combination of elegance and giddiness – Katharine Hepburn had it; so did Anne Bancroft – that makes Weaver so fascinating, and kept her career thriving in a landscape where too many women fall off the map after age 40. “I was just walking the dog, looking at the tugboats pushing this enormous barge down the East River,” she says. “I thought, ‘I am a tugboat in my business.’ I have endured.”

NOT MERELY ENDURED, but thrived. At 73, Weaver still lives in Manhattan with her husband of 38 years, the theatre director Jim Simpson, near their adult child, Char, who uses they/them

pronouns. And she’s launching four (four!) projects in late 2022. In *Master Gardener*, which wowed the Venice Film Festival in September, she plays “a fabulous older woman of appetites” who commands sexual attention from a younger employee (Joel Edgerton). In *The Good House*, available on demand, she plays a successful real estate agent “who takes care of everyone but herself,” Weaver says. “Her one indulgence is at the end of the day; she unhooks her bra, leans back, talks to her dog and drinks a secret bottle of pinot noir.” (It’s Weaver’s third film with co-star Kevin Kline, another member of her unofficial repertory group.) ➤

PERENNIAL FAVOURITE

Juxtapose a ladylike blouse with houndstooth, a favourite menswear suiting staple. Top and pants, Chloé, nordstrom.com.

Beauty note: Subtle hues work on every skin tone. Try: L’Oréal Paris Age Perfect Hydrating Core Lipstick in Brilliant Brown.



CRAIG MCDEAN/ART + COMMERCE



She also stars opposite Elizabeth Banks in *Call Jane*, a true story about a women's group in Chicago who helped women obtain abortions before Roe v Wade legalized them in 1973. And in the long-anticipated sequel, *Avatar: The Way of Water*, out Dec. 16, she plays a 14-year-old Na'vi named Kiri, the adopted daughter of Neytiri (Zoe Saldana) and Jake (Sam Worthington). Rumours abound that Kiri is the reincarnation of Dr. Augustine, but Weaver isn't allowed to say. Playing a teenager "catapulted me back, for better or worse, to my 14-year-old self," she says. Like every actor I've ever met, Weaver swears she was an awkward adolescent. Unlike every other actor, I believe her, because she had reached her full height at age 11.

"It was excruciating," she says. "I was incredibly self-con-

swimming without oxygen tanks). "One reason I love my job is that it takes me into areas I never would have foreseen," Weaver says. "For the ocean swimming, I trained for over a year with a master freediver from Canada, Kirk Krack. I was a decent swimmer, but now I'm a much more courageous one." Krack also taught her to hold her breath for long periods – her personal best is six-and-a-half minutes.

For me, learning that Weaver structured her career as if she were getting away with something only makes her more deliciously admirable. "Remember, I started out in theatre, where there are great roles for women of all ages," she says. "I've never lived in L.A., never subscribed to the Hollywood way of looking at women. I mean, think of Bette Davis and Joan Crawford. They were great actors,



I'm extraordinarily fortunate to play a confident woman in her 70s who still has a sex life



scious, very shy. But also very clownish, always getting in a bit of trouble. When a teacher turned around, I'd be the one they saw. We all remember that time in our lives, because everything is so important. We see things so passionately. I tried to bring that sense of justice and injustice to Kiri."

Keenly aware that *Alien* made her a role model for women, Weaver tries to choose projects that are "close to my heart," she says. "*Avatar: The Way of Water* is very much about protecting the planet. *The Good House* – my family has struggled with alcohol disorder. Alcohol can bring solace and comfort, but at a certain point, we're not able to control it. *Call Jane* is unfortunately newly relevant since the U.S. Supreme Court [which struck down the Roe decision earlier this year] handed down its Ayatollah decree. That's shocking. We have to get busy and do something about that." And with *Master Gardener*, "I'm extraordinarily fortunate to play a confident woman in her 70s who still has a sex life."

Are these films proof that Weaver's secret career plans worked? "I don't think I expected to have any career at this age," she replies, laughing. "I'm astonished. These four characters are women who don't want to be pushed aside, don't want to shut up. Each has something to say that I care very much about. And, as my husband reminded me the other day, 'No one was asking John Wayne to play a 14-year-old when he was in his 70s.'"

Weaver has always been physically fit – "actors have to have a lot of stamina," she says – but *Avatar: The Way of Water* pushed her to new limits. The film employs cutting-edge motion-capture technology: First the actors, wearing suits studded with sensors, performed the stunts; then their characters were animated based on their movements. Because she was "determined to keep up with the kids in the cast," Weaver undertook a regimen of burpees, parkour (a training discipline that turns the world into an obstacle course, with practitioners running, vaulting, climbing and swinging from point to point) and freediving (underwater

but by their late 40s they were relegated to doing films like *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*")

Because her parents were in show business, Weaver started with a workaday, show-must-go-on attitude that served her well. "And I haven't asked the business to give me anything, or to make me happy," she continues. "I believe you have to bring what you can to the business." She's grateful that she wasn't so busy that she didn't have a family. "They are my inspiration and my great support," she says. "I've never felt that as strongly as I do today."

Both of those convictions coalesce in *Avatar: The Way of Water*. It's not just the most anticipated sequel to the most successful film ever made. It's also about family – the lengths to which people will go to protect each other, and their home. "The world is struggling so much," Weaver says, sounding every bit as passionate and idealistic as her 14-year-old character. "But whatever our issues, at heart, I believe people will take care of each other. Regardless of our political or religious beliefs. I feel there's a great deal of humanity in each person that isn't being tapped right now in news reports and on the internet. Everything is highlighting the divisions between us, which are considerable, and very upsetting to me. But ultimately, I feel there is so much more that unites us, and we will come together to work things out."

Early in her career, when I was first falling for her, Weaver would walk into a film meeting and all the producers would sit down, because she towered over them. "Immediately, they'd reject me for any kind of love story," she says. "It was always a strange director who would hire me. As frustrating as that sometimes was – because I would have liked to do more love stories – it also protected me from conventional films and filmmakers. So I've been able to play women who are on the fringe, with great commitment.

"I think that's been a huge asset," she sums up. "I was not normal. Nor did I want to be."

And I couldn't be more grateful. 



IN FULL BLOOM Throw it back to fashion classics like corduroy and preppy stripes. Jacket, Hermès; blouse, Loro Piana. Photographed on location in New York City, by Craig McDean/Art + Commerce. Styling, Jason Rider; hair, Serge Normant; makeup, Brigitte Reiss-Andersen; set design, Stefan Beckman



ROYALS

A HOUSE, UNITED

King Charles and Princess Anne, the former Windsor heir and spare, have always managed to work hand in glove and now usher in a new era of duty **By Leanne Delap**



CHARLES HAS THROWN HIMSELF, robustly, into the role he has waited a lifetime to fill. But how will age factor into his future? After all, he is at a stage when most of us are slowing down, not kicking into high gear.

In his second speech, the King said he was dedicating “what remains to me of my life” to “the heavy task that has been laid upon me.” It was an open acceptance of the fact that his will not be a long reign, but it could still be transformative.

There are many pressing problems to address and that must be motivating. He will likely hope mourning the Queen in such a majestic fashion during “Operation London Bridge” – the code name for the Queen’s funeral – with its pomp, circumstance and the endless queue to see the Queen lying in state – will have drawn the nation and the Commonwealth together. There is a political and austerity crisis in post-Brexit, post-pandemic Britain. Calls for republicanism at home and abroad, the uproar over his charity scandals and vast, tax-free inheritance must weigh on him.

At 73, Charles was the oldest monarch to take to the throne. Physically, he appears to be in good shape: He seemed to manage the long walks behind the Queen’s coffin easily; his siblings – Anne, the Princess Royal, 72, in the heavy boots of her uniform, Andrew, 62, and Edward, 58 – all looked equally spry. Good genes and longevity run in the family, with Prince Philip living to 99, the Queen to 96 and the Queen Mum to 101.

The Queen was able to slowly alter her schedule over the years, winding down after the pandemic, the loss of her husband and the onset of mobility issues, delegating more and more to her heir and senior working royals. Still, in 2018, when she was 92, she completed 283 engagements. (Pre-pandemic, in 2018 and 2019, Charles had 500 engagements.) The Queen worked consistently during the seven decades of her reign, with responsibilities entered in her calendar annually, or even years in ➤

THE IMAGE OF KING CHARLES III after the committal service at St George’s Chapel in Windsor for his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, with Queen Consort Camilla by his side in the sovereign’s Bentley State Limousine, was poignant. After a long, emotional day of mourning his mother in public, with cameras catching him solemnly watching as the crown jewels were removed from her coffin, and a tear running down his face as “God Save the King” was played, he must have been exhausted. It had been 11 days of urgent activity for the new King: greeting the public, long processional walks behind the Queen’s coffin with his siblings, addressing Parliament and taping statements for television, receiving foreign dignitaries and holding audiences, and travelling some 3,000 kilometres around the United Kingdom to bond with his subjects and shore up support for his reign.

By the numbers, it paid off. The British-based market research company YouGov reported a third of English adults thought, before his accession, that Charles would make a good king, but, after the Queen’s death, 63 per cent expressed the same sentiment. Significantly, 73 per cent approved of the job he had done so far, and 94 per cent thought he performed well in his first speech as King, which aired the morning after the Queen’s death, when he was decisive and struck the right tone. The same day, after he returned from Balmoral Castle in Scotland for his first day of constitutional duties, crowds gathered at Buckingham Palace gates to greet the new monarch, quelling fears that there would be an unenthusiastic public response to his accession.

PHOTOGRAPHY, MARTIN MEISSNER/WPA POOL/GETTY IMAGES (PROCESSION OF THE COFFIN); DENNIS OULDS/CENTRAL PRESS/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES (FAMILY WITH CHURCHILL); AARON CHOWN/WPA POOL/GETTY IMAGES (KING CHARLES III WELCOMES RISHI SUNAK)





CALL OF DUTY King Charles greets British Conservative Leader Rishi Sunak, the first Hindu and person of colour to serve as Prime Minister, before inviting him to form a new government on the first day of the Hindu festival of Diwali. (Left) Prince Charles and Princess Anne meet Sir Winston Churchill, the first Prime Minister of Queen Elizabeth's reign, in London, 1954. (Above, opposite) With Camilla, Queen Consort, leaving Westminster Hall after the procession of the coffin of Queen Elizabeth II

advance. Just two days before her death – sharp till the end – the Queen performed her constitutional duty by meeting with the then new Prime Minister Liz Truss, to invite her to form a government in the Queen’s name.

The Queen was both young and old at the same time, all mixed up in our consciousness, perhaps because of the numerous portraits, newsreels and film and television depictions of her as a princess, wife, mother and monarch. She was never anyone’s kind of little old lady. Charles, who wasn’t owed the deference of a sovereign, was subject to the slings and arrows of tabloid and public fun-making. Will the crown on his head change all that? And more importantly, will it change him?

In the tense days after the Queen’s death, Charles made two minor gaffes, both, strangely, on-camera meltdowns involving pens, which went viral. Perhaps they signal that he’ll be a different kind of monarch. His mother, after all, never showed emotion. She likely would have risen above pesky pen placement or made a clever joke about leaking ink. Never complain, never explain. Charles always had a bit of a flare factor. He doesn’t have the same total mastery over his emotions as his predecessor, but that may work to his advantage, humanizing him in this more touchy-feely era.

He will also have to curb his penchant for expressing his political views, to conform to the royal tradition of complete neutrality. Sure, the Queen advised her prime ministers, and taught diplomats from around the world the ropes, but she was careful never to be seen to interfere in the nation’s affairs. Charles has been sending his so-called black spider memos (referring to his handwriting and choice of ink) to MPs for decades, campaigning openly for causes he is passionate about, such as climate change, which showed he was a man ahead of his times. In that first speech, he promised to put all that behind him, and subsequently backed out of COP27, the United Nations climate conference he had planned to attend.

Fresh off the highs and lows of a Jubilee year and his mother’s funeral, where all the visual spectacle and star power of the monarchy was deployed to knit the country together and bolster the institution, King Charles has a good tailwind behind him. Plus, events have conspired to keep the Crown (which has been criticized as obsolete) relevant, and the King in the news.

In the early days of his reign, Charles was swept into the drama around the revolving door of No. 10 Downing Street. The Queen famously worked with 15 prime ministers during her long reign; in less than seven weeks,

Charles welcomed two.

At his first weekly audience with Truss, just seven days before she resigned, he was caught on a hot mic mumbling, “Back again ... Dear, oh dear. Anyway...” after he shook her hand. No one knows exactly what he meant, but the video clip became a meme on social media because it seemed to reflect the British public’s exasperation – royals, they are just like us! – with Truss’ government, which was already unravelling.

When the King invited new Conservative Party leader Rishi Sunak to form a government, it was the U.K.’s Obama moment – the colour barrier to the country’s highest office had been broken by the son of immigrants from a former part of the British Empire – and Charles was in the frame. It was a counterpoint to the accusations of racism, and the reminders of their history of colonial-based profiteering recently faced by the Royal Family.

The symbolic message of the image of the two men shaking hands was a positive for the King. And amid all the political turmoil, the new King showed how integral the Crown is to the country’s fabric.

THE SUBJECT OF PRINCE HARRY continues to vex, along with the California-based royal’s estrangement from his brother, William, Prince of Wales, and the spectre of his tell-all book, *Spare*, which will be released on Jan. 10. That could result in more pain and scandal, given the impending Netflix documentary featuring Harry and his wife Meghan, which has since been delayed to 2023. But it is Season 5 of *The Crown*, another Netflix property, that promises to challenge the new monarch.

Early criticism of the show, which returned on Nov. 9, focused on a fictionalized scene where Charles discusses the Queen’s potential abdication with Prime Minister John Major. This would, obviously, never have happened, but serves the sensational arc of the series. The dramatic portrayal of the breakdown of his marriage to Diana and the salacious bits about his affair with Camilla is possibly more damaging, especially given the push for the public to accept Camilla as their new Queen. The palace is fighting back, and Charles is receiving sympathy from high-profile monarchists like Dame Judi Dench, who, in an open letter to Netflix, stated that the portrayal was unfair and the company should have a disclaimer emphasizing it is a work of fiction. Although the streaming service did add a disclaimer to the trailer’s announcement, at press time it was unclear if it will add one to the show. It remains to be seen if the goodwill Charles enjoyed right after he acceded will survive this pop-cultural trial by fire. ➤



Princess Anne with Prince Charles, 1955

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ON NEWSSTANDS NOW

The coronation, scaled down at Charles' behest, will follow on May 6, 2023. It will certainly be accompanied by further concerns about royal spending – which Charles has already addressed with a slimmed-down monarchy, selling some of the Queen's racehorses and downsizing royal staff – which will be exacerbated by a winter where the heating-oil crisis is expected to hurt many average Britons (and the rest of his subjects, like us, an ocean away).

Since King Charles III will be a transitional monarch, bridging his mother's reign and his son William's, he has the motive and opportunity to begin reshaping the Crown for modern times. Just as his mother provided inspiration in her tenth decade by navigating the Harry and Meghan rift and providing leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic with verve and vigour, Charles can set an example in his eighth decade by ensuring the monarchy's continuity and survival. The Royal Family's fate is in his hands. 

Steadfast and true, Princess Anne is the King's sure advantage **By Leanne Delap**

ONE OF THE QUEEN'S best lessons to us all may be that slow and steady wins the race. It is a lesson her only daughter, Anne, took to heart. In recent years, there has been a growing appreciation for the word and character of the no-nonsense Princess

Royal. This culminated in accolades for Anne's stoic demeanour and dedication to her mother in her final days, and through the 10-day mourning period.

Princess Anne was with the Queen when she took her final breath on Sept. 8, and stayed by her mother's side on the funeral cortège's epic journey from Balmoral, Scotland, to Windsor, England. We saw Anne's deep curtsy in Edinburgh, when the Queen's casket arrived at the Palace of Holyroodhouse after a six-hour, 280-kilometre journey from Balmoral Castle where the monarch had died. Anne made history as the first princess to participate in the Vigil of the Princes at St Giles Cathedral in the Scottish capital, then boarded the Royal Air Force plane that ferried the late Queen from Edinburgh to London. There, Anne marched alongside her brothers behind the sovereign's coffin in her ceremonial Royal Navy uniform, on the way into Westminster Hall for the Queen's lying-in-state, where the Princess Royal stood guard in another vigil.

She marched in the state funeral procession – as she had done for her father, Prince Philip, and her grandmother, the Queen Mother – her back ramrod straight, regal in bearing, a resolute figure to behold. When the cortège paused at Wellington Arch, Anne left King Charles III's side as the casket was transferred to the State Hearse, and she and her husband, Vice-Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence, climbed into the car to accompany the Queen to her final resting

place in St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle.


Anne has long been known as a workhorse of the Firm, attending to her assigned duties with a stiff upper lip, but, since she inherited a sense of humour from her mother and her father, she always had a smile and a quip at the ready. She almost always clocks in as the working royal with the second-most engagements on her calendar, behind her brother, Charles.

Now 72, Anne was a glamorous young princess about town. Modern royal watchers were reminded of her heyday, before she went on to become an Olympic equestrian, in the depiction of her youth by Erin Doherty in Season 3 of *The Crown*. Fans were dismayed when the Netflix series omitted a dramatic 1974 event, the attempted kidnapping of Princess Anne. A mentally ill man blocked her car on a London street, shot her security guard and chauffeur, and had his hand on the princess's arm as he urged her to get out of the car. "Bloody likely," was Anne's flinty response, before she urged him to flee. "Go on. Now's your chance." Anne's stoicism has stood the test of time. She is thrifty (wearing clothes from her closet that have been in regular rotation for four decades), unchanging (sporting the same hairstyle forever, like her mother; but in her case, a practical helmet updo) and committed to duty.

It was the image of Anne, revolutionary and traditional at the same time, who was perhaps most comforting to both family – and the public – during the long, 11 days of rituals as the Queen was laid to rest. She embodied her parents' chin-up-and-get-on-with-it attitude, which was exactly the tonic and the example needed for the moment.

In the first days of King Charles III's reign, he relied on his sister more than ever; the Queen's two eldest were always a tight unit. When their mother ascended the throne in 1953, the Queen was consumed by the new job's duties. Charles and Anne, then preschoolers, had a very different childhood than their two younger brothers, who came after a 10-year gap, when their mother was more settled into the role.

One of the first moves by the new king may be to send an amendment of the Regency Act of 1837 to Parliament, which determines the monarch's Counsellors of State – those who can act in his absence. The list, which includes, by law, King Charles' spouse, Camilla, the Queen Consort; and the four most senior adults in the line of succession – William, Prince of Wales; Harry, Duke of Sussex; Andrew, Duke of York and Princess Beatrice – is reportedly set to be expanded to favour Anne, Princess Royal, and Edward, Earl of Wessex, who are both working royals, unlike Harry, Andrew or Beatrice. It would be a recognition of the hard work of Anne and Edward.

Meanwhile, Anne started out the new royal era in the same way she conducted herself in the last. No one knew she was making a surprise official visit to New York in October, days after the official mourning period ended, until she was photographed on the Staten Island Ferry. Unassuming and delightful, and right on brand, Anne is getting on with things. 

PHOTOGRAPHY: DAILY MIRROR/MIRRORPIX/GETTY IMAGES (PRINCE CHARLES AND PRINCESS ANNE); FOX PHOTOS/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES (QUEEN ELIZABETH II AND PRINCESS ANNE); AARON CHOWN/PA IMAGES VIA GETTY IMAGES (PROCESSION OF THE COFFIN)

Prince Charles and Princess Anne ride together on their way to his investiture as Prince of Wales at Caernarfon Castle, Wales, 1969. (Below) Queen Elizabeth II and Princess Anne during a state visit to Austria in 1969 - the year in which the 18-year-old princess first began making public engagements.



Princess Anne curtsies as the Queen's coffin arrives at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh. Anne was the only female royal to march in the Queen's funeral procession, as she did at the funeral procession for her father, Prince Philip, the year prior.



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LEVEL UP
LONGEVITY



THE RISE OF THE CENTENARIAN

Live to 100?
The venerable
tortoise may
not be the only
species routinely
passing the
century mark.
Slowly and
steadily, the
human race is
keeping pace
**By Carolyn
Abraham**

IN THIS NEW AGE OF LONGEVITY,

hardly a week passes without dazzling reports of someone somewhere turning 100. This year's tally includes New York City's Lettice Graham, who partied in a Harlem ballroom; Wally Vickberg of Okotoks, Alta., who went four rounds in a boxing ring at his retirement home; and Manette Baillie of

Suffolk, England, who raced a Ferrari around a Northamptonshire circuit at 130 miles per hour. Norman Lear, the legendary television producer behind *All in the Family*, *Good Times*, *Maude* and *The Jeffersons* – who is still working – told *The Hollywood Reporter* in August that he celebrated simply “by getting up in the morning.”

Making it to the age of 100 is still a storied milestone, but in the 21st century, it's not the rarefied achievement it used to be. More people are reaching triple digits than ever before. In industrialized countries, the prevalence of centenarians has more than doubled every decade since the 1960s.

While it is still rare to live to 105 – the age at which someone becomes known as a semi-supercentenarian – and rarer still to reach supercentenarian status at age 110 (about one in five million), even the prevalence of these exceptional centenarians is creeping upwards. The United Nations estimates that by 2050 the world will have nearly four million people who are at least a century old. Despite the toll COVID-19 took on older adults, centenarians make up one of the fastest growing segments of the population in Canada, and the world.

There are signs of it. Hallmark has an expanding selection of birthday cards – “Celebrating 100 wonderful years of you!” (... and you ... and you!). Requests to the Prime Minister's Office to congratulate Canadians turning 100 climbed to 2,495 last year, an eight per cent rise

from 2017. Before her death at age 96, Queen Elizabeth II was sending off so many 100th birthday wishes to her citizens, Buckingham Palace had to hire extra staff to keep up.

All of it is propelling a broad rethink of the 100-year life. Policy makers, economists and city planners are prepping for a demographic revolution that could revamp everything from workplaces to urban spaces. Psychologists and sociologists are pondering the various ways people might reorganize the traditional life stages of education, career and recreation if they have 10 decades to play with. Financial advisers, meanwhile, are trying to design savings plans that will stretch 40 years past retirement.

Yet the centenarian story is not all tiaras and Ferraris. Unless more people hit the century mark in good health – and today, most don't – the looming burden on health care, community support and the economy could be catastrophic. And who wants to live to a hundred anyway if frail, broke and lonely?

It's that cold prospect that makes Paul Higgs, a professor of the sociology of aging at University College London, fret publicly over the popular portrayal of people who reach triple digits. “Very old age, if commented upon, is presented as if it were a kind of extreme sports competition. Centenarians are celebrated simply for reaching 100,” Higgs wrote in a 2018 essay in *The Conversation*, an academic news site. “For many of these people, life can be difficult. ... Aged lives of quiet desperation are sadly not rare, nor are most lived in the heroic terms of the marathon-running nonagenarian that hits the news.”

That reality – and the economic imperative that comes with it – has researchers everywhere investigating the minds and bodies of centenarians. PubMed, an online database of life sciences papers, shows the number of studies on centenarians has multiplied more than 10-fold since the 1980s, trying to parse the

ingredients that go into the making of a healthy 100-year-old. After all, as Higgs says in a recent interview, “Everyone wants to live to be 100, but no one wants to grow old while doing it.”

BLOOM, FISHER AND THE HUNT FOR HUNDRED-YEAR-OLDS

I**N THE EARLY '90S**, when Dr. Thomas Perls was a third-year fellow in geriatrics training at Harvard Medical School, he was assigned to look after two centenarians, and he assumed they would be the sickest patients on his roster: “This idea was quite prevalent at the time – the older you get, the sicker you get.

“The literature indicated that the rate of [getting] Alzheimer's disease increased at a very fast rate beyond the age of 85 – so one would expect that everyone over the age of 100 would have Alzheimer's disease.” But then he met Mrs. Bloom and Mr. Fisher.

Bloom was an accomplished pianist who lived on her own and still played at venues around Boston. Perls knew from their conversations she was still mentally sharp, but Bloom impressed him even further when he heard the 101-year-old in concert playing the difficult music of Chopin – and playing it well.

Fisher had been a tailor all his life. The 103-year-old could usually be found in the hospital's occupational therapy department, not getting treatment, but mending the clothes of the patients there, or teaching others how to mend. “If he wasn't doing that,” says Perls, “he was robbing the cradle – dating his 85-year-old girlfriend.”

At the time, Perls was looking for a research project and Bloom and Fisher seemed to pose a question worth answering. “I knew I had to find more people to see if these two were a fluke and everyone else [age 100 and up] were as predicted.”

Perls initially focused on eight ►

towns in the Boston area, scanning birthday announcements in the local papers, combing voter registration lists and conducting interviews with the centenarians he found. He discovered that while Bloom and Fisher were not complete anomalies, they were in the minority of successful agers: Only 20 per cent of centenarians were in fairly good shape and free of dementia, while 80 per cent had various health issues.

“So, you might say, ‘Well, what’s so great about that?’” Quite a bit, it turned out. Perls learned that, despite the final result, most centenarians in his study had been functionally independent until about the age of 93 before they declined – which was still beyond average life expectancy, and beyond the age at which most people were expected to have developed dementia.

To find out how these 100-year-olds had managed to markedly delay or escape the diseases of aging, Perls founded the New England Centenarian Study, which, since its inception in 1995, has grown into the longest-running investigation of its kind, with more than 2,000 centenarians and their families enrolled from seven countries, including 107 supercentenarians.

One of its most striking findings is that today, says Perls, now a professor of medicine and geriatrics at the Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine, “most people have a shot at making it to 90,” and one in five have the opportunity to get to 100. “That’s a remarkable number.”

THE BIRKDALE TRIO



ON A SUNNY afternoon at Birkdale Place, a Revera retirement home in Milton, Ont., more than three centuries’ worth of wisdom is spread across a loveseat and a wingback chair. There’s Marion Newman, who turned 100 in March, Bernard Teague, who

joined the centenarian club in July, and Vera Riley, who celebrated her 105th birthday in June. It was quite a party: live music; a local TV crew; Riley’s daughter had come from Alberta; and former Mississauga mayor Hazel McCallion, who turned 101 in February 2022, was among the guests. (McCallion, Revera’s chief elder officer, maintains the key to longevity is waking each day with a plan and a sense of purpose.)

Precisely how long Riley, Newman and Teague have lived at Birkdale, only Newman could remember. “Seven years,” she says. From the get-go, Teague acknowledges, “My memory is terrible.” Riley, in pearl earrings and a jeweled pullover, puts it this way: “My mind is a little bit sticky at 105.”

Riley, trim and still mobile, struggles to recall where she was born in 1917, but within a few moments, the details come back: “Barrow-in-Furness, in England,” she says, happily. “We were very poor, though lots of love, there were four of us. I worked in a sewing factory, making pyjamas. I had a work number, it was No. 9. I remember that – nine is my favourite number.” Her parents lived relatively long lives for the time – her mother, a homemaker, died at 80, and her father, a bus driver, died at 78.

Newman, still quick-witted and mirthful, was one of 15 children born on a farm in Edmonton. She is the only sibling still living. But she had an uncle who lived to 104, and another to 110, so Newman figures she has some years ahead – “I’m only 100!”

“I don’t feel any different today than I did when I was young,” she adds. “No matter how old you are, you never think you’re that old.”

Teague, a metal molder who served as a home guard soldier in England during the Second World War, couldn’t recall if longevity runs in his family. But he suspects the recipe for a century-long life needs “a little bit of everything.” Riley says the ingredients are probably different for each person – “What might be good for his long life, might not be good for mine.”

What they do seem to have in common is an almost cheery resilience. All three centenarians describe hardships in their lives, but that afternoon, it casts no shadow on their positive outlooks. Riley lost her husband Frank many years ago, when he was quite young – “He was standing against a wall and just slithered down.” She also lost her son; and her daughter out west lives “way too far away,” she says. “But you just have to take each day as it comes.”

Newman has also outlived her husband and both her children. Still, there’s a joyfulness when she describes how three nieces on her husband’s side are the ones who lured her to Ontario so they could be closer to her: “Isn’t that something?” she says. “One niece comes to see me every night. Last night she was here until 10 o’clock!”

“I think the older you get, the more you forget the hardships, you forget about your troubles,” Newman says. “But you know what you think about a lot? You think, ‘Oh, we’re gonna eat! What am I going to eat? What are we having?’” They all laugh hard in agreement at that one.

HOW ONE HUNDRED BECAME THE NEW NINETY



THE FIRST CENTENARIANS Perls recruited to his study were born around 1900, when the average life expectancy was about

46 – achingly low, mainly because infant mortality was tragically high. Families could count on losing about a quarter of their children, mostly to infectious diseases, says Perls.

But with improvements to public health – clean water, sanitation, education, better nutrition – and the advent of vaccines and antibiotics, an otherwise doomed quarter of the Greatest Generation not only had a chance to survive infancy and thrive, but also to age.

They lived through the Depression

and the Second World War and, as they matured, so did medicine. Screening for early signs of heart disease and cancers, the western world's big killers, became routine, as did new preventive treatments, such as drugs for high blood pressure, and surgical interventions.

Another boost to longevity came in the late 1970s and early '80s, says Perls, as the lethal perils of smoking became widely known and more people kicked the habit. With a broader understanding of behaviours that could be bad for the heart, more people started exercising and improving their diets.

For Perls, these factors explain how the prevalence of centenarians in North America has jumped from one in 10,000 people to about one in 5,000. He suspects it will rise further as baby boomers reach their 10th decade, but by how much is unclear. The factors that might predict a century-long life are varied and mysterious.

WHO WILL HIT A HUNDRED?

IN THE WORLD'S FIVE so-called Blue Zones, where people live longer and healthier lives than average and many into their hundreds, longevity is associated with a nourishing mix of good genes, good food, physical activity, family and friends. Yet there are intriguing differences. In Sardinia, Italy, where men are as likely as women to live to 100, and on the Greek island of Ikaria, drinking wine is common. But there's no alcohol consumed by the Seventh Day Adventists of Loma Linda, Calif.

Mostly plant-based diets are common to all the zones (the other two being Okinawa, Japan, and the Nicoya Peninsula in Costa Rica), as is religion or some form of spirituality. But the New England Centenarian Study has found that being vegetarian does not predict who will live to 100, and neither does religion, money, education or ethnicity. (The centenarians enrolled in the study come from 20

different ethnic backgrounds.)

The tangled links between ethnicity and longevity can be fraught and vary from country to country. In the United States, for example, health care and socio-economic disparities are believed to play a major role in the longevity gap between Black and white people. In January, the Kaiser Family Foundation, an American non-profit, non-partisan health policy analyst organization, reported life expectancy for Black people was 71.8 years compared to 77.6 years for white people. Yet the Office of National Statistics in the U.K. reported in 2020 that data shows Black and other ethnic minorities have longer life expectancies than white people. Black African women had a life expectancy of 88.9 years, and Black African men 83.8 years. For white Britons, life expectancy was 83.1 years for women and 79.7 years for men. People of Asian, Bangladeshi and Black African backgrounds generally lived longest.

Hong Kong, where cancers, cardiovascular disease and car accidents are comparatively low, has recently overtaken Japan as the place with the highest life expectancy. A 2021 report in *The Lancet Public Health* attributed this to "fewer diseases of poverty while suppressing the diseases of affluence."

But Japan still holds the top spot as the country with the highest per capita rate of centenarians, a perch experts chalk up partly to low obesity rates and nutrient-rich diets. There are claims of record-high concentrations of centenarians from other parts of the world, including areas in China, South America and the Caribbean, but Perls believes most of these are unsubstantiated.

"I think it's just to increase tourism," he says. "There's been fascination with the idea of living forever, and there can be a tremendous amount of sensationalism associated with that."

The traits centenarians do have in common in the New England study include not being obese, not hav-

ing a substantial history of smoking, handling stress well, not being neurotic, being extroverted and being female. About 85 per cent of centenarians are women, and they make up about 90 per cent of those aged 110 and older. Yet centenarian men are usually in better health than their female counterparts.

LIFESTYLE VS. GENETICS

IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, the Super Seniors Study led by Angela Brooks-Wilson, a distinguished scientist at BC Cancer, has also delved into the traits of successful agers.

The research included 480 women and men between the ages of 85 and 110 who were free of cancer, heart or lung disease, diabetes and dementia. In 2018, Brooks-Wilson reported these super seniors had high physical and mental function, low levels of depression and prolonged fertility. The study also found levels of alcohol consumption were no different than in the control group.

Having a family history of longevity is a strong predictor, but lifestyle choices play a much bigger role than genetics in determining who will become a centenarian. Perls estimates lifestyle factors account for about 70 per cent of longevity to the age of 100, while genes contribute only 30 per cent.

That conclusion is based in part on the surprising finding that most "young centenarians," aged 100 to 101, says Perls, have just as many age-related disease genes as everyone else. Yet they are somehow resilient, or resistant, to their effects.

Older people who are resilient have illnesses linked to aging, such as heart disease, cancer or dementia, says Perls, "but they seem to deal better with these diseases that other people might die from." Even more puzzling are those who are resistant and reach 100 without developing these diseases at all.

Beyond the age of 105, the nature-nurture equation flips: The older ►

a centenarian becomes, the bigger role genes play. Lifestyle factors explain just 30 per cent of longevity in people who make it to 110 and beyond, Perls says, while genetics account for 70 per cent.

“What we think becomes very important in these individuals are protective genes,” says Perls. These would be variations of certain genes that shield older centenarians from age-related illnesses entirely, or at least their worst effects.

“As we enrolled even older people, 105 and older, and 110 and older, these folks ended up being the *crème de la crème* of our sample. The younger centenarians don’t quite do what the people 105 and older do – which is not only greatly delay disability, but also dramatically delay or escape age-related diseases until the very end of their very long lives.”

The New England study has found that 105-year-olds tend to live independently and are cognitively intact until around age 99 or 100. The supercentenarians live independently until about 105, “so they really have very little in the way of age-related diseases.”

Similarly, in Canada, currently home to more than 12,000 centenarians, the Super Seniors Study has reached the same conclusion.

“Our findings support this ‘compression of morbidity’ theory,” says study leader Brooks-Wilson, who is now dean of the faculty of science at Simon Fraser University. “If you live well and disease-free in your first few decades of life, you are likely to be less sick at the end of your life.” This held true even among two brothers, aged 109 and 110, she says, who remained healthy until very late in life.

Perls believes the chances of living to 110 and beyond depend on carrying the right combination of perhaps as many as 200 different protective genetic variants. “It’s like winning the lottery,” he says.

“It becomes a very exciting proposition if we can find and decipher these protective variants. Then the biological mechanisms that con-

fer protection means we might be able to develop drugs and/or screening strategies ... to help other people have resilience or resistance to some of these age-related diseases.”

One clue in solving the genetic mystery may come from women. As the runaway winners of the longevity marathon, women may harbour age-protective genes on the X sex chromosome, of which women have two, and men only one. Another theory posits that women are often iron deficient due to menstruation, but because iron contributes to the development of DNA-damaging oxygen-free radicals, the cells of men age more rapidly.

The study has also found women who have children after the age of 35 or 40 are four times more likely to live to 100 than women who do not. Canada’s Super Seniors Study also discovered exceptional longevity in women was twice as likely if they had children at 40 and older. But Brooks-Wilson stressed this association does not necessarily suggest having a baby, or having a baby later in life, will allow a woman to live longer. Rather, she says, prolonged fertility could simply be an outward sign of a successfully aging biology – something women who do not bear children may also have.

Similarly, Perls suspects it is not so much the act of having children late in life that confers a longevity advantage, but that the ability to do so may reflect a slower aging rate of a woman’s reproductive system – which hints at the existence of genetic variants that may be helping to slow the aging of the body as a whole.

CALCULATING YOUR LONGEVITY ODDS



premature for people to spend money on DNA tests to search for longevity genes.

“Much more powerful and enabling is just to look at your family history,” he says. “If you have a history of heart disease or stroke or Alzheimer’s or certain cancers, then you need to be talking with your health-care provider to find out what you need to do to screen for those problems, to either delay them or escape them.”

And since lifestyle choices play the lead role for most people in determining who makes it to 100, Perls recommends those choices be good ones – eating a healthy diet, exercising, not smoking and keeping a healthy weight. “It will be the case that the older you get, the healthier you’ve been.” What’s more, it’s rarely too late to try: “The centenarians in the study have not necessarily always lived healthful lives. We’ve had people who have changed course, although there is always going to be an age at which it is too late.”

But with smoking, Perls says, it is never too late to quit. “The payoff can be huge. ... Within a few months, you start to see a really significant improvement in a person’s functionality. After five years, they are practically at the point where they had never smoked, in terms of their life expectancy.”

In 2002, Perls, now 62, launched a life-expectancy calculator to encourage people to live healthily by showing them – in years – how good habits can increase a lifespan. The free 10-minute test, Living To 100 Life Expectancy Calculator, estimates how old a person will live to be based on answers to 40 questions related to health and family history. About 30,000 people take the test each month, and Perls says it reveals “what they may be doing right or wrong ... and people can see how their behaviours make a difference” to their life expectancy. After the calculator was featured on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, the server crashed.

Making people aware that how they live now will impact how they age later is critical, he says, be- ➤

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cause otherwise the road ahead could be an epic struggle, especially as baby boomers – “about 70 million people all aging together” – head toward their eighth decade.

FIGHTING THE FOURTH AGE

AT UCL, HIGGS BECAME especially interested in the social dynamics of aging with the realization that, for boomers, retirement no longer meant the end of something, but the beginning. “It had been that you worked and then you retired and then you died, and this all happened in a relatively short period of time,” says Higgs. “But retirement became something to look forward to, not something to dread.”

Known as the “Third Age,” boomers have embraced the post-work period of freedom to try new things, travel, learn, volunteer – and, Higgs adds, to demonstrate how well they can age. “One of the things that exists in various stages of the life course is demonstrating how good you are at various things. And now people are demonstrating how good they are later in life, how they’re able to run marathons in their 80s, and join Masters athletic clubs and swim as fast as younger people.”

Boomers envision a kind of “ageless aging,” he says, which reflects a youth culture that seems itself to be immortal. “They listen to the Rolling Stones still singing about youth rebellion in their 80s.” Yet as the Third Age flourishes, it throws what comes next into “ever sharper and sharper relief” and that’s what Higgs describes as the “Fourth Age” – the late-life period of decline, when physical and mental limitations may lead to dependence. “It’s the stage where people go from living their own lives to being assessed by others,” he says. “Often it’s a shift from a first-person narrative of ‘I want’ to a third-person narrative of ‘That person needs ...’”

Society doesn’t embrace that aspect of aging at all, Higgs says. “It’s feared.” News reports may cheer the 100th birthdays of locals and the famous, especially those performing remarkable age-defying feats, but the majority of those who live extremely long lives are not in this camp. “It’s not discussed, and yet it is implicitly known.”

Indeed, most 100-year-olds are a somewhat invisible group. According to Statistics Canada, almost 60 per cent of centenarians live in nursing homes. “The focus on successful aging creates a barrier among those who have not aged as successfully,” Higgs says. “They are sequestered away by society because nobody really wants to think about that because it threatens the idea of ageless aging.”

As life expectancy continues to rise, and the number of centenarians continues to grow, Higgs feels society has a moral obligation to improve the quality of life of those in the Fourth Age, in part by finding ways to interact with them in everyday life. “Sometimes the only people who have close contact with them are their families, and even that can be done in a very performative way, you know, ‘Once a month, we go and see granny.’”

A 2018 study, based on interviews with 78 centenarians in Germany and published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, found that one in four reported longing for death. Yet nearly 90 per cent of their close family or primary social contacts were unaware of how they felt. Ideally, Higgs says, with longer lives becoming more common, imaginative solutions will arise to ensure the very old remain socially engaged so that “there is more intergenerational exchange.”

At SFU, Brooks-Wilson also sees the aging population as an opportunity. “Kids could help them with so many things, and elders can help kids with their perspective and their self-esteem. They have so much wisdom to share.” The


irony is that while the extremely elderly tend to socialize less, most studies have found that socializing is what enables people to reach an extreme old age in the first place – from the Super Seniors Study in B.C. to the Blue Zones.

BACK TO BIRKDALE

THE THREE CENTENARIANS at Birkdale Place agree that one of the hardest parts of growing old is fending off loneliness, having outlived so many family members and friends. “Time is pretty long, you know, if you sit there all day by yourself,” says Newman, “I don’t know how some people can do it. They go weeks and weeks by themselves. ... It’s not easy for anybody to leave their homes,” she adds, “but I’m happy here, it’s easy to make friends. We’re all one big family.”

“Yes, everybody’s friendly,” says Teague. “Companionship makes all the difference, that’s the main thing.” Teague and his late wife used to travel widely, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and he says he would travel still if he weren’t alone – “I wanted to go to Antarctica, I’m fascinated with that, and I’d like to go – still! I like icebergs and I like the cold. But I haven’t got anybody to go with.”

Would Riley like to travel? “Oh no,” says Riley, shaking her head emphatically – “That’s the end of that!” Then they all roar with laughter again.

The role good humour plays in a long life is also a hot research topic these days. Like laughter, it’s a tricky tonic to measure, but several studies find a strong association between a positive mood and healthy aging. So as Higgs argues, it may well be in society’s best interests to do more to ensure the happiness of 100-year-olds as they rise rapidly in number around the world. 



LEVEL UP

YOUR
FITNESS

SKATING *into* OLD AGE

For more than 60 years, hockey has been a balm for **Jay Teitel's** body and soul, but pandemic shinny brought it all home



The author
on the ice

IN SEPTEMBER 2019, my wife and children threw me a surprise hockey-themed 70th birthday party at the Vaughan Iceplex, one of the oldest multiple-rink complexes in the Greater Toronto Area. I thought I was just going to a little warm-weather pickup game with some friends, but while I was changing into my skates in the dressing room, people I knew – friends and family both – kept wandering in to join us. I was astonished that they had all decided to go skating on the same Sunday, at the same arena, as our little group. It took me 10 minutes to realize it was no coincidence, but the best party I'd ever been to in my life.

Six months later, on March 13, 2020, the regular pickup hockey game

I'd played three times a week for 20 years at Moss Park arena in downtown Toronto was shut down, suddenly, because of something called COVID-19. For the 18 players in the room, five of them older than 70, it seemed like the worst piece of news we could hear that year.

For most people, hockey is the opposite of an obvious “carry-over” sport, one that you can play when you're young and continue to play in later life. Everyone knows hockey is too violent, too strenuous and too hard on joints and spines to be sustainable with age. Except it's not. Non-contact hockey, played with helmets and full face guards, by sensible men and women, is far less percussive than tennis and jogging and, in my experi-

ence, probably no more harmful to joints and backs than golf or biking. (I have two artificial hips, and I haven't run a step for more than 20 years.)

As far as being too strenuous goes, hockey actually fits the parameters of the latest innovation in cardiac fitness for young people and old alike, High Intensity Interval Training. HIIT involves short bursts of intense activity, followed by short periods of rest. As does hockey. In 2020, a group of Norwegian researchers released the results of the Generation 100 study, an examination of a group of people aged 70 to 77 who had taken part in an HIIT regimen twice a week for five years. They found members of the HIIT group were physically and mentally healthier than control ►

PHOTOGRAPHY, ROBERT BURLEY (JAY TEITEL); SHIRONOSOV/GETTY (PUCK, BACKGROUND)



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groups who had followed either moderate-intensity training regimens (50 minutes, twice a week) or national Norwegian guidelines for physical exercise (30 minutes of moderate-level activity a day). In practical terms, the HIIT group had lower blood pressure, greater aerobic fitness levels, increased mental acuity, and lower risk level of “all causes” mortality. Dr. Steven Matlis, a sports medicine specialist who runs a clinic in north Toronto where he treats a number of seniors, says this about HIIT, hockey and older players. “Most of the seniors I see are doing the traditional physical activities for their age group – walking, jogging, possibly tennis – not hockey. But as long as it’s something you’ve been doing consistently for a long time, with no large breaks, and as long as you get your cardiovascular condition checked regularly, it should be all right for you.”

Matlis does add one more caveat; he cautions older shinny players not to play on very cold days. “Cold temperatures can create bronchial spasms. That’s what we see with many of the people who have heart attacks when they’re doing strenuous activities in the cold, like shovelling snow.” So, if you avoid frigid shinny, and hockey meets the prescribed definition of a carry-over sport for you, it can be the best carry-over sport around. It’s definitely the most fun.

The secret is locomotion. Most other land sports mandate that players move by running; hockey lets you skate. And compared to running, skating is smoother, faster and infinitely cooler. Anyone who’s ever skated regularly knows this. Older people who skate regularly know something else, that the act of gliding on ice helps them not just to survive but thrive. At a recent Spokane Hoopfest, billed as the largest basketball tournament on Earth, more than 20,000 players participated. Of these, there were exactly five aged 70 or older. At the 2022 Snoopy’s Senior World Hockey Tournament in Santa Rosa, Calif., there will be 200 players

over the age of 70 (with 60 over 75). The difference? Skating.

It was skating we probably missed the most when the mass shutdown happened in March 2020. And skating we managed to get back to first, the following November, outdoors only, on Toronto’s network of open-air, artificial, neighbourhood rinks. No hockey was allowed, and masks were mandatory, but still a small core of players from our game showed up regularly to skate laps, sometimes fast, sometimes slow, always with accompanying conversation. It felt like a conflation of playing hockey and talking in the dressing room at the same time, and it was a reminder of the other natural great benefit of pickup games, something critical for older people in general – having



The author faces off with his daughter, Emma


a group to belong to. Unsurprisingly, half of our skating contingent was made up of older players.

We did make it indoors at the end of August that year, a tantalizing tease, cut short by the arrival of the Omicron variant. When the weather turned and we headed to the outdoor rinks again, surgical masks were off, and hockey was permitted. Shinny, to be exact, two or three or four to a side, nets but no goalies – to “score” you had to hit the post – and with a different group of players filling out each game. There were men and women, boys and girls, high school and college kids, parents with children. My daughter came out to play with us several times, along with her one-and-a-half-year-old daughter, who sat on the bench with

her other mother and laughed hysterically whenever any of us skated by. I don’t know what she found so funny; I was too busy being exhausted. It was an amazing workout, freewheeling and sporadically intense; you skated hard when you felt like it, then rested by loafing on the ice or leaning against the boards. There were huge amounts of open ice, and time to handle the puck with a freedom you didn’t have in an ordinary pickup game, where people sometimes actually played defence.

I T WAS, THAT IS, exactly like the hockey we played as kids. Day or night, half the time on natural rinks with square plywood boards, where the corners collected snow and buried pucks. When you’d had enough, you sat on a bench beside your friends and changed into your boots. The rinks we were playing on now were like the rinks in the neighbourhood parks we had walked to, sometimes with our skates already on, and sometimes not walking at all. When I was nine, a freak overnight ice storm hit the GTA, glazing the roads and sidewalks in our suburb as flawlessly as a midnight Zamboni. The next day we skated to the rink. Somehow the COVID shinny we were playing reminded me of that day.

It wasn’t until the first week of March, almost two years to the day since our games were shut down, that we got back to Moss Park to play, permanently, inside again. It felt good, of course. It also felt, in that paranoid pandemic way, too good to be true.

It’s the hockey we played outdoors last winter that will stay with me most, a gift delivered in the least likely of times. People will tell you the worst thing about COVID was the way it suspended time, that it paralyzed life into numbness. But during the challenging winter of 2021, shinny hockey transported one 72-year-old and a group of aging cronies to a sweeter time. It was like going home. 

Rosemary is saving with FREE upgrades. You could be next!



**“I noticed that
my bills are
much better.”**

Rosemary

Is there a simple way to make an older home more energy efficient and comfortable?

That’s what Brampton homeowner Rosemary, like many Ontarians, had often wondered. Rosemary’s home was built in 1972 and at fifty years old it was drafty, especially through the windows, electrical outlets and attic hatch.

One afternoon while she was watching TV, a news reporter mentioned the **Enbridge Gas Home Winterproofing Program**, which provides free insulation, draft proofing and a smart thermostat to income-qualified homes.

She thought it sounded like a good idea, so she took a few minutes and applied. After a few questions, she qualified. Not long after, she received a visit from a program delivery agent, who checked her home and confirmed she could receive free insulation and draft proofing to make it more comfortable, energy efficient and sustainable year round.

Once the free upgrades were installed, Rosemary saw a difference almost immediately.

Like many older adults, Rosemary is on a fixed income, so every little bit she can save on energy use helps with household budgeting. “I budget very carefully,” she says. “Saving money on heating helps me, my budget, a great deal.”

If your home qualifies, there is no catch—the program really is free and there is no cost to the homeowner.

“One of my friends said she’d heard about it but she thought it was a scam,” Rosemary says. “And so I told her no. I said, ‘I’ve been in touch and they’ve done it for me.’”

If you’re looking for ways to save energy and live more comfortably and sustainably at home, take Rosemary’s advice and apply. “You’ve got nothing to lose,” she says. “It’s free”.

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GOING *to* PIECES

While puzzles may be a metaphor for life, **Elizabeth Renzetti** discovers that solving them might also benefit our brain health

ON A COLD WINTER evening not long ago, I found myself searching for a piece of a naked demon, but no one had seen it. “I’m putting together the trumpet monster,” my daughter said. My son was working on the Garden of Eden. Our heads were bent together over the dining room table as we worked on a jigsaw puzzle, shutting out the misery of the pandemic outside.

Once assembled, our 1,000-piece puzzle would depict 15th-century Dutch artist Hieronymus Bosch’s triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, famous for its graphic and bizarre representations of the Christian afterlife, with sinners writhing in hell and the saved bound for heaven. I suppose we could have chosen something more cheerful, but this one suited the mood of the times. I mean, there’s a dude with a flute sticking out of his bottom, and another being eaten by a

giant bird. I looked at that puzzle and thought: Yep, things could be worse.

We were, of course, not the only family gathered over a jigsaw as a distraction from plague. During the pandemic, I joined the hordes of people who found comfort in that relic of childhood. Manufacturers saw their sales rise by up to 370 per cent. Prices of puzzles rose, if you could even find them; jigsaws became as scarce as monogamy on *Love Island*.

The steadily growing global puzzle industry is worth an estimated US\$718 million in 2022, and is expected to grow by US\$67 million in the next six years. This is one pandemic trend that isn’t going to die, because jigsaws are that rare animal, both fun and good for you. There is no barrier to entry, little skill is required, and they give you great insight into your partner’s character: Do they methodically find all corners before starting, or are they anarchists who dive in with no regard to colour or

pattern? Solving puzzles together fills a basic human need for connection. You can do them alone, but as with sex, it’s just not as much fun.

At one point during the pandemic, Anna Douglas just couldn’t look at another screen. The Toronto-based actress bought a puzzle – glittering flowers and unicorns, no demons – and she and her partner worked on it over a glass of wine. “It was so nice, so satisfying,” Douglas says. “It was slow, cathartic, a little bit anti-capitalist. It felt like the antithesis to everything we do in life.”

When Douglas went to buy more puzzles, they’d shot up in price – if she could find them at all. So she founded the Toronto Puzzle Exchange on Facebook, which now has 825 members. People meet up and swap their 1,000-piece Ravensburger landscapes and their 500-piece Cobble Hill pastorals. “It’s such a joyful thing,” Douglas says. “And how ►



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many things exist that are just pure, pure joy these days?”

Karine Déry is also a “puzzle fanatic” who was searching for a connection – in her case, to other jigsaw fans. Déry, a Canadian who moved with her family to Malta during the pandemic, wanted to find a conference where she could meet other people who loved jigsaws. She searched online and found nothing. So she and her husband, Alexandre Ouaknine, decided they would supply the missing piece, and create the world’s first dedicated jigsaw puzzle convention.

“I wanted the convention to show that puzzles are great for people from all walks of life and all ages,” she says. “They help in many different ways, whether you’re five years old or 95 years old or anywhere in between.”

After they’d secured some unusual funding (the equivalent of \$260,000 from Shark Tank Malta), the Jigsaw Puzzle International Convention was held over three days in Las Vegas in July 2022. A team of “expert puzzlers” spent the whole time trying to put together the world’s largest commercially sold puzzle, Grafika’s 54,000-piece Travel Around Art (they finished just over half of it). Around 2,000 people visited, a number Déry hopes will increase next year when the convention moves to Germany, home of the famed Ravensburger puzzle company.

Like all puzzlers, Déry sees a metaphor in the madness: For her, it’s about setting boundaries – the frame of the puzzle – and conquering a challenge by breaking it down into discrete parts. For Douglas, the metaphor is one of calm resistance, defying the constant productivity that an exploitative economic system demands. For me, the puzzle represents an acceptance of the messiness of life. Sometimes a piece is missing. Sometimes you just have to give up. Sometimes the demon wins.

Before they were a metaphor, though, puzzles were an education-

al tool. In the late 18th century, a cartographer and engraver named John Spilsbury carved some wooden blocks in the shape of countries, so that upper-class British children could learn what parts of the world they should rule. The hand-carved wood gave way to die-cut cardboard, and subject matter is now limited only to one’s imagination. There are Braille puzzles and 3D puzzles and puzzles where no image is provided for the solver. (I gave one of these to my sister-in-law, and she still hasn’t forgiven me.)

FOR MANY YEARS, jigsaws were the playthings of the idle rich, and “extremely popular among high society as a must-have at vacation homes and house parties,” according to a Geneva Historical Society of New York blog post. But then the



Depression arrived, and puzzles became cheaper once they were printed on cardboard. For millions, puzzles printed with nostalgic pictures of landscapes and flowers (or advertisements) became a distraction from the horrors of the world. Sounds a bit familiar, no?


Jigsaw puzzles appear in Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park*, as a measure of one character’s dimness, and in the film *The Queen*, as a measure of how much the Queen was just like us. They appear in the paintings of Goya and the songs of the Rolling Stones. To the 18th-century poet William Cowper, they were “a heap of confusion,” but to British novelist Margaret Drabble, they represent a relief from the cha-

otic boundlessness of fiction writing. As she writes in her book *The Pattern in the Carpet*, a jigsaw “can’t be done badly. Slowly, but not badly. All one needs is patience.”

Puzzles are useful for calming our frayed nerves, and even for building connections with monosyllabic teenagers. But are they also good for our brains? Stacy Costa, a PhD candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, who also creates and gives lectures about puzzles, says that they are. For one thing, they help strengthen spatial reasoning and short-term memory, and may protect the brain from harmful effects of aging. The key, she says, is to build up what’s called a “cognitive reserve” as early as possible. “It’s great to start at 60,” she says, “but if you can start at 40 or 50, and do it over the long term, then those benefits are going to be even greater.”

But, Costa adds, research also shows that the benefit is greatest when people challenge themselves by stretching their puzzling muscles: a Wordle fan should also try Sudoku, and a jigsaw person should match wits with crosswords. “If you want to keep your brain functioning at its best, you really have to go into those other genres.”

I’ll admit I don’t think about my brain health when I’m doing a puzzle. Instead, I’m just glad that my children are still speaking to me (if only to say, “that doesn’t go there”). I’m happy to be creating something that has no real purpose beyond a fleeting moment of happiness and satisfaction.

Not that things always wrap up so neatly; like life, the best-laid puzzles often go awry. With 999 pieces placed in *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, devils and angels all properly sorted, we realized we were one piece short. We looked everywhere, including in the cat’s litter box. No luck. Maybe satanic forces were at work. Or maybe we were looking at another metaphor: Even when things don’t work out perfectly, there is still joy in doing them. 

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Progressive doctors admit that this is the direction medicine is going, to get the body to heal itself instead of employing drugs.

GHR is truly a revolutionary paradigm shift in medicine and, like any modern leapfrog advance, many others will be left in the dust holding their limited, or useless drugs and remedies.

It is now thought that HGH is so comprehensive in its healing and regenerative powers that it is today, where the computer industry was twenty years ago, that it will displace so many prescription and non-prescription drugs and health remedies that it is staggering to think of.

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By Vivian Vassos

next-gen tech

• **TREATMENT** The makers of Emsculpt, the body-contouring device dermatologists use to give skin a firmer appearance and muscle a leaner look, have introduced **Emface**, and Dr. Trevor Born is the first in Canada to offer it, at TMB Cosmetic Surgery in Toronto. “I personally try out every new treatment I bring into my practice, whenever I can,” he shares with me, via email. “I’m impressed with the technology. It targets the skin surface, as well as the facial muscles responsible for lifting the face, to reduce the visible signs of aging.”

According to Born, it’s a 20-minute, non-invasive solution with zero downtime for those who aren’t ready for surgery. The treatment combines radio-frequency heating, to elevate tissue temperature, with high-intensity electromagnetics to stimulate the muscles. In the U.S., dermatologists report wrinkles can be reduced by as much as 37 per cent; muscle tone increased by 30 per cent; and an increased lift, at 23 per cent, in the face overall. A caveat: For optimum results, the patient typically would be within 20 pounds of target weight. tmbcosmeticsurgery.com

• **TOPICAL** Clarins’ cult favourite, **Beauty Flash Balm**, with its tightening and radiance boosting properties, has been around for 40 years. Now it has been updated with energizing acerola seed extract, Clarins’ plant-based anti-pollution complex and oat sugars to create that tightening effect. clarins.ca

for the face

• **PRIME** CoverGirl has been in the makeup business for more than 60



years, but in 2021 launched Clean Fresh Skincare. Try **Priming Glow Mist** with rose water and vitamin C, which the company says improves skin texture, to “prime” and prepare the skin for better absorption of serums and moisturizers. Bonus: Wear it alone or after applying makeup to help it set, or spritz it on for a boost. Another reason we’re fans: Queen Latifah, at 52, is back as a brand spokesperson, and model Niki Taylor, 47, is also on the CoverGirl roster. shoppersdrugmart.ca; walmart.ca

• **BRIGHTEN** **Naturally Serious C Your Glow Vitamin C** radiance oil promises to brighten, nourish and protect even the most sensitive skin. This cruelty-free product is made in a carbon-neutral facility Tip: Apply before moisturizer, and massage in with a jade roller or gua sha tool for maximum absorption. shoppersdrugmart.ca

• **BOOST** **St. Tropez Gradual Tan Classic Daily Youth Boosting Cream** contains a natural melanin booster (to gradually brighten and tan skin), blue-light protection, antioxidants to guard against free radicals and hyaluronic acid to hydrate and improve texture. shoppersdrugmart.ca

• **HIGHLIGHT** **Revolution’s Bright Light** highlighter stick is infused with quartz, comes in four shades and features a sponge applicator to allow for light coverage. Dab it along the cheekbones, bridge of the nose, over the brow bone and even the collar bone. Tip: Use it to lighten skin above the upper lip that sometimes darkens with age. shoppersdrugmart.ca

• **PROTECT** If you prefer a pared-down skin care routine, try **Dermalogica Prisma Protect SPF 30**, a multitasking moisturizer. It guards against damaging UVA/UVB rays and pollution, helps even skin tone and, with its light-reflecting and hydrating formulation, it might be all you need. dermalogica.ca

for the eyes

• **FOR DAY** “To me, the idea of a glow for your eye area is that you don’t want any dark circles – anywhere,” writes U.K.-based Trinny Woodall, when I put the question to her via email. She’s the creator of the Trinny London cosmetics

ILLUSTRATION, HANNA BARCZOK


line – 60 per cent of her customer base are 40-plus. **Woodall's tip:** Place a dab of concealer on the inner part of your nose near the eye, where you sometimes don't notice dark circles. "As soon as you cover it, you look – and feel – wide awake and fabulous." Try **Trinny London BFF Eye serum-concealer**, which comes in 12 shades and contains peptides for toning the skin, hyaluronic acid to hydrate and a cooling applicator tip to reduce puffiness. trinnylondon.com

• **FOR NIGHT** **StriVectin Advanced Retinol Multi-Correct Eye Cream** is a new formulation that provides the wrinkle-reducing properties of retinol for the delicate eye area, without the irritation. It uses the company's patented NIA-114 niacin cocktail to reduce skin sensitivity and add radiance. It's gentle enough to apply during the day, but giving your eye area a massage with the cooling applicator tip is comforting self-care for the end of the day. strivectin.com

for the body

• **SOAK IT UP** **Dr Teal's Foaming Bath with Pure Epsom Salt Glow & Radiance** contains vitamin C and mood-boosting citrus essential oil. If you're a purist, the company also makes an Epsom salt soaking solution with the same ingredients. **Tip:** Take a few tablespoons of Epsom salt, mix it with water and use it as a body scrub to exfoliate and renew skin. drteals.com; walmart.ca

• **SHINE IT UP** **Shu Uemura's new Gentle Radiance Deep Cleanser** shampoo soothes the scalp, doesn't weigh down fine hair and removes excess sebum and pollutants to boost natural shine. Energizing citrus, calming blue chamomile and warm notes of cedar, add an aromatherapeutic experience. sephora.ca; www.shuuemura.ca

• **CHEW IT UP** Try **New Nordic Hair Volume Gummies**, part of the Swedish company's hair-volume collection, which also features shampoo and conditioner. The vegan chewable supplement, like its line of bestselling tablets, is said to help strengthen locks with biotin and add shine with a patented apple-extract formula. New Nordic has also stocked its herbal Hair Volume conditioner with the shine booster. newnordic.ca 



RELATIONSHIPS

An Unfair AFFAIR

In the effort to banish stigma and gender-based double standards, should we put the term “cougar” to bed?
Here’s to you, Mrs. Robinson **By Popi Bowman**

A MAY-DECEMBER ROMANCE often describes a relationship between an older man and a younger woman, but when the roles are reversed, the older woman is commonly dismissed as a “cougar” who stalks and preys on younger men. The term was popularized in the early aughts when former *Toronto Sun* sex and relationships columnist Valerie Gibson published *Cougar: A Guide for Older Women Dating Younger Men*, where she wrote about “the new breed of single, older woman ... [who] knows exactly what she wants. What she wants is younger men and lots of great sex.” The flip side of her premise was that many young men were relieved to be free from the pressure to settle down.

I wasn’t aware of the book when I met my life partner, who is 14 years younger, but I always felt self-conscious about being perceived as a cougar. After a few uncomfortable conversations, I quickly learned to avoid the topic around acquaintances. Since most people assumed we were both in our 20s then, it was easy to sidestep.

When I recently slipped our age gap into a casual conversation at work, my millennial co-worker blurted out, “That’s weird!” I asked her why, given how common it is to see an older man with a younger woman. “You’re right, it shouldn’t make a difference,” she admitted. I was surprised it was the first time she had considered the double standard.

I’ve been with my partner more than 15 years, and as I enter my 50s, he’s in his late 30s. I know from experience a large age difference can impact a relationship, mainly because it affected our friend groups (which can be surprisingly ageist – we each lost a “best” friend) and how family members treated us (in some cases, horribly). My co-worker was one of many people who have stepped into uncomfortable territory; years earlier, another female colleague suggested I should be extra cautious because my partner might be with me for financial support. That was especially amusing, because we met when I was broke.

I usually avoid talking about my relationship, while my partner proudly (sometimes too loudly) proclaims my age like a medal of honour. He enjoys seeing the looks of disbelief, since most people still assume we’re the same age. We sometimes joke that he’s my fountain of youth. ➤

Mrs. Robinson, played by Anne Bancroft in 1967’s *The Graduate*, became a toxic trope for a sexy older seductress who preys on younger men, in this case, Benjamin Braddock, a star-making role for Dustin Hoffman.





REVERSING THE ROLES

No matter what stage of life we're in, everyone can have major differences when it comes to financial success, having children, physical abilities and sexual needs. A large age gap can amplify those differences, but why should public opinion judge a relationship more harshly when the woman happens to be older?

We can partially blame conventional gender roles, according to Justin Lehmiller, a renowned social psychologist, research fellow at Indiana University's Kinsey Institute, author and self-described sexpert. In his 2011 paper, "May-December Paradoxes: An Exploration of Age Gap Relationships in Western Society," Lehmiller and his co-author explain that "pairings between older men and younger women seem logical because they are consistent with the traditional provider-homemaker marital arrangement."

Now, it seems antiquated to expect the older partner to take care of the younger one, but patriarchal tradition dictated the man in a heterosexual union provide financial stability, while the woman managed the children and household. For centuries, a woman was called a "spinster" if she weren't married by her mid-20s. Young women were traditionally seen as more fecund, and recent research supports the belief that girls mature earlier than boys. As Lehmiller notes, definitions of normal relationships are evolving, and he cites the #MeToo movement as one reason attitudes are changing. "There is more celebration of older women, but also more stigma against older men dating younger women," he explains. "There's a broader rethinking of relationships and sexual partnerships. Stigma hasn't disappeared, it's just shifting directions."

A QUESTION OF AGE

So now that we are in a time of somewhat precarious equality between the sexes, how have age-based gender assumptions changed? It depends where you look. "Cougar" is a word that can be found in many headlines about celebrity relationships, but in early 2021, a *New York Post* article about Olivia Wilde and Harry Styles (who have a 10-year age gap) proclaimed: "Once seen as desperate women on the prowl, cougars ... are having a cultural moment."

The unofficial queen of cougars, Madonna (now 64), hardly fits the "desperate women" cliché, and she's been dating younger men for decades – some more than 30 years her junior. However, her blatantly sexual persona and questionable cosmetic surgery choices tend to reinforce the negative "cougar" stereotype – which encompasses the lonely divorcée, the filthy-rich widow and the seductive school teacher.

One of the most well-known examples, Brigitte Macron,

met her husband when Emmanuel (the future president of France) was her 15-year-old student. A 24-year age difference didn't stop her from eventually marrying him, but to avoid scrutiny, the couple didn't make their first public appearance until several years later. In 2017, *The Washington Post* noted, "Even supporters of other candidates now say that the details of their relationship should not impact voters' decision-making process. They point out that many other male world leaders (one of them living in D.C.) have married much younger women, without causing a national debate."

Another example of aging rebelliously, 81-year-old fashion icon Vivienne Westwood is approaching her 30th anniversary with husband Andreas Kronthaler, who is 25 years younger; obviously, she didn't give a damn what anyone thought about their union. Several other high-profile relationships have contributed to the normalization of older women with younger partners, such as Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi, who have a 15-year age gap, and more recently, Holland Taylor, who turns 80 in January, and Sarah Paulson, 48 in December, who connected romantically almost a decade after they met.

Meanwhile, as older women are becoming more accepted, some older men have contributed to the bias against "trophy wives" – notably, when David Foster, 73, last December posted a photo of his bikini-clad, post-birth wife Katharine McPhee, 38, on Instagram. Critics accused him of objectification; it doesn't help that it's Foster's fifth marriage, and his wives keep getting younger.

Then again, in a consenting relationship between adults, why should age be anyone's concern? Of course, it's relevant in terms of life stages and self-realization, as illustrated by the recent film, *Good Luck to You, Leo Grande* – in which

Emma Thompson's widowed character hires a (significantly younger) male sex worker, played by 29-year-old Daryl McCormack. As *The Guardian* speculated, "What if this was a middle-aged man with a younger female sex worker? ... It naturally wouldn't be the same; the tone would shift away from comedy, but that is because the power relations of gender affect the bought-sex experience, as they affect every other kind of experience."

North American statistics are sparse when it comes to the details of age-gap relationships, but most numbers show somewhere close to 10 per cent of marriages have a significant age gap (more than 10 years); in these cases, only about one per cent of marriages involve an older woman. In Canada, almost 60 per cent of marriages land within a three-year age difference, according to the most recent data on marriage released by Statistics Canada in 2003; it is currently analyzing key indicators from marriage registrations between 2009-2020, but no release date has been set.

The 2003 report, "May-December: Canadians in Age- ➤



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Discrepant Relationships,” noted that “until recently, much of the attention given to age-discrepant unions was negative,” and the unions were expected to be “fraught with problems,” although other factors such as poverty or ethnic differences contributed to more conflict than age. The report also highlighted a significant difference for male same-sex couples, where one-quarter had an age gap of 10 or more years, compared with 18 per cent of female same-sex unions, and eight per cent of heterosexual unions.

SEX, LOVE AND POWER

When asked if a large age gap negatively affects a relationship, Lehmiller admits the topic is relatively unexplored. “Due to the lack of available data, that’s an unresolved question,” he says, “but one obvious implication is that with a much larger age gap, the older partner will most likely pass prematurely.” That’s often a discussion in my home, so it’s a fair (although painful) point. Then again, unexpected events can happen to anyone, anytime, regardless of age.

The conversation with Lehmiller quickly moves on to menopause and other age-related issues. “There can be concern around perception of appearance and signs of aging because women are held to a harsher standard in terms of appearance,” he emphasizes. Naturally, attractiveness and sex appeal are in the eye of the beholder, but when it comes to the bedroom, Lehmiller highlights a few logistical challenges for women. “Sexual difficulties can arise, such as pain, dryness, sexual functioning, desire discrepancies or sex-related issues. But there are also remedies, including hormonal treatments and lubricants,” he notes. On the other hand, men aren’t immune to sexual dysfunction and age-related issues.

When it comes to the balance of power, Lehmiller believes reducing the discussion to age alone is narrow-sighted; the older partner isn’t necessarily “in control,” he says. “A lot of younger folks view a power imbalance as creepy, but it’s also interesting how there’s an assumption that older means more power. Many could make the case that youth, beauty and attractiveness are also a form of power.”

Discussions about May-December relationships often suggest a man’s ability to have children at any age sets the stage for the older-man scenario, but when a woman is past child-bearing age, the issue is moot. Many older women value their independence and guard it carefully. As Lehmiller explains, “Women tend to take on the caretaker role in relationships more often than men. Older women are increasingly living apart from new partners in order to maintain independence and avoid taking on a higher-effort role in the relationship.”

READING THE LABEL

Let’s get back to cougars, and how Carlyle Jansen, a Toronto-based sex therapist, producer of the Toronto International Porn Festival and founder of the sexuality shop Good For Her, believes it’s an empowering word. “A woman can say, ‘Yeah, I’ve got wrinkles but I’m still sexy, and I have experience, and I know that I can be a good partner to you, and I can teach you some things.’”

I shared her comments with our teenager, who’s received more than her fair share of unsolicited approaches from older men, and she was quick to point out another double standard. “Some of the guys who try to lure me say the same things: ‘I’m mature, I can teach you.’ And why is it always just about sex, not love?” Several years ago, as she became aware of our age difference (especially after visiting her friends’ homes, and comparing parents), our daughter started teasing me – mainly by threatening to date much older men. But she also appreciates that her friends are

envious of her “cool” dad, and since I am the same age as most of her friends’ parents, none of the kids seem to notice the age difference.

When I met her father, I was completely blind to his interest, but then he pursued me like no other man had (in the best of ways). Conversely, in my late teens, I chased after an older man who was so uncomfortable with our 20-year age gap that he would rarely go anywhere in public with me, other than in the company of close friends. (No, we didn’t have sex – mainly because he didn’t want to.) Decades later, I can say that our relationship was a mature friendship, complicated by our attraction to each other and his worries about what some

people might think. Ironically, I stumbled into a similar dilemma almost 20 years later.

The stigma that surrounds older women dating younger men is so pervasive, a prominent mental health advocate, who is in a relationship with a man more than 10 years younger, declined an interview unless she could remain anonymous – despite sharing many personal details about her life throughout her public presentations. It made me wonder if some people believe being labelled a cougar is more harmful than being labelled mentally ill.

Along with stomping out the stigma around race, gender identity and sexual preference, it’s time to rethink our preconceptions around older women, especially when it comes to how we judge or label their personal relationships. Now that I’ve entered my 50s and I am in the longest relationship of my life, even as I begin to contemplate the ticking clock of mortality, our age difference has faded in my eyes. But for others, it’s all they see. ■



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A Toast TO THE Family Diner

The Commodore in Edmonton is 80 years old, the lifeblood of a city, but its future is far from certain By Ivy Knight

IN 2022, A FAMILY-RUN RESTAURANT is a rare thing, and a fourth-generation family-run restaurant is practically unheard of. There's a reason for that.

The Commodore opened on Jasper Avenue in Edmonton in 1942. The owners, the late Fong Chun and Ting Gee, were not part of the wave of immigrants who created Canadian Chinese food. Initially, they served all the things you'd expect to find on a diner menu – cheeseburgers, shakes and cherry pie, as well as sardines on toast and devilled eggs. Eventually, their son Wally took over with his wife, Sun Hee (Sunny). When Wally and Sunny's sons were born, they grew up in the restaurant. David, the eldest, worked there off and on until he bought the place from his parents in 1997, and his daughter, Meagan, joined him on the line until she quit during the second lockdown of 2020. He's still there. So are his folks.

When I visited this past summer, Wally, 86, was washing dishes during a Saturday brunch. He'd take the occasional break, sitting in a vinyl kitchen chair by the doorway, hands resting on his cane as he peered out at the customers in the dining room. Sunny, 84, was there, too, bustling around the

kitchen in a pink golf shirt, her eagle eye overseeing every aspect of service. The photos on the wall near the kitchen show the two of them with baby David by the back door of the original restaurant. (The restaurant was rebuilt after a 1971 fire, which is when Wally and Sunny decided to revamp the menu

There are two people missing from the Commodore staff: David's wife, Wilma (Willi), 68, and their daughter Meagan, 30. Before the pandemic, they were all at the diner, a place renowned for its longevity as much as its hot turkey sandwiches. "It is arguably one of the only old-time, café-

style Chinese restaurants left in Edmonton. It certainly is the only one left in the city centre," Linda Tzang, a former Royal Alberta Museum curator, wrote for a 2012 exhibit, *Chop Suey on the Prairies*, now posted on the Commodore's website.

She notes Jun Gee, one of the first Chinese men from Canton in southern China to arrive in Edmonton in the 1890s, opened the city's first Chinese laundry. His son, Fong Chun, arrived in 1920 and, as we know, he didn't follow in his dad's footsteps, but the rest of his family followed in his, longer than anyone could have expected.

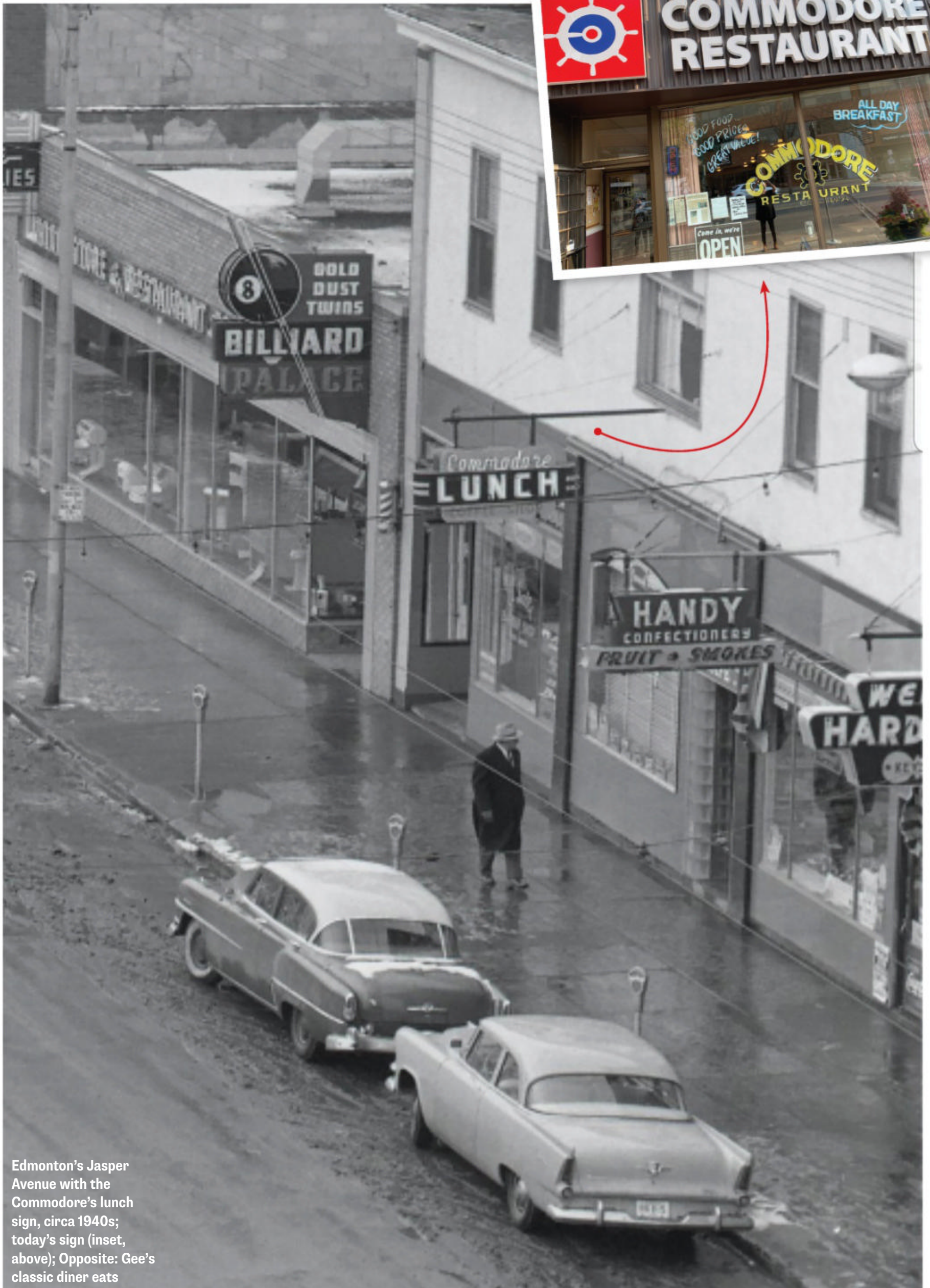
"My grandparents actually had quite a few restaurants," says David. "Back then, in the '30s and the '40s, a lot of the Chinese would go in together to help each other out. So, he was actually partners with a bunch of other people in a bunch of other restaurants."

The family legacy has been a news hook over the years, evidenced by ➤



and feature Chinese Canadian dishes for the first time.)

David, 62, is in front of the stove in a black apron, frying bacon for a clubhouse, and plating eggs sunny side up. He hurries past, ferrying a plate of fried rice to a table, greeting customers along the way.



Edmonton's Jasper Avenue with the Commodore's lunch sign, circa 1940s; today's sign (inset, above); Opposite: Gee's classic diner eats



Gee's grandfather on his rooftop garden, circa 1950; (right) at the counter, 2021; (below) as a baby, with his parents, Wally and Sunny, 1962



the clippings on the wall, and never more than when Meagan, who went to George Brown College and cooked for a few years in Toronto restaurants, took over as chef in 2012, becoming the fourth generation to participate in the family dynasty. Alas, it couldn't hold; the pressures of the pandemic have changed all of us, the Gees as much as anyone. Meagan loves the Commodore – it's where she grew up, after all – but she can't work there anymore. The societal changes of the last five years – from #MeToo to BLM to the pandemic – have all worked on her in a way.

I spent a decade of my working life in restaurant kitchens, and I have covered the restaurant beat for most of my writing career. I saw firsthand

how restaurant workers mobilized to demand better conditions. Less a case of “no one wants to work anymore” than the working class seeing the untenability of their situation – hard labour in precarious employment, with no benefits or sick days, taking place in, more often than not, a patriarchal hierarchy resistant to change – many decided they simply weren't going to take it anymore.

Lockdowns set a lot of people free, and Meagan is one of them. “It was the first time I've had off since 2012. It really gave me a perspective shift,” she says. “I was processing all of the stuff I had experienced since starting in the industry. How toxic and problematic and stressful it can be to be a marginalized person in the industry. It all kind of hit at once and I realized, maybe this isn't the future for me.” She still loves cooking, she just doesn't want to do it for a living anymore.

FOUR GENERATIONS have shepherded the Commodore, but it hasn't been easy. “You could say it was somewhat stressful,” says David. “Each generation wants to do their own thing, to update whatever needs to be updated. When I took over, some of my changes I had to fight my parents over. Same thing with my daughter.

She fought over some things with me.”

Willi, whom they used to call “the machine,” left her accounting job when Meagan was still in elementary school to work at the Commodore, sometimes beginning her days at 5 a.m. “I'm 68-and-a-half,” she says. “Up until I was 65, I was working 60 hours a week, before it became impossible, physically, for me to do it.” Meaning, perhaps, that she could still do it, and would, if only her body would let her. “Would I like to be back there? Oh, you betcha.”

When Meagan was growing up in Edmonton, everyone knew her parents, and not in a transactional, small-business kind of way, but in that these people were actually fed regularly by the Gees. Meagan remembers they would be stopped at the mall or in grocery stores by customers who wanted to say hello. The Commodore has also fed some celebrities, notably Pierre Berton and David Suzuki, as well as Bill Maher, but for the most part this is a place for regulars.

“One fella comes in just about every day for a veggie omelette, no cheese, with a side order of tomato. And Stephen Mandel, our ex-mayor, he would come in for a hot turkey sandwich or a clubhouse,” says David. “If you see them enough, you'll know they want their eggs poached medium or ➤

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Gee's popular Reuben; the Commodore counter; milkshakes still made the old-fashioned way



don't give a damn. We're not unique to them, we're just old."

Not just old, but the oldest family-run restaurant in town, and one with a strong sense of belonging. "Everybody knows everybody, we're all friends. This place, it's one in a million," says Willi. The family may have shrunk in 2022 when Willi retired, two years after Meagan's exit in 2020, but it's still strong. The elder Gees are still in the kitchen, part-time, with their son, and out front are the dedicated servers Angie, Margo and Roxy. The mint green Hamilton Beach milkshake maker is still buzzing up thick shakes 70 years later.

The pandemic taught us many lessons, not the least of which is how important restaurants are to the lifeblood of a city. This is where we gather, reconnect and raise a glass. Where we enjoy the luxury, no matter how

scrambled hard or whatever."

During Saturday brunch, the dining room is full and a band plays Johnny Cash standards and Townes van Zandt deep cuts, their bolo ties and belt buckles glinting in the sun through the front window. Live music on the weekends is one of the few changes that David brought in. That, and a loaded omelette. "The menu has pretty well stayed the same," he says. "Meagan brought in the corned beef hash. And about 10 years ago I started doing a breakfast burrito."

The servers are pouring coffee and mixing milkshakes, while plates fly from the kitchen. A diner is a nostalgic cauldron of emotion that holds our collective dreams, shaped through *Happy Days* and *Riverdale* nights.


WE USE THE WORD "COMMUNITY" a lot these days: The Commodore is the living, breathing reality of the word. "It is a history of this city," says Willi,

"a reminder of where we came from, how hard we worked, all the different cultures that have come into play. The strength of all those people who came before and brought us to where we are."

But Edmonton is changing fast, and the Commodore's downtown neighbourhood has some valuable real estate. "The developers came to us to purchase the property," she says. "We were insulted with the offer. They said, 'We will just build around you.' And David's parents said, 'You do that.'" She understands the ways of cities, she just hates the lack of foresight. "They are tearing apart the whole district, shutting down all these small businesses, putting up 45-storey highrises a block down from us. The developers have no respect for history. They really

humble the venue, of letting someone else do the cooking and cleaning. The family restaurant is a home away from home, with coffee poured hot and chrome napkin dispensers and a daily Chinese Canadian special. The Commodore is all the more precious for being so endangered.

David's parents are now in their 80s, and, like Willi, they'll have to retire at some point. His daughter is forging her own path. The Gee family's long legacy might end with him. "I'll run it for as long as I can," he says with a smile. And if the Commodore doesn't stay in the family? "That's a possibility. I can't worry about that too much right at the moment, because it's not in my control."

For now, he's got orders to fire and a dining room full of regulars to feed. 

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TRAVEL

Go Where You Want to Go

Inspiring ideas for the globetrotter
By Vivian Vassos

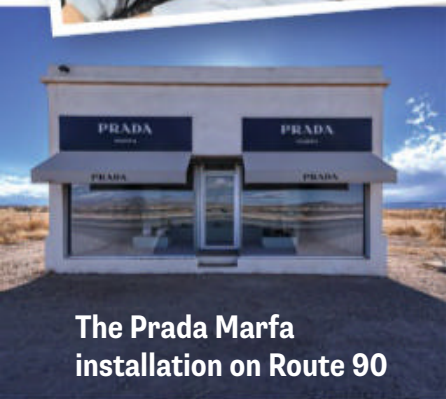


Highway views in Marfa, Texas; (below) Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson and James Dean on the set of *Giant*

LONE STAR

Everything is bigger in Texas (the higher the hair, and all that). Yet Marfa, in the western part of the state, is a hidden gem that's been a draw for the creative set for decades, including the late New York City-based modern artist Donald Judd. La Mansana de Chinati, his residence and studio, with galleries and architectural projects, is open to the public through his Judd Foundation. Others have followed suit: Prada Marfa, the by-the-roadway permanent sculpture, is an installation that popped up in 2005 along Route 90 about 40 kilometres outside town. Although not commissioned by Miuccia Prada, the fashion designer provided luxury goods from her Fall/Winter 2005 collection as props

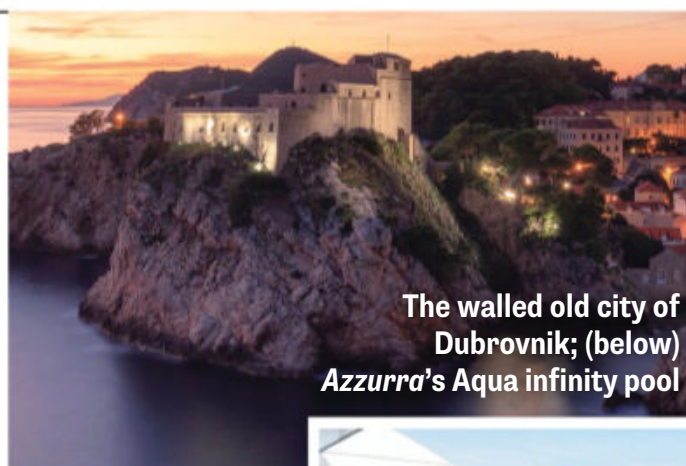
to the artists Elmgreen + Dragset. Marfa was also immortalized on film: It was here, in 1956, that Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor and a newly minted rebel, James Dean, filmed *Giant*. Check out the town's Hotel Paisano, where the cast lived while on set, and take in its collection of memorabilia related to the film. visitmarfa.com



The Prada Marfa installation on Route 90

DALMATIAN DREAM

Explore the rocky shores and historic towns of Croatia's Dalmatian Coast aboard the *Azzurra*, Emerald Cruises' 100-passenger superyacht. At 110 metres (360 feet) long, it's sturdy enough to take the open waters of the Adriatic, but sleek enough to sidle up to almost every port. Highlights include the Sky Bar, the Observation Lounge and the Aqua deck, with sea-facing sunbeds and Missoni striped towels. Dalmatia is rich with Italian influences: From coastal Dubrovnik to the island of Krk, architecture is Romanesque, Renaissance, and Baroque while the rooftops covered with red clay tiles lend the area a



The walled old city of Dubrovnik; (below) *Azzurra*'s Aqua infinity pool

Venetian vibe. Split, the capital, is home to Roman Emperor Diocletian's palace, built in the early 4th century. Used as a set in 2014 for *Game of Thrones*, it's where, in the lower reaches of the palace, Daenerys kept her dragons before the march to Westeros. It's not the fiery



breath of the beasts that fills the air now, but song. A half-dozen men, dressed in white shirts with red sashes around their waists, harmonize



Birdwatching in Myrtle Beach

SWEET CAROLINAS

Many of us get a nostalgic warm and fuzzy feeling when we think of Myrtle Beach, S.C. – March break, the parents loading up the station wagon (wood-panelled, naturally) and heading down to the beach. It's also a draw for golfers (90 courses, plus those of the mini-putt variety), and those who want the drive, but may not have the time to drive farther south. The newly launched Arts & Gallery Trail, in collaboration with the Franklin G. Burroughs-Simeon B. Chapin Art Museum and The Arts Grand Strand, offers art lovers more than 100 studios, murals, sculptures and gardens. And, with 95 kilometres of beaches, and special programs and discounts for Canadians known as Can-Am days during winter, why not? (visitmyrtlebeach.com). But don't stop there. On the drive back, take a *Nights in Rodanthe*-inspired detour via the Outer Banks Scenic Byway up the coast of North Carolina, where the 2008 Richard Gere-Diane Lane romance was filmed. At just over 220 kilometres, the 5 1/2-hour trip along stretches of beaches of the state's barrier islands, through wildlife nature reserves and up-close views of the Atlantic, also includes two ferry rides. Besides, studies show that we're much happier when we're close to water, so the journey may help soothe your post-holiday blues. visitnc.com

a cappella before small audiences. Known as Klapa music, this singing tradition captures the romance of Dalmatia. Next year, *Sakara* joins *Azzurra*. Both will also sail the Caribbean in late 2023. emeraldcruiess.ca

PHOTOGRAPHY, GARY HART/EYEEM/GETTY IMAGES (MARFA); UNITED ARCHIVES GMBH/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (GIANT); DIANA ROBINSON VIA GETTY IMAGES (PRADA, MARFA); VICKI JAURON, BABYLON AND BEYOND PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES (EGRET); MARK BAUER/LOOP IMAGES/UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP VIA GETTY IMAGES (DUBROVNIK)



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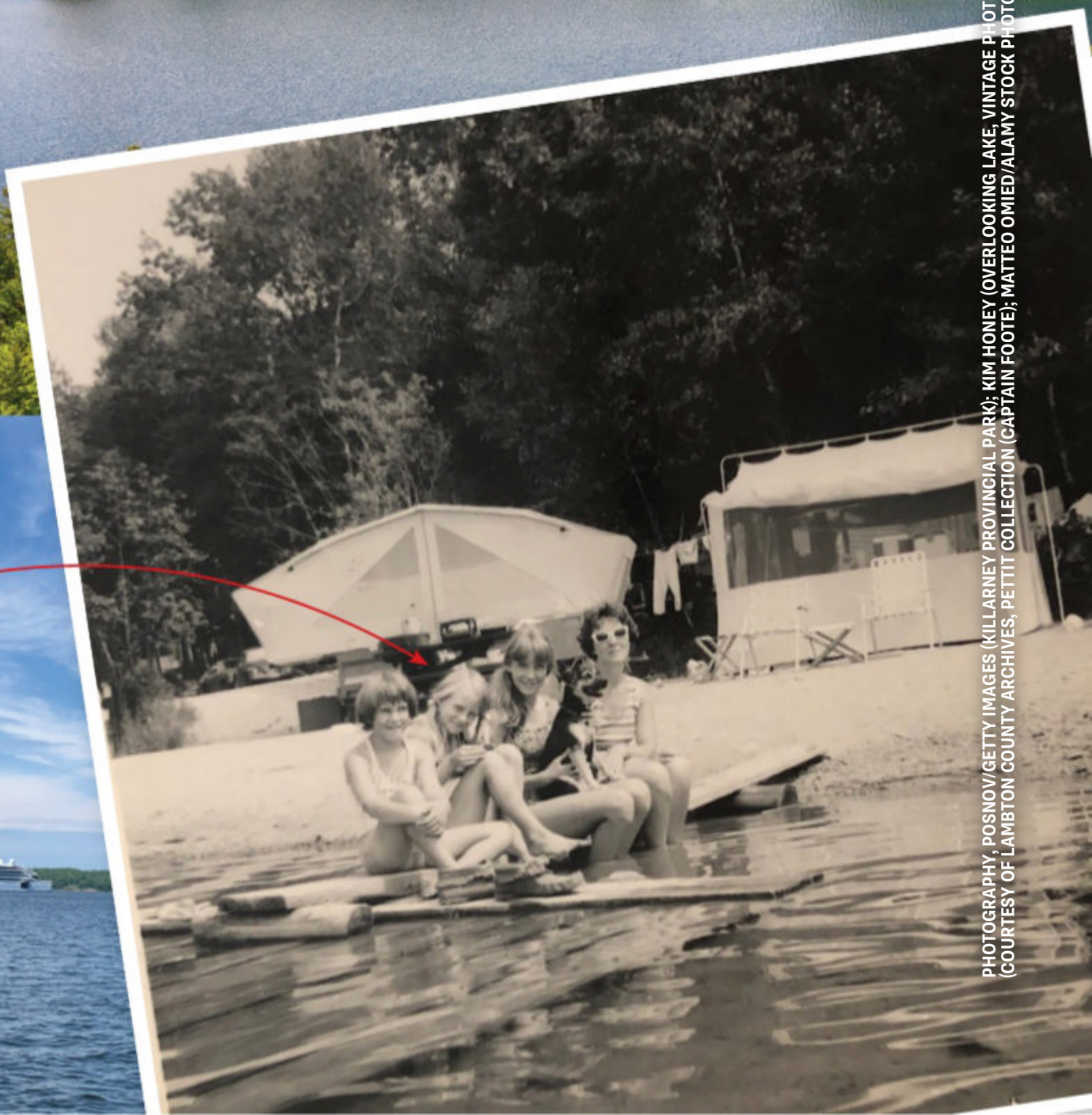
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TRAVEL

The Great

Taking a cruise through time, full of childhood nostalgia,

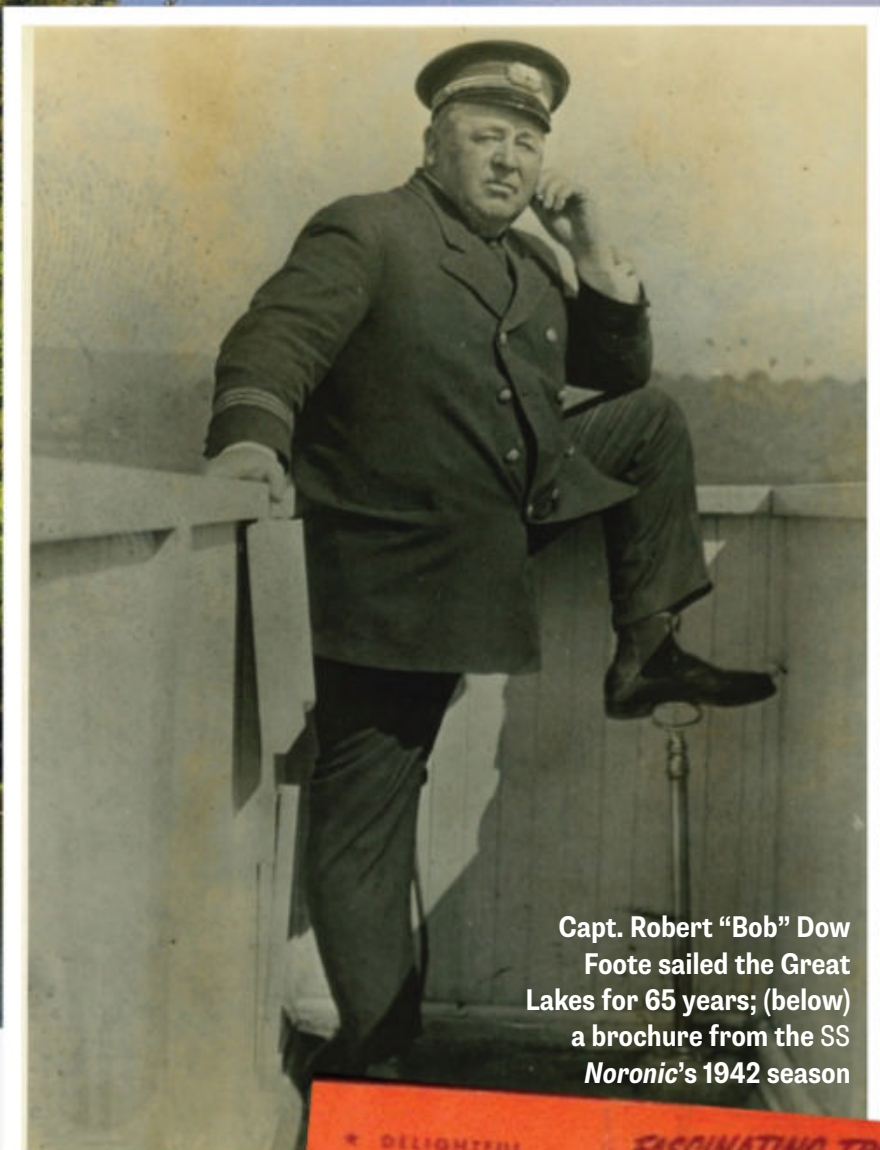
Ontario's Killarney Provincial Park; (right) the author, flanked by her sisters Valerie and Robin, who is holding their dog, Missy - with their mother, Joan, on the dock outside their Killarney campsite, 1970; (below) taking a break from a bike tour of Parry Sound, with the Viking *Octantis* in the background



PHOTOGRAPHY, POSNOV/GETTY IMAGES (KILLARNEY PROVINCIAL PARK); KIM HONEY (OVERLOOKING LAKE, VINTAGE PHOTO); (COURTESY OF LAMBTON COUNTY ARCHIVES, PETTIT COLLECTION (CAPTAIN FOOTE); MATTEO OMIED/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (SS NORONIC)

Lakes Effect

history and science By Kim Honey



Capt. Robert "Bob" Dow Foote sailed the Great Lakes for 65 years; (below) a brochure from the SS Noronic's 1942 season

M

Y PARENTS CALLED ME THE KILLARNEY KID; that's how much I loved our camping trips to the north shore of Georgian Bay. Every August, mom and dad would pack up the tent trailer, cram me, my two sisters and the dog into the green station wagon with the faux-wood side panels, and make the six-hour drive from London, Ont., to the same campsite in Killarney Provincial Park about 100 kilometres southwest of Sudbury, Ont. For weeks on end, the Canadian Shield was my playground. After swimming until my fingers were wrinkled like prunes, I spent hours hunting for quartzite, foraging for wild blueberries, rock-hopping over smooth granite humps and exploring the surrounding forest.

There were squabbles over the sleeping arrangements, since two kids had to share the bottom bunk bed – separated only by sleeping bags – while the third would have the coveted slab of plywood above, perched on ►



A chart on the *Octantis* bridge shows the position of the ship and the Zodiacs in Frazer Bay, Ont.; (above) An 1869 map of Lake Superior



fold-out metal legs.

On a Tuesday in early August, I got out of a big bed with four fluffy pillows, snow-white sheets and a traditional Norwegian blanket in a Scandi-cool stateroom full of blond wood on the brand-new, 378-passenger Viking *Octantis* expedition cruise ship. I pressed one button to raise the light-blocking shade and another to lower the top half of my floor-to-ceiling window – the so-called Nordic balcony – to behold the Killarney landscape for the first time in more than 50 years. The water, rocks and trees are part of my story, and connect me to my childhood, my country's history and my ancestors.

MY LATE MOTHER always told me her great-uncle was a famous Great Lakes sailor, but it wasn't until I researched Capt. Robert Dow Foote that I discovered he not only helmed many schooners and steamers, but once commanded the 600-passenger SS *Noronic*, "The Queen of the Great Lakes." (The *Noronic* went up in flames in 1949 while docked in Toronto, killing more than 100 people and marking the end of the Great Lakes cruising heyday.) It seems I come from a long line of mariners, since Capt. Foote's uncle, according to an 1898 article in the *Toronto Globe*, was an officer on a ship that searched for the Franklin expedition, and Capt. Bob, as he was known to friends and family, never sailed without his grandfather's parallel rule, an old-school navigation tool.

When my great-great-uncle died in 1923 at 72, newspaper articles praised him for piloting ships through treacherous weather, including the 1913 "Big Blow," when 250 people and 12 ships were lost on the Great Lakes during a November gale, and for dashing into the water near Collingwood, Ont., to save a fisherman who had become entangled in his nets and fell overboard in 1870.

For these very personal reasons, I was thrilled to board the Viking *Octantis* for its eight-day Great Lakes Explorer cruise from Milwaukee, Wis., to Thunder Bay, Ont., which sailed over Michigan, Huron, Georgian Bay and, after passing through the Soo Locks, Superior. It was a week of superlatives: first cruise; first visits to Milwaukee, Mackinac

Island, Mich., Parry Sound, Ont., Frazer Bay and Silver Islet; first trip through the Soo Locks; first kayak paddle on Lake Superior; first year I'd sailed, paddled or swam in all five Great Lakes; and the first trip back to my beloved Killarney.

The childhood nostalgia was intense as I gazed through binoculars at the pink granite topped with wind-swept eastern white pines. Through adult eyes, I saw a Canadian landscape immortalized in Group of Seven paintings. Instead of an early morning dash with a bar of Ivory soap to the chilly concrete bunker known as a provincial park washroom, I had a shower in my ensuite bathroom with heated floors, which was stocked with Freyja products, a Nordic skin care line only offered on Viking cruise lines. I didn't have to wait until the water boiled on a camp stove to eat breakfast; I ordered room service. When I was thirsty or hungry, I didn't whine at mom; I pressed a button to summon my attentive steward, Wayan, or took the stairs, or elevator, to the fifth deck. I had heard about all-day, gluttony-inducing smorgasbords on cruise ships, so I was pleasantly surprised by the decently paced intervals for breakfast, lunch and dinner at the buffet-style World Café, where lineups formed at the sushi bar and the steak-and-lobster grill station at 6 p.m. sharp.

VIKING LAUNCHED THE *Octantis*, built at an estimated cost of US\$225 million, from Norway in January 2022 with a maiden voyage to Antarctica. With the addition of its identical twin, the *Polaris*, in September, the ships will take passengers on expeditions to the Antarctic, Arctic, Great Lakes and the Eastern seaboard.

For a science geek, the ship is a floating paradise, staffed with two ornithologists, a climatology and oceanography specialist, a geologist and a chief scientist. "This is not a cruise ship with a side of science, this is a fully working research vessel," says Damon Stanwell-Smith, the University of Cambridge-trained biologist who is the head of science and sustainability on the *Octantis*. "The back of the vessel is the technical space and is paid for by the front of the ship."

Environmental impact on the Great Lakes, one of the largest freshwater ecosystems on Earth, is of paramount importance, especially in the Georgian Bay archipelago, which was designated a UNESCO biosphere region in 2004. The high-tech ship uses a dynamic positioning system to hover at the exact latitude and longitude entered into a computer to lessen its impact on the lake bed; uses electricity in ports to reduce fossil fuel emissions while idling; dims lighting on the bridge to lessen bird strikes; recovers heat from the engines to generate electricity; and chemically incinerates brown water, solid waste and food scraps on board.

I joined a geology lecture in the science lab, where I learned the rocks around Lake Superior tell a 1.85-billion- ➤

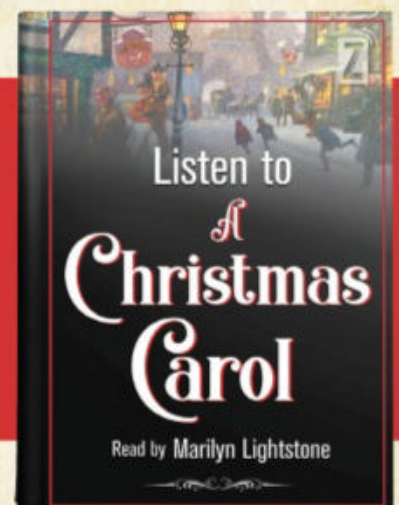
THE SNOW IS FALLING & THE BOOKS ARE CALLING!



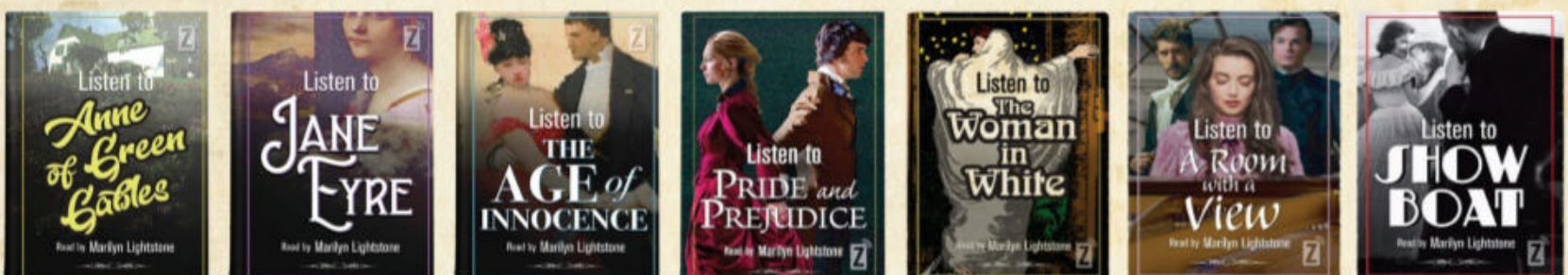
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year-old story about the meteor that crashed into the Earth near Sudbury, with a force twice that of the one that wiped out the dinosaurs. Geologist Julien Cornet explained that when the Earth's crust was crushed, magma bubbled up and heavier metals sank to the bottom of the crater. When I kayaked near Silver Islet in Lake Superior, where Cornet says \$3.5 million worth of silver was mined – “the dollar of the 19th century” – I saw a remnant of this cataclysmic event in a jet-black outcrop of crystallized melted magma near the Sea Lion arch in Sleeping Giant Provincial Park.

The lab overlooks the hangar, where the “toys” are stored in the belly of the stern: 17 Zodiacs, two special operations boats on mechanized slipways, 16 seaworthy kayaks and two six-person yellow submarines. (The submarine dives are dependent on the weather, and one group was disappointed when high winds cancelled their trip below the surface of Georgian Bay.)

It was the bridge tour that wowed me. I was disappointed when Capt. Anders Steen, sounding like a middle manager at Dunder Mifflin, excused himself to dash off to a team meeting. I wanted to know whether he thought all the high-tech instruments have taken the romance and swashbuckling adventure out of the job in the past 100 years, given it replaced a lot of labour that would have been done by calculation, educated guesswork or flying by the seat of the captain's underpants.

On the *Octantis*, there were banks and banks of computer screens, some fed by 300 closed-circuit video cameras, so the captain could see the ship from every angle. There were joysticks and levers and buttons, and tiny triangles moving around on the radar screen. Most large vessels have an auto-ID system that reveals what kind of boat it is, its length, width and speed, and the closest it can pass to the ship without colliding.


That said, the *Octantis* rarely feels like it's moving, let alone in any peril, and there is only one night of rough water


on Georgian Bay as we sailed toward the Soo Locks. At 9:30 p.m., Gordon Lightfoot's classic Great Lakes tune, “The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald,” was running through my head while the ship gently rocked and shuddered in the waves. “*The legend lives on from the Chippewa on down/ Of the big lake they call Gitche Gumee/ The lake, it is said, never gives up her dead/ When the skies of November turn gloomy.*” I turned off all the lights and sat in the dark, watching the swells. Although we weren't on Superior and it wasn't November, and the only imminent danger was my imagination running wild.

By the time I woke up the next morning, all was calm and the sun was shining as the ship approached the Soo Locks. At 23.5 metres (77 feet) wide, the *Octantis* had about five metres (16 feet) of clearance on either side. There was the sound of a slight scrape on the port side as the ship maneuvered out of the lock and around a bulk carrier, and then we were on Lake Superior, sailing toward Silver Islet, the last stop before Thunder Bay.



AFTER THE CRUISE, I excitedly told friends about my 20-kilometre bike trip around the perimeter of Mackinac Island, the Parry Sound Bikes tour around the harbourfront, the bus excursion to Killbear Provincial Park to learn about a birch bark canoe built by Anishinaabe youth, and the geology lecture where I held a pellet of taconite – the crushed iron ore the Edmund Fitzgerald was carrying when it sank in November 1975.

I may have dined like a king and slept like a baby, but I will remember the cruise, especially, for that magical day in Killarney. After a kayak paddle, and a feast on fried whitefish at the Killarney Mountain Lodge, I was ready for my special mission: to swim, possibly for the last time, at Killarney. I knew, like the children jumping off the dock, I would acclimate to the frigid temperature and eventually be able to paddle around. After many agonizing minutes of hesitation, I jumped into the channel and shot right back out. The water took my breath away, just as I remembered, and that was enough. I did not linger in the sun, trying to warm up, because there was a tender waiting to ferry me back to the cruise ship, where a plush bathrobe, slippers and a hot shower were waiting for the Killarney Kid. 

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IF YOU GO:

> Check the website, vikingcruisescanada.com, for available dates. At press time, only May and June sailings were available for Milwaukee to Thunder Bay. • **Price per person:** From US\$8,395 • **Airfare per person:** From US\$799 • **Drinks:** Free beer, wine and soft drinks at lunch and dinner • **Excursions:** One free land excursion in every port (must be booked ahead)

George Lake at daybreak in Killarney Provincial Park. Opposite: Franklin Carmichael's *Mirror Lake*, 1929; a bell from the SS *Edmund Fitzgerald*, Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum, Michigan

PHOTOGRAPHY, STEVE-XTC/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (MIRROR LAKE, FRANKLIN CARMICHAEL 1929); DIANNE LEETH/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (EDMUND FITZGERALD BELL); INTERFOTO/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (GEORGE LAKE)



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DOWN

- 1 Speak hoarsely
- 2 Spunky spirit
- 3 Blue bill
- 4 "May ___ excused?"
- 5 Logger's call before a fall
- 6 Upscale apartment
- 7 Risk being bleeped
- 8 Nothing specific
- 9 Elicit a "Wow!"
- 10 Calm and serene
- 11 Bolivian capital, and the world's highest
- 12 Author Zola
- 13 Equally sunburnt
- 18 Quaker product
- 22 TV courtroom drama, 1986-94
- 23 Richard of American Gigolo
- 24 Prop for 22-Down
- 25 Deserves a dog treat, maybe
- 26 Sack opener?
- 27 "Eww!"-inducing
- 30 Shipping-related
- 31 Last number on a hit list
- 32 "Yeah, right"
- 33 Syllables with cadabra
- 34 Rideshare company
- 36 Without a tenant
- 37 ___ bear swim (New Year's Day event)
- 38 ___ about (roughly)
- 42 "... desert on ___ with no name ..."
- 43 Grain tower
- 44 "... get off of my cloud" (Rolling Stones lyric)
- 45 Swiss math genius Leonhard
- 46 Lots and lots
- 47 Follow the leader, maybe
- 48 Toy box truck name
- 49 Muslim woman's head scarf
- 52 Tanned body part?
- 53 Off in the distance
- 54 Teen's room, stereotypically
- 56 Many a millennium
- 57 Canadian Atty's degree

BRAIN GAMES #87
Pressing the Reset Button
BY BARBARA OLSON

ACROSS

- 1 Update, as machinery
- 6 Product testing org.
- 9 Cop ___ (bargain in court)
- 14 Cover story?
- 15 The "O" of MYOB
- 16 ___ the door (leaves in a huff)
- 17 Resolution #1: Cut back on spending
- 19 Pig kin of the tropics
- 20 Van. summer fest
- 21 ___ Bing! (The Sopranos club)
- 22 Happening place?
- 23 Resolution #2: Do some decluttering
- 25 They go downhill fast
- 28 "Put ___ on it!" ("Quiet!")
- 29 Growth: Abbr.
- 30 Super stars?
- 32 Suffix with editor or janitor

35 Resolution #3:

Try painting, scrapbooking, French cooking, etc.

39 Trench coat wearer, in cartoons

40 Atwood output

41 Sponge ball brand

42 "... and to ___ good night!"

43 Aimed for

45 Resolution #4:

Make better food choices

50 Public outcry

51 Like deep-fried food

52 Green eggs go-with, in kid-lit

55 Masters of fiction?

56 Resolution #5 (and the most important): Be happy!

58 Girl's name in Beethoven's "Für ___"

59 Quebec town or its cheese

60 ___ the hills

61 Took the reins again

62 Cuff, as a crook

63 34-Down alternatives

SUDOKU

1				2			8	
6				4				9
				7			4	6
	2				4		5	
		1				7		
	9		6				2	
9	5			3				
2				9				8
	7			6				5

FOR ANSWERS, TURN TO PAGE 94

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ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD (PG. 92)

1	R	E	F	I	T		6	C	S	A		9	A	P	L	E	A		
14	A	L	I	B	I		15	O	W	N		16	S	L	A	M	S		
17	S	A	V	E	M		18	O	N	E	Y		19	T	A	P	I	R	
20	P	N	E			21	B	A	D	A		22	L	O	C	A	L	E	
				23	G	E	T	O	R		24	G	A	N	I	Z	E	D	
25	S	K	I	E	R	S				28	A	L	I	D					
29	I	N	C	R				30	N	O	V	A	S		32	I	A	L	
35	T	A	K	E		36	U	P	A	N	E	W	H		38	O	B	B	Y
39	S	P	Y			40	N	O	V	E	L				41	N	E	R	F
				42	A	L	L	A				43	S	H	O	T	A	T	
45	E	A	T	H	E	A	L		48	T	H	I	E	R					
50	U	P	R	O	A	R			51	O	I	L	Y		52	H	A	M	
55	L	I	A	R	S			56	E	N	J	O	Y		57	L	I	F	E
58	E	L	I	S	E			59	O	K	A			60	O	L	D	A	S
61	R	E	L	E	D			62	N	A	B			63	U	B	E	R	S

ANSWERS TO SUDOKU (PG. 92)

1	4	9	3	2	6	5	8	7
6	8	7	5	4	1	2	3	9
5	3	2	8	7	9	1	4	6
7	2	3	9	8	4	6	5	1
8	6	1	2	5	3	7	9	4
4	9	5	6	1	7	8	2	3
9	5	6	1	3	8	4	7	2
2	1	4	7	9	5	3	6	8
3	7	8	4	6	2	9	1	5

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“I am in a holiday mood!”

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BET ON YOURSELF!

2023! THE NEW YEAR ALREADY? SO SOON? ONCE AGAIN IT'S TIME FOR MY **ANNUAL RESOLUTIONS** AND THIS YEAR I HAVE ONLY ONE. IT CONCERNS A CHALLENGE FOR OUR GROUP THAT I HAVEN'T ADDRESSED BEFORE: **ONLINE GAMBLING.**



"RECENTLY, YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED AN EXPLOSION OF ADS FOR GAMBLING SITES ON T.V. AND RADIO AND THE WEB, PITCHED BY CELEBRITIES LIKE WAYNE GRETZKY AND JAMIE FOXX. THESE SITES HAVE BECOME HUGE POPULAR. 19.3 MILLION CANADIANS VISITED THEM IN 2022, MAKING CANADA #8 IN GLOBAL INTERNET GAMBLING.

SENIORS ARE A GROWING PART OF THAT NUMBER!"



"IN 2021 THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS IN ENGLAND ANALYZED GAMBLING DATA AND FOUND THAT ONLINE BETTING AMONG OLDER BRITONS HAD JUMPED 55%, AN INCREASE LARGER THAN ANY OTHER AGE GROUP'S. CANADIAN DATA ECHO THAT DIFFERENCE. BY WINTER '22 **NEARLY HALF THE CANADIANS VISITING GAMBLING SITES** IN THE 9 PROVINCES WHERE IT IS LEGAL **WERE ZOOMERS."**



BUT WHAT'S SO BAD ABOUT INTERNET GAMBLING FOR OUR GROUP, YOU MIGHT ASK? **SIMPLY PUT, IT'S NOT BINGO,** THE PRE-PANDEMIC GAMBLING FAVOURITE AMONG OLDER CANADIANS.



"IN 1945, ONE MILLION CANADIANS PLAYED BINGO. IN CHURCHES, REC CENTRES, AND AT MAPLE LEAF GARDENS, WHICH SET A SINGLE SITTING RECORD OF 12,660. BINGO WAS AND IS COMMUNAL AND **A GOOD REASON TO GET OUT OF THE HOUSE AND MINGLE,** AS IS IN-CASINO GAMBLING AND EVEN WALKING TO THE CORNER STORE TO BUY A LOTTERY TICKET. BOTH INVOLVE OUTINGS."



"BUT GAMBLING ONLINE AND BY PHONE IS THE OPPOSITE. IT'S AN EXERCISE IN ISOLATION AND LONELINESS, A SECRET, SILENT SCOURGE FOR SENIORS. THE T.V. ADS SELL GLAMOROUS FANTASIES OF JAMES BOND LOOK-ALIKES ARRIVING AT CASINOS IN HELICOPTERS AND FERRARIS. **THE REALITY IS PEOPLE SITTING ALONE IN BASEMENTS OR DENS -** STARING AT SCREENS WHERE YOU CAN BET ON ALMOST ANYTHING!"



IT'S ALSO EXPENSIVE. IN ONE 3-MONTH PERIOD LAST SPRING, ONTARIANS ALONE SPENT \$4.1 BILLION GAMBLING ONLINE. **2 BILLION OF THAT CAME JUST FROM ZOOMERS!**



"WHERE DO THOSE BILLIONS GO?" UNLIKE THE REVENUE FROM LOTTERIES AND IN-CASINO GAMBLING, USUALLY COLLECTED BY PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS AND DISPENSED TO AREAS OF NEED, THE LION'S SHARE OF ONLINE GAMBLING REVENUE GOES DIRECTLY INTO THE COFFERS OF COMPANIES LIKE BET365, BETMGM, DRAFTKINGS, NORTHSTAR BETS, BETRIVERS, THESCORE / BET ETC."



IS THIS WHERE A ZOOMERS' GROCERY MONEY SHOULD BE GOING?



AND HOW COME GAMBLING GETS TO BLANKET ADVERTISE IN PLACES AND WAYS THAT ALCOHOL AND MARIJUANA CAN'T?



"SO FOR 2023 I ASK YOU TO RESOLVE THIS: IF YOU HAVE TO GAMBLE, DON'T BET ON A **SCOURGE** THAT WILL LEAVE YOU **POORER** AND **LONELIER**. BET ON THE SURE THINGS THAT HAVE THE OPPOSITE EFFECT: **KEEP MOVING, KEEP GOING OUT, AND KEEP REACHING OUT TO TOUCH PEOPLE."**



FOR A NEW YEAR AND A NEW YOU - DON'T BET ON THE INTERNET, OR THE METAVERSE TO COME... **BET ON YOURSELF!**



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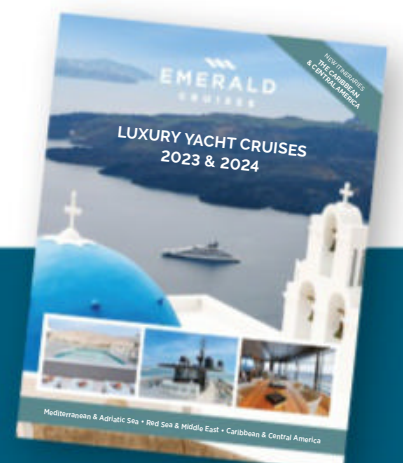
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