

PostScript

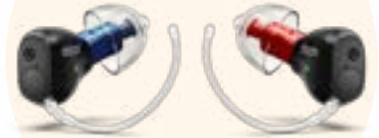
SPRING 2026



THE MAGAZINE FOR RETIRED EDUCATORS



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*Christensen et al. (2024). Evaluating Real-World Benefits of Hearing Aids With Deep Neural Network–Based Noise Reduction: An Ecological Momentary Assessment Study. American journal of audiology, 33(1), 242-253. **A comprehensive hearing assessment is provided to adults ages 19 and older at no cost. The results of this assessment will be communicated verbally to you. Depending on the province you're located in, an administrative fee may apply if a copy of an Audiological Report is requested. Child hearing tests are conducted at select locations for a fee, please contact us for more information. ***The extra 10% will be applied to the remaining balance on hearing aids and accessories after all other discounts (if applicable). Offers not valid in Quebec. Offers expire April 30, 2026.



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PostScript

SPRING 2026



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by BCRTA Member Richard Hoover

PostScript welcomes photography submissions from members for our cover and for articles. Printing requires high resolution images at least 300 pixels per inch in printed format (3000 pixels wide by 3600 pixels high).

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The travel patterns of Canadians, and especially retirees, have changed significantly in the last year. This has meant far fewer road trips across our southern border and more people willing to consider other destinations. There are also some retirees who combine travel with opportunities to contribute to the well-being of people in locations far and wide. If such thoughts have been turning in your mind the last few months, we have some idea starters in this issue.

Louise Herle gives us some of her impressions of India, and into that swirl of colours and exotic scents she drops a few historical facts that might surprise you. What she says lines up with a book I recently enjoyed, *The Anarchy*, by William Dalrymple, which tells the story of one of the earliest and most deeply inhuman international corporations, The East India Company.

Marian Dodds shares an excerpt from her new book, *Tizita*, which has launched to glowing reviews. In this article she describes getting her feet on the ground and bracing to train up teachers in rural Ethiopia.

Recent disruptions in Venezuela had **Marlene LeGates** recalling her adventures there some time ago. It's a window into a part of the world that will likely stay closed for some time - not to be missed.

We also have an extensive set of articles courtesy of BCRTA's **Well-being Committee**, full of useful information about health concerns common to retirees.

There are of course also a few of our regular treats, puzzles and games.

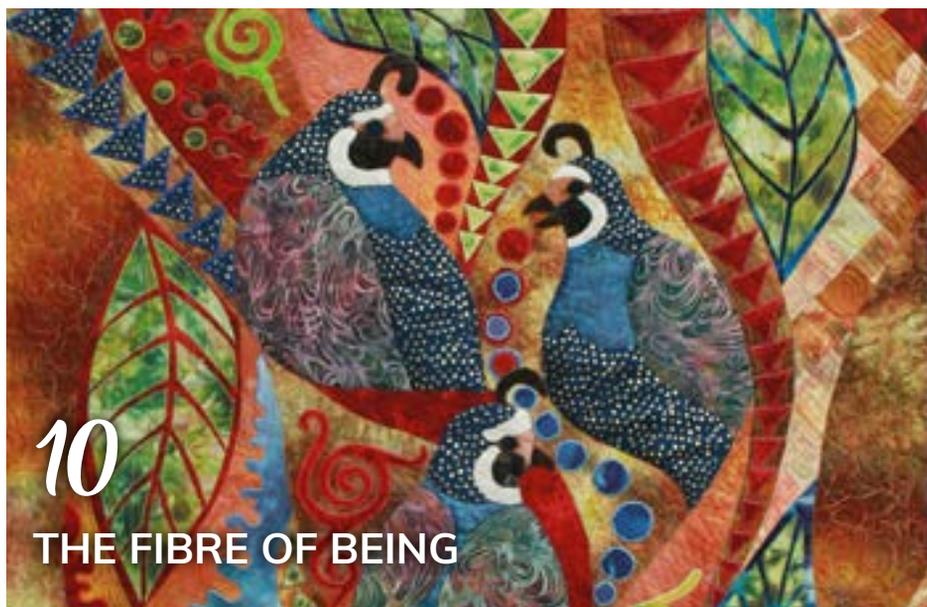
But on the theme of borders let me close with a pop quiz. You may not realize that Canada shares a land border with two countries. Let's not count the north pole. You know about our southern and (so far) undefended border with the US. But there is one other country we share a border with, and it isn't France - the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon have a body of water separating them from Canada. A clue: we didn't get this border until the 2020's. It relates to recent international news and it's wild! Let us know if you figure it out.

The Editor

postscript@bcрта.ca

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PROVINCE-WIDE

To open the door to retirees in BC, BCRTA focuses on making it easy—and appealing—for retirees to say “yes.” One of the most effective strategies is offering free first-year membership. This allows retired teachers to explore what BCRTA offers without pressure or financial risk. It’s a welcoming gesture that says, ‘*come see what we’re about*’.

We also work hard to clearly communicate the value of membership. Strong advocacy around pensions, well-being, and seniors’ issues is central to our mission. Added to that are practical benefits such as group insurance options tailored for our members, travel and retail discounts, and access to publications that keep members informed and connected. We enrich our legacy to education by acknowledging outstanding intergenerational programs in public schools and by supporting heritage projects around the province. All of these benefits are important and they come to life best when they are shared by fellow members who have experienced them firsthand.

We provide pre-retirement workshops throughout year. These sessions reach teachers who are just beginning to imagine retirement, and these working educators discover that BCRTA can be part of a smooth, well-supported transition.

Still, even with all these efforts, many retirees don’t join right away—not because they aren’t interested, but because retirement is a time of great change and they lose track. That’s where local branches and members like you and I can make all the difference.

A CHALLENGE FOR THE COMING YEAR

BCRTA has always been about connection. We are a community built by educators who spent our careers supporting others—and who continue that spirit of care and service into retirement. One of the most important ways we keep that community strong is by welcoming new members into the fold. BCRTA reaches out to retirees through the highly visible work of our workshops and media, and the local activities of our 47 branches. But another avenue of contact with new members is one I especially value, and that is the personal outreach that happens one conversation at a time, through each of us.

I want to take a few moments to review the different ways that BCRTA is seeking to expand our membership, because a survey of all those activities highlights the value our association delivers, and why we can be proud to invite friends to join.

*When we take the time to include someone new,
we are saying, “you belong here”.*

BRANCHES

Belonging often begins close to home. Local branches are at the heart of BCRTA recruitment. They offer something brochures and websites can't fully capture: friendship, laughter, and a sense of belonging. Through luncheons, walks, book clubs, speakers, and social gatherings, branches create welcoming spaces where retirees can reconnect with colleagues and build new friendships.

Branch communications keep members informed and engaged, while modest branch dues make local personal participation accessible, reinforcing the message that BCRTA is both a provincial voice and a neighbourhood community.

THE POWER OF PERSONAL CONNECTION

But perhaps the most effective local recruitment happens informally. There is nothing quite like a personal invitation: a phone call, a coffee chat, a friendly email, or a warm welcome at a local event. A retired teacher hears about a lunch from a friend. Someone is invited to a meeting “just to check it out.” A new retiree shows up, is warmly welcomed, and realizes “*these are my people.*”



LET'S DO THIS!

OK, you guessed it, this is where you come in! *You* have a role in the recruitment challenge. You likely know someone who has recently retired—or is about to. Perhaps you know a former colleague who retired some time ago but never joined. As part of our recruitment challenge, I encourage you to reach out to just one retiree this year:

- Tell them why you joined.
- Share what you enjoy about your branch.
- Lend them a PostScript they would enjoy.
- Invite them to an event.
- Let them know their first year will be free.
- Most importantly, let them know they will be welcome.

Some retirees haven't joined because they assume they've “missed the boat”, won't know anyone, or were too busy when newly retired. Your invitation can change that. Your simple, friendly gesture can open the door to connection, purpose, and fun.

Recruitment is not about numbers alone. It's about strengthening our collective voice, ensuring our advocacy remains strong, and making sure no retired teacher feels isolated or forgotten. When we take the time to include someone new—provincially, locally, personally—we are saying, “you belong here”.

Every invitation, conversation, and warm welcome strengthens the fabric of BCRTA and ensures our collective voice remains strong. When you take the time to include someone new, you keep the spirit of connection alive. So let's take up the challenge: one conversation, one invitation, one new member at a time.

Who will *you* invite? •

CAROLINE MALM is President of BCRTA

PostScript Letters

Let's Buy Canadian

I'm always happy to receive my copy of PostScript. I particularly enjoy the section on books in each issue. In the Winter issue, I was quite taken aback to see that after each title this month there was a note stating that it's available on Amazon. I did a quick google search and discovered that all but one title are available from Indigo as well.

I hope that in the future you will strive to highlight Canadian companies that provide the products we want and conduct business in a manner that we can feel good about. Chapters and all local, independent book stores would be happy for our business. I think we owe them that much.

Elbows Up!

Esther Schmit

Editor's Note: Interestingly, it is mostly the writers themselves who supply the info that their book is on Amazon. For some, that is because they have used that service to publish their book and that is the only place to get it. But for others, it may simply be that the brand has become so synonymous with easy delivery that it is the first source that springs to mind. We have done some digging on where else to purchase the titles but have sometimes defaulted to putting in what the writers submit. So your note is a good reminder to us all. Thank you.

It's in the Blood

I was quite proud to be at Blood.ca on Oak Street in Vancouver to celebrate my husband's 200th 'whole blood' donation.

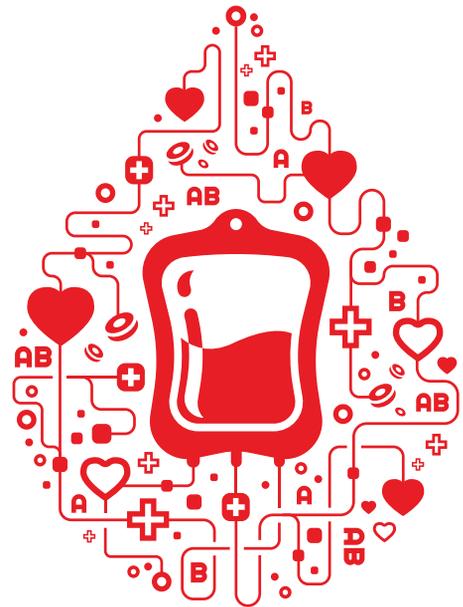
In the 1960's, just over 5% of Canadians gave regularly. It was a carry over from WW2 blood donating when 11% of Canadians did so.

But donor levels in Canada have recently gone below 2%. Not surprisingly, more than 99% of Canadians expect blood to be there when it's needed, but there is a chronic shortage. Others don't for religious or other reasons such as "fear of needles".

I first gave, 17 donations ago, after retiring from 42 years teaching grade 1.

Please consider donating blood.

Sharon E. Cooper
Port Moody



Write us at postscript@bcrt.ca

important dates

CPP and OAS

Payment Dates

- March 27, 2026
- April 28, 2026
- May 27, 2026
- June 26, 2026
- July 29, 2026
- August 27, 2026
- September 25, 2026
- October 28, 2026
- November 26, 2026
- December 22, 2026

Teachers' Pension

Payment Dates

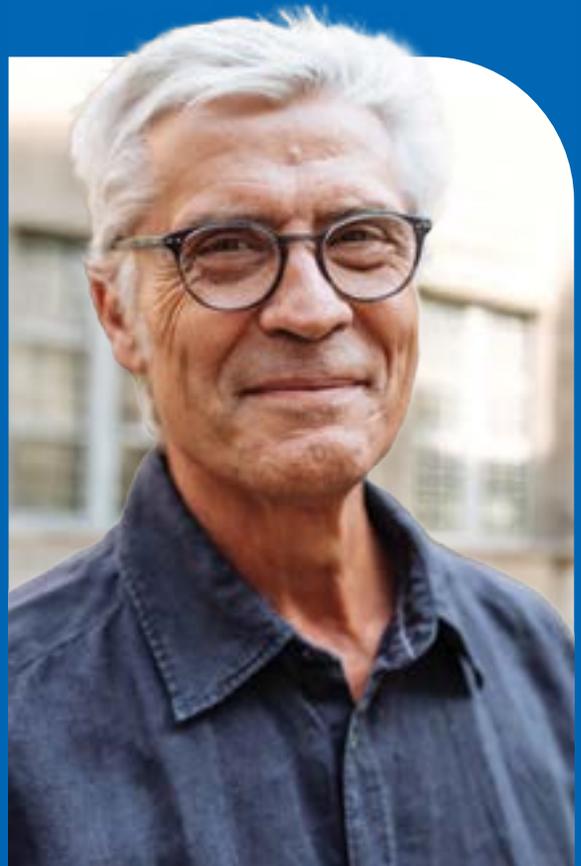
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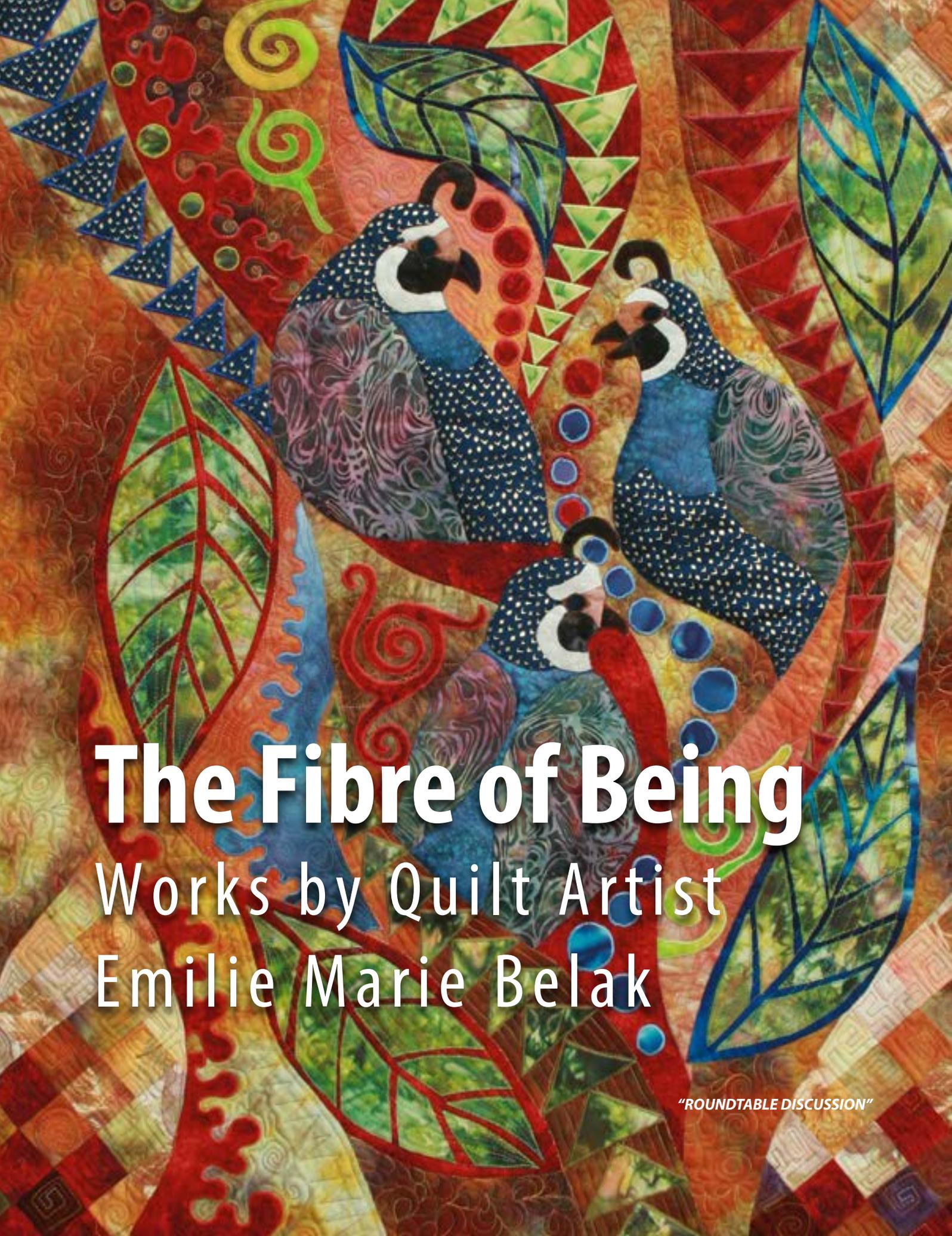
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The Fibre of Being

Works by Quilt Artist
Emilie Marie Belak

"ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION"



Where the Condors Soar
2024, 34"x25"

Sacsayhuaman is an impressive construction of three terraces of enormous granite ramparts at an elevation of 3,000m above Cusco in Peru. Constructed by pre-Inca Killke peoples, it probably served as a huge military fortress.

Roundtable Discussion
2011, 29" x 34" (facing page)

It is a joy to watch the scampering quails in my garden. I tried to express the light mood by playing on the surface of the quilt. Inspired by Gloria Loughman's whimsical work.

Galapagos Untamed

2021, 21"x 29"

Wild, beautiful, mysterious, wonderful, pristine, unique . . . are some of the many adjectives to describe the volcanic Galapagos archipelago, its fauna, spectacular scenery, sunrises, and sunsets.

The bottom layer depicts the volcanic origin. Snorkeling in the shallows presents riches of corals, fishes, turtles. Schools of dolphins came to inquire and put on a show around our zodiac. We walked carefully among iguanas, sea lions, tortoises. We laughed at the boogie of blue footed boobies, pelicans, sea gulls, frigate birds, and many more.





Rooftops of Prague
2021, 28"x24"

A steep climb through narrow and winding Nerudova street to Hradcany Castle Square brings a joyous reward of a view of roofs and chimneys, church spires, and river Vltava with its multitude of bridges.



Marmot Mansion

2010, 24 x 33 in

Peering into darkness I wonder who used to live here. Entry barred by saplings, doors permanently ajar on rusted hinges, the dwelling became a refuge for a family of marmots.

Technique: piecing, machine applique and quilting, photo transfers. Cottons.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

EMILIE MARIE BELAK has always had creative hobbies and interests. She has taken many courses with gifted quilt artists, learning something from each of them. Other artists' work, nature, flowers, color, photographs, travel, and fabric are her inspiration. She uses a variety of methods and materials to express her ideas. In her quilts, Emilie strives to express the beauty of nature, and to give herself and the viewer visual enjoyment.

Emilie started quilting in early 1980's to satisfy her curiosity about the medium, while still teaching math full-time in high school. She is now an internationally recognized quilt artist. Her quilts have been shown in juried and judged shows, competitions, and invitational exhibits in Canada, United States, France, and

Japan. Emilie's quilts have won a number of awards and have been featured in magazines and books. Her quilts have been featured by the Husqvarna sewing corporation and are part of several private collections. Her quilt *In Praise of Poppies* was chosen as one of the '100 Best American Quilts of the 20th Century' for a special exhibit at the International Quilt Festival in Houston.

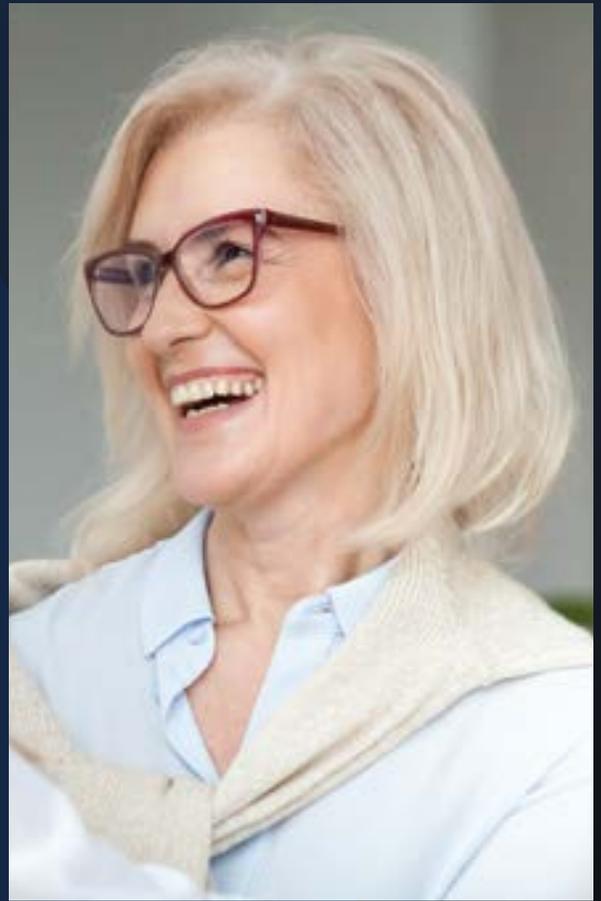
After two decades in retirement, Emilie still tries to spend time in her studio as part of her determination to remain mentally active and physically independent.

Boundary Area Retired Teachers Association President Ted Harrison describes Emilie as a "faithful member of our branch." We thank Ted for drawing attention to her work and especially thank Emilie for sharing these images with us. •

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Building Bonds Through Reading With Children

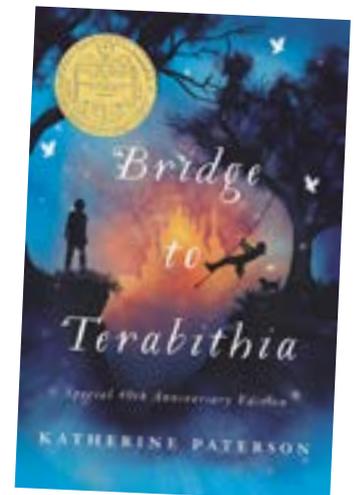
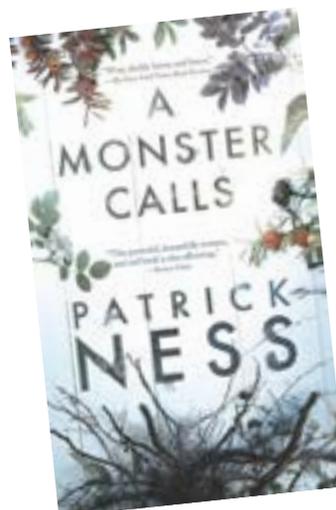
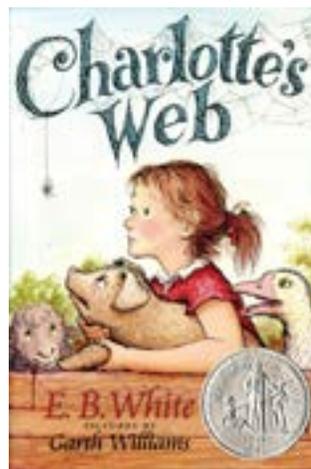
In the Winter 2025 issue of PostScript we featured an article by Joan Elliott on books that teachers recommend to read with children. We asked readers to share their favourites, and the list includes some familiar titles and perhaps a few that are new to you. Thank you to all who shared!

With young readers I love to read **Charlotte's Web**. I love the beautiful story of how a small spider could make such a difference. It has great pictures in it and everyone can connect with some part of it.

For middle school readers I love **A Bridge to Terabithia**. It's a tearjerker but it deals with important issues tweens often deal with like not fitting in, poverty, bullying and even death.

For high school and reluctant readers I love **A Monster Calls**. The book is quite short and the reading level easy for a mature subject. This makes it a great choice for teens who find reading difficult. There is also a movie of the book which is excellent. Teenagers and adults love this book which deals with bullying and losing a loved one to cancer.

Liz



As a Teacher of Grade 11 & 12 French Immersion, *français langue*, I read to them often and on Mothers' Day, I read the French version of **Love You Forever (Je T'Aimerai Toujours)** by Robert Munsch. I always warned them in advance that I would probably shed tears while reading it - and I always did.

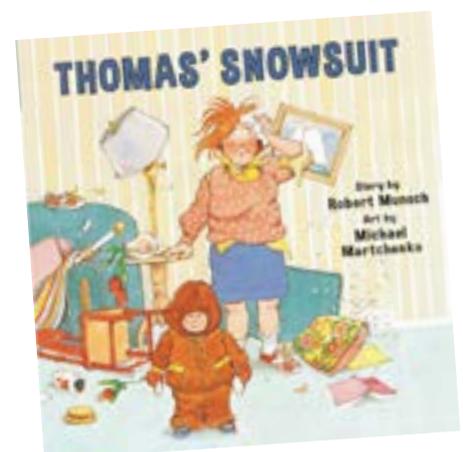
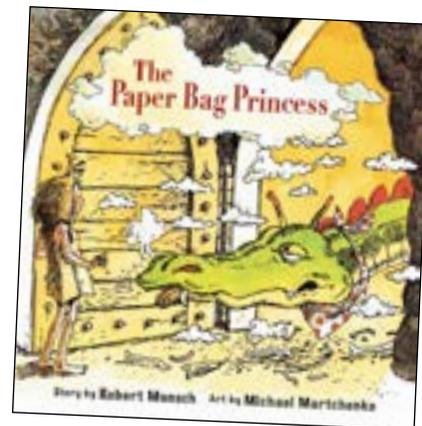
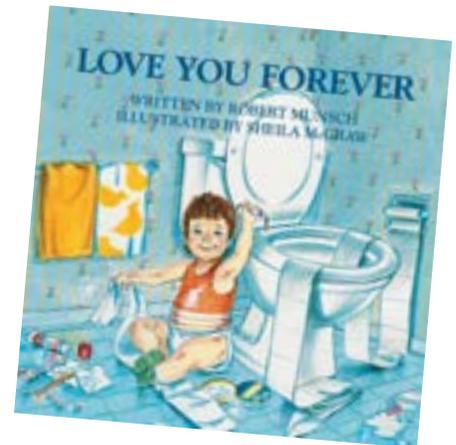
I have met many of them as adults and they haven't forgotten that book, a book which they have bought for their own children.

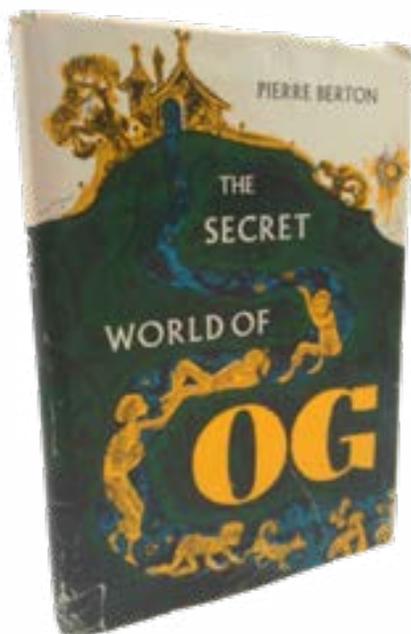
Cheers,

Christine Johnson

My name is Laurie Bauer and I live in Kelowna BC. I retired from full time teaching in 2022 after 38 years. I loved my career. I taught all grades from grade 1-6. I used picture books every day. I felt it was a fantastic connection between me and my students. I loved Robert Munsch books. I actually met him many, many years ago back in my university days. I heard him tell a story, not read a story. I looked so forward to his new books, even more than the kids did I think. His books were a constant in my classroom. He had a huge impact on my teaching career. I hope I helped to encourage the love of reading through these books. They sure had an impact on me.

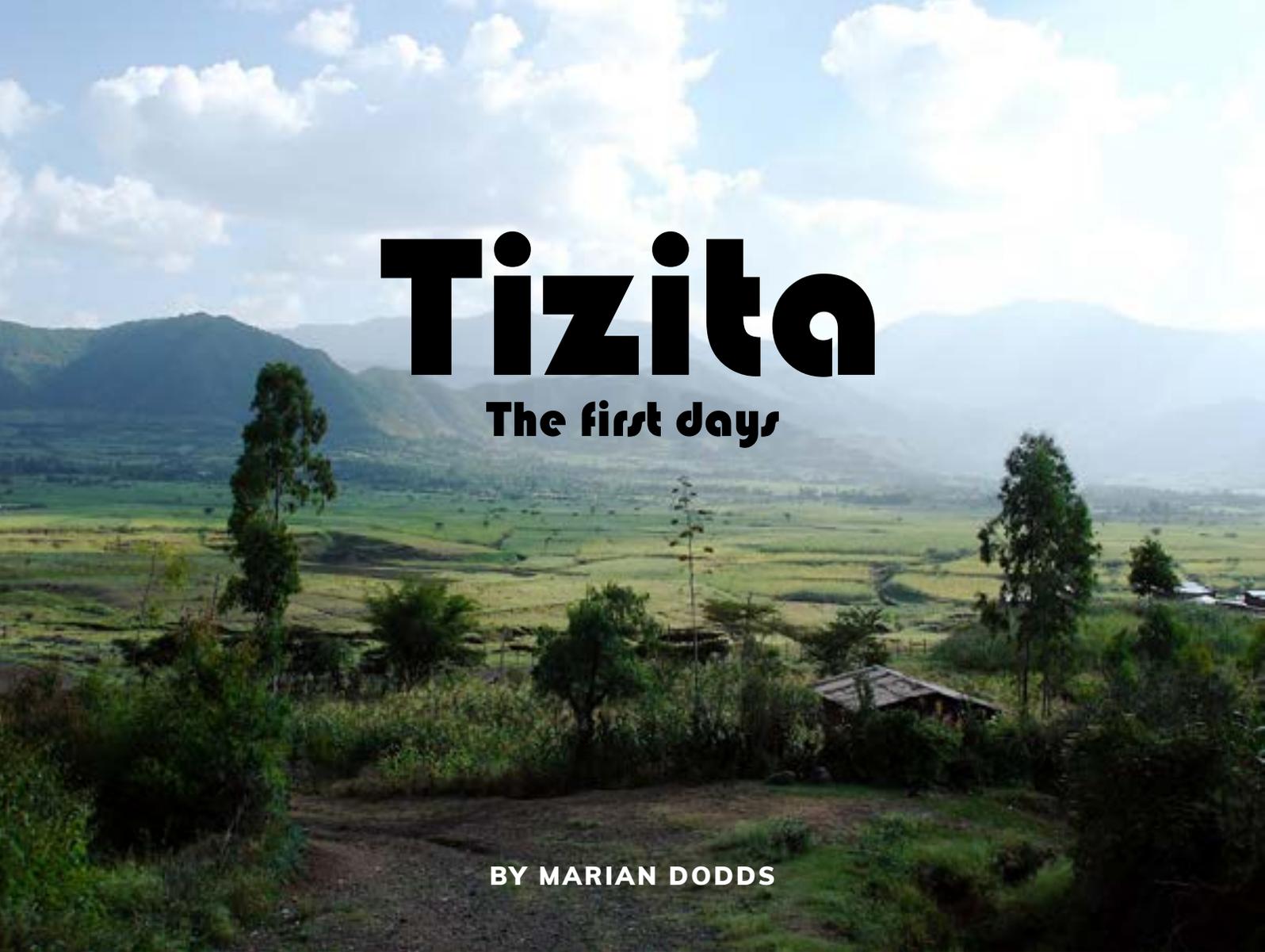
Laurie Bauer
Kelowna





Every year, in my grade 3 class, I would read aloud **The Secret World of Og**. It was my favourite novel when I was in elementary school. The author, Pierre Berton, bases the characters on his own children, which my students and I just loved. Berton's description of the Og world underground inspired my students' imagination, and I would have them draw and colour their perception of the Og village. Their drawings brought the Secret World to life. And it was always wonderful to introduce the students to a classic Canadian author.

*Debbie Sabourin
Qualicum Beach*



Tizita

The first days

BY MARIAN DODDS

Woldia landscape near Teachers' College. Photo by Marian Dodds

It's barely dawn in Addis Ababa, the sky grey and smoggy from diesel fumes and charcoal smoke. Demis secures our giant boxes, marked MARIAN and SHELAGH, to the roof of a white SUV emblazoned with VSO's (Voluntary Service Overseas) purple logo and motto: "Sharing Skills, Changing Lives". We head northeast, grinding across gravel, jerking over potholes, and choking from acrid asphalt road construction until we reach fresh pavement and clear skies. Lush countryside teems with sheep, goats, curly-horned cattle, and camels lurching unexpectedly from ditches, stopping traffic. Shouting men brandish sticks, shooing their animals off the road. Women in long,

slim skirts and diaphanous shawls coax fully loaded donkeys toward the Friday market.

When Demis pulls up at a hotel in Debre Birhan for breakfast, I order scrambled eggs and, because it sounds unusual yet recognizable, the peanut tea. *I'm game to try something new.* Demis, a tall middle-aged man with an aura of calm self-assurance, jokes in Amharic with the waiter who, after bringing him a round stainless tray covered with a circle of injera, the spongy sourdough flatbread that's the staple of Ethiopian meals, hustles back to the kitchen, returning with a steaming bowl of meat stew he upends over the injera. I study how seamlessly Demis uses his right hand to tear off injera bits,

*How obvious are our fears and insecurities?
Is he calculating our odds of lasting?*

wrapping them around the meat to make good-sized mouthfuls.

“Here, try some,” he says, gesturing to his plate. We politely decline. Demis offers again. “It is our culture to share.”

I rip off some injera and pinch up a small bite. “Yum—spicy and delicious!”

Demis exudes confidence—he’s been a driver and logistics officer for years. Last week he’d gone to Woldia to set up our house. “It is a good house, and the furniture has arrived. The landlady is a widow, living in the servants’ quarters in the back.” Trying to visualize this, dying to ask more, I pause my impatience. Years ago, my Sierra Leone experience taught me it is wiser to wait and see, not be too pushy with questions, and let things unfold in due time.

Once we’ve settled the bill, Demis says, “By the way, I suggest you use the toilet. It is clean.” I beetle out back, glad I’ve stuffed toilet paper in my backpack, and find a sit-down toilet, missing a seat. *This might be my last sit-down toilet.* Shelagh

accepts my offering of toilet paper, like a runner grabbing a relay baton. Hesitant to ask Demis about the Woldia bathroom and suspecting a pit latrine, I keep quiet. *Might as well remain hopeful as long as possible.*

We cut through a mountain tunnel Demis says was built seventy years ago by Italian occupiers. The vehicle strains upward from steamy lowlands, hairpinning to airplane height. Breathless from the altitude, I gulp cooler mountain air. Rainy season just ended; the countryside is lush and green. Sun glistening off leaves illuminates fields dotted with golden stooks of grains, where men pushing yokes of oxen harvest their crops. Brilliant green teff grain used for injera terraces up the mountaintop. Circular compounds of thatched-roof huts sprout like shaggymane mushrooms. Double lorries overtake us on single-lane blind curves. My butt clenches at near misses. Terror, exhilaration, and unanticipated beauty—I feel fully alive!

When we take a coffee break, Demis tells us he’s driven dozens of foreigners to their placements.

Left: Tukul huts along the way. Right: Entrance to the house in Woldia. Photos by Marian Dodds.





Simien mountains in Ethiopia's northern highlands. Photo by Marian Dodds.

How stupid and predictable are our questions?

I wonder. *How obvious are our fears and insecurities?*

Is he calculating our odds of lasting? As he speaks, clusters of wide-eyed kids edge closer and reach out their hands to us: "Give me pen; give me caramela." Demis brushes them away with stern admonishments. "It is no good for ferenji to give to children," he cautions. "They will never leave you alone."

As twilight seeps into darkness, we spend our final two hours twisting up hairpin curves high into the mountains. Demis brakes hard to avoid an animal fleeing across the road.

Shelagh gasps. "Did you see those glowing eyes?"

"Hyena," Demis says.

Twelve hours after leaving Addis, we shudder to a halt in front of our new home. The tall gate clatters open, revealing a flat concrete yard fronting a small wattle and daub house. An attractive middle-aged woman wearing a long, gauzy white dress, its neckline and hem bordered with intricate weaving, greets us with a warm smile and loud ululation: "Elelelele!"

"This is Asra, your landlady," says Demis, translating. "She doesn't speak English."

Asra beckons us inside. Fresh green grasses line the floors of the four small rooms and hallway. Settling onto a low stool in the sitting room, Asra rearranges charcoal in her brazier with a stick, then shakes a flat pan of green coffee beans over white-hot coals. This Ethiopian coffee ceremony, a

centuries-old ritual, is to welcome us. *Good thing they taught us about coffee ceremonies at orientation and drinking the three obligatory cups. The last thing I need at this late hour is coffee, but we must start off on the right foot.*

Clouds of frankincense and charcoal smoke swirl around a solitary bare bulb dangling from the high ceiling. Using a wicker fan, Asra wafts roasting coffee smoke toward us. I cup my hands, draw the smoke to my face, and inhale, murmuring my appreciation. Next, using a wooden mortar and pestle, she pounds the beans into a powder and spoons it into a graceful black clay pot she then fills with water and settles over the coals. Once it bubbles, she pours coffee into tiny cups, spoons in sugar, and calls out, “Dirib.” A tall, slim young woman appears through the back door and passes us each a cup like an offering, bowing her head downward. Demis takes a satisfying slurp of coffee, spreads his arms wide, beaming with pride, and announces, “This is our culture!”

Soon after, the Woldia Teachers’ College dean, who looks about forty, arrives in a commotion with four department heads, all men dressed in suits. “Welcome! Welcome to Woldia!” After a round of handshakes, they take seats around the coffee table.

Suddenly, shockingly loud ululations interrupt us. An Ethiopian woman dressed in jeans and a t-shirt bursts in, shouting, “Marian, I didn’t know you were the ferenji moving next door!” The



Camels and kids at a small market town. Photo by Marian Dodds.

others look astonished as she embraces me in a tight hug. Zerefa turns to the group, explaining in a fusion of English and Amharic that her friend, who owns a small shop in Vancouver, introduced us; Woldia is her birthplace; and she and her husband Issyas have returned to help orphans.

I chime in: “When the shopkeeper said the orange spice mix she was selling was Ethiopian *berbere*, and I told her I was going to volunteer in Woldia, she said, ‘My friend Zerefa is from Woldia! You must meet her!’”

Zerefa’s phone beeps with a text. “OK, I have to go,” she calls out as she heads toward the door. “I’ll take you girls shopping at the market next weekend.”

“Very good,” the dean says, beaming at us. Meanwhile, Asra adjusts the thin white cotton *netella*

Clouds of frankincense and charcoal smoke swirl around a solitary bare bulb dangling from the high ceiling...

covering her head and lifts her coffee pot to fill the cups on her tray. Each man, bobbing downward in thanks, accepts his coffee with both hands. Dirib offers around a basket of popcorn. She looks about eighteen and seems shy, her eyes downcast while serving us. My eye catches a brindie cat slinking around the grasses in the corner.

The dean smiles. “We are happy to welcome you. You are our first *ferenji*.”

“How did you find the trip?” another man asks.

“Your countryside is spectacular,” I gush. “The lowlands, the Italian tunnel, the mountains, the colourful crops, the people, the animals—all are amazing!” The men look pleased and proud.

“Yes, after rainy season the countryside is most green and fresh,” Demis says.

“How do you get the weather condition?” The English department head asks.

“Well,” Shelagh offers, “It surprised me how cold Addis got after sunset and how breezes cool things down even at midday.”

“Yes, the highlands are cold at night. But the day is good.”

“What is the altitude?” I ask.

“Woldia is 2,100 metres above sea level,” the geography department head replies.

“Before coming to open Woldia Teachers’ College two years ago, I led the HDP at Dessie College,” the dean interjects, serious and businesslike. “Now Marian has come to lead the first HDP at Woldia. We expect the quality of

instruction should improve greatly.”

In Vancouver at my pre-departure fundraiser, I’d explained to friends my job as Higher Diploma Program leader would involve teaching the teachers who are teaching pre-service teachers how to teach.

“How many will be in the class?” I inquire.

“About twenty-five men.”

“No women?”

“No. Maybe we will get one next semester.”

Well, that’s a surprise. I’d hoped to mentor a woman as a co-tutor to take over next year, something my pre-departure briefing in Ottawa had led me to expect. Challenges are to be expected, but this one on day one—wow! OK Marian, visualize the cultural competency skills “tree” from that Ottawa orientation. There’s a reason those leaves labelled Flexible and Adaptable were close to Patient on the branches.

Shelagh startles me out of my reverie by asking about the English Language Improvement Centre (ELIC) she’s to establish for college staff and students. She’s anxious to understand exactly what’s expected of her since her job description is vague.

“We have not so much space, so it will be in the corner of Marian’s HDP room,” the dean says.

OK. Shelagh and I will be together twenty-four/seven, sharing a house and classroom, sinking or swimming together.

I sip my coffee and look around. Our sitting room is the largest room in the house, with a simple table and four upright chairs pressed against one wall, a sturdy wooden coffee table, and two



Left: Carrying injera baskets. Right: A typical roadside scene. Photos by Marian Dodds.



*A local herder at work.
Photo by Marian Dodds.*

sets of chairs, one pair upholstered in threadbare orange velveteen and the less inviting, skimpier pair covered in cracked blue plastic with a faded floral imprint.

It's already nine o'clock with two ritual cups to go before we can unpack. Right now my bladder is bursting. Steeling myself to face the toilet, I lift the metal bolt, and the door opens into a four-foot-square stall with a squat toilet and a rusty showerhead sticking out of the wall. My heart sinks. *Try to not look upset.* A small wall-mounted sink is outside in the hallway. There's no hot water.

Finally, the dean and department heads leave, promising a formal college welcome on Monday. Tomorrow, the dean will take us to the Meskel celebration. Demis, looking tired, quickly negotiates with Dirib, settling on a fair price we'll pay her to wash our clothes and sweep the floors. "She is Asra's *saratengna*," he tells us, "she will help you."

"*Isbi, ciao.*" Demis shakes our hands in farewell. "I'm sleeping at the Lal Hotel. I need to leave before dawn to reach Addis tomorrow afternoon."

Alone at last, we explore the rest of our small home. Each bedroom has a double bed with a thin foam mattress, a bedside table, and a wardrobe with shelves on one side and a dowel on the other, but no coat hangers. The kitchen contains a long table under a window and two bookshelves. But there is a small fridge! *This is unexpected; fridges are only supposed to be supplied to volunteers in tropical*

lowlands. Demis said he'd found an extra. *Is this an offering to offset the toilet shock?* With no water supply in the kitchen, we'll fill buckets from the small sink in the hall. A ripped screen on the kitchen window faces a row of rooms Asra shares with Dirib.

Rustling through our boxes, we unearth sheets to make our beds. The place is chilly now. I pull out my fake-fur leopard housecoat, an impulse purchase from the day before we left Addis.

"This leopard is going to be my lifesaver!"

"We're lucky Zerefa is next door," Shelagh says. "She'll help explain the culture."

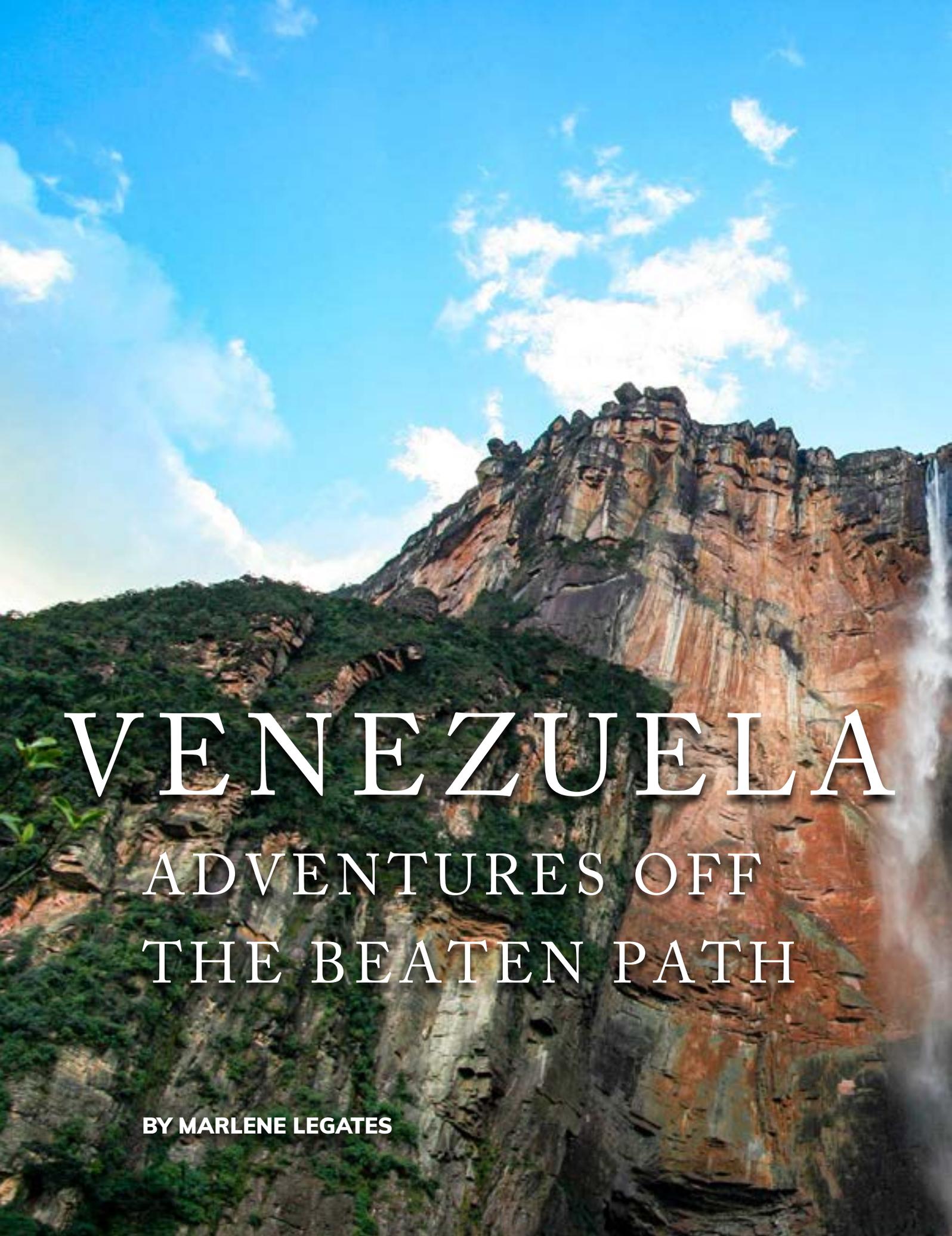
She places a photo beside her bed of a man cradling a fluffy, long-haired cat like a pampered baby. "I wonder how Misty is doing back home with Steve."

My exhaustion is coming in waves, but something the dean said bothers me.

"I'm a bit concerned my class will only be men."

Shelagh offers a non-committal "Hmm." *Maybe she is just too tired. Honestly, so am I; it's been a long day, full of surprises.* •

BCTF retiree **MARIAN DODDS** 'unretired' in 2010 to volunteer for three years in Ethiopia, then 'unretired' in 2017-2018 to become acting editor of Teacher Magazine. In 2018 she joined Simon Fraser University's Writer's Studio. This article is an excerpt from her book **TIZITA—A Memoir of Perseverance and Enchantment.**



VENEZUELA

ADVENTURES OFF THE BEATEN PATH

BY MARLENE LEGATES

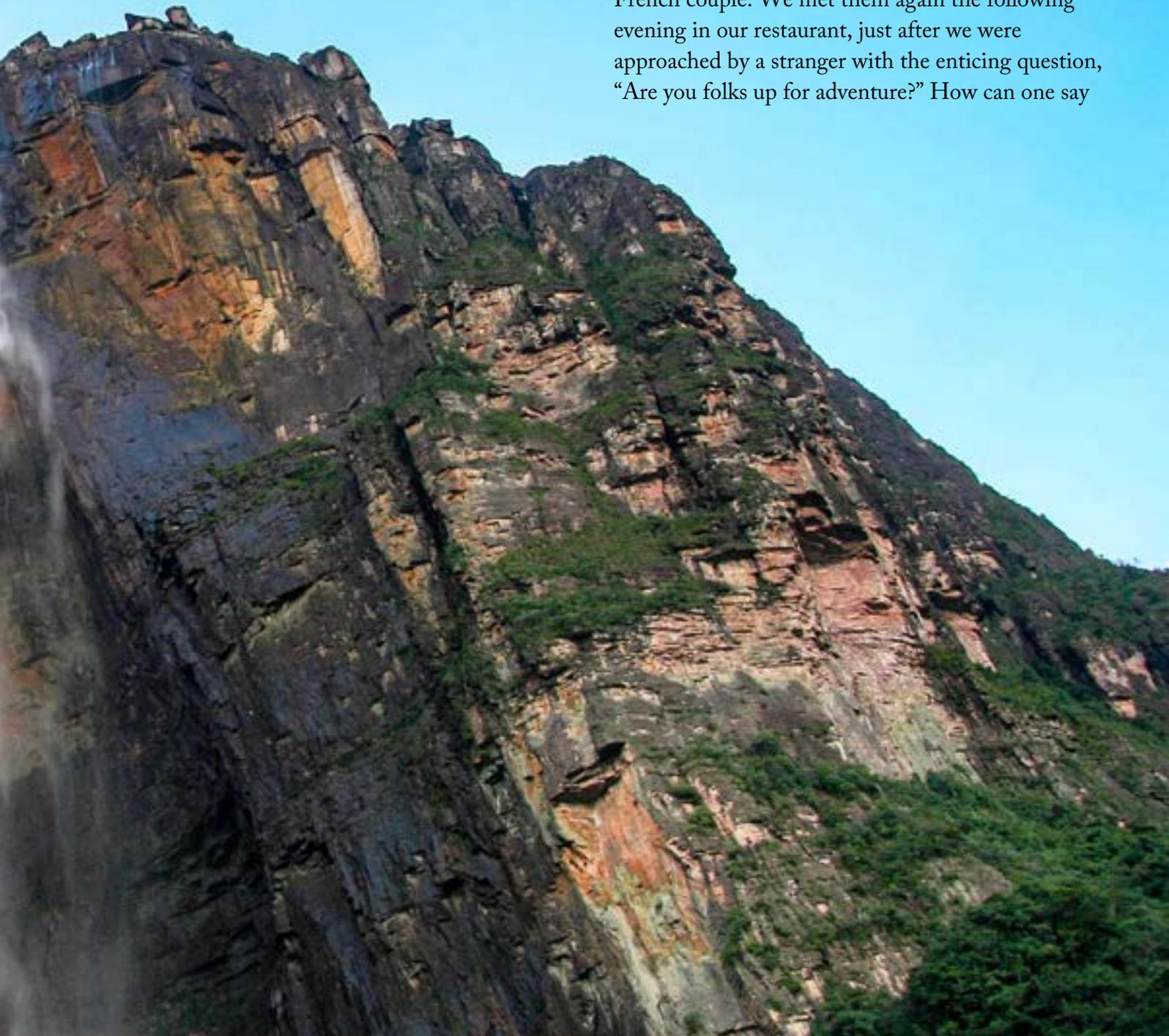
The recent prominence of Venezuela in the news reminded me of our visit to the country in early 1999, just after Hugo Chavez assumed office as president. I had not thought about it for years, but as I recalled that trip, I realized how amazing this adventure was.

Why did we choose Venezuela? Was it the enticing mix of jungle, mountains, and coast? Or the political moment that might prove to be reminiscent of my life-changing experience in Chile during the presidency of Salvador Allende? I have no idea now. Whatever the reason, we soon enough replaced our dark, cold winter with the sunshine

and warmth of the northeast coast of Venezuela.

My partner Al had been content to let me plan the trip, but then I made the mistake of encouraging him to read the guidebook. He was quickly taken by its mention of a week-long canoe trip down a tributary of the Orinoco River. I was loath to forsake my planning, so we compromised by deciding to take the next long-distance bus that left the terminal, no matter where it was headed, something that is simply unimaginable now. And so, within the hour we found ourselves headed to Ciudad Bolivar, some five hours south.

The only other foreigners on the bus were a French couple. We met them again the following evening in our restaurant, just after we were approached by a stranger with the enticing question, “Are you folks up for adventure?” How can one say





Previous page: Angel Falls, Venezuela. Photo by iStock Above Left: Dona Maria makes pancakes. Right: Marlene (2nd from right) with the Garcias.

no to a question like that! Carlos asked if we would like to go with him to an island in the Orinoco delta inhabited by one family of Warao natives, who had seen outsiders only once before, only two months earlier. We immediately agreed and roped in the French couple to round out our group of five.

Our misgivings about Carlos landing us on the wrong island evaporated when we finally found the village on Isla Cangrejo (Crab Island) and the nonplussed members of the Garcia family overcame their astonishment to greet us warmly. The family consisted of parents and ten adult sons with wives and children. The parents knew no Spanish, but the sons translated and we spent hours around the long table listening to their stories, while Doña Maria made pancakes. It was not Club Med: we slept in hammocks (until the roosters started crowing at 2 am) and used the jungle as our toilet. The family was almost self-sufficient, buying only oil and perhaps rice, as I recall. We helped Maria make *cachiri*, a fermented brew made from manioc. We hunted tarantulas, rode horses, and received appreciatively the woven basket and headbands two of the sons made for us (the Warao are noted for their intricate weavings).

A few days later, Al's dream came true, as we piled into two motorized dugout canoes for a multi-day trip down the Chagauo River. The boats were loaded with water and toilet paper but disturbingly little food. And why a gun, I worried? Problem solved with the shooting of a wild turkey. We saw macaws and petroglyphs, learned about jungle

plants and trees, visited small settlements where we helped make bread, and learned to beat the ground with a stick when we left our hammocks at night in order to scare away snakes.

Would the rest of our trip be anti-climactic? Angel Falls, the world's largest uninterrupted waterfall, didn't disappoint, but I was tired of sleeping in hammocks, especially when they were so close as to be elbow-to-elbow. And then we somehow missed our flight back to Ciudad Bolivar and our connection to Caracas. The next plane would have meant an overnight in CB, which I found unpleasant and wanted to avoid. So, we embarked on a series of small hops that eventually got us to Caracas late that night. With the only alternatives of spending the night at the airport or taking a public taxi—both deemed equally dangerous—we managed to find a nearby hotel that sent a car to pick us up.

Setting off on the river trip.





Left: The hammocks, spacious ones, not the elbow-to-elbow ones. Right: Guide showing off a "small" 12' anaconda.

The next morning, exhausted, we waited by the roadside in a downpour, trying to flag down a bus to take us to the other side of Caracas. We eventually made it to Colonia Tovar, a town founded by Germans that still bears a German character. It was our launching point for birdwatching in Henri Pittier National Park, which boasts more than 500 species. Accordingly, we boarded a very early morning bus to the park and then climbed an arduously steep and wet

trail, from which we heard dozens of birds and saw absolutely none. After three hours we gave up and made our way back down, arriving at the ranger station just in time for the morning "feeding," when fruit and seeds were set out for birds that descended in dozens and, not coincidentally, for the tourist buses that arrived for the event.

Highlights from the rest of the trip included an overnight 12-hour bus trip where we managed to snag two desirable-looking seats. It turned out they

Petroglyphs, Canaima National Park, Venezuela . Photo by iStock.



were available only because the roof leaked directly over them. We arrived in Merida, wet and sick, having eaten spoiled arepas (a stuffed bread) at the station. To this day we can't face an *arepa*.

Merida sits in the Andes, a lovely town with the highest cable car in the world, rising from the base at 1,577 meters up to 4,765 meters. As a result, I had altitude sickness so acute that my vision went black with every heartbeat. We immediately descended to the middle level, but my head hurt so much, I couldn't manage our hike to Los Nevados, the village where we planned to stay the night. It was a narrow trail with only foot and mule traffic. Accordingly, when the next mule came by, I hitched a ride and left Al to follow in its wake. It turned out to be a uniquely rewarding experience, since the mule's owner needed little encouragement to share his ideas on the conservatism of village life

and the stifling effects of religion.

Next up was a multi-day group tour by van, river, and horseback to Los Llanos, a huge grassland plain about four hours east of Merida. Our guide showed us piranhas and an anaconda at least 12' long (these snakes can reach up to 30'). But the highlight for me was our horseback tour. The way back to the ranch turned into a race, won by...me! I'll never forget the astonished look on the cowboys' faces as I galloped up with the guide far behind eating my dust.

We spent the last few days on Los Roques, a small Caribbean island, with sidewalks made of sand. I promptly sprained my ankle and visited the local clinic to get it taped. There I had an intimate conversation with the young doctor serving the equivalent of a year's residency. Besides criticizing the health care system (doctors siphoning off

Macaws are plentiful in Venezuela. Photo by iStock.





Los Roques Archipelago, Venezuela. Photo by iStock.

supplies for themselves), she admitted how terrified she was at her responsibility, especially since the lack of lighting on the runway made it impossible for planes to land at night. She would have to somehow keep an acutely ill patient alive until the morning.

If one of our motives was to sample an exciting political climate, we were not disappointed. It was indeed reminiscent of Chile. The enthusiasm was palpable. Chavez had just appointed the first indigenous woman to his cabinet, dismissed his bodyguard, started his radio talks, and given the army the task of road building. Cassette tapes of his speeches were hawked in the market. There was hope that a new era in Venezuelan politics was

beginning. Those hopes are now, sadly, a distant memory.

When I look back on that trip, what amazes me is how different I was then; did I really do all that? I could ascribe it all to the recklessness of youth, but I was already pushing 60. I simply can't imagine that kind of adventure now. But how could I have forgotten it, especially when the headbands gifted us by the Garcia brothers still grace our mantel? •

MARLENE LEGATES taught History and Women's Studies at Capilano University until her retirement in 2008. Since then, she has balanced travel with teaching in the SFU Liberal Arts and +55 Program..

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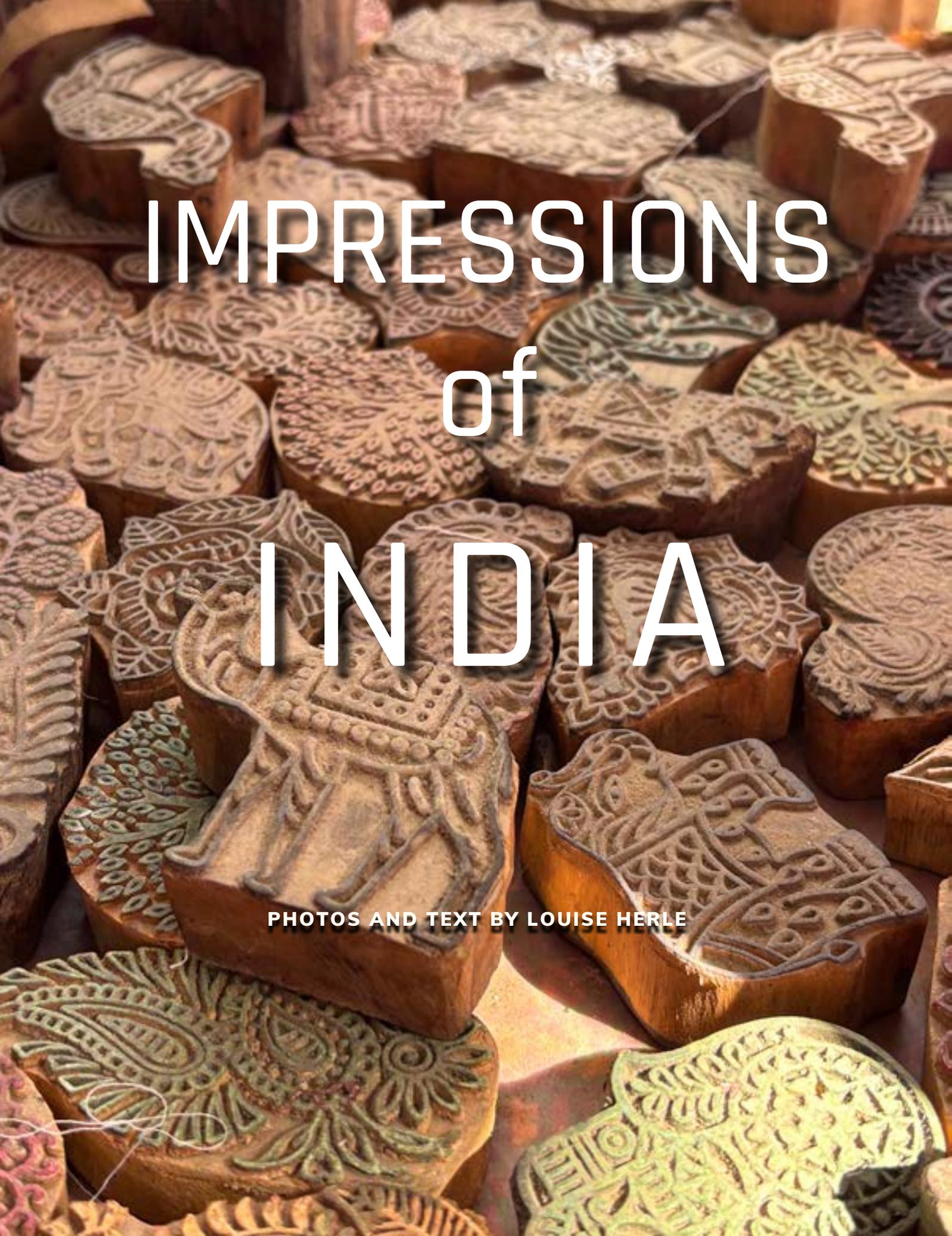
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IMPRESSIONS of INDIA

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY LOUISE HERLE

India: intense, breathtaking, buzzing with life! This pluralistic, multilingual, and multiethnic society is one of the oldest civilizations and the world's most populous democracy. 35 million people - almost the entire population of Canada - in one city: Delhi.

In November 2025, I met my tour in Delhi: seven Canadians, plus local experts, driver Suki and guide Amit. Driving from the airport parking lot into unbelievable traffic that flowed in spite of volume, the air stung my lungs, but my eyes had never been so wide open. Delhi's smog dulls the sun but the spirit of the city shines through. In Suki's luxury coach, we covered 720 km of India's Golden Triangle (Delhi-Agra-Jaipur) and travelled through three of 28 states: National Capital Territory of Delhi (Old and New Delhi), Uttar Pradesh (Agra), and Rajasthan (Jaipur and Ranthambore National Park).

During Amit's daily cultural stories and lectures on history, politics, and religions (Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Jainism), we marveled as Suki navigated all modes of transport: trucks, buses, buffalo carts, bicycles, rickshaws, and tuk-tuks. People crowded roadways without sidewalks, pushed wheelbarrows piled with produce, pulled carts

with supplies, and walked with goods on their heads. Women carried babies with several toddlers in tow.

Overwhelming poverty. Women and children begging. Many came right up to our coach windows, highlighting what we already understood as our privilege. Interestingly, they did not touch the coach. Some had roses, trinkets, or hand-embroidered souvenirs to offer, but most extended only an empty hand. At 'tea and toilet' stops we were advised not to open our wallets.

We passed shops with tall stacks of turbans in gorgeous colours. We exchanged peace signs with our fingers as teens on motorbikes with a parent (one to five aboard!) pulled up alongside to peer at us Westerners.

The clamour included Brahman cattle, dogs, monkeys, camels and elephants. Incessant traffic and 'zig-zag driving', vehicles raced on paved and unpaved roads, through roundabouts. Traffic signs were mere suggestions. This demanded plenty of meaningful honking: two short horn blasts signal I'm here! and one long horn blast signals 'get out of my way!' Roads are jungles; a good driver must roar to get ahead. It is all part of the flow.

Chalo! Let's go! Ji haan!

Facing page: block printing designs for cotton fabrics made in Jaipur.

Right: The crowded streets of Chandni Chowk in Old Delhi.

Photos by Louise Herle



OLD DELHI AND DELHI (POP: 35.5M)

Jama Masjid is one of the largest mosques in India. We removed shoes and donned robes to view sights from the courtyard: black and white marble tiles designed to look like 25,000 individual prayer mats (Paris' Notre Dame Cathedral seats 3,000). In the heart of Old Delhi we visited Chandni Chowk, founded in 1650; markets sell everything imaginable. By rickshaw, we explored narrow crowded streets, hundreds of tangled electrical wires overhead. Chandni Chowk has one of nine historical Gurdwaras: Gurdwaras Sis Gang Sahib. A gurdwara or 'door to the Guru' is a Sikh place for worship and community gathering. The Langur Hall hosts free meals for all. We removed shoes and socks and rinsed our feet, as an ablution before entering.

Delhi revealed wide boulevards, modern government buildings and vast green spaces. Despite 'very poor' to 'severe' air quality warnings we enjoyed public spaces like Mahatma Gandhi Park, peaceful spots for relaxation and contemplation. Gandhi Smriti Museum (where the peace activist spent the last 144 days of his life and was assassinated in 1948) is significant, educational. UNESCO World Heritage Site Humayun's Tomb (1570) is the first example of Mughal garden tombs on the Indian Continent. India Gate in the centre of New Delhi is a massive sandstone monument that commemorates 70,000 Indian soldiers who died in WWI.

*Statue of Mahatma Gandhi
Photo by Louise Herle*



AGRA (POP: 2.8M)

On the banks of the Yamuna River in Uttar Pradesh is UNESCO World Heritage Site Taj Mahal, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It was predawn, birds and monkeys were waking. We walked quietly along the esplanade in the dark, nearing the Darwaza-i-rauza Gate of the Mausoleum or simply The Great Gate. The crowd grew as we approached with anticipation. The Taj does not disappoint. Translucent white marble sourced from Makrana, Rajasthan reflects light and appears pink at dawn. Featuring intricate inlays (pietra dura), floral designs and calligraphy, some 28 globally sourced gemstones on the massive structure include lapis lazuli (Afghanistan), jade (China), carnelian (Arabia), turquoise (Tibet) sapphire (Sri Lanka), amethyst, and garnet.

Other UNESCO World Heritage Sites were next on our list: Agra Fort, Taj Mahal's sister monument, a red sandstone Mughal Dynasty (five centuries) fortress that blends Hindu and Islamic architecture, and former Mughal capital Fatehpur Sikri (16th C) were incredible! The sheer scope of these places boggles the mind.

We then hopped into a jeep to tour a small village with beautiful fields for farming vegetables and goats. We visited a school (150 K-grade 10 students in uniform): flip flops lined up outside seven dirt-floored, desk-less and chair-less classrooms where teachers used small chalkboards, and students' attentiveness and giggles belied poverty.

RANTHAMBORE NATIONAL PARK (1,334 km²)

Welcomed with fruit juice and a *varmala* (garland) of marigolds at Tiger Den Hotel in Sawai Madhopur, we enjoyed BBQ, outdoor bonfires, live music and dance with a



Left: Sighting a Bengal Tiger in Ranthambore National Park. Right: Village school. Photos by Louise Herle

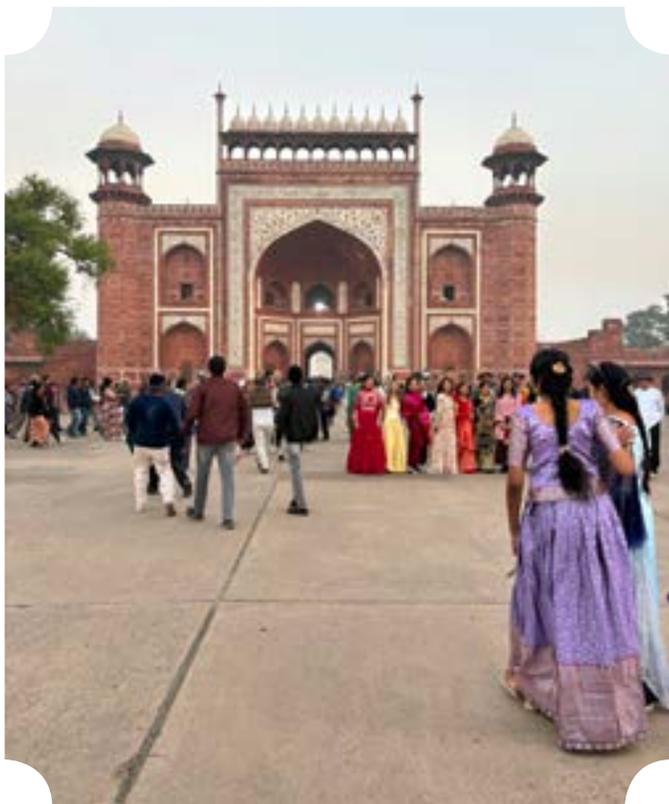
Rajasthani folk ensemble: a Harmonium keyboard provided melody and drone, *Khartal* (or ‘Rajasthani bones’) percussion, and a two-headed *dhholak* drum. In the morning, we watched in awe as women in flip flops and saris moved large granite rocks one-by-one, on their heads from a workshop to a job site. Yet there was a tractor behind the workshop! The women’s labour was less expensive than fuel.

A former royal hunting ground, Ranthambore National Park became a wildlife sanctuary in 1955, a Tiger Reserve in 1973, and a National Park in

1980. Bengal tigers have no natural predators except humans, and their populations are rising. We saw three tigers from our jeep on morning and afternoon safaris! Our experienced guide discerned distinct warning calls of monkeys and deer which led us to encounter India’s magnificent apex predator. Their resounding roars and arresting strides were extraordinary.

We also saw countless deer, monkeys, crocodiles, birds, one soft-back turtle and a leopard.

Below: Taj Mahal East Gate.



JAIPUR (POP: 4.5 M)

Jaipur (aka Pink City, Paris of India), the capital of Rajasthan since 1949, is one of India’s first planned cities and is rich in heritage: cultural, culinary and artistic. Buildings were painted pink to symbolize hospitality. Highlights of this beautiful city include: Hawa Mahal Palace of Winds, a five-story building with 953 small windows designed for royal women to keep cool and discreetly observe street festivities; City Palace Museum, built by Jaipur founder Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II and home to the last royal ruling family; UNESCO World Heritage Site Jantar Mantar, 18th C architectural astronomy instruments and the world’s largest stone sundial; Birla Mandir, a marble Hindu temple with three domes as tribute to three faiths; and Amber Fort (Amer Palace) built in 1592, a four-level complex featuring Rajput and Mughal architecture with red sandstone and marble. It was the residence of the Rajput Maharajas and a temple at the entrance is dedicated to Shila Devi, Goddess of the Chaitanya cult.

We had to pay close attention to Amit to keep us from losing each other or getting run over when we crossed streets!

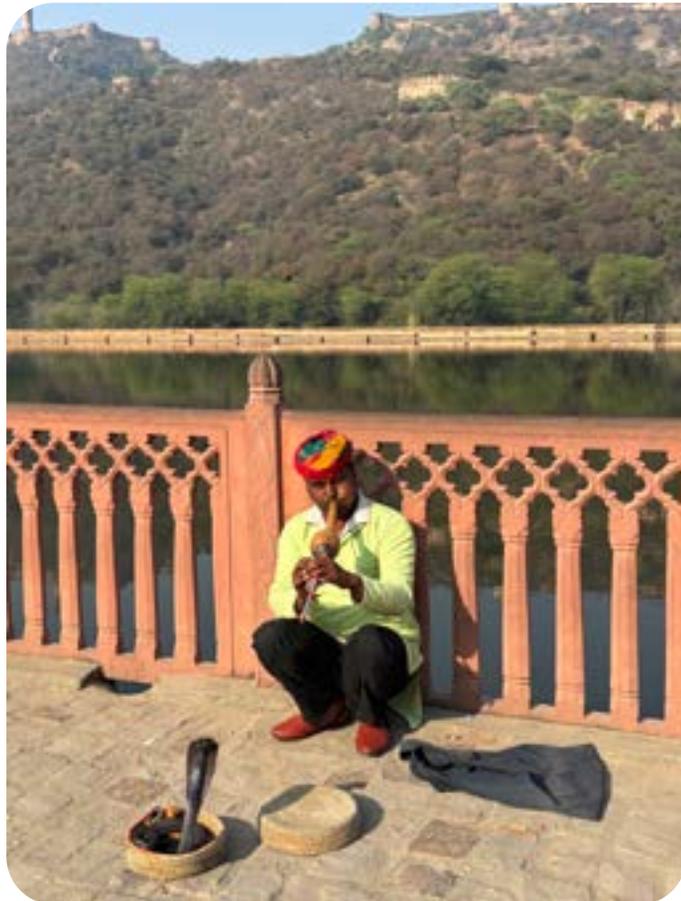
We observed artisans creating block printed cotton, hand-made carpets, and marble inlay with gems. Amit engaged us in lectures about history as well as deities: Shiva, Parvati, Ganesha, Vishnu, Lakshmi, Rama, Sita, Krishna. The divine manifests itself in many forms, according to Hinduism.

A BRIEF HISTORY (1526 - 2026)

During the Mughal dynasty and empire (1526-1858AD) India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 27% of the world's economy. Extensive road networks facilitated trade, weighty agricultural taxes and significant exports in textiles, shipbuilding and steel, along with imported gold and silver, helped the Mughals build wealth. British rule in India began in 1757 through the East India Company. It became the British Raj



Left: Snake Charmer at Amber Fort. Right: Village School.



in 1858 which lasted until Independence in 1947. British colonial rule devastated India's economy. By 1950 India's GDP was 4% of the global economy.

Today, India's population has surpassed China's at 1.46 billion. It is one of the world's fastest-growing markets for food and agricultural products. India is also a global research, IT, and industrial hub with multinational companies. Gurgaon (*Guru-gram*, village of the guru), the most modern suburb of Delhi and fastest growing city in India (pop: 1.3 m) is core to India's economy with more than 250 offices of Fortune 500 companies (IBM, Amazon Google, Microsoft, UNO Minda). It is also home to some of India's largest medical and luxury tourism industries.

In January 2026, the EU and India struck a free-trade deal that goes beyond tariffs, covers approximately 2 billion people, and represents a combined market of nearly 27 trillion dollars,



Carpet making in Jaipur. Photo by Louise Herle.

about 25% of global GDP. Canada is also looking towards India for trade to diversify business partners and reduce dependence on the USA.

SLOWING DOWN TIME

Namaste. Suniye.

In *Time Expansion Experiences* (2024) Psychologist Steve Taylor investigates how attention and memory influence our perceptions of time. He writes that while we are in our ordinary routines, time seems to vanish. But when we travel and our brains have new experiences to process, time seems to pass more slowly. We pay more attention to unfamiliar surroundings, scenery, the tastes of new food, sounds of foreign languages, smells of incense, Frangipani tree flowers, chai, spices, the feelings of excitement and awe. We can

slow time through exposure to new textures, sights, smells, tastes and sounds!

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LOUISE HERLE is a member of the Sunshine Coast Retired Teachers' Association, and serves on the BCRTA Communications and Membership Committees.

DID YOU KNOW?

FASCINATING HEALTH FACTS

BY PAT THIESEN

A DRY TOPIC: DEHYDRATION IN OLDER ADULTS

Not drinking enough can have serious repercussions on the health of seniors. The most alarming issues are post-stroke mortality and risk of serious impairment, with dehydrated patients being twice as likely not to survive and more than twice as likely to suffer impairment post-stroke than those who have adequate liquid intake. Dehydration can make you tired, weak, and dizzy, increasing risk of falls. It can affect cognitive functioning, including memory, attention, and ability to concentrate. Other common harmful effects of dehydration include low blood pressure, decreased kidney health, and constipation.

Luckily, it is possible to avoid these harmful effects by keeping up balanced fluid intake throughout the day. The daily expectation of 8 to 10 cups of H₂O can be achieved by drinking water as well as other liquids and consuming foods that have a high-water content. Having incontinence problems should not inhibit you from getting your daily water intake.



REFERENCES

Search “Mayo Clinic Dehydration and Falls”

Search “Healthline Seniors Dehydration”

LATTE ME HELP YOU

A recent study from University of Copenhagen researchers found that adding milk to your coffee helps your body by doubling the protective power of your immune cells. Antioxidants called polyphenols are common in fruits (including coffee beans) and vegetables and help reduce cellular stress in the case of inflammation. Researchers found that as a polyphenol reacts with amino acids (from the milk), reduction of inflammation in immune cells was enhanced. So, drink up cappuccino lovers!

Search “coffee milk healthline.com”

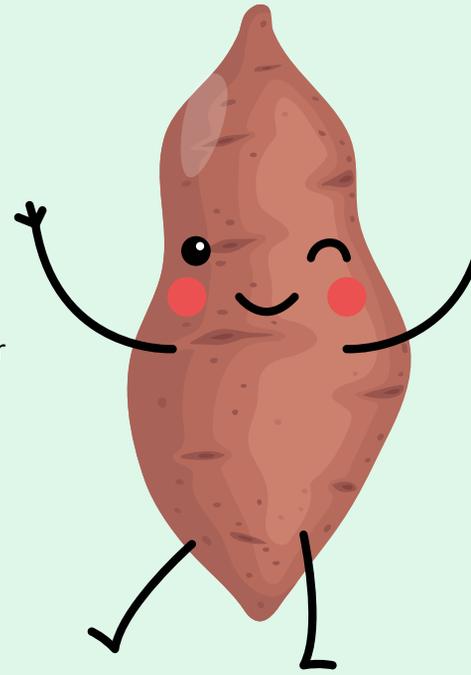


THIS SPUD'S FOR YOU

The versatility of potatoes seems to be never-ending. From fries to mashed potatoes to breakfast hash, it's as if they can do anything. Recent research further confirms this notion, reporting that sweet potatoes could serve as the perfect gluten-free flour for baked goods! Wheat flour has been the standard for tens of thousands of years and will likely stay that way for the foreseeable future. However, for those who face a gluten intolerance or have celiac disease, wheat flour can irritate the stomach and lead to pain, nausea, and even intestinal damage.

In recent years, as gluten-free options have skyrocketed, scientists are continuing to explore different options like banana peel, almonds, and other grains like sorghum. Sweet potato-based flour may completely change the game. Not only does it bring a welcoming sweetness, but its nutritional profile is one to boast about. This flour would contain gut-loving fiber and an abundance of antioxidants.

<https://www.fooddive.com/news/gluten-free-sweet-potato-flour-research-texture-baked-goods/643356/>



MISINFORMATION IS JUST BAD NEWS

Dangerous MIS-information and the even more dangerous DIS-information about health issues can be found at the click of a mouse.

The best way to verify health concerns is to speak directly to qualified experts – your family doctor or nurse practitioner, pharmacists and even specialists in relevant fields for specific conditions.

Know how to spot the “red flags” for misinformation such as content that triggers fear, anger, or shock, or is “too good to be true”, claims promising a “secret” or easy cure for a complex, chronic illness, or reliance on personal stories or testimonials rather than peer-reviewed, scientific studies.

Always be skeptical or suspicious of social media accounts. Be especially suspicious if the account is very new, has no original photos or is filled with memes and stock images.

Many of us who retired 15 or more years ago may not have the built-in awareness or computer sophistication of our younger former colleagues, so always use caution while researching on your computer.

Search “UBC Evaluating Health Misinformation”. Includes a very useful tutorial.



A photograph showing a person's feet on a cane on a reflective floor. A power strip is visible on the left. The title 'PREVENTING FALLS' is overlaid in large, bold, black letters.

PREVENTING FALLS

BY CAROL BAIRD-KRUL AND BARB MIKULEC

In 2023 the Netherlands' government launched a national fall prevention program. This involved municipalities evaluating citizens over 65, while focusing on exercise programs and specific fall prevention programs for everyone. With an aging population throughout the western world, falls are becoming a medical crisis.

SOME GENERAL FACTS ABOUT FALLS

- Falls are not a normal part of aging
- Falls are a leading cause of injury and death in seniors
- Women are three times more likely to be hospitalized after a fall
- The various injuries that are the outcome of a fall can lead to a permanent disability, a loss of independence, and a reduced quality of life

WHAT CAN A PERSON DO?

- Stay socially connected
- Keep mobile
- Ensure shoes fit well and have a low heel and good tread
- Make sure slippers also fit well and have non-skid soles
- If you have problems with your feet, see a podiatrist

- If you need help with your stability, use a cane
- See your health care provider if you are experiencing dizziness, feel unsteady
- Have your eyes checked regularly and keep track of your medications
- Maintain your fitness. If just beginning, start with 10 minutes and work up from there
- Try a program like Tai Chi to maintain your balance and strength
- Do weight- and non-weight-bearing exercises to strengthen your muscles
- Eat well, including food high in vitamin D and calcium and avoid too much alcohol

RISK REDUCTION AT HOME

- Remove clutter from the stairs and outdoor walkways
- Firmly secure mats and carpets
- Install grab bars/handrails
- Increase the wattage of your lighting and install motion-activated lights outside
- Keep outside stairs and walkways in good repair
- Put equipment away after use
- Carry a flashlight or your phone to light your way at night, or wear a headlamp to keep your hands free
- Report sidewalk hazards and lighting issues to your local authority

PLAN AHEAD

Plan for a possible fall by having a personal alarm/whistle. Leave a spare key with someone you trust and always carry your cellphone. If you do fall and think you can get up look around for a stable piece of furniture and roll/creep close to it. Then roll on your side, rest, and slowly rise up then rest again. When you feel better analyze what caused your fall. If you cannot get up use your phone or alarm to call for help and tell someone you fell even if you feel okay and didn't hurt yourself.

Source: Information & Facts – Fall Prevention – Seniors' Health and Wellness Institute / COSCO Pamphlet – revised March 2025. •

CAROL BAIRD-KRUL is a member of the BCRTA Well-being Committee.

BARB MIKULEC is President of the Seniors' Health and Wellness Institute and a BCRTA director.



RESOURCES

Stay in the Game... Prevent Falls. The brochure comes in several languages and is available through Vancouver Coastal Health. fallsprevention.vch.ca

BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit.
www.injuryresearch.bc.ca

Vancouver Health Home Activity Program.
<https://www.vch.ca/en/home-activity-program>

Fall Prevention: Mayo Clinic.
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/healthy-aging/in-depth/fall-prevention/art-20047358>
(search Mayo Clinic Fall Prevention)

AGING IN THE RIGHT PLACE

BY DEBBIE PAGE

Younger adults sometimes have difficulty understanding why their elders are resistant to making significant changes. They think their seniors might be better off moving to be closer to family or even moving to a home that requires less care. For some people this might be true, but the vast majority of seniors prefer to stay where they are.

Aging in place—the ability to live in one’s home safely, independently, and comfortably as one grows older—is a goal shared by many seniors. Aging in the right place might mean remaining in a home lived in for many years or might mean remaining in a familiar community. Remaining in a familiar environment promotes emotional well-being, supports autonomy, and preserves social connections. Yet successful aging in place

requires thoughtful planning across multiple areas: physical environment, health, daily living, finances, social support, and technology. The first consideration is whether the home is appropriate for aging or whether the home would require too many alterations to be safe and accessible. For some people, moving within their familiar community to a smaller, safer, and more accessible home is the appropriate option.

Unfortunately, in many communities there are only limited options for housing that would allow seniors to maintain their choice of lifestyle and activities. For many seniors, remaining in their home is not only the best option but the only option.

So let’s talk about the things that seniors need to do and plan for to remain safely and comfortably in their own homes.



I. SAFER HOMES

One of the biggest challenges seniors face is that their homes may no longer suit their evolving physical needs. To prevent falls and injuries, seniors should conduct a full home safety assessment—either independently or with the help of an occupational therapist or aging-in-place specialist.

Essential modifications might include:

- **Improved Lighting:** Vision naturally declines with age, making enhanced lighting vital. Installing bright even lighting in hallways, staircases, and bathrooms reduces fall risks. Automatic night lights help with nighttime navigation.
- **Bathroom Safety Enhancements:** Bathrooms are common sites for falls. Installing grab bars near toilets and inside showers, adding non-slip mats, and considering step-free showers or walk-in bathtubs can significantly improve safety.
- **Reducing Fall Hazards:** Throw rugs, clutter, and uneven flooring should be removed or corrected. Seniors may also need to rearrange furniture to create clear walking paths. Ideally, laundries should be located or relocated to avoid carrying baskets of laundry up and down stairs.
- **Stair and Entry Modifications:** For multi-level homes, stairlifts or handrails on both sides of the staircase can improve accessibility. Entrance ramps or zero-step entryways may be necessary for seniors with reduced mobility.
- **Kitchen Adaptations:** Lever-style handles, easy-to-reach shelves, and appliances with clear

controls reduce strain and make the kitchen more user-friendly. Lower cupboards can be converted to drawers for easier access. These modifications not only reduce the risk of accidents but also create an environment where seniors can navigate their homes with confidence.

II. HEALTH MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTIVE CARE

Good health is central to aging in place. Senior housing must be conducive to maintaining health and access to care needs.

Key health-related steps include:

- **Routine Medical Appointments:** Keeping up with checkups helps detect issues early and maintains stability of chronic conditions.
- **Medication Management:** Seniors should have access to pill organizers, automatic dispensers, or digital reminders to ensure correct dosing. Pharmacists can package medications to make their use easier.
- **Exercise and Physical Activity:** Senior housing should accommodate access to activities which help maintain physical health. Strength, flexibility, and balance decline naturally with age. Regular exercise programs—such as walking, Tai Chi, strength training, or chair exercises may help preserve mobility and independence.
- **Nutrition and Hydration:** Aging adults should maintain balanced diets rich in fruits, vegetables, protein, and whole grains. Seniors should be able to easily access Meal-planning tools, grocery



delivery services, or home-delivered meals which can help when shopping becomes difficult. Good health practices reduce the likelihood of hospitalizations and enable seniors to remain independent longer.

III. DAILY LIVING SUPPORT AND SERVICES

Even healthy seniors may need occasional or ongoing assistance with daily tasks. Planning for support before it becomes urgent ensures continuity and reduces stress. Appropriate housing for seniors should ensure that these services can be accessed when needed.

Supports may include:

- **Home Care Services:** Personal care aides can help with bathing, grooming, dressing, and mobility.
- **Homemaking and Chore Services:** Assistance with housekeeping, laundry, or yard work helps maintain a safe, clean environment.
- **Meal Preparation Assistance:** Some seniors may benefit from visiting meal programs or in-home cooking help.
- **Transportation Services:** When driving is no longer safe or convenient, seniors can rely on community transit, volunteer driver programs, or ride-share services adapted for older adults. Combining independence with targeted support allows seniors to continue living at home without feeling overburdened.



IV. FINANCIAL PLANNING AND STABILITY

Aging in place often comes with expenses, including home modifications, care services, and ongoing maintenance. Seniors must evaluate their financial resources and make informed decisions.

Important steps include:

- **Budgeting for Care Needs:** Seniors should estimate the cost of potential future assistance and plan accordingly.
- There are provincial and federal tax credits available for seniors who have accessibility modifications completed on their home by an accredited contractor. These programs include the federal Home Accessibility Tax Credit and BC's Home Renovation Tax Credit for Seniors/Persons with Disabilities and the Multigenerational Home Renovation Tax Credit.

V. SOCIAL SUPPORT AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

Social isolation is one of the greatest threats to seniors aging at home. It contributes to depression, cognitive decline, and physical health problems. Maintaining social connections is therefore essential. Strong social networks help seniors stay motivated, healthy, and engaged with life.

Aging in the right place should include ways to stay socially engaged including:

- **Regular Visits with Family and Friends:** In-person or virtual visits help maintain emotional connection.



- **Community Center Participation:** Senior centers offer classes, events, and support groups.
- **Volunteer Involvement:** Staying active in community efforts enhances purpose and builds relationships.
- **Pet Companionship:** Animals provide emotional support, though seniors should ensure they can meet the pet's needs.



VI. TECHNOLOGY FOR SAFETY AND CONVENIENCE

Technology can significantly support safe aging in place. Seniors do not need to master complex systems; even simple devices can make a big difference.

Helpful technologies include:

- **Medical Alert Systems:** Wearable devices that summon help in emergencies provide reassurance for seniors and their families.
- **Smart Home Devices:** Voice-activated assistants can control lights, thermostats, reminders, and communication without physical strain.
- **Remote Health Monitoring:** Devices that track blood pressure, glucose, or heart rate allow healthcare providers to monitor conditions from afar.
- **Home Security Systems:** Cameras, door sensors, and automatic locks create a secure environment. Adopting the right technology can enhance safety and simplify daily routines. Therefore, housing options for seniors should have the ability to access useful technologies.



VII. PLANNING AHEAD AND ADAPTING OVER TIME

Aging in place is not static. Seniors' needs evolve, and so must their support systems.

Planning ahead involves:

- *Creating Advance Directives:* Documenting healthcare preferences ensures clarity during medical decisions.
- *Discussing Care Preferences with Family:* Open conversations help avoid misunderstandings and prepare family members for future needs.
- *Reassessing Home Safety Annually:* Regular checkups help identify new risks as abilities change.
- *Gradual Implementation of Modifications:* Spreading out home improvements and support services over time helps adjustment and reduces

costs. Being proactive makes aging in place smoother and more sustainable.

Aging in place is a realistic and fulfilling option for many seniors, but it requires thorough preparation. Planning ahead prevents difficult decisions having to be made during a crisis situation. By making home modifications, managing health proactively, arranging support services, planning finances carefully, staying socially engaged, and embracing helpful technologies, seniors can continue enjoying the comfort, independence, and dignity that come with living in the home of their choice for as long as possible.

With the right strategies and resources, aging in place becomes not only possible but deeply enriching.

DEBBIE PAGE is a member of the Prince George Branch and also serves on the BCRTA Communications Committee.

RESOURCES

"Aging in Place: Planning Future Life Today." <https://bccrns.ca/prevention-and-awareness/aging-in-place-planning> (search "aging in place bccrns")

"Thinking About Your Future? Plan Now to Age in Place" <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/seniors-forum-federal-provincial-territorial/aging-checklist.html> (search on "Thinking about your future Canada.ca")

"The Safe Living Guide: A Guide to Home Safety for Seniors" <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/safe-living-guide-a-guide-home-safety-seniors.html> (search on "Safe Living Guide Canada.ca")

Photo File



PHOTO BY ELIZABETH EISNER

"SIGNS OF SPRING"

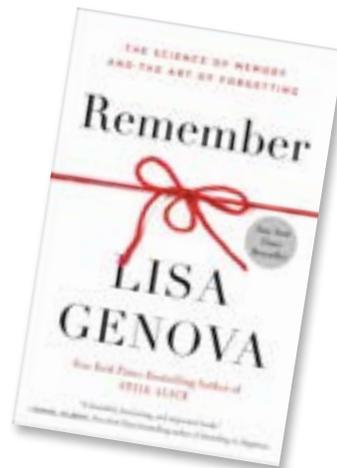


MEMORY AND AGING

BY DEBRA SWAIN

As we age, we notice many changes in our bodies, our eyesight, our hearing, and our memories. Seniors often worry about these changes to their memories, wondering if they are signs of something serious such as dementia. However, many changes in memory are normal as we age. Also, there are things we can do to help our brains age in healthy ways.

Neuroscientist Lisa Genova writes and speaks about memory. You may remember the movie *Still Alice*, based on one of her books. In her book, *Remember: The Science of Memory and the Art of Forgetting* (2021), Genova devotes a chapter to normal aging as it relates to memory.



Her list of common age-related complaints about memory:

- Struggling to remember the word or name you are searching for.
- A decrease in episodic memory recall, the ability to retrieve specific, personal past experiences. We may forget more of what happened, but what we do recall is as accurate as younger people's memory.
- A decline in working memory, so information leaves our "present moment" memory quicker.
- A decrease in processing speeds, so it takes longer to learn things.
- More difficulty retrieving information.
- Less ability to attend to more than one thing at a time (multi-tasking).

These and some other changes to our memory are described as "sign[s] of a memory system getting older and not a sign of pathology".

There is a growing belief amongst researchers that we can do things to support our brains and memories remaining healthy including:

- Sleeping is important. The brain cleans the synapses that carry and hold information while we sleep. Aim for 8 hours a night.
- Eating a healthy diet such as the Mediterranean or MIND diet

- Exercising regularly
- Practicing meditation and/or mindfulness
- Keeping mentally active
- Using sensory supports for vision and hearing. Sensory impairments are significantly linked to cognitive decline and dementia risk.

Practicing memory strategies such as paying attention, decreasing distractors, rehearsing, self-testing, creating meaning, using visual and special imagery, and keeping a diary have been shown to improve memory at any age. Using a calendar, lists, and notes to remind us of things we will do in the future also supports memory.

Seniors have many challenges to deal with including various losses, medications, ailments, and changes to our environment that are out of our control. Learning to adapt to changes in our memory is one of the challenges, but there are things we can do.

Seniors Health and Wellness Institute (SHWI) offers free workshops on Memory and Aging, Sleep, and Dealing with stress. Each of these workshops has helpful ideas on things to do to promote healthy aging. Keeping ourselves informed and healthy is the best way to support memory as we age. •

DEBRA SWAIN taught inclusive education for 29 years, mostly in SD61 in Victoria. Debra is a presenter for the Seniors Health and Wellness Institute and a member of the BCRTA Well-being Committee.

RESOURCES

Remember: The Science of Memory and the Art of Forgetting. Lisa Genova. Harmony Books, 2021.

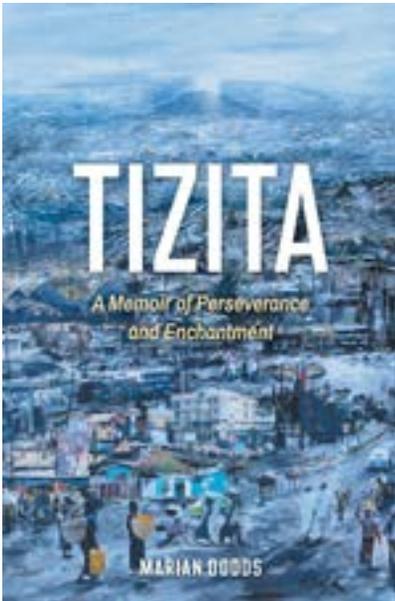
Ted Talk - What you can do to prevent Alzheimer's: https://www.ted.com/talks/lisa_genova_what_you_can_do_to_prevent_alzheimer_s (SEARCH Lisa Genova Ted Talk)

5 ways to build an Alzheimer's-resistant brain. Lisa Genova. YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBDGgovA1LI>

Seniors Health and Wellness Institute: <https://seniorshelpingseniors.ca/workshops/>

books OF NOTE

Books of Note features publications by BCRTA members.
To have your book included, send the details to postscript@bcrt.ca



TIZITA - A MEMOIR OF PERSEVERANCE AND ENCHANTMENT by Marian Dodds

Traversing personal narrative and broader social themes, this memoir will resonate with anyone who's ever felt compelled to do good in the world, whether in person or by donation. Vivid descriptions, historical context and personal insights offer an immersion into Ethiopian life and the triumphs and challenges of international work through the eyes of a Canadian volunteer.

"I half-expected an exposé of the contradictions of international cooperation, but instead found a powerful voice grounded in love, humility, and deep respect. This isn't a story of giving, but of exchange, attuned to complexity and rooted in relationship. There is no trace of saviourism or superiority – only a genuine, thoughtful presence that challenged my assumptions and stayed with me long after I turned the last page."

Anne-Catherine Bajard, Executive Director, BC Council for International Cooperation

Available at all online bookstores

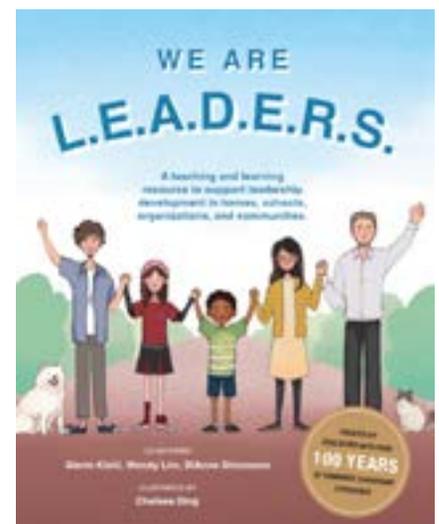
WE ARE L.E.A.D.E.R.S. by Glenn Kishi, Wendy Lim, and DiAnne Simonson

We believe everyone is a leader — and leaders make others better. As three retired BC educators with over 100 years of combined experience, we joined together to create “We Are L.E.A.D.E.R.S.”, a picture book that empowers leadership development in homes, schools, organizations, and communities.

This book uses a picture-book format to follow a family modeling leadership. The L.E.A.D.E.R.S. acronym of 7 leadership competencies leads to questions that inspire reflection, dialogue, and action. Profits are donated to support food insecurity and youth leadership education

Let's change the world together!

To order, email gwdweareleaders@gmail.com

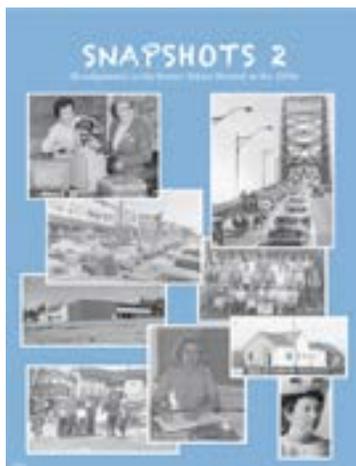


THE MAGICIAN'S HAT

by C & M Barnett

Curious young rabbit Long Ears is introduced to Sage, a travelling performer from the other world. Through a series of lessons and adventures, Sage and others impart valuable knowledge and understanding that Long Ears takes in eagerly. Trial, error, practice and discovery, lead Long Ears through his development as a travelling magician's helper and his first performance with Sage. Can this young rabbit focus long enough to gain the skills and attributes he needs to become an integral part of Sage's life and act, as well as become an asset to Sage on his secret mission?

Available at Amazon.ca



SNAPSHOTS 2: SURREY SCHOOL DISTRICT

by Alice Tiles, Karen Susheski, and Karen Bentzen

The Surrey Retired Teacher's Association's Heritage Committee has built upon the work of Jack Brown to document the history of Surrey Schools to the year 1949. The authors decided to continue from where he had left off and focus on the 1950s. After extensive research using a variety of sources, they were able to compile brief histories of 23 schools. They collected photos from different sources - many from the Surrey Archives and others from retired teachers.

View Snapshots 2 at bcrrta.ca/snapshots2

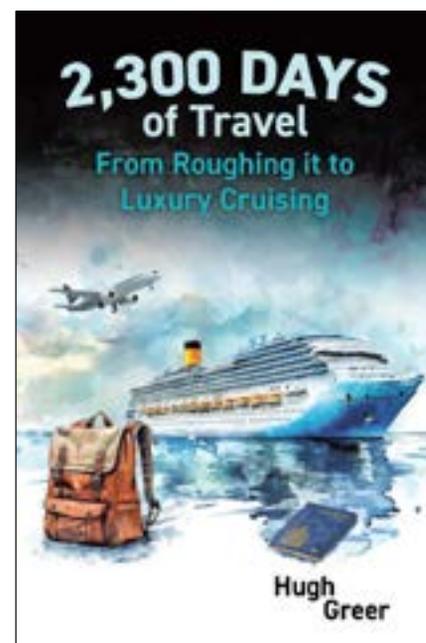
2,300 DAYS OF TRAVEL

by Hugh Greer

Hugh Greer began his travel adventures in the nineteen-fifties with his mom and dad. There were camping trips where he slept in a small canvas tent and was forced to do his business in a terrifying outhouse. There also were gruelling car trips to Southern California in an era of no interstate highways or bypasses, backpacking around the world and a year living and working in England.

As time went by, Greer enjoyed a more upscale level of travel which included ocean cruises and river boats through Europe and down the Mekong River.

2,300 Days of Travel describes, in a humorous and self-deprecating style, many of Greer's interesting travel experiences. This is a read for anyone who has travelled or wants to travel in the future. It is also a book for anyone who enjoys a good laugh.



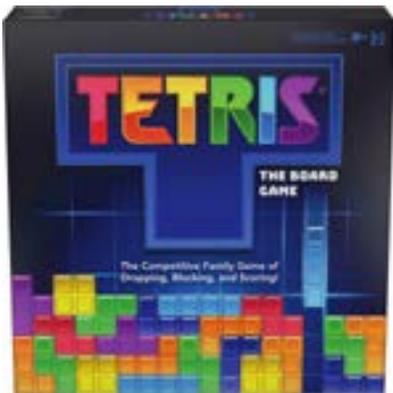
Available online from Chapters-Indigo, Amazon and at the author's website, hughgreerauthor.com

GAMES LADY

ROUND V

BY PAT THIESEN

Spring has finally arrived with returning flocks of noisy geese and greenery sprouting everywhere. Here are some games for those quiet, rainy evenings when friends or family have joined you.

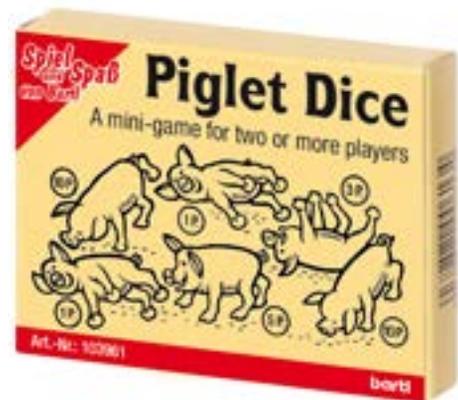


TETRIS BOARD GAME

Age: 6+. *Players:* 2-4. About 20-30 min.

Fun: My 7-yr old granddaughter begged to play against her dad so she could beat him.

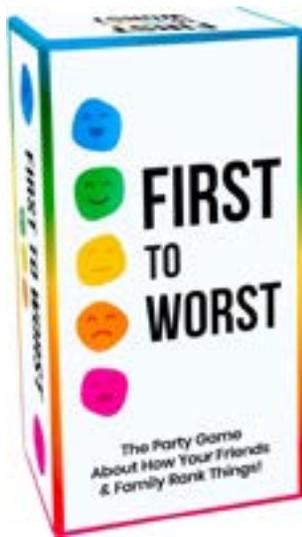
Gameplay: To play this version of Tetris, the once challenging computer video game from earlier days, players take turns putting “Tetrimino” pieces into their own see-through plastic tower. Cards indicate which piece to place into your tower. Players try to complete full rows (no spaces left unfilled) using the odd shaped pieces to score a point is the challenge. Higher levels available.



PIGLET DICE

Age: 6+. *Players:* 2+. About 10 minutes.

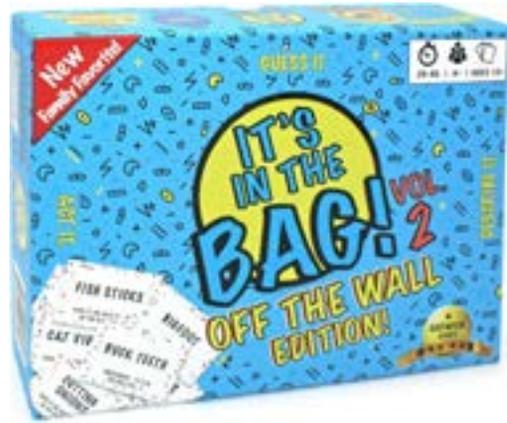
Gameplay: The game comes in a tiny box with a scoring system written on the back. Scoring is based on how each piglet lands on the table. If a piglet lands on its side, 1 point; on its back, 3 points; on 4 feet, 5 points; or snout down, 10 points. Alternate players rolling the piglets until a target score is reached. Couldn't be easier or more frustrating!



FIRST TO WORST

Age: 10+. **Players:** 2+. **Time per round:** 30 minutes.
About \$35 CAD

Gameplay: Each round's RANKER has set of cards numbered 1-5. A dealer places 5 TOPIC cards, face-up, on the table. The RANKER decides in which priority order those 5 cards should be placed by putting an up-side down RANK card next to each TOPIC card. The rest of the players then discuss and decide what the RANKER's choices were and place the second set of RANK cards face-up on the opposite side. The RANKER then reveals his/her choices. For each group decision that is correct (a PERFECT MATCH), 1 point is awarded to the players, but each incorrect match gives a point to the game. 5 points will be awarded each round. Proceed clockwise around the table, changing dealer and RANKER each round. Play continues until everyone has had the chance to be the RANKER. The winner (the group or the game) will have more points after all the rounds are finished.



IT'S IN THE BAG! VOL. 2: OFF THE WALL EDITION

Age: 12+. **Players:** 4+. **Duration:** 20-35 minutes
Cost: \$50.

Gameplay: 2 teams are seated in a circle alternating between Team 1 and Team 2 members. 4 cards per player are placed in a bag. In 3 rounds per game, (1 – Describe the Word; 2 – One-Word Only; and 3 – Act It Out) players attempt to have their teammates guess the word from the bag within 30 seconds. As soon as the word is guessed, start another word from the bag and continue until time runs out. Keep the cards your team has successfully guessed. Pass the card bag to the next person in the circle (the other team) and set the timer for their team's turn to guess the next word out of the bag. The round is over when all the cards from the bag have been guessed and points awarded. Begin Round 2 with one-word clues only and finish a game by tallying up all points awarded over the 3 rounds. The winning team has bragging rights until you play again.



A resident of Delta and former BCRTA director, **PAT THIESEN** is a frequent contributor to our magazine. As a Grade 6 teacher she loved to introduce her kids to Math Games Friday.

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RETIREE BENEFIT PLANS

CLASSIFIEDS

TRAVEL

DISCOVER CUBA Cuba1tours of Courtenay, BC takes groups to Cuba and offers a safe and fulfilling experience. You will travel from location to location in a modern, comfortable bus with space to relax and enjoy the scenery of the Cuban countryside. All special tours are guided by professionals and your tour guide is with you throughout. Tours are run through Square1travel, Courtenay BC which is a full service BC registered agency.

www.cuba1tours.com

COSTA RICA TRIP - THIS YEAR IS SOLD OUT!

BCRTA member Alex Campbell is organizing and leading a group of retirees to sensational Costa Rica.

Alex's been to Costa Rica 21 times and has taken many groups. Please email Alex kocho@shaw.ca if you are interested in taking a no obligation look at the itinerary and trip details for the next year.

ACCOMMODATION OFFERED

SUNSHINE COAST 3 bedroom, rustic and cozy waterfront cottage with view and beach. Perfect for retirees and families. Between Gibson and Langdale ferry. April, May, June, Sept, Oct. Contact Barry 250-744-7447 bwrolston@telus.net for information.

Heritage house in Alsace-France, Vosges Mountains, three bedrooms, modern kitchen, wifi, located on wine route, close to Germany (Freiburg) and Switzerland (Basel). Partial cleaning included, CA\$850 per week. mano936@gmail.com

MOVING? CHANGED EMAIL?

You can submit a change of address or contact information on our website BCRTA.CA - use the option "UPDATE MY MEMBER INFO" on the top menu!

PostScript

CARING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

PostScript Magazine is part of the Tree-Neutral Printing movement. Thanks to our printer, *Mitchell Press*, and their partner, *Print Releaf*, every copy of PostScript Magazine works to ensure that reforestation projects are undertaken and certified in areas that need it most. The program keeps track of fibre used in the printing process and carbon generated and then initiates planting of trees via certified global reforestation projects to offset all the effects.

Print Releaf sponsors reforestation and carbon storage projects around the world, including in BC's Cariboo region, where they are currently reforesting areas with native species like Ponderosa Pine, Western Larch, Lodgepole Pine, Douglas Fir, and Spruce.

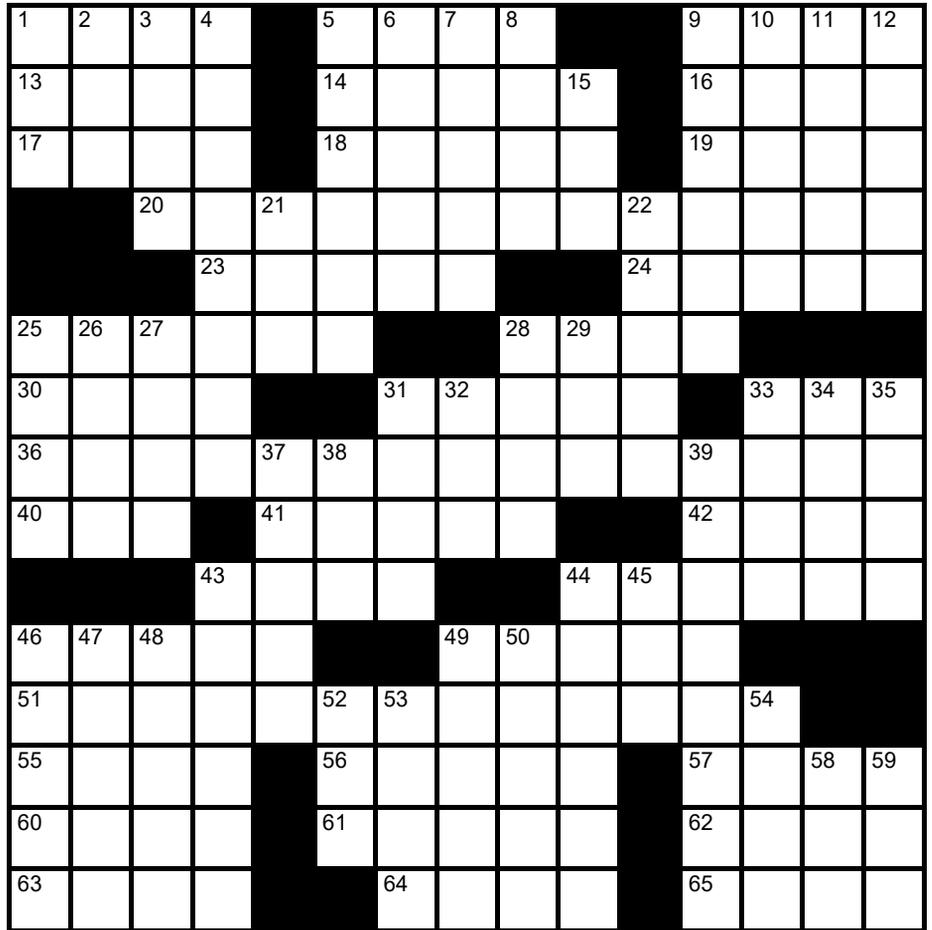


crossword

Still Waters Run Deep

By Lynn Hembree

Email: crossword@bcrrta.ca



ACROSS

1. Copied
5. Iconic peak of Japan
9. Moist
13. Sudden pivot or skid
14. Turn away
16. Biology lab supply
17. Vega's constellation
18. Starting with an "s", it might mean viewed? (2 wds)
19. Abhor
20. Our moon's "Sea ____" (2 wds)
23. ____ Mouse, British animated series
24. Dressed to the ____!
25. Charge
28. ____ carotene
30. ____ moss
31. Ringo
33. "The Three Faces of ____"
36. Librarian's line, maybe (3 wds)
40. "A Nightmare on ____ Street"
41. Architectural moldings
42. Ancient
43. Short cut?
44. Chocolate squares brand
46. Unemotional and strong
49. Freetown currency unit
51. It may be found at 20-across (3 wds)
55. Trans-Siberian Railroad city
56. 1988 Olympics site
57. Abounding
60. "What've you been ____?" (2 wds)
61. Outer covering of a flower
62. Object of worship
63. Chuck
64. Chip or Roy & ____
65. Checked out

DOWN

1. Visual communication skill: Abbr.
2. Layer of TP, perhaps
3. Currency worth about 1.6 CAD
4. A person who is ____ or ____ may use 1-Down (2 wds)
5. Creature of folklore, (var.)
6. Pigmented layers of eyes
7. 52-down female
8. Middle East hot spot
9. Showy bloom
10. "Encore!"
11. Photo print choice
12. Takes advantage
15. Followed by "-nami", may cause widespread flooding
21. Classroom helpers
22. Foreword, for short
25. Recess in a church
26. It may end in "-ing" or "-idh"
27. Soothe
28. Low in pitch
29. .000001 joule
31. Drain slowly
32. 20-20, e.g.
33. Halftime lead, e.g.
34. Swerve
35. Aims
37. LA '90's Hip-hop duo know as "The ____"
38. Film graphics initials, briefly
39. War of 1812 locale
43. Perverse people (slang)
44. Famous 18th century French cabinetmaker
45. "Gimme ____!" (start of a cheer for Iceland)
46. Gush forth
47. Beat
48. Hop kilns
49. "Awakenings" drug
50. "="
52. Donkey
53. Call for
54. Fastidious
58. Enemy
59. Antiquity, in antiquity

Sudoku

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

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

TO SOLVE SUDOKU PUZZLES:

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3 x 3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

SEND COMPLETED PUZZLES TO:

100 – 550 West 6th Avenue,
Vancouver BC V5Z 4P2

FOR MORE ONLINE SUDOKU PUZZLES:

www.websudoku.com/

DEADLINE FOR SUDOKU AND CROSSWORD SUBMISSION IS:

April 30, 2026

Congratulations to last issue's puzzle winners. Your cheques are in the mail!

Crossword:

Liana Horkoff, Nelson
Rob MacDonald, Sooke
Todd Strong, Greater Victoria

Sudoku:

Peter Staton, Parksville
Myrna Ziola, Vancouver
Patricia Rankin, Cowichan

WINTER 2025 CROSSWORD SOLUTION

1	S	2	U	3	V		4	T	5	U	6	T		7	D	8	O	9	10	T	11	E	12	D
13	I	R	A				14	B	L	I	15	P		16	I	G	U	A	N	A				
17	M	I	G	R	A	18	N	T	S		19	M	E	X	I	C	O							
20	O	N	A	I	R			21	L	Y	22	C	É	E										
23	N	A	R	D			24	T	E	C	H	S		25	L	26	A	27	S	28	H			
29	S	L	Y				30	M	O	S	H	E		31	B	I	L	C	O					
							32	S	E	I	K	O		33	J	I	G	S	A	W				
			34	S	35	O	M	E	L	I	K	E	I	T	H	O	T							
37	R	E	M	O	T	E					38	I	S	L	E	T								
39	B	R	A	T	S			40	O	N	P	A	R		41	R	42	O	43	W				
44	C	A	N	E				45	F	R	E	O	N		46	M	E	S	A					
							47	B	A	N	T	U		48	O	A	S	I	S					
49	H	50	A	51	W	52	A	I	I		53	I	S	54	S	A	T	U	R	N				
55	E	L	E	V	E	N				56	C	A	S	H		57	M	I	O					
58	D	E	T	E	N	T				59	L	E	U		60	E	S	T						

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Obituaries

Location listed is the area given as "last taught"



Anderson, John R.	Courtenay	Currie, Patricia A.	Vancouver
Allen, Nelson	Nanaimo	Dotto, Kerry	Burnaby
Ansell, Ronald A.	Prince George	Fischer-Credo, Matthew C.	Vancouver
Arkininstall, William	Bulkley Valley	Foulds, Donna Joy	Shuswap
Baker, Lois J.	Surrey	Francis, Clarence G.	Chilliwack
Baker, Alan Edward	Kamloops	Frew, Phyllis B.	Central Okanagan
Baker, Michael C.	Vancouver	Fricke, Neil	Kootenay-Columbia
Behnsen, Gerard D.	Campbell River	George, Brian E.	Sooke
Bennett, Merle	Vancouver	Goodrich, Kathryn M.	Campbell River
Benwell, R. Owen	Saanich	Gould, Cecil E. J.	Sooke
Bouvier, Gilles	Coquitlam	Gray, Marjorie J.	Vancouver
Bowing, Karen	Delta	Hall, Helen	Nanaimo
Braddock, Roberta	Surrey	Hartley, Deborah	Prince George
Brandon, Melodie	Surrey	Heuberger, Wendy	Surrey
Brouwer, Janet E.	Penticton	Hayden, Daphne E.	Cranbrook
Burleson, Gordon D.	North Island	Hemphill, Shirley R.	West Vancouver
Butler, Terri M.M.	Burnaby	Hoffman, Linda	Kootenay Lake W
Catchpole, Patricia	Delta	Irvine, Margaret	Kitimat/Coast Mtn
Clark, Joan E.	Delta	Johnson, Morley M.	Surrey
Clark, Janet D.	Maple Ridge	Karagianis, Ronald	Vernon
Clay-Smith, Geoffrey	Vancouver	Keller, Theresia	Fraser Cascades

Kennaird, H. Elizabeth	Alberni	Nash, Joy H.F.	Campbell River
King, Robert H.	Cowichan	Neave, Petrie	Quesnel
Knight, James	Coquitlam	Nelems, Wendy	Vancouver
Knowles, Rose	Greater Victoria	Nutter, W. Roy	Richmond
Kokot, Harold	Abbotsford	O'Brien, Derek	Campbell River
Koleszar, Shirley J.	Powell River	Paterson, M. Dawn	North Vancouver
Komar, Anita	Greater Victoria	Pauliuc, Stephanie	Cranbrook
Lotzer , Kathleen A.	Langley	Peary, George W.	Abbotsford
Lowry, Judy	Nanaimo	Pennell, Elizabeth A.	Nanaimo
Lyall, Robert A.	Kamloops	Pennington, F. William	Vancouver
Lynn, Clarke	Surrey	Person, Leonard W.	Vancouver
Mammone, Rod J.	North Vancouver	Porco, Barbara	Delta
Marshall, Michael K.	Gulf Islands	Reeve, Margaret Anne	Sooke
McCabe, J. Elizabeth	Howe Sound	Reimer, Brigitte	Central Okanagan
McCune, Terry	Powell River	Revfem, Erik	Powell River
McDicken, Raymond	Kootenay-Columbia	Rout, Jonathan	Qualicum
McDonald, Ida G.	Abbotsford	Ruggiero, Daniel	Central Okanagan
McLean, Lorne	Armstrong - Spallumcheen	Segnoe, Gary S.	Abbotsford
McLean, Veronica	Vernon	Stevenson, Daniel	Campbell River
Mclennan, Lorne H	Surrey	Stone, Geoffrey	Cowichan Valley
McMichael, Helen L.	Greater Victoria	Taylor, Mary E.	Richmond
Miller, Verne R.	Van. Island W.	Uchiyama, Elizabeth Anne	Vancouver
Miller, Nancy	Saanich	Walmsley, John	S.E. Kootenay
Mossop, Margaret Anne	Surrey	Wiebe, Menno	Delta
Nadeau, Myra	Prince George	Wightman, David	South Cariboo
Naef, Barbara	Abbotsford	Willing, A. Douglas	Alberni

The background of the entire page is a dark, textured surface, possibly black or dark grey. Scattered across this background are several white cherry blossoms and individual petals. Some blossoms are in full bloom, showing five petals and numerous stamens. Others are buds or single petals, some appearing to be falling. The flowers are primarily located on the right side of the page, with a few petals scattered towards the top and bottom. The lighting is soft, highlighting the delicate texture of the petals and the intricate details of the flower centers.

February 11, 2026

Dear Colleagues and Parents,

On behalf of the BC Retired Teachers' Association (BCRTA), I want to express our sorrow and solidarity in the midst of the devastation in Tumbler Ridge that has shaken our province.

Although BCRTA members are no longer in classrooms each day, our hearts remain with the educators, students, and families who are carrying the heaviness of this tragedy. We understand that in times like this, the roles of teachers and others extend far beyond instruction and daily routines. Teachers and parents are being called upon to provide comfort, stability, and reassurance while dealing with your own grief.

In sorrowful times, the strength of our educational community matters more than ever. Please know that our association stands with each educator, student, parent, and support staff member. Every healthcare worker, paramedic, first responder, and resident in Tumbler Ridge is in our thoughts. Tragic events have wide-ranging effects; to all people who have been affected by these heartbreaking events, we encourage you to seek support from your family, friends, and community members.

With heartfelt condolences and solidarity,

Caroline Malm
President
BC Retired Teachers' Association



R. R. Smith Memorial Fund Foundation is the charity established by the BCRTA in 2002 to support Canadian-registered charities who support the cause of education around the world.

Our Purpose

To advance public education in British Columbia and in developing countries by :

- Providing scholarships and bursaries to doctoral students in any area which advances public education and deserving students, to enable them to attend post-secondary educational institutions.
- Making and administering grants to Canadian registered charitable organizations, the purposes of which are similar to those of the society.
- Acquiring school materials, books, equipment, and supplies of all kinds, and donating them to schools.
- Providing funding to support innovative projects which advance public education.
- Working cooperatively with governments in Canada and other countries, and other charitable organizations.

In the past year we were pleased to assess and support all 2025 applicants except one which did not meet our criteria. The opportunity to support more worthy causes was made possible by the financial increase to R.R. Smith from \$2.00 per year, per R.R. Smith member, to \$5.00. This motion was approved at the 2024 BCRTA AGM.

If you are not a member of R.R. Smith, please contact the BCRTA office and ask them to add you. Your annual contribution to the foundation will occur each September when you pay your fees.

Two of our B.C. supported projects include:

The Wonderful World of Books - organized mainly by retired teachers in the Qualicum School District. These volunteers purchase and deliver age-appropriate books to babies and toddlers in their district.

The Blue Act Marine Society - Sunshine Coast, which works to create meaningful change for the health of our oceans by “embracing simple, personal actions that can help transform your daily tasks to minimize your environmental footprint and embrace a ‘zero-waste’ lifestyle.”

Learn more at www.rrsmith.ca



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