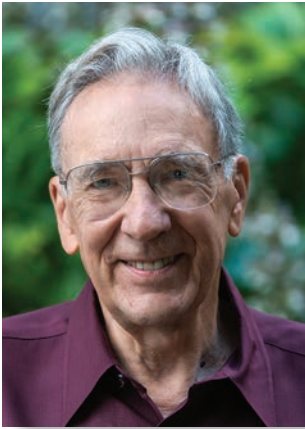


# 3550





**ED PARKER**  
Co-editor



**BOB HOPKINS**  
President

**I**n 1858, the Atlantic Monthly published a poem by Oliver Wendell Holmes titled “The Deacon’s Masterpiece” about a perfectly crafted vehicle pulled by a single horse to transport one or two people. It was called a one-horse shay.

The mythical vehicle was built in 1755 by a craftsman who knew that the weakest component in a complex system would be the first to fail. So he attempted to create a vehicle with no weak link — every part and every connection would be as strong as the strongest part.

Following the craftsman’s logic and assuming that nothing complex lasts forever, the poetic vehicle collapsed into a heap of rubble in 1855 after 100 years as all parts failed at the same time.

In the unmythical world we live in, we know that in all complex systems, whether manufactured or biological, some parts fail before others. In humans, even with the good maintenance of staying physically, mentally and socially active, eating well and getting good health care, some parts fail before others. We may not know in advance which parts.

In my case, eyesight is the failing part, with currently untreatable macular degeneration. My workarounds — better lighting, greater magnification and getting help from my friends — have made it possible to struggle through. But the process now takes so much time that I don’t have time for the other tasks I wish to complete before my eyes fail further or some of my other parts start failing.

Consequently, I will be unable to continue as co-editor of 3550 after this issue. I am turning over full responsibility to my co-editor Nancy Moss. I am not going away and will continue to be a member of the 3550 staff and be available to help Nancy as best I can.

Please give Nancy and the rest of the all-volunteer staff of 3550 your support and encouragement.

**M**any good things have happened at Mirabella Portland already this year. Among other things, Aria, Adagio and the Aqua Vita Lounge on the 24th floor finally became fully functional after many months of remodeling, kicked off with popular New Year's Eve and other holiday celebrations. We once again have dining and lounge venue choices with views, service and comfort unsurpassed anywhere in the city. All residents should take advantage of these great improvements to our stunning building — and invite relatives and friends to join you.

Also, more support for the 20 plus committees and 15 plus interest groups we now have at Mirabella has begun with the implementation of the Internship Program created early this year between Mirabella Portland and Portland Community College. And we are striving to remain current with the changing demographics, interests and abilities of our residents through updated surveys, improved comment card systems and better communications within our community.

We also have new and growing activities, events and programs. These include three new art classes started in January in the Artist Studio, additional wellness lectures and fitness classes, many and varied musical and theatrical programs, interesting author and other speaker events, choral group formation, travel and dining trips, more excited weekly pool volleyball competition participants, and stimulating movie and book discussion gatherings.

With all of this and everything else Mirabella Portland has to offer, if you feel you are not benefitting sufficiently then I would encourage you to try more and maybe something new, volunteer some, ask for help when you can use it, help others when you can, and provide your comments and ideas to your RAMP council members, committees and interest groups.

Mirabella Portland will remain a premier community and facility if we, its residents, remain engaged and supportive of our fellow residents, our great staff and the efforts of our committees and interest groups.



**Front Cover**

The Tilikum Crossing was dedicated in 2015 and takes its name from the Chinook word for "the people." It is the first major U.S. bridge exclusively designed for pedestrians, cyclists and mass transit. Photo: Bert Van Gorder



**Back Cover**

Ukulele orchestra members Rosemary Hole, Nancy Rubovitz, Judy Seubert and Terri Hopkins enjoy a ride in a hot air balloon. Photo: Stanley Berman.

**~ The Inside Scoop ~**

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## Council Amends RAMP Rules

**At its January meeting**, after hearing no objections from residents during the preceding comment period, the resident association council amended the organization's rules to make more explicit the duties and authority of the treasurer.

The revised rules authorize the treasurer to open and close bank accounts, subject to council approval, and to act independently in an emergency.

They give the treasurer authority to approve budgeted expenditures under \$2,000 and require approval from two authorized council members for amounts of \$2,000 or more.

The treasurer, subject to council approval, may prepare and require the use of forms for RAMP members and committees to request payment from RAMP funds.

The rules explicitly permit RAMP to accept funds from sources other than Mirabella Portland. An example is advertising revenue received by 3550 magazine.

## Moss Play on Aussie Broadcast

**Nancy Moss' 10-minute play** "Detained," about a young Hispanic man pulled from a bus, was aired on Keppel Bay FM91.3 radio on January 11 and repeated at 11 p.m. the following Saturday. FM91.3 is located in Yeppoon, which is on Australia's east coast.

Chapel Theatre in Milwaukie, Oregon, produced "Detained" as part of its festival of 10-minute plays in 2021.



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## Committees Add Services

**Fitness and Wellness.** The Fitness and Wellness committee has new co-chairs for fiscal year 2023-24, Julie and Bill Young, who are new to the committee themselves. Julie says they are on a learning curve with the support of their committee of more than 20 residents and Sherry Bonekat, Mirabella wellness coordinator.

The committee is advisory only but brings resident input on the types of fitness classes they would like offered or changed.

A new emphasis on wellness says that fitness is one aspect of wellness, which also includes mental health, physical health, social wellbeing and, for some, even spiritual health. A resident survey has been drafted by RAMP's ad hoc survey committee to reveal information about residents' satisfaction or dissatisfaction relative to social relationships and connections. The committee is aware that a certain number of residents suffer from loneliness. The survey will help guide it toward ways of improving this aspect of social wellbeing.

**Art Committee.** Art Committee co-chairs are Dan Hole and Eileen Kane, with Anne Clark as RAMP liaison.

In 2020 the committee established regulations that allow residents to donate art for the benefit of Mirabella Portland. Dee Poth chairs the acquisitions sub-committee that receives the pieces and plans their display. The hall to River Parkway, the Park View room and the Pennoyer lobby all display donated art. New colorful posters featuring Portland parks that break the long hallway walls in the parking level were the first purchase by the Art Committee with support from the Mirabella Portland Foundation's cultural enrichment fund.

Winter classes included an outside instructor for the first time. Portland artist Jane Gallen taught "Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain." Ron Mendonca reprised his popular Kumihimo Japanese braiding class and Eileen Kane taught another watercolor class.

The Art Committee is fortunate to have a spacious studio across from the tower elevators on the parking level that provides areas for drawing, painting and classes as well as sewing and quilting. The talented fabric art residents have donated fabric pieces, thread, buttons, yarn and embroidery thread for others' use. The studio also has reference books for quilting and knitting patterns and technique.

Free gift-wrapping materials are always available and are a popular art committee offering, especially during the holiday season.

## Bylaw Amendment Vote Planned

**Based on the recommendation** of its former bylaws committee, the RAMP council plans to ask residents to approve at the March semi-annual meeting a bylaw change to permit bylaws to be amended at a special meeting of association members.

Currently, bylaws may be amended only at the regularly scheduled annual or semi-annual meetings. The change is intended to give RAMP additional flexibility to respond to unexpected circumstances.

## Knoll Attends Conferences

**Mirabella resident Paul Knoll**, retired University of Southern California history professor and medievalist, made a presentation to the Association for Slavic and East Asian Studies in Philadelphia. What Paul terms a "bunch of different Slavic peoples," including Russians, Poles, Ukrainians and Czechs, considered the tradition of the cold war with Russia.

Paul's presentation was "Constructing history: approaches to the past in medieval and pre-modern Eastern and Central European historiography,"

In January Paul attended the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in San Francisco.

Because of Covid, these are the first two conferences he has attended since January 2020.



"This trip, we'd like to go everywhere our luggage goes."

## Renters Moving into Willamette Tower

**The first residents** of the recently completed 24-story Willamette Tower have moved into the South Waterfront neighborhood. Alamo Manhattan is now leasing apartments in the gleaming-white building.

The central structure of the riverfront building south of Mirabella rises above a four-story podium. It is topped with 12 penthouses. There are 240 one-bedroom units and 72 two-bedroom units. There are also 18 units of two-story, street-level townhomes. Tower residents will park above ground in the podium, arranged around the elevator and utility core, with 334 parking stalls and 58 bike spaces.

A 20th-floor, two-bedroom, river-facing unit with 1150 square feet rents for \$4,038 per month. A one-bedroom, 726 square-foot unit on the fourth floor will rent for \$2,196 per month. A slightly larger (770 square foot) unit on the eighth floor with a marvelous up-river view — though some of that view will be lost when the last tower is built in the third

phase of the project — goes for \$2,500 per month.

In 2022, Alamo's contractor, Andersen Construction, emplaced earth and concrete pilings at the top of the river-edge slope to stabilize the bank. In 2023, it graded and paved the Greenway.

With that pathway open, Mirabella residents can now stroll or bike to The Old Spaghetti Factory (and as far as the Sellwood Bridge should they wish) without needing to use city streets.

Phases two and three of the Alamo project are currently on hold. Project managers still hope to find a grocery store tenant for a new building on the Bond Avenue lot next to the Spaghetti Factory property. The planned 33,000 square-foot store planned for the delayed phase two of the project would have underground parking for customers.

— Pete Swan



Photo: Stanley Berman

*The best news about the opening of Willamette Tower is the opening of the walking and bicycle pathways between the South Waterfront Greenway and the Old Spaghetti Factory.*



Photo: Richard Mounts

Joscelyn Cook started work on Jan. 15 as Mirabella's new health services administrator.

## Dining Management Changing

**Mirabella residents** were shocked to learn on Feb. 1 that three leaders of the dining team were no longer employed at Mirabella.

Executive Director Sharon Van Eaton, in a brief memo to residents, announced that Christopher Handford, director of dining services, Rob Shumate, assistant dining room manager, and Dylan Thompson, lead server, "are no longer with us, effective immediately."

"We are grateful for the contributions they have made to our organization and wish them the best in their future endeavors," she said. "We will be working with the existing managers until a new director and manager are hired."

Sharon promised to keep residents informed of any further developments.

## Help for Low-Vision Readers

In a talk to **Mirabella residents**, Elke Bruton of the State Library of Oregon presented its free Talking Books program, for anyone who has a hard time seeing small print. Members can choose from over 130,000 titles "based on your profile," Elke says, as well as magazines and newspapers.

Residents applying and accepted will get a player and cartridges, each of which contains up to eight books. They can keep the cartridge as long as they want and mail it back when finished with the books.

Residents interested in the program need to fill out an application and have it approved by Megan Huston. Application forms are in her office and in the library.



Photo: Bert Van Gorder

Remember the January ice storm? Turning Mirabella's entryway fountain into an ice sculpture was a rare event.

# Foundation Merger Completed

By ED PARKER

**T**he long-delayed merger of the Mirabella Portland Foundation into Mirabella Portland is finally happening.

In January, the boards of directors of the Foundation corporation, Mirabella Portland and its parent company, Pacific Retirement Services (PRS), all approved the merger, Mirabella Executive Director Sharon Van Eaton reported. Also in January, the PRS legal department submitted the required formal paperwork to the Oregon secretary of state for inclusion in the state's corporation records.

As 3550 went to press in early February, Sharon told 3550 that the transaction was expected to be recorded in the state's public record of Oregon corporations within a few days.

A Mirabella Portland board committee consisting entirely of Mirabella residents and chaired by resident board member Jim McGill replaced the former foundation board. That nine-member board had three resident members.

Mirabella Portland bylaws require that at least one board member serve on each board committee. With Jim's appointment as chair, all six voting members of the new committee are Mirabella residents. That committee includes the three residents previously elected to serve on the prior foundation board, Stan Berman, Lynne DeVries and Jim Fitzsimmons. The RAMP president and vice president, currently Bob Hopkins and John Briggs, are also members. Sharon Van Eaton participates as a non-voting member. Mirabella residents will elect a new member each year to serve a three-year term, replacing the member completing three years on either the prior foundation board or the new committee.

In its final meeting, the Foundation board approved a new version of the foundation reference manual that describes the new legal structure. The foundation advisory committee of the Residents' Association of Mirabella Portland (RAMP) will now advise the board's resident foundation committee. Except for that change, the foundation advisory committee will continue to operate exactly as before. It provides advice on foundation policy and does the fund-raising for the foundation funds. Under delegated authority from the board, it decides how to spend money from the employee scholarship fund and the cultural enrichment fund.

The policies and procedures for applying for and distributing foundation funds remain unchanged under the new legal structure. Those policies and procedures and relevant forms are included in the revised reference manual, a copy of which is (or soon will be) posted on the RAMP foundation advisory committee page on Miranet.

Donors may make their donations payable to the Mirabella Portland foundation with a designation (usually on the memo line of their check) indicating which fund or funds the money is for. If no fund is specified, the money will go into the foundation general fund, which is used primarily for fund-raising and administrative expenses. Alternately, donors may make donations payable to Mirabella Portland with a specific foundation fund specified.

All donations to foundation funds continue to be tax deductible as charitable donations. Mirabella Portland is an Internal Revenue Code 501(c)3 charitable organization, as the prior foundation corporation was.

See the sidebar foundation funds article for a statement of the restricted purpose for each of the foundation funds. ●

## Foundation Fund Purposes

The following funds are collectively referred to as the Mirabella Portland foundation funds. Mirabella Portland administration must account for these funds separately from all other Mirabella Portland funds. To comply with donor intent, all expenditures from any fund must be for the specified purpose.

**Resident Assistance Fund:** Established to provide financial support to ensure that no resident will ever have to leave Mirabella Portland due to outliving their financial resources.

**Employee Scholarship Fund:** Established to assist Mirabella Portland employees who wish to improve their work skills, pursue a formal licensing, certification or degree program or generally further their education.

**Health Center Fund:** Established to provide funding to improve the quality of life for residents of the Health Center through programs, facilities and equipment.

**Employee Hardship Fund:** Established to assist Mirabella Portland employees who face unforeseen financial hardship.

**Cultural Enrichment Fund:** Established to sponsor artistic and cultural presentations and performances, and to provide equipment needed to support such events.

**Medical Transportation Fund:** Established to support transportation to medical appointments for residents of Mirabella Portland.

**General Fund:** Established to be used only for fund-raising and administrative expenses and for the support of other funds within the foundation family of funds.



# PRS Changing to Meet Customer Needs

By ED PARKER

**M**irabella's parent company Pacific Retirement Services (PRS) has completed the first year of a three-year plan to become more responsive to the needs of prospective retirees and current residents.

John Howl, PRS chief strategy officer, is leading the charge under the direction of President and Chief Executive Officer Eric Sholty.

The first step in the strategic plan was to revise the PRS mission and vision statements. The board-approved new mission statement is: "To provide exceptional leadership to our family of organizations, working together to enhance the aging experience." The vision: "Every person deserves a healthy, stable, and secure retirement experience."

Why new mission and vision statements? John reports, "Mission captures the reason we exist and is a foundation to inspire employees and residents ... Vision sets aspirations and connects us to an aim much greater than our current capability and capacity."

John told 3550 that PRS needs to be focused on and responsive to the needs of the next generation of retirees while also paying attention to the needs of current residents in PRS communities.

PRS plans to remain a non-profit organization that can successfully compete with the growing number of for-profit retirement communities.

One element of the plan is to grow and diversify the company to increase economies of scale. Stand-alone retirement communities are not prospering because they lack the financial resources and management capabilities of larger organizations.

The first step in that expansion plan was the 2023 acquisition of the non-profit Haverland Carter Lifestyle Group with its New Mexico, Oklahoma and Colorado retirement communities, nursing homes and a hospice facility.

The next major element of the strategic planning process is to change the culture of the PRS organization so that the tasks and incentives for all PRS employees are closely aligned with the consumer focus of the revised mission and vision statements. John says that currently PRS departments work in separate silos and are not working cooperatively with a strong customer focus.

Resistance to change is normal in most people and organizations. Changing the way corporate employees have previously done their jobs is not easy. PRS has hired the organizational consulting firm Korn Ferry to help transform the organization into one that focuses better on consumer needs.

In his January 2024 progress report to the PRS board

and the boards of PRS communities, John listed his other priorities for this calendar year. One is "With the goal of sustainability and efficiency top of mind, make a governance structure recommendation to the PRS board."

It is too early to know what recommendations will come from the governance

structure discussions now underway. John said the members of the PRS board attended the annual Leading Age conference in November to participate in discussions with other non-profit retirement communities. The Leading Age website says they serve approximately 5,000 non-profit retirement communities.

PRS recognizes that financial losses in skilled nursing facilities at Mirabella and other properties is a problem that needs to be fixed soon. One strategic planning task for 2024 is, "Make decisions about the future of skilled nursing care in PRS communities." John told 3550 that "skilled nursing will not be going away completely" but that it needs to change to be viable in the current environment of reduced insurance reimbursement and staff shortages.

Another 2024 task is to "Enhance PRS's infrastructure by creating and executing the first phase of an infrastructure improvement roadmap." John said the first step in that process was the currently underway conversion to new accounting and human resources software.

John said that many of the strategic plan activities won't directly involve affiliate communities in 2024. He reported that affiliates, including Mirabella, will benefit "as PRS grows its capabilities, resources and management systems. For example, while the PRS employee culture is distinct from that of community employees, how work gets done at PRS influences the productivity and engagement levels of community staff."



*John Howl, PRS chief strategy officer*



Photo: Robert French

# Flora and Jim Lee

**P**eripatetic may not be quite the word. Avid travelers serves better. A plethora of interesting jobs go into the mix.

Flora and Jim Lee have traveled to 61 countries and are planning for number 62. They have hiked, biked, and eaten local foods such as live shrimp, caterpillars (dried), and rat (very dried). They always prefer street food (carefully) to restaurants, finding it more authentic. Their favorite country is Mongolia. They encountered Komodo dragons on Komodo Island in Indonesia. See photo.

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## Resident Profile:

# Flora and Jim Lee: Finding Adventure

By **PAMELA LINDHOLM-LEVY**

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Both Flora and Jim were born in New York City. They met at Cornell University. They married while Jim was working for GE medical systems in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, using his degree in electrical engineering. Flora graduated from Cornell in biomathematics. Milwaukee wasn't the couple's ideal. Going back to Cornell, Jim earned a master's in electrical engineering and Flora earned one in biometrics. Jim also earned an MBA. They moved to Westchester County and acquired an Old English Sheepdog, Windy.

Windy would become one of eight of this shaggy, adorable breed the Lees loved as pets and showed in competition. While none ever made it to Westminster, Jim and Flora had a good time on the show circuit.

Flora was working at Lederle Laboratories pharmaceutical house designing experiments in drug development. Finding this a literal rat (and mouse) race, she took a job with General Foods in management analysis and later in operations research. At the time, this company, which was later absorbed into others, owned the brands Baker's Chocolate, Kool-Aid, Jell-O, Birdseye frozen foods, Oscar Meyer, Post cereals and many others. Eventually, Flora moved to its marketing department. During this time the couple lived in Fairfield County, Connecticut, in towns Stamford and New Canaan. Each move was purposely to a house that needed the upgrades Jim and Flora were able to provide themselves.

Jim also worked for General Foods in marketing, then moved to an advertising agency. That led to a four-year

marketing job with Zotos, a hair-care company that made color and permanent wave preparations for salons.

Jim left Zotos for a direct mail company called MBI and Danbury Mint. It produced collectibles such as books, commemorative plates, model cars, dolls and spoons. Christmas ornaments were big sellers. Jim liked the company structure that allowed product managers control over the whole process, from manufacturing through order fulfillment.

Four years at MBI led Jim back to Zotos as a vice president, more or less running the company while the owner contemplated retirement. When the company was acquired, Jim left and went back to MBI/Danbury Mint. He worked on its direct mail campaigns. The company didn't send out catalogs. It advertised by what is called solo mailing, focusing on one featured product.

A big change came when the couple moved to Seattle. Flora was tapped to be regional general manager of the baked goods division under the Oroweat banner. Products included Entenmanns, Lenders and Boboli brands. From Flora's office window on Lake Union she enjoyed the aroma of a million loaves of bread consisting of hundreds of varieties baked by 400 bakers every week. She also managed 400 sales people and hundreds of delivery personnel.

Flora and Jim loved the Pacific Northwest. Jim says he retired, mentally, when they moved to Seattle, but in fact he talked himself into a job with Seattle Film Works, with an immediate four-weeks-vacation perk. Do you remember Seattle Film Works, the place you sent your Kodak film roll and received prints back soon after? Jim realized the company needed more tech support, so he learned programming and was able to fix glitches that had required a week's wait for sorting out. He liked learning geeky things, he discovered.

Beginning in the 1970s the Lees traveled internationally, recognizing more and more the types of trips they liked best. Since the mid '80s they've done wildlife adventure travel such as safaris and to the Galapagos Islands, and bicycling trips in the '90s and '00s. Outfitters such as Overseas Adventure Travel have been their inspiration for cultural and adventure trips for many years.

Flora rafted the Grand Canyon without Jim after their first camping trip together. "I like hot showers and flush toilets," he says. Flora, undeterred, took three more of these 16- to 18-day camping trips.

They were in Indonesia when a volcano erupted. While they were never in danger, air travel and communications were cut and the Lees had to stay three additional days on (readers, ready to sympathize?)... Bali. It was on this trip that Flora and Jim took in Komodo Island and encountered the dragons.

*(Continued on next page)*

*(Continued from previous page)*

Mongolia has remained the Lees' favorite country, but Bhutan and Namibia are high on their list. They have been impressed with traditional life in Mongolia over the years, recognizing that the country is being pulled more and more into the modern world.

Even though she and Jim are interested in the food in the countries they visit, Flora says, "I'm a big fan of eating, not a big fan of cooking."

It appears cooking does not run in the family then, for Flora's mother, Florence Lin, was a renowned cook and teacher of Chinese cuisine. After immigrating to New York in 1947 and expanding on self-taught recipes that brought back tastes of home, she began teaching at the China Institute and never stopped. She had travelled throughout China with her father and learned about the myriad cultures and cuisines in that vast country. She recreated the dishes and shared them in classes and books. The books are out of print but available online. When Julia Child wanted to learn Chinese cuisine, it was Florence Lin to whom she turned.

Retirement took Flora and Jim to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where they knew they would enjoy the art, skiing (including heli-skiing) and other outdoor opportunities. Because of her business background, Flora became a consultant to artists, steering them to greater representation in galleries. She worked with non-profits that provided services for seniors in

the community such as a daycare for people with dementia.

As much as they loved Santa Fe, they were concerned about the deficiencies in local and regional medical care. The answer to the question "where do you go for medical care" is "the airport." They had loved the Pacific Northwest and knew it could meet their needs, particularly OHSU. They moved to Lake Oswego in 2016 and, on July 5, 2023, into Mirabella Portland.

Fitness activities here are important to the Lees. Flora is on the Fitness and Wellness Committee, and they both work out in the gym four days a week and play pool volleyball.

Both Jim and Flora are on RAMP ad hoc advisory committees, which conduct fact-finding surveys. Flora's committee is determining interests and abilities of residents so they can better take advantage of programs and activities within Mirabella. Jim's ad hoc group looks at the potential for interns to play a role in Mirabella committees and how that might be accomplished to best advantage for both interns and Mirabella. In addition, Jim participates on both the building and grounds and communications committees. Flora is an accomplished woodworker, having made furniture in the past. She plans to keep up her skills in Mirabella's well-appointed wood shop.

If Mirabella can be called an adventure, the Lees have taken to it in a big way. ●



*The Lees claim they were not as close to the Komodo dragon as it appears in this picture.*

# Health Care Floor Losing Money

By NANCY MOSS

The healthcare floor here showed significant losses in Mirabella's recent financial statements. This is not surprising, according to Executive Director Sharon Van Eaton.

Although Mirabella received the license to shift its memory care area from skilled nursing to residential care in May, a move made to save money, that change only became effective in July. The 10% raise in rates that started in October should also trim losses.

But Medicare is continuing to cut support of skilled nursing and is reimbursing for home-health care instead. Residents with long-term-care insurance should check to see if their policy covers home health care.

One way Mirabella hopes to cut health care losses is by training its own certified nursing assistants (CNAs). Four people graduated from the first class, two from Holladay Park Plaza and two here. The second group contains five people who will take a six-week class and then pass a test for certification.

Past Healthcare Administrator Stephanie Cook has said she wanted to eliminate all contract CNAs, who cost more and can lower staff morale.

Healthcare services have been in high demand; the August financial report lists memory care as 100% full and skilled nursing at 97% occupancy.

Memory care now has a bed available, Sharon says. After a resident dies, Mirabella "gives the family some grace" in clearing the room of the resident's possessions. The room may be, like jam in "Alice in Wonderland," available but not at the moment.

Asked if Medicare's pressure on skilled nursing has affected new life-plan communities coming on market in Portland,



Photo: Robert French

RNs Anna Khimich and Lauren Morayta working at the health care floor's pill station.

Sharon said skilled nursing has "either shrunk dramatically or is not part of the plan." She mentions Terwilliger Plaza's new addition, which contains assisted living and in-home services.

The advocacy group Leading Age continues to press for skilled nursing, as in its bill to have the cost of temporary staff capped, which is still before the state legislature. This bill would limit what contract employees can charge.

The snapshot Mirabella's August report gives us, with a skilled nursing area almost filled to capacity, suggests a need. How legislation will meet that need remains to be seen. ●

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Photo: Johanna King

# Anthony Franz

**A**nthony Franz learned some important life lessons from his father, who was born and grew up in Micronesia on the island Republic of Palau, and was steeped in its cultural values: “Be kind to others; love to take care of everyone; and resolve your issues before going to bed so you can wake up happy.” “These,” says Anthony, “have always been my values.”

After studying engineering on Palau, his father came to Oregon where there were better job opportunities. Some companies thought his island education was inferior to what he would have learned in Oregon, but he persisted and was successful with an engineering firm.

---

## Staff Profile:

# Anthony Franz

## Serving Seniors for 22 Years

By **PRISCILLA COWELL**

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He met Anthony’s mother at a volleyball match, where his constant spiking the ball at her prompted them to exchange phone numbers so she could give him volleyball lessons. “They fell in love and were married,” says Anthony.

When Anthony was a child, his parents were in a major car accident and his father was left paraplegic. Anthony did not see him for two years while he was in intensive therapy. “My dad never did walk again.”

Anthony’s mother now had to support the family, so Anthony left school at age 17 because he did not want to be a burden to her. “I found a job at Village Health Care, where I learned to be a dietician aide for residents with food restrictions, cook, dessert maker and kitchen manager, caring for residents for 11 years,” he said.

Next stop in his career was Calaroga Terrace, a residence for seniors in Northeast Portland. He cared for residents and became front-house manager for seven years, “a role that I felt carried too much responsibility,” he remembers.

Anthony was hired at Mirabella to join the dining services crew. The Covid pandemic made it necessary for residents to dine in their apartments rather than in the dining venues. That meant that servers had to fill residents’ orders quickly and correctly so they could be picked up on the 24th floor while the food was still hot. Anthony filled the dining containers, packed them into bags and helped residents find the bag with their surname on it. He offered special help to

residents who used walking devices, sometimes greeting them at the elevator. His warm smile and boundless energy made him very popular.

“At first I thought the job was boring,” Anthony recalls. “I soon found the back of the house to be a fun-loving, close-knit group who knew how to tease and to work together.” He fit right in.

When the pandemic let up, the planned renovation of the 24th floor could proceed. Adagio moved temporarily to Willamette Hall, and Anthony went along to help serve the buffet with dine-in and take-out orders. “I had learned all the residents’ names from matching them with the name written on their dinner bags.”

Anthony shares his apartment with Sapphire, a female gray tabby, a lap cat who always watches him, even when he’s in the shower, Little Man, an unusually long male cat, and a long trailing house plant that mostly inhabits the ceiling.

Running on his home gym treadmill and reading his astrological forecast on his phone each day are musts. “I am a Gemini,” he says, “who are quick-witted and good at all trades but masters of none.” He also loves to play video games and bake pineapple upside-down cake and lemon meringue pie. He talks every day with his mother, who is his best friend, and keeps in touch with aunts and uncles. Anthony hopes to go to his father’s birthplace someday. “I am proud that my father many years ago began the ‘President’s Picnic,’ a yearlong campaign to get Palauan people together to raise money to send home to the island for improvement in infrastructure, schooling and village life.” He is also proud that there has never been a case of Covid on Palau because everything and everyone arriving on the island was carefully screened.

A Mirabella resident described Anthony as “always moving and always with people.” True. He is also always adding caring, joy and humor to our dining experience. ●



*Anthony celebrates his first birthday with his father, John*

# McPeak in the Thunderbirds

By NANCY MOSS



*Merrill is flying the aircraft at the end of the Thunderbird delta formation.*

In 1967 and 1968, Mirabella resident Gen. Merrill McPeak flew with the Thunderbirds, the Air Force squadron that performs air shows in the US and overseas. One of two solo pilots in the six-plane airshow, he was pulling up to do vertical rolls at Del Rio, Texas, when the wings came off his airplane.

He says he was, “going fast, barely subsonic,” at an altitude of about 500 feet. He heard a loud explosion, followed by fire in the cockpit. In a split second, he pulled up his F-100’s armrests to start the two-step process that separates the canopy from the aircraft and ejects the pilot from the jet.

Merrill “got an immediate parachute opening,” he says. The high-speed ejection ripped open a couple of the parachute’s panels and wind blast tore away his crash helmet. “I landed show center,” Merrill notes, claiming a typical solo pilot performance.

He learned later that the “explosive shock wave” had blown off the first six feet of the fuselage, and that the aircraft pressurization system had pumped fire into the cockpit.

An investigation cited rupture of the wing center box, with “40 or so fatigue cracks located alongside the one that failed.” Some aircraft losses in Vietnam that had been chalked up to combat may well have been caused by this same flaw. All F-100s worldwide were grounded temporarily

and the wing center boxes replaced. As a consequence, Merrill’s accident probably saved lives.

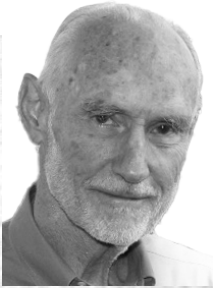
In the Thunderbirds’ early days, when (as Merrill says) the air show was a little more exciting, a number of pilots were killed. The solo pilot before Merrill and the one after him both lost their lives during their two-year assignment with the team.

Asked about the danger, Merrill says, “Flying upside down close to the ground is a lot of fun, once you get used to it.” ●

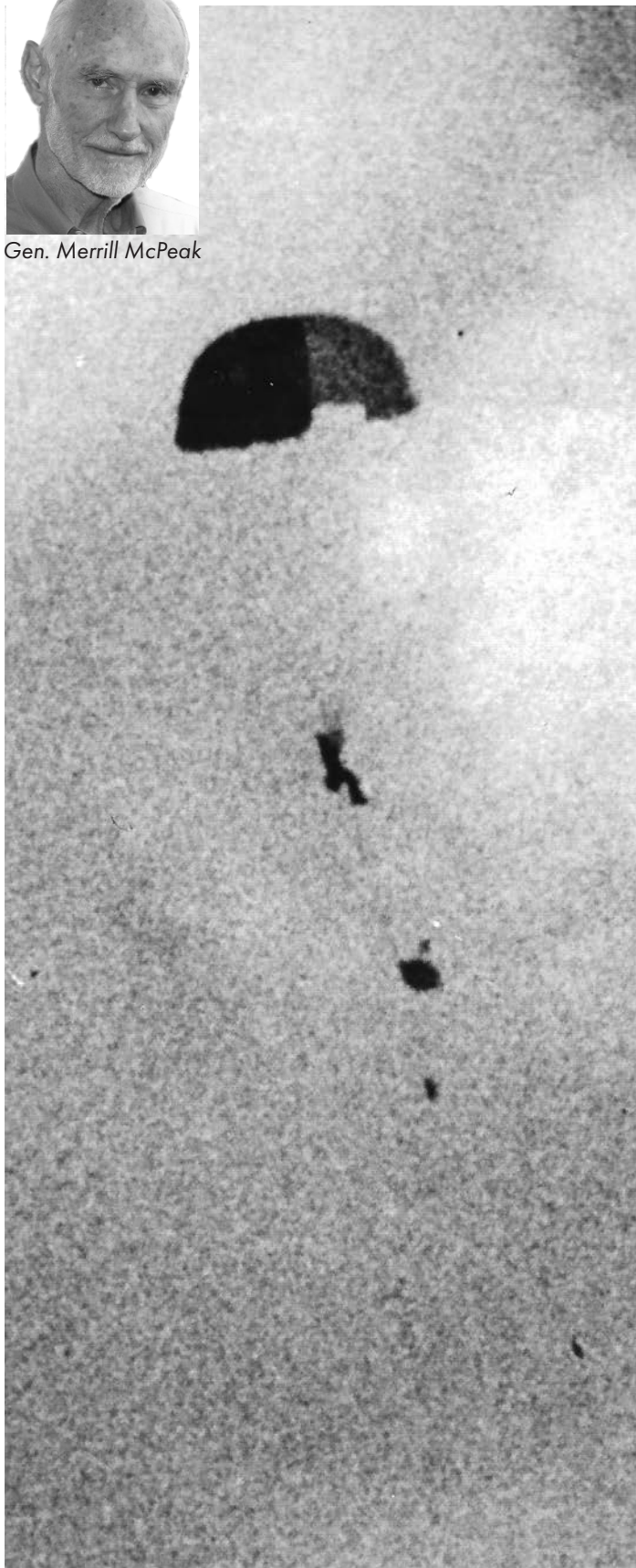


*Merrill is flying upside down in close formation with his right-side-up wingman at an airspeed of about 400 knots.*





Gen. Merrill McPeak



After ejection Merrill descends in the parachute. Hanging below him is a life raft and survival gear.



The intake (first six feet) of the aircraft blew off when the aircraft engine exploded.



Aircraft canopy. When he was a captain Merrill was called Tony.



The rest of the wreckage. Everything landed on government property. The wing center section was recovered out of the wreckage, was tested and failed again.

## The Adventure Continues

My work as a digital artist keeps changing as I learn more and more about the hidden intricacies of Photoshop. My master teacher, Rikard Rodin, continues to challenge his students with projects that often look simple but actually are quite complex. I have included some of my more challenging pieces for this issue.

Ron Mendonca



The Human Tourist



Girl on a Swing



Snow White



Apocalypse



Underwater Swimmers



Ron Mendonca

Welcome to the Portal



Ron Mendonca

Resting by the Stream



In My Dream



Ron Mendonca

Mystical Portrait



Twisted Time



Forest Stories

# Imagination

By RITA BRICKMAN EFFROS



Art: Eileen Kane

Imagination can be defined as the capacity to create mental models of things or situations that were not previously perceived in reality. It allows us to explore ideas ranging from the familiar to the never-before-experienced.

The Italian Nobel Laureate in physics, Carlo Rovelli, an expert in black holes, has pondered the role of imagination. He asks, “how do we learn about parts of the universe that we cannot — even with the most powerful technology — observe?”

Rovelli concludes that to learn about a place we can neither travel to nor see, we need more than technology, logic or mathematics. We need imagination.

According to Albert Einstein, “imagination is more important than knowledge.” Indeed, knowledge is limited to what we know and understand. By contrast, imagination allows us to explore things that are not physically present, which can embrace the entire universe.

The human capacity for imagination plays an important

role throughout our lives. Indeed, imaginative play is critically important for a child’s development. Fantasy and make-believe can teach children critical social skills and can also encourage curiosity and creativity.

Imaginary friends are often created during childhood. Private thoughts and feelings are sometimes expressed through these imaginary friends, providing parents with insight into their child’s inner world. Interestingly, studies have shown that children who are more fantasy-prone are often more outgoing and creative. They also tend to be more able to see perspectives that differ from their own.

Parents can encourage their child’s imagination by reading to them at bedtime. Indeed, the “Imagination Library” created by Dolly Parton was inspired by her father’s inability to read and write. The project, now in its 18th year, gifts over two million free books each month to young children around the world.

It might be surprising that an article in the Harvard



Business Review is so highly enthusiastic about the role of imagination. The piece, by Martin Reeves and Jack Fuller, proposes that although imagination may seem like a frivolous activity in the midst of such crises as pandemics, wars or social upheaval, it can actually play a crucial role.

In their book "Imagination Machine," Reeves and Fuller provide specific methods that organizations or businesses can use to help foster imagination. These strategies seem applicable on a personal level also.

To allow for imagination to flourish, they suggest that it's essential to actually carve out time for reflection. Allowing yourself to be playful and trying to reflect on active, open questions are important tricks as well. Finally, attempting to seek out the anomalous and unexpected and sharing ideas with others all seem to help engender creativity and imagination.

Reeves and Fuller point out that it is usually not possible to return to the pre-crisis reality. Pandemics, wars and other crises often generate new attitudes, needs and behaviors. The capacity to create and evolve — using our imagination — helps to establish models of things that do not yet exist.

It is obvious that imagination may be particularly hard to keep alive under pressure. Yet, in the business world, companies that do foster imagination seem to reap considerable

benefits. For example, Apple released its first iPod in 2001, the year that the company saw a 33% drop in the company's revenue. Yet, the imaginative adaptation to the new environment — increased R&D spending, launching of the iTunes Store (2003) and newer iPod models — sparked a period of high growth for Apple.

Creativity is clearly an important goal of the Walt Disney Company, which has an entire category of employees called imagineers. As part of the research and development arm, imagineers consist of illustrators, architects, engineers, show writers and graphic designers.

Research on imagination has documented an intimate link between imagination and empathy. Investigation in this arena has been spearheaded at McGill University. Those studies demonstrated that when we vividly imagine someone else's problems in our minds, we feel their pain more and are motivated to help. Thus, our mental experiences can be linked to prosocial behavior.

Imagination can be a powerful tool in psychology. Mental health professionals often employ guided therapeutic imagery to help patients in a variety of situations. These include grief, depression, relationship problems, parenting concerns, anxiety and PTSD.

*(Continued on next page)*



Dr. Mila Joussifova is a residency-trained optometrist with a diverse background and widespread training in comprehensive eye care. A graduate with honors from New England College of Optometry, Dr. Mila maintains and practices the highest standards in optometric practice. Her approach to patient care is systemic with an emphasis on ocular nutrition and disease prevention. She is passionate about eye care and health, and she takes the time to educate her patients on how to maintain healthy eyes.

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(Continued from previous page)

For people who suffer from fear that negatively affects their daily functioning, imagination can be particularly helpful. Rather than exposing these individuals to their fears in small doses — often impractical or expensive — merely imagining the exposure is used. Thus, a vivid imagination can actually help some people unlearn fear.

Research on end of life has shown that news of one's impending death is associated with intensified dream life. Although this phenomenon is often dismissed as a side effect of medications or hallucinations, most studies have failed to demonstrate a link to hallucinations. Indeed, these intensified dreams were found to actually be comforting to both patients and their families.

One of the intriguing findings regarding imagination is that some people do not have it. The condition, known as aphantasia, describes a situation where your brain fails to form or use mental images as part of your thinking or imagination. It's viewed as a characteristic, such as lefthandedness, rather than as a disease or disability.

Aphantasia can be either congenital or acquired. People who are born with this condition are unaware that they lack the ability to form mental imagery. The acquired form is usually associated with injury, illness or a mental health condition.

It is difficult to determine the frequency of aphantasia, since the people who have it don't realize that they think in a way that is different from other people. Nonetheless, the condition is considered very rare, according to experts at the Cleveland Clinic.

There is an ongoing debate regarding the relationship between dreams and imagination. Interestingly, recent studies of aphantasia and its neurobehavioral features have shown that the majority of aphantasics, while unable to produce visual imagery while awake, do retain the capacity to have rich visual dreams. These studies appear to challenge the view that dreams are essentially imaginative experiences.

Scientists are beginning to gain greater understanding of how the brain functions during the process of imagination. Humans carry in their heads mental representations of all kinds of spaces, such as room layout in our houses, shops,

neighborhoods, libraries, etc. The simple act of reminiscing involves placing ourselves in these locations. Moreover, the ability to conjure up certain scenarios in our minds seems to be crucial to our ability to plan ahead.

Recent experiments with rats indicate that a similar neural pathway may be operating in non-human species. Rats have been shown to be capable of imagining that they are moving through mental environments. Interestingly, both species seem to use the same area of the brain during these mental processes.

Neuroscientists think that the mental maps in humans are encoded in the hippocampus. This is the brain region involved in memory. Cells in this region of the brain fire electrical signals in particular patterns, depending on our location. When we later think about visiting that location, the same hippocampal patterns are activated.

This hypothesis was recently confirmed in rats. Researchers cleverly developed a brain-machine interface that rewarded rats for virtually navigating their surroundings, i.e., using only their thoughts. Throughout the rats' wanderings, brain activity in the hippocampus was measured. This animal model will help researchers learn more about hippocampal function in humans.

Einstein once said, "The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science." This raises the question of whether artificial intelligence (AI) can ever show the same level of creativity and imagination as humans.

The workings of the human brain — of which imagination is one element — are largely still a mystery. Indeed, the brain atlas, started in 2017, has mapped more than 3,000 cells whose functions are still unknown.

At this point, it seems that the difference between human and machine creativity is that human creativity and imagination is the original source of what machines can generate. Machine creativity is, at best, an emulation of human creativity. Indeed, even an impressive piece of computer-created art or writing has been built from material carved out of the data that was used to train it.

In sum, our gift of imagination invites us to be fully present and delight in the wonder of it all. It can almost become a spiritual practice. Thankfully, the late John Lennon provided us with the ultimate power of imagination:

"Imagine there's no heaven... no hell below us  
... above us only sky  
Imagine all the people living for today  
...no countries  
....nothing to kill or die for  
...no religion  
Imagine all the people living life in peace." ●



# A Good Question

By DOROTHY DWORKIN

“**W**hy go someplace where you need so many inoculations?”  
“Why travel with 600 college students? Sounds like bedlam.”

“**Why** take a cruise where you dine cafeteria-style?  
Cruise food is gourmet.”

“**Why** visit countries where there is so much poverty and disease? Sounds scary.”

“**Why** not go to Florida or Palm Springs for vacation?  
Sun, golf, friends, good food!”

“**Why? Why? Why?** Lots of well-meaning questions.

Why did we choose to go on a voyage that takes us to 10 developing countries around the world with a group of students mostly below the age of 21? Friends were surprised we were doing this and even more surprised that in our “golden years” we have this sense of excitement and adventure.

“Live on a ship for 100 days,” they commented. “How do you know what to bring with you?”

It’s not that those thoughts hadn’t crossed our minds as we prepared for the voyage, but our sense of exhilaration and excitement overcame our apprehension. A trip around the world with college-level classes, extended stays in 10

non-touristy ports, lectures from renowned university professors and interaction with young people from various college campuses were all challenges we looked forward to experiencing.

Granted, the trip was not everyone’s cup of tea. Daily changes of linen, reliable air conditioning, gourmet dining, Las Vegas style entertainment, large, well-appointed state-rooms and lots of personal attention were not on the agenda. Instead, it was a trade-off for thought-provoking lectures, lively dinner conversations, greetings and welcomings from official representatives of the ports we visited and well-traveled, knowledgeable fellow passengers and adult observers. Best of all, the enthusiasm and energy exuded by the students would be a major change from our contemporaries.

We sat in on classroom credit courses, participated in open-mic evenings on a myriad of topics, visited atypical tourist destinations, spent leisure hours exercising, reading, writing and getting to know our fellow passengers, young and older. If we really needed to explain why we wanted to go on this trip, the questioners wouldn’t understand our answers. ●



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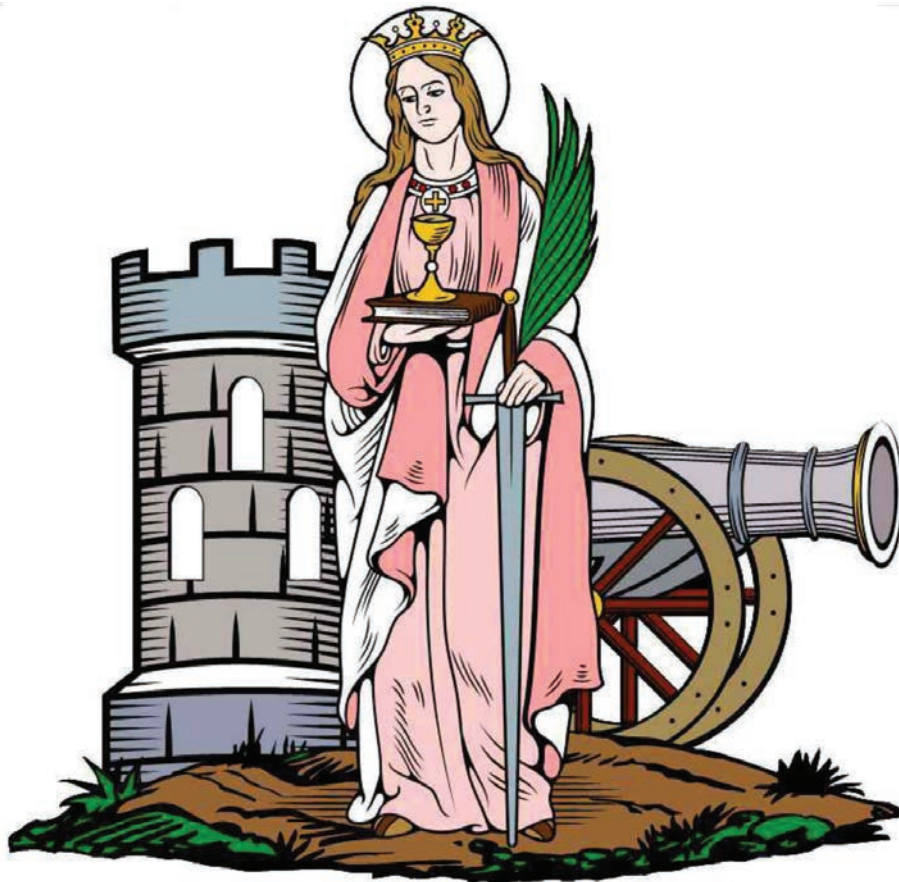
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# My Name is Barbara

By DOROTHY DWORKIN



*St. Barbara is recognized as the patron saint of artilleryists worldwide. Field Artillery forces around the world award the Order of St. Barbara in recognition of outstanding service.*

“**W**hat’s in a name?” Juliet asked. “That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” She was trying to convince her lover that their families feuding was irrelevant but we know how that ended.

At Mirabella, names are important. If your name is Barbara, you are part of a group of women with the same name who gather on Dec. 4 every year to remember the saint whose name they bear. Barbara has origins back to the Middle Ages. It means foreign or strange and is derived from Barbarosa.

St. Barbara is the patron saint of engineers, explosive workers, miners, artillerymen and mathematicians. The legend about her tells that her father locked her in a tower to remove her from suitors who were not his choice and wanted her to stop helping the poor. The rest of the story is harrowing and

involves lightning and flames. That’s how she became the patron saint of gunners and others who work with explosives.

In modern times, many armed forces award the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara to recognize Marines and Army artillery men and women who have demonstrated the highest standards of integrity and moral character, have also displayed outstanding degrees of professional competence and have served with selflessness.

Santa Barbara, California, got its name in 1602 from Sebastian Vizcaino, the Spanish navigator who stopped there on Dec. 4 and chose to name the city after the saint.

The Barbaras at Mirabella join an illustrious group of same-named women: Barbara Walters, Stanwyck, Boxer, Bush, Kingsolver and Streisand. The latter dropped the middle A when she was 18. In 1913, Barbara was in the top 100 naming choices for girls. By 1928 it moved to the top 10

and was number two until 1944. In Italy, between 1969 and 1977 it was the second choice after Maria.

These days, we are more likely to hear the informal: Bobbie, Bobby, Barbie, Babs and Bebe. When the Barbie doll was introduced in 1955, it was expected that the name would experience a resurgence, but it didn't. However, when the film "Barbie" appeared in 2023, the baby-naming website Nameberry reported that the search for the name Barbara had increased by 603%.

In 2011, a Barbara transplant from California relocated to Mirabella. She invited members of her California Barbaras to visit her on Dec. 4 for a tea party. To her surprise, 75 women showed up. Barbara Bush was invited but White House duties interfered. The original Mirabella group met in one another's apartments for wine, tea and cookies. It evolved into house luncheons. More recently, the women gather in the Bistro. The current Barbaras think about 14 of the original members are still living in Mirabella. More Barbaras are scheduled to move in soon.

After Barbara Gaines visited Cuba in 2014, she hosted a Barbara-day luncheon with a slide show and photos of the interior of a church that honored the saint. Other Mirabella Barbaras have hosted luncheons featuring personalized party napkins, gift pins, notecards and goody bags as party favors. The current group ranges in age from the 70s to 90s. Members admit that their overriding goal is to get together

and have fun.

When a newly arrived Barbara was invited to join the group, she was surprised and delighted. "It's a special way to connect with new friends," she said. "At least one of the things we have in common is our name." She remembered a saying that friendship isn't about big things but about a million little things.

There are Barbara groups all over the world. During the height of the pandemic, a Barbara in Belgium created a website aiming to connect Barbaras around the world. In one month, it had two million members. When the group ended in March 2023, there were almost four million members worldwide. Its founder called it a community of hope during difficult times.

What's in a name? Contrary to Juliet, Icelanders might answer, "a lot!" They often wait at least six months before naming their babies. They want to get a sense of the child's personality before choosing the most suitable name. While waiting, they sometimes simply call the infant Boy, Girl, Love, Sweetheart or another endearing name.

The Mirabella Barbaras were born in a more traditional baby-naming time. Although it is less common to hear about an infant named Barbara these days, what goes around comes around, so who knows? In the meantime, at Mirabella the Barbaras look forward to Dec. 4, 2024, and another fun gathering. ●

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# Portland Diary

By NANCY MOSS

I

Grand Avenue dentists' office

Across from me a woman sits with a baby in a stroller, who is waving his arms around. His name is Michael, she tells the woman next to her; he is 4 months old. The two women are talking about Greece. "Why are Mediterranean people so attractive?" the woman next to her wonders. A man wearing a tee shirt that says "Protect Trans Kids" walks across the room. A parent?

In the stroller, Michael is still waving his arms around. They fasten onto the ring attached to a soft toy for a little while, then go back to idle waving in the air.

He is about to learn how to use his arms.

II

Overheard outside OHSU CHH 2, a woman to a man:  
"Going to the bathroom isn't a freakin' privilege, it's a right!"

III

Moving from the Mirabella bus into Washington Square mall, I feel like Rip Van Winkle. What are these stores: Avocado? Aldo? Forever 21? "All the stores are new," one resident says.

I see young women wearing remarkable sneakers: day-glo pink and green, metallic, super-thick soles. Not meant for running around tennis courts, I'm guessing, or for walking the Greenway. With Portland schools on strike, the halls are full of kids, a couple holding hands, small groups loitering.

After our allotted shopping time, we retreat to the quiet of the Mirabella bus.

---

## Watching Ocean

Seemingly endless  
churning  
Continuous energy  
Colors matching  
Soothingly blue  
Sky above, around  
Infinite indicators  
Of hope  
Feeling affinity  
With waves  
Heartbeats of the Earth  
Lines of ragged fingers  
Splaying toward  
Wet sand  
That silvery-purple  
Transition  
Between Water  
And land  
Dark Purple-Brown to  
Earthy Tan  
  
Soundless,  
Soundful,  
Solo-ful,  
Rhymic,  
Continuous Melody  
Of the Sea.

— Eileen Kane

---

## Mountain Evening

Gnarled roots clutch the merciless granite  
Like arthritic fingers no longer pliant  
Trees bear limbs stunted by their winter  
Coats of storm-leavened whiteness  
The serrated crest towers above the cradled lake  
Shadowed chimneys reach toward the deepening blue  
Bathed in the rose hues of the setting sun  
The mountains shimmer with the softness of alpenglow  
A saddle's smoother contour is silhouetted  
Against the purple stillness of the northern sky  
Flickering shadows from the snapping campfire  
Dance on the greying trunk of a long-fallen tree  
The wind-chopped lake hushes to nocturnal placidity  
As its tree-fringed surface is ignited  
By the quicksilver of the rising moon  
The inverted ridge-crest looms in the obsidian waters  
Across the wilderness miles to the south  
Banner and Ritter command the indomitable heights  
As they slumber through the icy Sierra night  
'Til the meadow flowers awake in morning splendor

— Pete Swan



Photo: Johanna King

*The January ice storm froze the water in Mirabella's entryway pond into an interesting piece of abstract ice art.*

