

# 3550





**NANCY MOSS**  
*Co-editor*



**REESE BERMAN**  
*President*

**C**ovid's radical effect on modern life ranges from the new elbow-to-elbow greeting, the touching of two bony, angular body parts instead of the warm press of hands, to increased isolation with Zoom meetings and people working at their job remotely.

Covid can lead to low-level hostility, both nationally and at Mirabella. Picture the following: You are on an elevator with four other residents, all masked. The elevator stops at a floor and someone enters, unmasked. Do you: A) Hold your breath B) Get off the elevator or C) Ask that person to put on a mask, possibly creating the low-level hostility mentioned above?

Another situation: You have a question for Megan or Safia and enter the administrative suite to find their door locked. They are working remotely, like so many, post-Covid. You will email them later, of course. They will answer your question, but you will have lost the small change of discourse that helps fund working relationships.

Our society has not fully addressed the isolation caused by Covid. The story goes that a vineyard owner had a manager who cared for his crops. The owner would walk the vineyard and walk up and down the rows with the manager, inspecting the grapes. Every year the manager sent the owner a carton of bottles.

One year the owner moved to a different country and was unable to visit as usual. When he tasted the wine that the manager sent him, he found it acid and flat.

What happened? He complained to the manager in an email.

They missed the shadow of the owner, the manager wrote back.

Shortly after arriving at Mirabella, the new director of dining services, Christopher Handford, showed up in Aria at dinnertime, hanging out at the main desk, checking in with the staff and saying hello to arriving diners. By greeting people and being there, he helped weaken the shadow Covid has cast over Mirabella as it has touched everything in our society. ●

**R**esident leaders from each of Pacific Retirement Services' 12 continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs), their executive directors and most of the officers from the PRS organization participated in a 1½ day summit in Palm Springs on Feb. 8–10. The packed agenda included presentations from President and CEO Eric Sholty and other PRS officers on its strategic plan, the state of senior living, staff recruitment and retention, an operations update and governance. RAMP VP Walt Grebe, Mirabella resident board member Ed Weiner, Sharon Van Eaton and I represented Mirabella Portland.

The purpose of the Summit was to get to know one another, connect and develop trust, better understand the services provided by PRS and update resident leaders on industry trends.

One trend that was presented is the change in senior living. The over-65 segment of the U.S. population is growing rapidly, and there is increasing competition in the housing market to address that rapid growth. The for-profit sector is moving more quickly and aggressively than the not-for-profit sector. Many of the not-for-profit facilities have failed and closed. The demand for labor and the shortage of workers presents a huge challenge resulting in competition for attracting and retaining staff.

In its strategic plan, PRS is looking toward the future development and adaptation that the changes in the senior living market require.

I feel that the intended purposes of the resident summit were achieved. I met all the officers and feel connected enough to contact them with issues and questions. I met many of the resident leaders from the other CCRCs and was able to learn from them and share common concerns. I am more knowledgeable about the history of PRS, its structure and plans for growth. I am better informed about the trends and changes in senior living. I more fully appreciate the support that PRS offers and the security and stability that being part of a large not-for-profit organization offers to Mirabella Portland. ●



**Front Cover**  
Pastry chef Sheri Soria surveys her work.  
Photo: Johanna King



**Back Cover**  
The Milky Way galaxy and a starry night sky rise above an abandoned farmhouse in rural Gilliam County, Oregon.  
Photo: Robert French

## ~ The Inside Scoop ~

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## Alamo Manhattan Project Tops Out

**The tower in Block 41** topped out on April 14 at 24 stories. Twenty studio apartments may rent for around \$1,300 a month. Another 280 one-bedroom units will each have 700 to 800 square feet of livable space while 28 two-bedroom units will likely rent for \$3,500 a month. Townhouses at street-level will have an area of 1,000 square feet.

The pedestal roof has vegetation and a paver-floored patio featuring barbecues and planters. The pavers themselves will rest on miniature pedestals, about seven inches high, that can be adjusted to ensure the proper tilt for drainage.

The roof will also include a dog park with synthetic grass, special flushing sprayers and good drainage.

A spacious and internet-connected room on the fifth floor will offer those working from home a comfortable, shared place to work with a nice view of the river.

The living units will have quartz counter tops, tile backsplashes, stacked washers and dryers, mid-brown cabinetry and fairly spacious walk-in closets.

The exterior panels, shipped from the manufacturer as floor-to-ceiling modules, arrive at the job site complete with windows, electrical outlets and insulation. They are installed from the inside, eliminating the need for scaffolding or cherry-pickers. These modules seat in grooves in the floor and overhead and can slide horizontally before being locked down to assemble an entire unit wall.

Two ramps allow drivers to spiral up to parking stalls wrapped around the elevator/utility core of the tower on levels basement through four. Entrance/exit to the Block 41 garage will be from River Parkway. There are 334 stalls plus 58 bike places.

The six-story, wood-framed building on Block 42 is a little further along. Much cabinetry has been installed, floors are laid, most bathrooms are completed and final painting has already started. An inviting courtyard in the building's center contains plantings, pavers, barbecues and a water feature.

This building has underground parking with stalls for 181 cars and places for 375 bikes. Alamo is working to identify a grocer for Block 42.

— **Pete Swan**



Photo: Ron Mendonca

Naomi Matusow as Elizabeth Banks Bryant, Spiderwoman.

## Mirabella Players' Summer Show

**The Mirabella Players'** summer show, its date depending on microphone availability, contains four short pieces. The two-person "He Says, he Says," by Nancy Moss, opens the show, followed by the monologue "Elizabeth Banks Bryant, Spider Woman," by Nancy Moss. Ms. Bryant worked at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology classifying and preserving spiders.

Moss's ten-minute play "Brave New World," about a newcomer to Mirabella, will be followed by Rich Rubin's "How Nice of You to Ask," about a retired sex worker. Rich has entertained Mirabella audiences in a number of Mirabella Players' shows.

— **Nancy Moss**

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Photo: Stanley Berman

Julie and Bill Young receive a tasty meal from Dining Room Supervisor Kenzie Carpenter.

## Bistro Opens to Acclaim

**With the opening** of the Bistro for dinner, Director of Dining Services Christopher Handford promised a “casual dining experience” and “nightly specials,” pleasing residents who recall past specials of deep-fried oyster po’boys and ahi poke. Dining room managers Brian La Fleche and Robert Shumate will alternate running the room, adding to the mellow Bistro ambiance.

Sometimes people just feel like burgers and fries.

With outside musicians and speakers expanding life at Mirabella, the Bistro’s opening for dinner feels like the cherry atop an ice cream sundae.

— Nancy Moss

## 3550 Magazine Adds Talent

**Dorothy Dworkin**, 3550 Magazine’s newest staff member, has been writing for the Sun Sentinel newspaper in Florida for years, sending them “whatever interests me.” Dorothy has contributed to Newsday, The New York Times and local papers, sending them “ideas, memories, personal experience and commentaries”— anything but politics.

A recent article of Dorothy’s on Covid says the “virus was scary, boring and lonely, but I learned something from it, too. I will never take my good luck and good life for granted.”

## Zidell Planning Takes a Step Forward

**A Zoom presentation** on April 5 has proclaimed the Zidell Marine Corporation is ready to launch a modern, mixed-use development on the 33-acre parcel it owns north of OHSU’s CHH1 and Ronald McDonald buildings and running up to the Tilikum Crossing.

Zidell’s land contains the long, grey steel shed where the corporation, up to 2018, built sea-going barges. To the south of the shed, there is a huge gantry crane and two rail-track cranes.

The land will be plotted into seven blocks with new streets, including a continuation of Bond Avenue, gridding the acreage. Narrower, grassy strips will be created under the Ross Island Bridge and where the shed is now located.

At the Zoom meeting Zidell announced that it would apply for a permit to subdivide the property.

The project architect is Sasaki, a firm with almost 300 employees and 18 offices. That firm has created the master plan for the University of Colorado and the long-range development plan for the campus of the University of California at Berkeley.

Mirabella residents who used to watch the completed barges slide into the Willamette River will be able to watch development of the site.

— Pete Swan

## Dance Event at Zidell Yards

**On July 21–23 and 28–30** this summer in the Zidell Yards, ProLab Dance will present Break-to-Build, a blend of dance and other movement forms. Before sunset the dancers will move from the water up the slipway to the cranes. When it gets dark, the audience will move into the barge building for the second half of the show. This immersive and ambulatory experience will include approximately 10 dancers and 10 musicians performing live. Tickets will go on sale in June; the producer has not yet determined how much the performance will cost.

— Mary Finneran



Ellie and Merrill McPeak as undergraduates at San Diego State University.

## McPeak Awarded Honorary Degree

**San Diego State University** awarded Mirabella resident General Merrill McPeak a Doctor of Humane Letters degree during its May 13 commencement service. The award honors his "distinguished military service" and "efforts to commemorate the achievements and sacrifices of the men and women of our country's Armed Forces."

Merrill was U.S. Air Force chief of staff in 1990–94 during the George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton administrations. Merrill was also a solo pilot for the Thunderbirds in 1967 and '68 and flew 285 combat missions in Vietnam.

— Nancy Moss



Photo: Johanna King

## O'Keeffe Print Donation

"**White Calla Lily,**" a Georgia O'Keeffe print was donated by residents Barbara Short and Linda Wood, accepted by the art committee and approved by Executive Director Sharon Van Eaton. "We are delighted that our prints now hang in the Park View Room to be enjoyed by everyone," Linda says.

— Nancy Moss



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Photo: Stanley Berman

Valet Ian Martin about to lower a stacked car.

## Life Plan Community Report

**Life Plan Community Collaborative**, a group of green team leaders from six Portland CCRCs, including Mirabella, is producing a booklet on the best ways to be a good steward of our environment. The booklet describes best practices in energy, food, transportation, and water use, and waste reduction and recycling.

It will be available on the Miranet under RAMP's Buildings and Grounds tab.

The Life Plan Community Collaborative's report recognizes Mirabella's stacked parking, which saves nearly one-third of the space that would otherwise be required. The booklet also praises Mirabella's EV car share program for residents.

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# Leading Age Oregon's Milligan Speaks

By NANCY MOSS



Photo: Leading Age Oregon

Leading Age Oregon CEO  
Kristin Milligan

**L**eading Age Oregon CEO **Kristin Milligan** told an audience of Mirabella residents that stringent federal and state regulations increase staffing challenges already made extreme by Covid. She criticized regulations that make health care facilities "do more with less" by not including adequate funding with their new rules. Reimbursements to nursing facilities often are below the cost of care.

Negative media coverage often leads to these increased rules, Milligan said, pointing to a media study finding that 49.2% of stories about health care facilities were negative and only 10.5% positive. The negative ones were 75% more likely to make the front pages. She feels that negative media coverage often leads to increased regulations, and "the legislature should not make decisions based on negative coverage," which often "misses out on places that do a great job."

Milligan said that one-third of Oregon lawmakers are new to their job and that most of them "don't know the different levels of care," such as assisted living versus skilled

nursing. She has found that most legislators have personal knowledge of health needs for the elderly — a parent or grandparent who has needed care. These legislators respond to voters' letters or phone calls in support of bills such as HB 2665, which put caps on salaries paid to temporary staffers.

Some legislators opposed the bill as a limit because of the free market, but "the health care sector doesn't work with the free market, but with reimbursement," Milligan points out. Insurance decisions drive health care trends.

In addition to lobbying legislators, Leading Age Oregon works with regulatory agencies. Milligan says that "Right now regulatory agencies use the stick instead of the carrot" and should try praise for what is done well rather than just fines for rule infractions. Some states are shifting to positive incentives; the preliminary data is hopeful.

Ninety-five percent of Leading Age Oregon's membership is non-profit institutions, one of which is Mirabella. Milligan believes non-profits have a "higher standard of care" for seniors than for-profit institutions. She urged her listeners to become involved in learning the details underlying their care.



## Memory Care Shifted

**M**irabella's memory care shift from a skilled nursing license to residential is complete.

After a long process involving paperwork and inspections, the new category should provide substantial savings for patients there, according to Executive Director Sharon Van Eaton. ●





# PRS Executives Discuss Health Care Future

By NANCY MOSS



Photo: PRS

PRS Chief Operating Officer  
Anthony Sabatini

**P**RS Chief Operating Officer **Anthony Sabatini**, Mirabella's first executive director and a man who guided it through the financial crisis after 2008, says, "My crystal ball is foggy" when it comes to predicting the future. He has, however, firm confidence that PRS will meet its challenges and honor its obligations to its communities.

Covid was a catalyst, Sabatini says, leading to

"extreme staff challenges," especially in the health care area, which in Mirabella includes skilled nursing and memory care on the second floor and assisted living on the third. Sabatini points out that without the necessary staff, following through on any creative idea can be difficult. Covid impacted skilled nursing as people went home after hospital stays — to be tended to by home health care — rather than to skilled nursing facilities.

However, PRS is preparing to give classes for Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) to meet the present staffing challenge. As this interview was taking place, Mirabella's health services administrator, Stephanie Cook, was meeting with PRS Chief Healthcare Officer Debbie Rayburn to discuss training CNAs. Training home health aides, however, would be more challenging, Sabatini says, since any change would have to go through the state and "more due diligence" would be required for these aides. This kind of training would take time, he says.

Asked about the trend of nonprofit life plan institutions selling out to for-profits, Sabatini says that stand-alone retirement communities were struggling and looked for other operators, either for-profit or not. He believes that PRS can use its "strong infrastructure" and its size to enable it to navigate shifting terrain.

For example, asked about Mirabella's healthcare floor operating at a loss, Sabatini said that was part of the projection baked into Mirabella when it opened. At first the floor filled with "high scale outside patients," and then, as residents aged, more of them would end up on the healthcare floor replacing higher paying outside patients. "We knew that ahead of time," Anthony said. He believes Mirabella's community

can support its health center.

PRS "signed an agreement to provide skilled health services to residents," Sabatini says, adding that "A contract is a contract. We honor the contract." Years down the road, if skilled nursing is not feasible, PRS might have to "come into the community" and sell the necessity for change. They might ask residents to sign an addition to their contract. "Nobody knows," Sabatini admits. "We try to plan." Meanwhile, "We're committed to the contract we have."

Sabatini mentioned Mirabella's shifting its memory care license from skilled nursing to residential as an example of creative change overcoming Oregon's slow process. He is confident that when PRS works with its communities, "We'll probably have good ideas."

With time and some effort, that crystal ball may become more clearly defined.



Photo: PRS

PRS Chief Health Care Officer  
Debbie Rayburn

**Debbie Rayburn**, PRS chief health care officer, writes, "In our PRS communities, current challenges are: labor shortages, high cost of goods and services, a pandemic which resulted in workers leaving the healthcare sector, new and heavy regulations, and a growing senior population that will increasingly need healthcare services and support. PRS and our communities are digging deep and working hard

to find and implement solutions to these challenges. We can continue to fulfill our mission of offering health care services to the residents we are honored to serve." ●



# Health Care Aides Have Varied Roles

By NANCY MOSS



Photo: Stanley Berman

CNA for home care Raymond Van helps Ardyth Shapiro with her lunch.

**R**esidents bought into Mirabella hoping to solve their future health needs. Medicare's plan to reduce its coverage of skilled nursing in favor of care with home health aides makes the future less certain.

Who are these home health aides? This reporter called Adventis, which services OHSU. Adventis charges \$30–\$50 per home care visit. Medicare funds it 100%, so what's the worry?

It could be Mirabella's having no responsibility for these aides, no oversight. The burden falls on the sick or recovering elderly patient's family. One Mirabella resident returning from

a hospital stay that included surgery dealt with Amedisys Home Health Care. After an initial session, Amedisys enlisted the patient's daughter to continue her wound care. "She did their work for them," this resident says, "took a class and then followed up on my procedures." "It's becoming contract work, just like Amazon," she added. A patient without a child able to help would be in a more difficult situation.

Tia Threlfall, in-home care manager, oversees Mirabella's aides, who provide home support services but are not health aides. They do laundry and light housekeeping, help residents with dressing and make simple meals. "We're not chefs," Tia

stresses. They make beds, walk dogs, feed cats, pick up those brown-bag meals, and provide companionship. “We support all levels of care,” Tia says; she has clients in independent living as well as on the second floor. Her goal is “to keep our residents independent and in their apartments.” Tia follows up with residents to check the quality of their care.

Mirabella resident Joe Matarazzo calls the In-Home aides who help an “excellent resource, professional, caregiving, and like family.” He adds that Tia has come to help him when she is short-staffed. Having received morning and evening visits for four months, Joe is “extremely satisfied.”

On the other hand, a convalescing resident who asked for housekeeping help said the aide arrived with no cleaning supplies. “I thought she would at least come with a rag or two,” the resident said.

In addition to in-home care, Tia oversees Mirabella’s assisted living, which was full when 3550 spoke to her. Executive Director Sharon Van Eaton says that independent living residents who qualify for assisted living but can’t move there will receive assisted living services in their independent living apartment at an assisted living rate until one opens up.

Mirabella’s healthcare floor is full of purposeful activity, like a hive of very quiet bees. Nurses and aides, intent on their tasks, move briskly along the corridor, at one end of which an aide may be helping a patient learn to walk again.

About 20 of those employees are certified nursing assistants (CNAs), “our first line of defense,” according to Mirabella Health Services Administrator Stephanie Cook. CNAs deliver meals to patients, give showers, assist in eating and toileting, dress patients, and clean rooms. They do not care for wounds or pass out medications on the health care floor. In assisted living or in a patient’s home, they can give out meds if instructed by a physician or nurse.

CNAs take vitals (blood pressure, temperature, and heart rate). They “can be the first to notice changes” in a patient’s condition, Stephanie says; a sudden drop in weight “can be

crucial” in diagnosing heart failure. Jeanette Schutz, a patient on the second floor, calls the CNAs “excellent,” adding, “I get everything I want, first of all, plenty of food.” Another patient, Dr. Ralph Merrill, calls the CNAs “chipper.”

Continued staffing challenges mean that in addition to Mirabella CNAs the health care floor has some contract CNAs, who are paid more than the others. This is a problem, Stephanie says. Their presence “entices our CNAs to leave for more money” when there is “only so much we can pay.” Mirabella Director of Human Resources Renee Chan says that hiring CNAs is difficult when higher-paying contract jobs are available.

The Lund Report, available on the Miranet, mentions “skyrocketing rates” charged by staffing agencies, saying, “Even with the pandemic waning, staffing agencies have kept their outsize role as worker shortages persist.”

Mirabella’s Executive Director Sharon Van Eaton says that technology — improved hip and knee replacement surgery, for instance — can move health care forward. But the current pressure on skilled nursing, with increased regulations and Medicare’s reduced financial support, is leading to a crisis. “There should be a place for both” skilled nursing and home health care, Sharon says.

The challenge of maintaining a healthcare floor extends beyond Mirabella. Across America, a number of CCRCs or life plan communities have sold out to for-profit entities. Reese Berman’s column in this issue details PRS’s message about for-profits buying up smaller CCRCs. PRS believes that its size and diversity will enable it to flourish and to live up to the promise it has made residents.

The recent change in nomenclature from “continuing care retirement communities” to “life plan communities” — more vague, less comforting — is no accident; the terrain is shifting. 3550 Magazine will do its best to keep Mirabella residents informed. ●



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# Christopher Handford: Master of the Kitchen

By DOROTHY DWORKIN

**A**t Mirabella, dining is a social as well as a culinary experience: Diners are guests, not customers, in its three restaurant venues.

The recent opening of Aria, Mirabella's most glamorous dining room, under the leadership of Todd Albert, PRS corporate director of culinary services, has enhanced residents' dining experience.

Once again, dinners come with sunsets.

Enter **Christopher Handford**. Mirabella's new director of dining services comes with an extensive background in food services, most recently as director of food and beverage operations for the restaurant at Portland's Hyatt Regency hotel. Prior to the Hyatt, he was market manager for New Seasons, where he oversaw daily operations at all of its food and beverage outlets.

Christopher Handford has over 25 years' experience working in fine dining restaurants in Nantucket, New York City and Oregon. Locally, he opened three different dining concepts: Davis Street Tavern in Old Town, Jamison in the Pearl, and Garden Bar, a favorite salad-centric restaurant chain. Before starting at Mirabella Portland in mid-February, he trained at Mirabella ASU with its senior dining services director.

Chris brings his experience to a foodie-centric city named in 2022 as the overall #1 best food city in America by WalletHub, a group that looked at 180 U.S. cities and measured their affordability, number of residents per capita, accessibility of gourmet and specialty foods, craft beers, wineries, and more.

Among his restaurant achievements was the opening in 2001 of the first Craft restaurant in New York City in 2001, led by the noted chef, Tom Colicchio, author of "Think Like a Chef." With Christopher at his side, Colicchio was a proponent of the farm to fork movement in which restaurants sourced their ingredients from local farms through direct acquisition from farmers. The movement promotes simple, pristine, seasonal ingredients and a local-is-best cooking style.

As much as possible, Christopher hopes to incorporate this philosophy into Mirabella dining and encourage the kitchen staff to take advantage of South Waterfront's summer farmers' market. He acknowledges that this cannot always be accomplished but he will make the effort.

One of the many challenges Christopher faces at Mirabella Portland is addressing the variety of food allergies among residents. Recent studies show that roughly 10% of adults in the U.S. have specific food allergies, and half of these issues developed in later life. Allergic reactions occur



Photo: Richard Mounts

*Christopher Handford ready to greet residents in the Bistro.*

when the body releases immunoglobulin E, an antibody that is released when the body perceives a certain food as harmful.

Although family history plays a role in some allergies, other allergies can develop in adulthood. As people age, their immune systems age as well. The condition, immunosenescence, can result in the development of new food allergies.

Common allergens are cow's milk, eggs, fish, peanuts, shellfish, soy, tree nuts, and wheat. Reactions vary: abdominal pain, itching, wheezing, and others. Treatment varies but avoiding the specific food is most important. Sufferers learn to read labels carefully and ask food preparers about ingredients. Even a small amount of a trigger food can cause a reaction. As one resident said, "I am vigilant about SOS, not the kind found in army mess halls! I watch out for sauce on the side. Even a taste can send me into an allergic free fall!"

Enter food services at Mirabella. Its answering machine message now contains a reminder for residents ordering pick-up bags to include any allergies they may have.

Christopher explained that when a dining reservation is made through Open Table a resident profile can be created listing special food concerns. That profile will alert the kitchen and the table server to menu choices containing problematic foods for specific diners. Servers will be informed and can alert diners at their table about potentially inappropriate

dishes. The kitchen does not manage the diners. That's the job of the dining room staff, Christopher explained. He is willing to offer a class for current non-users of Open Table in order to make the process user-friendly, especially for new residents.

The residents' comment box in the mail room and on the Miranet receives comments, both positive and negative,

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## Food is all about bringing people together and celebrating life.

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related to dining. Service and atmosphere are almost always rated favorably. Many of the negative concerns are related to specific dietary needs. Christopher says that he sees his role as being an advocate for residents in the area of food service. He is hoping to hold some open meetings to acquaint residents with the dining staff and food choices through demonstrations and chef talks.

His first goal is to bring dining at Mirabella back to the pre-covid level and then move beyond. He sees a future re-opening of all three venues and a varied menu available with more dining options for all levels of dining. As he says, "it's not a question of if it will happen. It's a question of when."

Christopher comes to Mirabella with a history of working in fine dining in different parts of the world while growing up in Uruguay, Mexico, Jamaica, Guatemala, London, Washington, D.C., Georgia, Nantucket and New York. He has paternal roots in Prineville, Oregon.

Although Christopher enjoys cooking, most of his work was in the front of the house in restaurants. When he moved to Portland in 2003, he continued working and managing some of the best upscale restaurants in town. At Mirabella, Christopher's role is as overseer of the entire dining staff, including food services on the second and third floors. At the time of this writing, management is planning to fill the position of manager overseeing operations on those floors specifically.

"Food is all about bringing people together and celebrating life," Christopher says. He plans to "offer the finest hospitality to all the residents" and bring his talents and expertise to creating excitement around dining. He emphasized, his "open door" policy for meeting all residents' dining issues.

When Christopher is not on site, he can be found at the Oregon coast or at home in the Sellwood area chasing his two young children, George, age 8 and Ophelia, 4. ●



*Christopher Handford consults with Omar Alaniz.*

Photo: Richard Mounts

“**S**orry, I’ve been in Canada photographing polar bears.” Some women might hang up the phone on such an unlikely excuse, but it was true, and Ingrid Brandt was not offended that Lester Reed had contacted her on E-Harmony and then gone silent. Widow and widower finally met in Salem, where, it turned out, they lived a 15-minute drive apart. Lester had three cats and lots of wildlife photographs. All good to Ingrid. The two had life stories to share with each other and now with us.

Ingrid was born in Berlin. When she was 4 years old, her parents divorced and she and her mother moved to Munich. Remaining close to her father, a literature and philosophy professor, Ingrid spent summers with him in Berlin and visited

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## Resident Profile:

# Lester Reed and Ingrid Brandt — The Second Time Around

By **PAMELA LINDHOLM-LEVY**

---

him even in the midst of World War II. They wrote to each other weekly when they couldn’t be together.

Ingrid recalls that some nights in Munich her mother told her to leave her daytime clothes on when she went to bed. An air raid warning meant they would need to run to a bunker, with no time to change from pajamas. Ingrid’s mother had re-married; Ingrid’s half-brothers are 9 and 10 years younger than she.

At the war’s end, Ingrid and her family luckily ended up in the American zone of carved-up Germany. Her father was in the Russian zone. When she was 16, Ingrid, without telling her mother her plans, had convinced a male friend to sneak her across the border into the Russian sector to look for her father. The friend’s mother lived in Freiberg Saxony. Ingrid had clues that her father might be there. The friend had made his way across and back several times and knew the risks. He cautioned her, saying, “Run if I say run.” They moved at night, hid in bushes and woods, and made their way to Freiberg.

She says that inquiring at the housing bureau (every resident had to register) was not a signal to the authorities to question her about why she was asking. Germany was in flux, people looking for people everywhere, so her inquiry seemed normal. And she found him. She and her father spent

a week together; then Ingrid and her guide carefully and safely crossed back into the American zone.

Lester’s young life was less fraught but still difficult. As a kid in New Jersey during the Depression, he felt the sting of wearing hand-me-down clothes and of his father doing truly back-breaking work — there was nothing else. His mother provided diversions for him and his sister on excursions to New York City. Grant’s Tomb was a frequent destination, hot dogs a favorite lunch nearby. At Christmas time they might venture to Macy’s toy department and Santa, but those toys never appeared on Christmas morning. Lester appreciates that his family valued education as well as respect for one’s job.

Lester joined the Navy right after high school. For three years he was a corpsman (medic). He transferred to the Air Force and became a navigator on transport planes that flew worldwide.

Ingrid had been accepted to the Salzburg music conservatory and expected to go there after high school. Her father had saved money for this purpose, but after the war the currency was devalued severely and there was no longer enough for her tuition. Although her education was curtailed, playing the piano has been a lifelong pleasure for Ingrid.

Because she had good English, Ingrid was able to get a job with the American military occupation forces. At the same time she attended business school and took accounting courses.

Lester became a commissioned officer in 1955 and earned a bachelor’s in psychology from the University of Nebraska/Omaha while he was stationed at Offutt Air Force Base. He went on to get a masters in the same subject. In his Air Force career he was a staff officer at the Pentagon for a total of eight years, his first of two postings in 1968.

Stationed in Texas when he retired from the military as a full colonel, Lester enrolled at the University of Texas in Austin and earned a doctorate in education administration. In his course of study he had an internship at a junior college in Columbia, S.C. On earning his degree he took their offered position as a senior vice president at that same school. Lester and his wife, Barbara, agreed he would take the job. They knew they would be treated as outsiders by the community because they did not have southern roots, and as they did not share the racist attitudes; but they stuck it out for 16 years. Lester recalls that in those years the Confederate flag flew under the U.S. flag over the state house. Lester was in favor of moving to California; his wife wasn’t. “We compromised on Oregon,” he says. Their daughter, Jeanne, lives in Delaware.

Near Corvallis, they accommodated themselves to a new kind of weather. They began raising llamas and found the market volatile. Llama wool isn’t as soft and knittable as

*(Continued on page 16)*



Photo: Robert French

# Lester Reed and Ingrid Brandt

*(Continued from page 14)*

alpaca wool. You can't eat llamas. They earn their keep carrying camping and hunting gear for humans and can be trained to guard sheep and goat herds. The Reeds kept llamas for 20 years until Barbara needed nursing home care, for which they moved to Salem.

During the five years she was under care, Lester discovered how much he enjoyed photography, especially as it evolved into digital. He focused (pun intended) on wild things. "Critters," he says.

He traveled with groups and guides to India, Antarctica, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Brazil, as well as to Canada for polar bears. He was 20 feet from a brown bear in Katmai National Park in Alaska when he photographed its impressive bulk. He observed five different tigers (some travelers never see one) in India and photographed one at about 15 feet. Lester and company were in a Jeep, and when the seemingly relaxed tiger roared hugely they took that as a signal to leave.

Lester learned to consider the whole scope of the animals he photographed: their environment, lives and future. His photos have been displayed in Mirabella's main lobby gallery, and the brown bear is in the December 2022 3550 Magazine. In a competition with 2,000 entries, his African sky and landscape photo with no animals placed in the top 25. For years he maintained a website showing his photos but has discontinued it. He created books of photos just for his own enjoyment.

Ingrid married in Germany when she was 22. Her husband, Heinz, was 15 years older, an engineer. He was half-Jewish and survived the war with the help of friends and strangers. Ingrid recalls not absorbing Nazi antisemitism. Neither did her parents. Ingrid's son, Werner,

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## **She and Lester were getting closer without knowing it.**

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was born in Munich. Sponsored by a man in Los Angeles, the family moved there, arriving on Dec. 24, 1951. "My first Christmas without snow," she says.

Heinz took a job with Litton Industries, and Ingrid began working as the financial manager for an interior decorating



*Ingrid Brandt at age 15, in Germany.*

firm. She and her family made yearly trips to Germany to visit her parents and other relatives.

Werner moved to Salem as an adult, eventually giving Ingrid five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. When Heinz died, Ingrid followed their son.

She and Lester were getting closer without knowing it. She hadn't planned to work, but the berry and nursery stock farmer at Blue Heron Farms in Independence needed her financial expertise. Part-time work turned more and more full time as the farmer employed 400 workers during harvest and kept 80 on the rest of the year.

Then one day Ingrid's phone rang.

They've been married for 11 years and Mirabella residents for two. They wanted to live near cultural activities and in a vibrant community of retirees. Ingrid enjoys the travel club. Lester joined the dining, transportation and fitness committees.

Together at Mirabella they have found a home. ●



# When I Saw Queen Elizabeth

By ED PARKER

**W**hen I saw Queen Elizabeth II, she was not a queen; she was Princess Elizabeth. On May 24, 1939, in Winnipeg, Canada, I was a 7-year-old second grader in Glenwood School in St. Vital, a suburb of Winnipeg. We were not in school that day because Canada continued a long tradition of having a holiday on that date to celebrate Queen Victoria's birthday.

King George VI and his wife, Queen Elizabeth, who was later known as the queen mother and was not to be confused with Queen Elizabeth I from another era, brought their children, Elizabeth and Margaret, with them on a royal tour of Canada. Elizabeth had turned 13 the month before.

World War II threatened. The United Kingdom and its



former colony, Canada, went to war with Germany in early September that year. The royal tour was intended to strengthen Canadian support for the mother country in the coming conflict.

We school kids were bused to a street in Winnipeg where the royal family was to pass in an open vehicle for all to see. As it turned out, the king was involved in an important meeting at the time, or so we were told. So, we

only saw the queen mother and her children, who were the main attraction for us kids anyway.

We waved flags and cheered as the royal procession went by. We were later given a colorful certificate with pictures of the king and queen to commemorate the visit. I still have it. ●



**M**argy and her six younger siblings grew up knowing responsibility. Each had chores after school, and Margy's was a particularly onerous one: peeling five pounds of potatoes for her family's dinner. "It developed my strong work ethic," she says.

At their home in Essington, Pennsylvania, Margy remembers she was the leader of the pack of kids playing along the nearby river when her father became very ill with cancer. He was sent to the hospital and her mother went to work as a

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## Staff Profile:

# Concierge Margy Stief Work Ethic and a Sense of Fun

By **PRISCILLA COWELL**

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hotel housekeeper to make ends meet, spending her free time at the hospital. "Suddenly I had to take over the care of my six siblings. I was 12 years old."

"I did the washing and ironing, started dinner and watched over them all. If one of them was sick, I had to stay home from school. For two years, in eighth and ninth grade, I was in charge. We had some fun times, though, so it was not all bad, and eventually my dad got to come home."

After high school she married her sweetheart, whom she had met while working part-time at the local diner. A honeymoon photo shows Margy as a lovely natural redhead, thanks to her Irish heritage.

Her only child, a daughter, was born during her 11-year marriage. "I am very proud of Stacey," she says, "She got a master's degree in information technology at Penn State, married, had a daughter, and moved to Portland, where she is a systems analyst."

At age 43 Margy had cancer with long treatment and recovery periods. Stacey urged her to move to Portland, but she was not ready to pull up stakes.

Margy returned to hotel work, becoming front office manager. "I met famous people in the arts and entertainment, like Michael Jordan and Diahann Carroll. The hotel sent me to seminars in places like Hotel del Coronado. I loved hotel work," she remembers.

She began to develop her artistic side when "my doctor prescribed painting to exercise my arms after cancer

surgery." She made gourds into birdhouses and decorated them with acrylic paints, selling them at yard sales and craft fairs up and down the east coast.

For Margy's 50th birthday, Stacey fulfilled her mother's long-held dream by taking her on a trip to Ireland. They visited Donegal, home of the Campbells, Margy's family clan.

More recently she had another cancer scare, which fortunately turned out to be false. This time her daughter lured her to Portland with a beautiful condo she had bought for her in the Goose Hollow in Southwest. Downsizing her home of 40 years took some months and several yard sales, but in the middle of the Covid pandemic Margy finally moved across the country and into her new home. She remembers, "As my plane approached Portland, it was so beautiful and green I thought I was back in Ireland."

With her long hotel experience, Margy soon found the concierge job opening at Mirabella. "I happily succumbed to a job offer when Mirabella staff members Megan and Safija mentioned Monday-to-Friday work, no weekends, so unlike my hotel work where I was on-call at any hour."

Her 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. weekday schedule suits her fine. She brings to the position her well-developed front desk skills, keen interest in people, playful sense of humor and a still-strong work ethic. Who can forget her goofy hat that brought smiles and giggles to the concierge desk at Christmas time? When she broke her arm on a slick rainy sidewalk, she simply draped a cape over the arm and continued behind the concierge desk.

Margy loves to spend time with her granddaughter, who is co-president of the freshman class at Portland's Lincoln High School and active in track and field, swimming, Junior Olympics training, choir and theater. "When we're together, we like to go to Papa Haydn restaurant and visit all the Oregon places mentioned in the Twilight book series."

She appreciates Mirabella's encouraging her art. She displayed her delicate watercolor flower paintings in the lobby when she was artist of the month and is currently branching out to learn jewelry-making.

She hopes to win a scholarship to take a night class at a community college or Oregon Arts Society.

"Mirabella residents have had such interesting jobs and are so generous and kind," she says. "And it's good to see the managers working together as a team. It's a very pleasant atmosphere."

Ever the optimist, Margy concludes, "I've learned compassion at Mirabella, where so many residents' bodies are beginning to fail them. I am blessed to have this job at age 71." ●



Photo: Ron Mendonca

Margy Stief

# An Adventure in Learning

Over the years I have taken many courses in photography and digital art. Since the beginning of this year I have been enrolled in a master class on Photoshop. The pictures shown in the following pages are projects that I have completed so far. My teacher, Rikard Rodin, is a Swedish-born teacher of graphic design, color and compositing.

Each project in the class emphasizes different techniques. Each project is composed of multiple photos utilizing various techniques and builds upon what came before it. The goal is to become a master in retouching, compositing and manipulation.

Ron Mendonca



Eiffel Tower



Fashion Bee



Light Portal

**Return of the Bee**



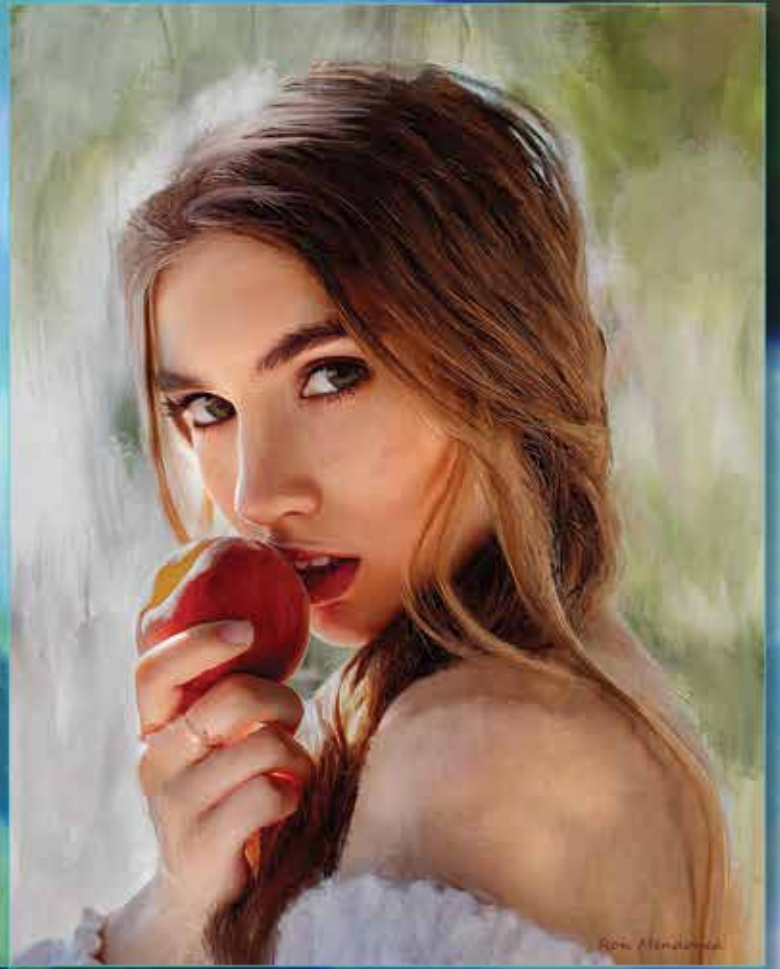
**Female Potion**

Woman Underwater



Enlightened Animal

**Painted Lady**



**Levitating Man**





Snow White



The Flight of Icarus

Roni Mendonca

# Silent Night

By JUDY SEUBERT

**W**hen I got out of the car, I noticed the night was pitch black. There was no moon. There should be a streetlight in the alley, I thought, as I walked from the garage to our house. There was not even a light at the back door. I put my key in the lock.

"Give me your purse," a voice behind me said. Turning my head, I looked straight down into the black barrel of a gun.

As I removed the Coach bag from my left shoulder to hand to him, he reached over and pulled up the left sleeve of my sweatshirt. "Do you have anything else of value?"

I don't remember if I said, "No," or shook my head or said anything. My mind was racing. Should I hand over my rings? Somehow, the diamond skewed toward my palm. I bent my wrist down. He could see the Timex on my left wrist. Maybe he would not see the rings.

"Lie down on the ground," he said. Whatever he saw was not "of value" to him.

My brain was churning. What thief says "Lie down" or "of value?" Some Crispus Attucks teachers have PhDs, I thought.

Light was streaming from the open garage door about 20 feet away. I saw another man with a gun pointed at Jim. Both were standing by the open car door. I put my face down in the grass, hands above my head, expecting gunshots.

They were normal in our neighborhood. Last year two dead bodies had turned up in our alley. Midnight, why aren't

you barking? my mind rushed on. The Hudsons' German shepherd, normally 150 pounds of raging fury, was penned up about three yards from Jim. Any movement in the alley —

cars, people, squirrels, rats — and he channeled his meanest junkyard dog: barking, snarling, lunging against his industrial-strength, chain-link cage. Mr. Hudson wanted him that way.

Come on, Midnight, I prayed. It was near 10 p.m. I knew the Hudsons were already in bed not 50 feet from me. Do your job, Midnight. Bark. Wake them up. Mrs. Hudson will look out her window.

My glasses were cutting into my nose; my thoughts, whirling in darkness. Dare I move my head? Was the guy going into the house? The keys were in the door.

"Honey, are you OK?" It was Jim's voice. Surprise. Elation. Relief. Warm gratitude — all welled up in me at once as I

looked up and saw him.

"Yes, I think so," came out from somewhere inside me as he helped me up. I looked around. Images of the gunmen dissolved into the dark and silent night. We hugged tight. Midnight remained mute.

*Note:* Many African-American schools are named in honor of the first American soldier killed by the British in the American Revolution. ●



Photo: Susan Seubert

# The Art of Dying

By RITA BRICKMAN EFFROS

Despite the central role of death in our lives, many people avoid conversations about death. Diminishing the role of this fundamental human experience tends to obscure our understanding of health and life itself.

Peter Schjeldahl, long-time art critic for *The New Yorker*, wrote, "Death is like a painting rather than a sculpture, because it's seen from only one side."

The Harvard surgeon, Atul Gawande, ends his book, "Being Mortal," with the observation that "helping people in the final phases of life has been my most fulfilling experience."

And Maya Angelou's poem about death ends with the comforting lines:

*Our senses, restored, never  
to be the same, whisper to us.  
They existed. They existed.  
We can be. Be and be  
better. For they existed.*

Carl Sagan says that we are made of dying stars. Indeed, the nitrogen in our DNA, the calcium in our teeth, the iron in our blood, the carbon in the apple pie we're digesting all have celestial origins.

Viewed through Sagan's lens, the afterlife is simply a process of chemical recycling. Even Schjeldahl notes that "the secret to surviving in the universe is to be dead."

These literary and scientific examples can be contrasted with the points raised in a recent article on the value of death in the *Lancet* medical journal.

Dying in the 21st century is a story of paradox. In high-resourced health systems, advances in technology, science and medicine have saved lives but made dying more complicated. This often-futile care leads to millions of people experiencing avoidable pain and suffering, often dying from curable or preventable illnesses.

The authors point out that despite the centrality of death in our lives, its value as a fundamental human experience has been lost, since many people resist having meaningful conversation on the topic. Death is not so much denied as generally invisible.

Reluctance to discuss end-of-life issues is highlighted in the best-selling humorous book by *The New Yorker* cartoonist, Roz Chast, "Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?" With great tenderness, she describes how her parents, well into their 90s, resisted acknowledgement of their own mortality as well as any effort to prepare.



"Life Cycles 2" by Eileen Kane

Death is clearly a topic that many people prefer to avoid. Nonetheless, those who can discuss it with a friend experience a special bond.

In a recent podcast, Anderson Cooper, who lost a brother by suicide, and Stephen Colbert, whose dad and two brothers died in a plane crash, discussed their shared experience with death.

Colbert offered some sage advice that applies to any of us who have experienced death of a loved one. Instead of viewing grief as a downward spiral, he suggests that we think of it as a doorway, "because you're going to be a different person on the other side of it."

In contrast with the personal experience of death of a loved one or a pet, there are those who bear the burden of making decisions regarding who shall die. In war zones,

*(Continued on next page)*

*(Continued from previous page)*



*"Elusive Horizon" by Eileen Kane*

medical settings and natural disasters, the process of triage, often described as playing God, is a reality.

The word triage is defined as "to sort for quality," a process originally relating to coffee beans. The first known example of its use in emergency situations was in 1790, when Napoleon's chief surgeon had the job of sorting based on the value of a life.

Dr. Sheri Fink is intimately familiar with this process, where limited resources require painful decisions of choosing which life to save. In 1999, right out of medical school, she was tasked with these decisions at the Kosovo-Macedonian border, where 100,000 refugees fleeing from Macedonia arrived nearly at once. There was no time to debate the guidelines for triage. But she anguished over the so-called "tent of the damned," which housed the physically disabled, chronically ill and persons with psychiatric issues.

During Katrina, Dr. Fink spent several weeks in Memorial Medical Center in New Orleans after the levees failed. The hospital had 250 patients, including babies and those in intensive care, plus 2,000 staff and visitors. She experienced firsthand the very difficult process of sorting the value of lives.

In pandemic situations, such as flu or Covid, the limited number of ventilators requires difficult decisions. Do you save the most lives or the greatest number of years of life? Alternatively, should those who would be most helpful during the pandemic be saved first? Maybe the decision should be left to fate or a lottery. Finally, would removing a needed ventilator from one patient to service a needed health care worker be considered murder?

A professional/research field known as thanatology deals with aspects of death and dying. The name derives from the god Thanatos, whose brothers were gods of old age, retributions, suffering, strife, and blame. A core philosophy of the field of thanatology is that we start dying at birth.

Thanatologist Cole Imperi's work is multifaceted, dealing with such diverse themes as death care, use of hallucinogenics at the end of life, near-death experiences and burial practices.

Thanatology research has shown that during the process of dying, the last sense to shut down is hearing. That's why experts recommend that if you're with someone who's dying, you need to always talk to them. You think that they are long gone, but they may not be.

Thanatologists also think a lot about existential pain, a type of pain that often happens on your deathbed. It's when you're confronting stuff from your life like, "Am I a good person?" "What is a good person?" "Where do I go after I die?" Those can be very painful things to think about.

Imperi bemoans the fact that we don't have a place for these big conversations, so we end up keeping everything inside. She feels that this is sad because talking about death is an easy way to become intimate and connect with someone on a deeper level. Her work has shown that talking about something like death and dying can be a very freeing experience which can leave one feeling more connected to the world.

Interestingly, Imperi notes that those who anguish over what they did not do during life seem to suffer far more than those dying with great physical pain. Indeed, she points out that the best way to combat death anxiety is to be as present as possible in our day-to-day life.

Imperi reminds us that we experience little deaths such as loss of a job, divorce, assaults, throughout our life. These contrast with big deaths of family members, friends or pets. She notes that grieving is a roller coaster, and the stages described by Elizabeth Kubler Ross rarely occur in order. Interestingly, brain activity studies prove what many of us already know — that animals grieve, too.

She also notes that, in general, people who are more religious seem to be more afraid of dying than others. Religion also affects how the soul is viewed. For example, Tibetan Buddhists refer to the horoscope at the time of death to make sure not to bury the person before the soul leaves the body. Religious Jews believe that ensoulment occurs at the 40th day of gestation.

The concept of the soul weighing 21 grams appears in numerous media, songs and TV shows. Nonetheless scientists have proven that the weight difference between pre-and post-death, e.g., in the 1978 film "Beyond and Back," was due to loss of water.

Imperi's work also deals with burial practices or disposition methods, i.e., what people do with a dead body. She points out that cremation is becoming more common, especially in blue states.

So-called green cremation is a gentle, eco-friendly alternative to flame-based cremation and casket burials. It is

a quiet process that uses water and potassium hydroxide to reduce the body to its basic element of bone ash. The ashes are then returned to the family.

Other disposition methods include burial at sea and so-called promession, an eco-friendly process that involves freeze-drying followed by vibration into dust. Human composting is another environmentally friendly method in which the soil becomes a means to return nutrients from our bodies to the natural world.

Finally, sky burial is used in areas such as Mongolia, where the ground is too rocky to dig a hole. This funeral practice involves placing the corpse on a mountaintop to decompose while exposed to the elements or to be eaten by scavenging animals.

Fear of our own death leads to psychological stress. The best way to deal with this death anxiety, according to Cole Imperi, is to be as present as possible in our day-to-day life.

Although we usually do not strategize our own end of life, an article by oncologist and ethicist Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel has done just that. At age 57, he published a controversial article in *The Atlantic* titled, "Why I hope to die at age 75." The piece sparked nearly 4,000 comments online. Although some readers defended his decision, most protested his plan to cease most medical treatment once he turns 75.

One reader pointed out that Emanuel was defining "life worth living" using only two metrics — creativity and productivity. Clearly, there are numerous other barometers for judging life.

Death and end-of-life decisions are becoming discussed more openly. "Finish Strong," by Barbara Coombs Lee, helps

to demystify the subject of death. Long involved in drafting the Oregon medical-aid-in-dying law, she is now at the forefront of the battle for a peaceful and dignified end-of-life journey.

Coombs Lee covers issues such as initiating conversations with our family and informing doctors about the kind of care we want at the end of our lives. When asked why she has chosen to steep herself in the topic of death, she points out that "death is an essential and ever-present element of the human condition .... and living and dying don't fall into a clean binary." Indeed, Coombs Lee points out that throughout our life, some parts of ourselves are dying while something else is born. She therefore advises us to work toward our death during the course of our life.

One inspirational example of the type of agency and personal choice that Coombs Lee endorses is described in the *NYT* article, "Grandfather's Death Party." The author's grandfather was receiving hospice care but chose to gather his family for a five-day event that included drinking, reminiscing and enjoying each other's company. His daughter wrote that "the death party remains one of the most profound experiences of my life."

As a society our challenge is to reframe death systems and to broaden approaches from siloed sectors into interconnected ones.

Although we cannot change the inevitability of death, providing time, space, comfort and compassion will help both individuals and societies renew belief in our shared humanity. ●

(\*Thanks to Peter Schjeldahl)



The advertisement is a rectangular box with a white background. On the left side, there is a photograph of Dr. Mila Loussifova, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a black blazer, holding a pair of red-rimmed glasses up to her eye. Below the photo is a short bio. On the right side, there is a list of services and contact information. At the bottom right is the logo for South Waterfront Eye Care, which consists of three stylized eyes in green, blue, and orange, followed by the text 'SOUTH WATERFRONT eyecare'. Below the logo is the address, phone number, and website.

Dr. Mila Loussifova 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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# Portland Diary

By NANCY MOSS

## I

**The posh merchandise** — Gucci, Saint Laurent — of Pioneer Place doesn't match the people walking its aisles; the portly man sleeping on a first-floor bench looks unlikely to buy. Security guards lounge in the doorways, perhaps hoping for some action. That takes place in the Apple store, a few blocks away.

## II

### A Good Clerk

I was in Ecrú looking for a Thanksgiving card for my sister-in-law, who is under hospice care for pancreatic cancer. I had rejected a number of cards that said "Happy Thanksgiving" when the clerk approached me.

I explained my problem to her. She found a card that pictured scattered autumn leaves and said, "Fall is my favorite F word."

Now that's a good clerk.

## III

### Tilikum Crossing Report

After tripping over a scooter and gashing my forehead, I took a Lyft with Art to Kaiser Interstate urgent care to get stitches. We paid our \$25 at the registration desk.

"We're sorry," the woman there told us. "We cannot care for you."

"What the bleep!"

She explained that they had no provider on the premises and therefore could not see me.

I argued, strenuously, loudly: we were Kaiser members, urgent care was open; they should see us. She said we could go to Vancouver or Sunnyside Kaiser; they might have room for us. She did not offer to telephone for us. I continued to argue, loudly.

Out of the corner of my eye. I saw a man in a white coat striding confidently down the hall. A doctor, I thought.

"We can see you," the woman said.

Sometimes it pays to be difficult. ●

# Prose Poems

By TERRI HOPKINS

She was at the music store. When she explained that her building was starting a ukulele orchestra, the owner looked at her and said, "That's both thrilling and terrifying." She had to agree, but bought one anyway—she was overdue for a little silliness. Plus, she once loved to do the bunnyhop. That may come next.

By ROSEMARY HOLE

She was all excited when she heard that her building was starting a bunnyhop dance group. But then she remembered that she could no longer hop.



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# OMSI: Portland's Pride

By PETE SWAN

**W**alk or bike across Portland's Tilikum Crossing bridge and you will see the distinctive planetarium dome of the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, a thriving institution that goes by its acronym, OMSI.

OMSI's present building, which opened in 1992, features a 150-seat planetarium, named after museum patron, Harry C. Kendall, two auditoriums, the larger of which seats 300; a 9,500 square-foot cafeteria, the Theory eatery and multiple exhibit halls. The interior space is 219,000 square feet. In 2013, OMSI's 330-seat OMNIMAX motion-picture system was converted to a more conventional system with an ultra-large screen.

OMSI offers a wide array of permanent exhibits. The entrance provides the first temptation, the Morphis Motion Sensor, where people can sit inside a 25-foot fuselage and choose either a space shuttle feeling or that of an aquanaut roaming the deeps.

The largest exhibit space, the Turbine Hall, features a former PGE steam-driven turbine (a mighty 36' x 10' x 11') that generated electricity. The display shows how the various elements relate to each other to produce the current.

In addition to many hands-on exhibits on the floor, there are side alcoves with laboratories. The chemistry lab, staffed with volunteer mentors, features 10 themes, rotating weekly, ranging from chemical reactions and crime-scene analysis to nano (ultra small) chemistry. Another laboratory covers physics with an excellent hands-on pulley display and a scaled-down model of a container crane. Yet another demonstrates lasers and holography. A hands-on exhibit regarding storm-water absorption in urban settings is popular with younger children and ties in with a warming climate.

Elsewhere in the hall one can find an informative video on salmon migration and a demonstration of erosion by wind and water.



The USS Blueback surfaces.

Photo: OMSI

A visitor leaving the Turbine Hall encounters a full-scale replica of a Gemini capsule used by U.S. astronauts to circle the earth in the mid-to-late '60s.

The third floor's Natural Science Hall has a newer exhibit called "Beginning the Journey" that details human conception and gestation through the 32nd week. Week-by-week development is depicted by models and photos. This exhibit was created by Gunther von Hagens specifically for OMSI. Von Hagens was also the creator of "Body Worlds."

Five teams of six work on designing, constructing and repairing exhibits. A new exhibit, "Wild Creativity" (focusing on biomimicry) has just opened. Another new exhibit, "Orcas, Our Shared Future," opened on May 13.

Berthed in the Willamette River next to the museum just off the Eastbank Esplanade is one of the public's favorite exhibits, the U.S.S. Blueback, a World War II submarine that was the last diesel-electric sub in service. All built since have been nuclear-powered.

Unlike previous designs, the Blueback was a sub with a single, five-bladed screw — you can view the prop just outside OMSI's western wall — with a teardrop hull shape, making her faster, quieter and more maneuverable. This fast-attack vessel was in service in the Pacific for 31 years, home-ported in San Diego and Pearl Harbor. She had two tours to the Vietnam war zone and visited Portland's Rose Festival in 1977.

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The 220-foot-long Blueback was equipped with a snorkel and could run shallowly submerged on her diesel engines, which require air and have to expel exhaust, to recharge her batteries for tactical operation at greater depths. She weighed 2,146 long tons fully loaded and could make 12 knots on the surface and 25 knots submerged.



Photo: OMSI

OMSI's former PGE steam turbine electricity generator.

She carried 18 torpedoes that fired from six forward-facing tubes, and carried a crew of eight officers and 69 submariners. OMSI offers daily Blueback tours for a small extra charge of an additional \$8.50.

Over the years, OMSI has had such well-loved exhibits as "A T-Rex named Sue" (2001–2002), "Body Worlds" (2007), and, more recently, replicas of Leonardo da Vinci's machines. Da Vinci's ingenious designs varied from helicopters and tanks to devices designed to cut threads for screws and bolts.

The planetarium shows for this spring are, among others, "Worlds Beyond Earth," "Black Holes," and "The Other Side of Infinity."

The museum is presently offering a comprehensive display of Marvel Comics heroes (think the "Fantastic Four"). It is not intuitively clear how this very interesting display relates to either science or industry, but you can have fun and learn a great deal about the creative and imaginative artists who produced these comic favorites. You do get a sense of the teamwork required to produce the monthly products.

OMSI has big plans. It hopes to develop 34 acres (10 city blocks) with a 3.4 million square-foot build-out. This

considerable area was all part of the original gift from PGE. The utility also gave OMSI \$1 million to cover asbestos-removal costs plus another \$100,000 to use for development of the land. The "true consideration" — in OMSI's favor — for the deal was stated as \$4.48 million.

The development concept is mixed-use: institutional, commercial, retail, residential and park/plaza/open space. Twenty percent of the residential space will be reserved for affordable housing.

First presented to the Portland Design Commission in August of 2022, OMSI'S master plan was approved in February. OMSI CEO Erin Graham, a UO grad with a JD/MBA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, told Oregon Public Broadcasting that the development "is still years away".

Once construction is completed, the development should be able to boast about net zero carbon emission.

There are plans for a "Center for Tribal Nations" that will include an education park planned by indigenous groups — that have already received a \$750,000 grant for open (green) space, restoration of riverfront habitat and interpretive displays "to affirm and share ... indigenous ecological knowledge and cultural connection to the river."

Projections show greater than \$11 million new annual property tax revenue as well as a \$22 million annual increase in income tax revenue, presumably by enticing many more people to emigrate to Oregon to fill new jobs and supply materials and services. Also projected are 7,100 new construction jobs, not necessarily new workers as construction projects end and existing workers move on to the next project. The OMSI planners also see 4,300 new jobs from operations after construction ends.

The estimated build-out cost would be approximately \$120 million.

Core development partners include Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, City of Portland, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, Metro, Portland Community College, Pacific Gas & Electric, State of Oregon and Portland Opera, whose headquarters building is within the planned development.

Allison Rouse of ZGF Architects is the project's local agent. The master architect is Snohetta, with headquarters in Oslo.

We Oregonians have an outstanding museum in OMSI. It will be fascinating to watch its development plan come to fruition. ●



# Debt Refinancing Approved

By ED PARKER

**M**irabella Portland's approximately \$85 million building construction debt is on track to be refinanced at a lower interest rate. The Mirabella Portland board of directors approved a refinancing deal at its quarterly board meeting on April 12. Meeting participants said the board expects the deal to close before the end of May.

Truist Bank, one of the ten largest banks in the U.S., is providing an eight-year interim mortgage loan at an interest rate about two percentage points lower than the current debt.



The new loan has an interest rate of approximately 3.5%, compared to nearly 5.5% for the current debt financing. The remaining debt will need to be refinanced before the end of that eight-year period.

Mirabella Portland Executive Director Sharon Van Eaton said the refinancing would have no effect on the operating budget, on resident fees or the entrance fees for prospective residents. She said the main benefit for Mirabella residents of lower interest costs would be the availability of more cash for capital improvements to keep the building attractive for current and prospective new residents.

Sharon said, "The refinance is coming at an optimal time. Mirabella's current resident transitions to various levels of care are outpacing our sales activity. While our occupancy is still strong, this provides some relief to our cash flow while we work to bring in new residents and maintain our capital planning."

The deal requires that the mortgage debt of four Pacific Northwest properties operated by Pacific Retirement Services (PRS) be mutually guaranteed. The three other properties in what is called the Northwest Obligated Group are Mirabella Seattle, Holladay Park Plaza in Portland and Cascade Manor in Eugene. Mirabella Portland's debt is more than 40% of the total mortgage obligations of the group. All four

properties are jointly responsible for the mortgage debts of the group.

Sharon said the boards of the other three members of the group previously approved the refinancing deal.

Ed Weiner, resident member of the board, told 3550 Magazine: "This will result in substantial short-term cash flow increases for Mirabella Portland. PRS believes those benefits outweigh the risk of higher interest rates when the interim loan matures. The pros and cons of the refinancing proposal were carefully considered and thoroughly discussed by the board before approving the deal."

The board also concluded that the financial gains were worth the risk of being obligated to pay the debts of the other three properties should any of them be unable to pay their individual obligations. The joint obligation condition would help Mirabella Portland in the event of a Mirabella Portland financial problem.

The current debt was scheduled to be paid off by October 2049, according to Mirabella Portland's audited financial report for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2022. The new debt arrangement could result in a different payoff period.

Once the refinancing is finalized, the previously approved merger of the Mirabella Portland Foundation into Mirabella Portland will be implemented quickly. The Mirabella Portland

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**This is a big  
and significant step.**

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board also expects that reorganization to happen before the end of May. Implementing the merger earlier could have delayed the refinancing by requiring additional legal and financial analysis. Such a delay was not desirable in a time of rising interest rates.

Referring to the board's refinancing decision, RAMP President Reese Berman said, "This long-awaited decision makes way for the long-awaited merger, which in turn will provide for the long-awaited vote on the revised bylaws at our annual meeting in September. This is a big and significant step." ●

# RAMP Rules Face Revision

By JOHN FOREMAN

**M**irabella residents will vote on a motion to adopt new bylaws for the Residents' Association of Mirabella Portland (RAMP) at its annual meeting on Sept. 18.

If the new bylaws are adopted, the RAMP council will consider adopting rules for the organization. The rules will include sections required by the bylaws and consolidate in one place all policies and procedures approved by prior councils.

Before RAMP's annual meeting in September 2021, RAMP recognized that COVID had exposed problems that challenged the organization's efforts to enhance life for Mirabella residents. For example, large groups of residents had to meet on Zoom or channel 981 rather than in person.

To adjust to the new reality, new RAMP President Jim McGill appointed a committee to review and overhaul the bylaws.

The planned vote on the revised bylaws had to wait for a vote on the proposed merger of Mirabella Portland Foundation, Inc., into Mirabella Portland. Mirabella Portland residents approved the reorganization that replaces the foundation board with a resident-dominated committee of the Mirabella Portland board.

Approval of the merger agreement requires additional amendments to the RAMP bylaws. The ultimate result will increase resident oversight of Mirabella resident donations to the foundation and reduce costs.

The legal process to create the new corporate structure and establish the new Mirabella Portland Board committee should conclude by midsummer. The final changes to the governance documents for Mirabella Portland will allow residents to vote on the proposed changes to the RAMP bylaws at the September 2023 annual meeting.

However, RAMP has not stopped revising its governing documents. The proposed bylaws emphasize the rules that operate RAMP. The revised bylaws contain new authorizations for rules, which can be created or modified quickly at RAMP council meetings.

Bylaws can now only be created or modified by a vote of

the members of RAMP at an annual or semi-annual association meeting. This change will help to avoid problems like the one created by the need to use electronic media to conduct RAMP meetings because of Covid restrictions. The current bylaws did not adequately address procedures needed to conduct remote attendance.

With most bylaws revisions already drafted, the RAMP Council under new President Reese Berman pivoted to drafting rules to implement the bylaw changes before a bylaws proposal authorizing the rules could be voted on.

The new rules will replace the policies and procedures adopted over the years by the RAMP Council. The rules will also be more easily changed by the RAMP Council to meet any future emergencies.

The council appointed a new ad hoc rules committee consisting of Ed Parker, Pete Swan and John Foreman along with RAMP Vice-President Walt Grebe as council liaison and President Reese Berman as an active ex officio member. The rules committee is drafting the rules important to RAMP.

The committee expects to have a draft available for distribution to RAMP members this summer. The rules committee wants to incorporate comments from RAMP members about how they want their organization to operate.

The most important issues include elections, especially voting procedures; electronic participation in meetings of the association, the RAMP council, committees and interest groups; record keeping; access to records; and destruction of records.

The rules committee will submit its work to the council to circulate to members for their review and feedback.

After the feedback is collected, revisions will be made in time for final submission to the new council elected at the September 2023 annual meeting. If the bylaws proposal is passed by the members at that meeting, the new council will then consider adopting rules to implement the new bylaws and consolidate previously adopted policies and procedures. ●



"What luck!"

CartoonStock.com

# Gordon Davis Stretches the Limit

**My commitment to exercise** evolved over the years. After about 20 years of running, my legs started to feel the damage so I sought out aerobic exercises which eventually led to stretching exercises. My routines now include an

aerobic, a weight and a stretching component.

— **Gordon Davis**

(These exercises are not suitable for people with certain medical conditions.)



