



Still Fresh N' Green: Stories About Living Life to the Fullest

Compiled by Scott Douglas, Staff for Older Adult Ministry, A Ministry of ABC

Naomi West Enjoys Life

"I live in a retirement community and there is so much one can do to bring a little joy into the lives of those who cannot be so active. And what joy my children and grandchildren have brought. There are also greetings from over the world from our 'German daughter' of 1950, my Vietnamese namesake, a 1956 refugee, a Bridgewater graduate from Japan and a 1949 Yugoslavian refugee, among others. These serve to remind me how Guy and I were able to contribute something to the lives of others.

"Yes, sometimes clouds appear on the horizon but back of the clouds are the sun and the love of God. So, 'My life flows on in endless song. How can I keep from singing?'"

Mary Dadisman

Stays Useful

When Mary Dadisman and Grayce Brumbaugh returned from Nigeria in 1979 they tried to imagine what retirement in their mid-sixties might be like.

Their visions of relaxed enjoyment and freedom from constant responsibility soon vanished at Hillcrest, when the Woods Convalescent Hospital nearby pleaded for their help in nursing care.

Nursing came to take first place in their retirement "leisure" but they were soon involved in church activities and in committees in Hillcrest Homes for the enhancement of everyone's retirement. Leading seminars and classes in nursing kept them busy but also afforded a new life style as a part of a caring community.

Retirement years for Mary add up now to 23, but she is still happy to be depended upon for useful tasks. "God has abundantly blessed me all the way. Thanks be to God!"

Loren Bowman's Sense of Adventure

After spending some early retirement time involved in the organized life and welfare of the community and the church, S. Loren Bowman, who reached 90 years of age in

October 2002, made a momentous decision to explore areas of human thought and knowledge outside of his professional areas of study. He chose science as one of the fields of exploration, with emphasis on new trends or breakthroughs that developed on a wide front.

He found good mental stimulation as a member of the World Futurist Society over the past 30 years, and the reading and study involved proved both fascinating and stimulating. As he shared his findings with his community and church he was dubbed the "in house futurist." He is now convinced that every older adult should find some area outside of one's experience and enjoy the exhilaration of venturing into new areas of human thought. This helps to achieve an anonymous request, "God, please never let me lose the sense of adventure."

Coretta Scott King

Carries the Flame

Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King, Jr., is now, at 75 years of age, a tireless keeper of her husband's flame — extolling freedom, non-violence and equality. Friends say she is an unflagging campaigner for social change and an enduring echo of Freedom's Song.

Although trained at the New England Conservatory of Music and having performed with Paul Robeson, the new music that sprang most memorably from her heart was "We Shall Overcome." When the assassin's bullet tore her and Martin apart, she was left alone to raise their four children. Even now she says, "I am fulfilled in what I do. I never thought that money or clothes would make you happy. My concept of happiness is to be filled in a spiritual sense."

D. Eugene Lichty Is A Stellar Volunteer

D. Eugene Lichty has found his own brand of exhilaration and enjoyment in the days of retirement by volunteering, along with his wife, for a variety of local and worldwide experiences. Upon retiring from McPherson College about 12 years ago, he and his wife entered the 194th unit of BVS. This centered on directing the World Friendship Center in Hiroshima, Japan, for two years.

Eugene filled in as an Interim District Executive for Western Plains District for a year, followed up with various volunteer positions nearer

home. He eventually became involved in the New Windsor Brethren Service Center. The Lichtys had previously been employed at New Windsor after two years of relief work in Italy under the Brethren Service Commission. Further retirement volunteering took them to the Lybrook Indian Mission and later to Bethany Theological Seminary.

Limitations are now placed on their health and travel, but the joy of volunteering continues closer to home. Continuing satisfaction comes to them in terms of having set a good example of Christian service for their five children and 12 grandchildren.

Bob Neff's Period of Re-invention

When Robert Neff retired from Juniata College about four years ago he looked at this new stage of life as a search for meaning outside the context of a career path. He could characterize it as wandering through an enchanted forest while making discoveries that unfold in uncharted ways. Past modes of operation do not suffice.

The present provides opportunity for self-discovery, giving one the freedom "to sing the songs of our hearts."

Consequently, he has begun work on a commentary on Job. He was called to assist the Village of Morrison's Cove in a fund-raising campaign for the purchase of land. He was invited to teach an introductory course on the Old Testament at the Susquehanna Satellite, and

later began assisting in the development of an agricultural exchange project. He has found a new focus on aging issues and likes to help older adults lead active and productive lives.

David Metzler's Life Passages

David has found it best to consider his retirement experience as one passage in the faith journey of life. Thus his years of "freedom" are not focused on retirement issues but are seen as a continuity before God and within his wider human family. His perception of God's human family is much more inclusive than when he was young.

He now feels the urgency to live in and represent the unity of the human community that can lead to peace and wholeness for the world. He cannot retire from this thrust of his career. At his present stage of aging he enjoys an enlarging spiritual vision of God and God's creation, and seeks through all the remaining days of his life to "glorify God and enjoy Him forever."

Joan Deeter Feels A Deep and Sincere Gratitude

Acknowledging that good health makes it easier to enjoy quality of life in retirement years, Joan George Deeter shares a deep and sincere gratitude for fulfillment beyond her control. Friends and family members contribute much that keeps her mentally and spiritually on the move.

Joan works halftime as a chaplain at Timbercrest in

North Manchester, Ind., marveling at those whose courage and spiritual grace enable them to live well despite obstacles. She makes careful choices in accepting volunteer opportunities at the college, the local church and district. She is involved also in a prison ministry. The focus is forward for Joan, with much to be done and experience.

Lowell Brubaker Values a Positive Attitude

Embracing the opportunity to enter into a unique semi-retirement situation, Lowell Brubaker, released from professional duties earlier than usual as a public school administrator, sought varied opportunities to further his knowledge and experience.

He participated in 22 Elder Hostel programs, tutored

incarcerated boys, served more than 25 years on the Board of the University of LaVerne, and volunteered in church, district and retirement home activities.

With the losses and limitations that accompanies aging, he knew the value of dealing with these in a constructive mode. A positive attitude and determination has allowed him to live a wholesome and vibrant life. He shares with friends the conviction that our bodies are divinely created and deserve the best care we can give them. His pattern of living has brought him many blessings and joys, and he is grateful.

Lamar Gibble Enjoys Older Adulthood

Having no fear for the changes that older adulthood can bring, H. Lamar Gibble avers that

these years have not changed his mind. He likes best the texture and timbre of “living out older adulthood” rather than “What are you doing in retirement?” Since his years of “gainful employment” meant extensive travel, he now has enjoyed assuming local congregational responsibilities, serving as a consultant for agriculture development projects in Russia, attending meetings as an Elizabethtown College trustee and as a Brethren Benefit Trust Director.

These opportunities, along with family travel, good books and times with children and grandchildren, fulfill his hopes for older adult living. He revels in the reality that there always seems to be many things to do, and new interests to pursue. It is a time to enjoy life to the full, and to “smell the roses” we missed in earlier years