

REKINDLING FUN

Seniors Find Enjoyment and Renewal with Hobbies



Barbara Weary and her Vassar College classmates in Cuba.

According to art historian Judith Stein, Grandma Moses was “practical at heart, turning to painting in her seventies after working with worsted wools for embroidered compositions,” which risked being eaten by moths. It thrills the mind that as people age, they may discover something they have always wanted to try as the case of Moses who decided painting seemed like a good fit. Or perhaps they find a connection or rediscovery of a venture that might have been put on hold.

Even prolific playwright Neil Simon revisited *The Odd Couple* when he was 76 years old. Stephen Sondheim wrote the music and lyrics to *Road Show* when he was 74. Closer to home, Ernie Lowden, 77, says he always thrilled at photography. As a young man, he worked at the Eatonton Messenger newspaper in Georgia. “I was taught the basics of dark room and photography. When I went to college, I studied curriculum and instruction in education and some of my photography skills turned more for my needs in educational technology. I was also an instructor in the military and taught at a couple forts and for reservists. Photography has always been on the fringe of my work.”

Now Lowden, a resident at Cedar Lake Village, enjoys his leisure time and the chance to share his love of photography.

Some of his pictures hang in local galleries and coffee shops. He has taught basic photography composition for other interested neighbors and hopes to offer a similar class this fall. “About seven years ago, I started taking the photography seriously. My work even hangs at Cedar Lake.” Lowden says his style has gone from being journalistic to more creative.

“When we retired, we made the decision to move here and we looked at a number of places,” he says. “Cedar Lake still meets our needs.” There is even ample subject matter on the campus. “Some of the landscaping is new and one of my goals is to photograph the entire campus. I haven’t been asked to, but it’s a personal goal. I enjoy this art and I want to share it with others.”

Barbara Weary is another go-getter. Widowed about 18 months ago, Weary decided she was going to continue traveling. “My husband use to talk about his younger days and taking guests to Cuba so last October, I joined a group and traveled there. I had a fabulous time and even a fellow traveler sent pictures and videos. I now share the adventure in small discussion groups.”

Weary, 84, who lives at Bishop Spencer Place, says she didn’t want to give up traveling. “I just had to change gears,”

she says. “I realized I could travel on my own. I went to San Antonio for my sister’s 67th wedding anniversary. I returned from the West Coast where I saw three friends of my husband’s, my new great-grandson and spent time with my daughters at the Carmel Bach Festival. I was gone for two weeks and had a blast.”

Her children gave the couple a map of the world which they decorated with push pins to denote the various destinations during their 60-year marriage. The map even bears the title of “A Map of World Travels of Dan and Barb Weary.” “I am contemplating a big bucket trip for February. It would be a tour by private jet that my husband I wanted to take to nine destinations including Oman, Bhutan, Cambodia, Maldives, two safaris in Africa and ending in Barcelona. It all takes place in 24 days. I even had to get permission from my doctor. We take a chef and a doctor. I will be 85 when I go and I want this trip to be my last big splash.”

She remembered fondly the first trip with her husband in 1961 where they spent \$200 each for a charter flight from Kansas

City to Paris. “That hooked us. We always looked for those opportunities to travel. Cruises were a good way to go. I think we were on 50 or so. The hotel went with us,” she says, laughing. “I know that Dan wanted to go to Oman and he will

go with me in spirit.” She has also taken trips to New York with the Lyric Opera and Japan once with the former Kansas City Philharmonic.

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Photo by Ernie Lowden

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