

Commentary... Of a certain age.....

By Sue Stafford
Columnist

Culturally, we in the U.S. seem to automatically equate advancing age with declining health and loss of former abilities. Those losses do happen for many at some point in the aging process. It has been shown, however, in study after study, that an active lifestyle promotes both physical and mental health as well as a meaningful quality of life.

Fortunately, for those who do need care of some type, there are people like Dr. Bill Thomas, the geriatrician who has approached aging from a different perspective. His Eden Alternative concept has turned stultifying nursing homes into havens of energizing nature with resident animals and birds and lush plants — all of which are cared for by the residents.

Thomas also developed the concept of Green Houses, small residences for elders where each person has their own bedroom/bathroom in a house for six to 10 people. The bedrooms all open onto shared living space and a kitchen available round the

clock. Residents share responsibilities and help one another as they are able. Staff works with and for the residents rather than residents conforming to the staff's schedule and routine.

While Thomas' early ventures have been a step in the right direction, he realized that the real problem lies in the existing prejudice of "ageism" in our society. Rather than viewing elders as resources possessing wisdom and ability, we are often viewed as a burden, an inconvenience, no longer useful, and a drain on national resources.

I believe that it resides with all of us who are 65-plus to help change that perspective.

Now is the time to volunteer, to share our years of experience and the wisdom gained. If we are no longer employed full-time, we have the hours to give. Run for City Council, serve on a board or commission, become a SMART volunteer and help a young child grow their ability to read.

Circle of Friends needs adults to help mentor children after school who may have

needs not being met at home. Sisters Park & Recreation District always needs coaches for their sports programs and facilitators for their children's programs. ASPIRE volunteers at the high school work with juniors and seniors to help them formulate their post-secondary plans. The Scouts, 4-H, and church youth groups need responsible adults to plan and lead programs and activities for the youth of our community.

Across Central Oregon are more organizations needing volunteers to mentor the children who are our future. Central Oregon Partnership for Youth works with children who have an incarcerated parent. The local Juniper chapter of the Sierra Club needs adults who will help introduce young people with no opportunities for outdoor experiences to the joys of hiking and camping.

There are several organizations that work with veterans, who are always looking for willing hands. Local hospices utilize volunteers to make home visits to patients and help provide a few hours of respite for family caregivers.

St. Charles Medical Center has a vibrant volunteer organization that provides assistance throughout the hospital in a myriad of ways. Meals on Wheels needs drivers to deliver food to shut-in seniors.

Cultural organizations and programs are plentiful and looking for volunteers as well as participants — musicians, artists, singers, actors and fundraisers. Most nonprofit organizations can always use volunteers to help fulfill their missions. The major annual events in Sisters require year-round volunteer help. Call the Quilt Show or Folk Festival offices and offer your talents.

The Sisters Science Club, the Deschutes Public Library, and the Sisters Trails Alliance provide educational offerings throughout the year with everything from scholarly presentations to fun how-to classes to travelogues and nature talks. These organizations also function with the help of volunteers.

To remain active and involved in life also requires regular physical activity to maintain stamina, muscle strength, and balance. If only my mind is willing, but

my body can't support my efforts, then the downward spiral begins and my choices become fewer and fewer.

Since the day I arrived in Sisters almost 13 years ago, I have said that if someone is bored living here, they have only themselves to blame. Volunteer opportunities, cultural events, and educational offerings are available year-round. We are surrounded by an unparalleled natural playground. Walking, biking, fishing, skiing and hiking wait at our very doorstep.

We have athletic facilities, bicycle activities, yoga studios, hiking groups, martial arts, book groups, aerobics and Zumba classes, rivers and creeks, and miles and miles of free trails through beautiful natural settings in which to exercise. You may not be up for skydiving like Peggy Benton, but then again, maybe you can go whitewater rafting.

Get up, get out, get engaged. Share your joy of living, your hard-earned wisdom, and your well-deserved leisure time with our community and those who are following us on the path.



Central Oregon Eyecare

Doc, I've got crusty irritated eyelids, can you help?

The crustiness you see on the lashes in the above picture isn't a critter, but the byproduct of one. Demodex is a mite that lives on most of us. It tends to be most prevalent in our eyelash follicles and eyebrows. If it multiplies uncontrolled, symptoms may start such as itchy, red eyelids or crusty eyelashes.

At Central Oregon Eyecare, we employ the latest research and products to successfully cure this common problem.

The products and procedures we use are formulated to kill the Demodex. Controlling the Demodex living in the eyelash follicles greatly improves eye comfort and appearance.

For all your eyecare needs — from immediate concerns to regular eye exams, for children and for adults — contact Central Oregon Eyecare.

Life is too short for boring glasses...
SEE the Difference at
CENTRAL OREGON
EYECARE
+ EYEWEAR GALLERY

625 N ARROWLEAF TRAIL, STE 103
541 549 2105
REDMOND • PRINEVILLE • MADRAS
SISTERS • BEND
www.centraloregoneyecare.com

On the job injury?
We can help from x-ray to healed.

YourCare **541-548-2899**
your health. **YourCareMedical.com**
3818 SW 21st Pl.
Hwy. 126 to Redmond,
two turns and you're there!
(Near fairgrounds)
**OPEN EVERY DAY,
AFTER HOURS AND WEEKENDS**
WALK-IN • URGENT CARE • OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE

**SOLVING UNUSUAL
& LONG-TERM
HEALTH PROBLEMS**

**ANXIETY • DEPRESSION
SLEEP • DIGESTION**
Dr. Kim Hapke,
NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE
& COUNSELING
Bridging Traditional & Holistic Medicine
971-409-0908
SISTERS ART WORKS BUILDING