

Make It Happen with Emily Kimball
.....Creative Aging Expert.....

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In This Issue

- 1. Career Waitresses as Healthy Agers**
- 2. St. Mary's Red Hat Hussies**
- 3. Interesting Quotes**
- 4. Resouce Guide Aging Adventures Revised**
- 5. Older American Month Statistics**
- 6. NYC The Five Boro Bike Ride**
- 7. Speaking in Milwaukee Area in November**

1. Career Waitresses as Healthy Agers

One of the more original sessions I attended at the American Society on Aging – National Council on Aging conference was Candacy Taylor's presentation on *Career Diner Waitresses: Models of Healthy Aging*. Taylor is a cultural critic, writer and visual artist with a BA in Painting and Drawing and a MA in Visual Criticism.

Candacy's research focused on women ages 50 to 80 who have been waiting on tables for up to 60 years. She found them some of the healthiest, most vibrant seniors she had ever met.

Walking keeps them in shape. Memorizing orders keeps them mentally alert and carrying heavy plates strengthens their arms. They believe the physical demands of the work keep them healthy instead of wearing them down.

They simply loved their jobs. Arguably waitressing is hard work, but it keeps them feeling younger, keeps their minds sharp and fulfills their desire to make meaningful human connections. They feel effective, efficient and needed. In fact they scorn the younger workers

who are not used to hard work, call in sick and complain about the physical labor.

These career waitresses also earn good money. Many own their homes, drive new cars and have put their kids through college. Most have no desire to retire. “What would I do? Sit home and watch TV?” asks 80 year old Esther.

Over the years the regular customers have created meaningful, lasting relationships with them. Some “regulars” will wait 2 hours to sit with their favorite waitresses. Many have served the same regulars for over 40 years. Meaningful moments have accumulated and created a complex yet simple relationship that both parties look forward to everyday.

I was blown away by Candacy Taylor’s presentation of this overlooked subculture that has been thriving in roadside restaurants since the 1950’s. It made me wonder if there are other career groups of older workers who could give us insight into healthy aging. For more information visit www.careerwaitresses.com or e-mail Candacy at slingingpower@yahoo.com. *This description is taken from Candacy Taylor’s paper, Career Diner Waitresses: Models of Healthy Aging.*

2. St. Mary’s Red Hat Hussies

I was recently in St. Mary’s, Georgia, waiting for the ferry to Cumberland Island National Seashore when I observed signs in almost every store window announcing, “St Mary’s Red Hat Hussies Women’s Health and Wellness Fair.” I also noticed numerous women dressed in purple and red — too many for it be a coincidence. I went to their web site and learned there was to be a lot more going on than a Woman’s Health Fair. There was a pajama party at a local restaurant (!), a parade — “watch the sea of red flood down Osborne Rd.,” a picnic, a fashion show, a red hat contest and a “scandalous gala dinner” requiring “classy elegant” attire.

The Red Hot Hussies are part of the national Red Hat Society, a group of women who believe "there is fun after fifty for women of all walks of life." These St. Mary's Hussies certainly understood that. Check out their web site. www.stmarysredhathussies.com

3. Interesting Quotes

"The great secret that all old people share is that you really haven't changed in 70 or 80 years. Your body changes, but you don't change at all. And that, of course, causes great confusion." — *Doris Lessing*

"Learning is a lifetime journey...growing older merely adds experience to knowledge of man and wisdom to curiosity."— *C. E. Lawrence*

"Doomsayers see the aging boom as a problem to be solved, a costly gray wave. Civic Ventures sees this longevity revolution differently — as the springboard for an America made better by experience." — *Civic Ventures Newsletter, June 2005*

4. Resource Guide Revised

I have just updated my booklet, *A Resource Guide for Aging Adventures: Unusual, sometimes inexpensive opportunities for volunteering, learning, traveling and adventure*, originally published in 2001. The 2005 edition includes 15 additional opportunities. Test out a new vocation with Vocation Vacations, drive someone else's car to your destination, teach English in China, earn income while you RV-it across America, travel as a courier, exchange homes with others, work on a cruise ship or in a National Park — and much more

The resources in this guide can save you lots of money and help make your life a real adventure! It will stimulate your thinking about the possibilities available in your later

years — locally, nationally and internationally.
To order go to www.TheAgingAdventurer.com

5. Older Americans Month Statistics

The U.S. Census Bureau notes the month of May by publishing a variety of facts about U.S. seniors. Among them: there were 4.9 million Americans aged 85 or older as of last July; 73,000 people aged 65 and older were enrolled in college in October 2002; and 4.6 million seniors (13% overall) work. Info from www.aoa.gov; www.census.gov

6. New York City Five Boro Bike Ride

You may be wondering if I survived riding my bicycle with 30,000 other people on the car-free streets of the Big Apple and the surrounding boroughs and bridges. I did — barely! For a full report go to writings at www.TheAgingAdventurer.com

7. Speaking in Milwaukee Area in November

I will be keynoting the Southeastern Wisconsin Area Agency on Aging conference on November 3, 2005. If other groups in the area would like to contract with me for engagements around that time they could save money as we could share expenses among organizations.

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