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Web Books Blog



Après Le Downsize Edition

Moving into a house that's half the square footage is like sliding your size eight foot into a size seven shoe. I stood at the sink in my bathroom this morning (yes we have His and Her bathrooms post-downsize, so why am I complaining?) and laughed at my snowbird daydreams. Where would I put my earring racks in a trailer? My collections of seashells and beach glass? Our new "little" house is bigger than the stucco crackerbox where four of us lived when I grew up.

I complain about too much stuff, but then there's the stuff that disappears when you move. Where is the back of the cheese grater? The kitchen boxes are unpacked. We emptied the moving truck. It's a mystery.

The folks we know in North Carolina have not quite disappeared. My writing group, my cancer support group, my meditation group are all online, commiserating about Southern storms and power outages. They make me nostalgic for a place I never really liked. Plus here in Oregon I'm just waking up when they're raring to Zoom. Does it make sense to keep old ties versus putting that energy into building new connections? Another mystery.

Meanwhile the sun shines through the window of my new office, which is decked out in teal and purple, my favorites. The new gym is the best equipped and most attractive place I've ever worked out. The new church is welcoming. And my daughter and her family are just twelve minutes from here—no plane ride required. Gratitude has begun to replace grumpiness.

Last weekend the partner and I went to Sip & Stroll, an annual gig where local shops host Oregon wineries that give samples of their wares. I tend not to drink, but had lots of fun talking with people and checking out the host shops. We ended up at the bar in a taberna. The guy to our left was an engineer in the midst of a divorce; we reminded him (from experience) that the best is yet to be. The women to our right were electrophysiology techs who clued me in to the best cardiologist in town.

It's striking how distinct is the culture of each town. When I visited my younger daughter in Minneapolis, the security guard at the airport approached drivers parked in the loading zone with quiet respect, unlike the guards at JFK who tell people to eff off. Salem turns out to be near the

Minneapolis end of the spectrum: friendly and happy to chat. We've traded North Carolina humidity for Oregon rain; a good swap? Right now it's summer, the sun is out, and the beach is just an hour away. I'll take it.

And I'll take all these connections, with crone writers in the places I've lived and the online communities I've joined. When the last box is unpacked, when I've washed the windows and trimmed the roses and finished editing my next book, I'll start a monthly Zoom joint called "Stella's Soiree." I'll invite the crones I know in California and New York and North Carolina, and the ones I get to know in Oregon, and you, Dear Reader. We'll chat and write from unabashedly silly prompts and read to one another and trade ideas and triumphs. Just one thing, though: I must find a time when everybody is awake.

Are you in? I hope so.



Keep the pen moving, or the keys clicking.

All the best,

Stella,

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From the blog this month

Grow Radical with Me, The Best is Yet to Be

Stella Fosse

I wouldn't call us "quiet," but we Crones sure are busy. That gathering of millions for [No Kings Day](#) was mostly olders, and the olders were mostly women. While those demographics aren't getting much play, the fact is, five million old women is just too damn many to ignore.

In the corner of America where I've just landed (Salem, Oregon), people turned out by the thousands just outside the State Capitol. The local paper called our No Kings the biggest protest ever in this town. I heard comments among old women protesters along the lines of: "We need more young people! Where are our replacements?"

A reasonable question; but first let's celebrate who we are and what we are doing right now. Aging hippy chicks, the children of the sixties, came out in droves to remind us that our highly imperfect nation has long celebrated democracy. Those of us with deep memories are bearing witness, and

Retirement is Another Lifetime

Mandy-Eve Barnett

When I announced my retirement there was a distinct divide in the reactions from my colleagues. Some were happy for me and a little jealous, while others told me I would be back to work in six months. This last statement puzzled me until I dug deeper.

For a start, all these comments were made by men. When I queried why they thought I would return to a job I loathed and found mind-numbingly boring, they said I'd get bored at home just like they did. They told me they could only play so much golf (we have a short summer in Alberta, Canada), and the list of odd jobs around the house didn't take that long. When I asked if they had other hobbies or socialised with friends, for the most part their answer was "not really," and the same went for travel. They enjoyed a few trips, but health concerns and costs limited those opportunities.

Reflecting on their comments, I realized that planning for retirement is so focused on the financial aspect that the day-to-day

to judge by the enthusiasm among my peers, we will keep on doing just that.

Grow Radical

There are self-interested reasons why Crones should advocate for reasonable public policies on older health care, social security, and more—and the urge to protect our safeguards transcends our political views. But there are plenty of reasons to fight for key causes that are not about olders specifically: foundational stuff like the First Amendment and the three co-equal branches of government. We who are Crones remember successful campaigns for freedom from the Civil Rights era to Second Wave Feminism to the peace marches during the Vietnam war. We were there with our boots on, and we are here now.

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experience is largely ignored. The refrain of “How will you fill your time?” was repeated to me often in the month before my departure. I always answered the same way.

“I will be actively writing and publishing more, extending my author and freelance reach through conferences, workshops, and networking, as well as connecting to the writing community and writing organizations. In addition, I’ll actively engage in my social life, seeking new adventures and experiences with friends. I’ve even started a Life List (not a bucket list!) of things I want to do before it’s too late.” In case you are curious, that list includes a hot air balloon ride, a tandem parachute jump, and a zip line adventure. I will also travel extensively through Italy, my favourite place apart from my homeland of England.

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Stella Fosse



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