

April 15, 2019

Issue No. 1

I'm very excited to share our first newsletter with all of you. Each month, we'll be sharing a feature story about a member of our community who is living their best life. This month our featured member is Susan Rochester, an artist who is using her work to help make the world a better place. I'll also be sharing other news and announcements in each of our monthly newsletters.

Living our best lives now and in the future!

Empowering Self & Others through Visual Communication

Visually Creating Her Next Chapter

She was already an associate professor of art, the chair of performing and visual arts, and the director of the Umpqua Community College Art Gallery. But when Susan Rochester turned 50, she said that she panicked. She started thinking about her own mortality and what she still wanted to achieve—both personally and professionally. As she looked ahead, she said she realized that it



was time to both celebrate what she'd learned and pass in on. It was also time to accept "the discomfort of being a beginner again."

As a way to tap into her hopes and dreams for her



next chapter, Susan began intentionally using a practice called visual journaling. Trained and certified in this area, Rochester shared that visual journaling is a way to tap into our subconscious mind through a visual language. As she explained it, visual journaling basically involves

finding images that speak to us and then journaling in response to those images.

Susan noted that by actually capturing images and thoughts, we help create our own realities. She shared that two years before she actually ended up buying the house she always wanted, she'd collected images of homes and features that appealed to her.

When she started looking for a home, she knew exactly what she was looking for and found exactly what she wanted.

Connecting with Passions

As she continued to use visual journaling as a tool, Susan began re-exploring some of her long-held passions. She'd long had an interest in culture, travel, and weaving traditions. In 2017, when she had the opportunity to travel to Cyprus on a Fulbright Scholarship, she became a student of another culture and some of the weaving traditions that had emerged from that region.

Ever a teacher, a student and a learner, Susan has continued to pursue her interest in cultural issues including those related to the environment and human rights. For the past couple of years, Susan has been developing a powerful visual story of the border between the United States and Mexico. She said, "I was born in Los Angeles. As a child, I was fascinated by the fact that had the border been 100 miles further north, I would have been a citizen of Mexico."

Visually Communicating for a Cause

Supported by various grants including one from the Ford Family Foundation, Susan's border project involves two major components. One component is a facsimile of the nearly 2000-mile border separating the U.S. and Mexican soil, created by stitching together satellite images. So far, Rochester



has digitally completed the entire US – Mexico border. If printed out on a single sheet, the image would be 10 inches by nearly 1,700 feet in size. More practically, she has segmented the entire border into 10-foot-long sections, that when displayed vertically, they resemble the steel

slats that make up several sections of the border wall. Inspired by *kintsugi*, a Japanese tradition in which broken pottery is repaired using lacquer infused with precious metals, Rochester is applying copper leaf to the border in the finished prints. Concurrently, Susan is printing a half-scale version of the border images that are being bound in copper as accordion-fold book structures.

The other part of Susan's border work has again involved the use of satellite images but with the addition of weaving and reversing various topographical patterns from both sides of the border. What she has created are some evocative visual



patterns that capture some of the weaving traditions of the South West. Susan says these visual weavings are "like a blanket of comfort." Each of her weavings has a story. She can tell you many of the stories of people whose border crossings are represented in each of her creations.

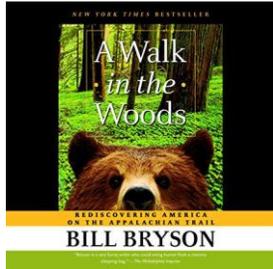
Next Steps

Susan's work has already been getting some well-deserved recognition from professionals in her field. Currently she has six or seven exhibit proposals in the works.

Susan continues to pass on the joy and power of making art through teaching and through workshops. By doing so, she empowers others. For anyone interested in learning about the power of visual journaling, Susan does offer visual journaling workshops: <http://www.artephilia.com>. You can learn more about Susan's work on her website: www.susanrochester.com

Movie Night with Familiar Faces

Sometimes my husband and I like to kick back with a bowl of low-fat popcorn and watch a movie featuring familiar faces. Last week, we watched a 2015 movie from Amazon Prime called [A Walk in the Woods](#). Starring Robert Redford and Nick Nolte, this comedy adventure film was based on Bill Bryson's 1998 Memoir (same title).



In brief, the story is about two old friends taking off on an adventure of a lifetime—walking the Appalachian Trail. Redford, who played Bill Bryson, was everything his less than successful, annoying friend (played by Nick Nolte) had become.

This nearly two-hour film kept us engaged and was humorous. Because the film is rated R for strong language and sexual references, it isn't one I'd recommend watching with younger grandchildren. We watched the movie with our dog. He seemed to enjoy some of the scenes that included animals.

If you would like to recommend a film featuring actors over fifty, please let me know. Just drop me an [email](#) with the name of the movie, the type of movie (comedy, drama, etc.), and a short review. If space allows, we'll try to include your recommendation in an upcoming newsletter. Recommendations may be edited for brevity.

Spring Tune-Up Time

With pleasant weather on the horizon, it is a great time to focus on health and well-being. Research consistently indicates that the health and fitness choices we make today can have a huge impact on our longevity and overall quality of life.

If you are curious about how small changes can make a big difference in your future, I've listed five

health calculators on the boomerbestu.com website. You can [click](#) on each one to see how well you are



currently doing. I just added a new one that projects the number of years we might have based on our health habits called the Healthy Life Expectancy Calculator. The good news is that I could live a very, very long time if I make some small adjustments and keep up my healthy habits. I think that is good; I'll let you know in another 30 years.

Power Up with Sleep

Getting a good night's sleep is part of a healthy lifestyle. Learn about some benefits of sleep: [8 Surprising Things Your Body Is Doing While You Sleep](#). The national Sleep Foundation offers insights as to how it can be more difficult to get good sleep as we age. The site also provides suggestions for improving sleep: [National Sleep Foundation: Aging and Sleep](#)

Subscribe by April 30 for May 1 Drawing

Anyone who subscribes to our [newsletter](#) by April 30 will be entered in our drawing for a copy of *Disrupt Aging* by CEO of AARP, Jo Ann Jenkins. The drawing will be on May 1st and will be announced in the May 15 newsletter. Note: You can unsubscribe using the same newsletter link.

Interested in Sharing Insights with Our Community?

If you'd like to share insights about positive aging or standing against ageism, we'd love to hear from you. If interested, check out [Guest Submissions](#). Also, your [feedback](#) is always appreciated.