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*50+Living our best lives now and in the future!*

## Spice of Life: Following Her Own Path

While other high school students were working to support a car, Connie “Pepper” Winn was working to support a horse. She also became an accomplished competitive rider. At one time, she even considered becoming a jockey but was told that at 5’9”, she was too tall to be considered.



Coming full circle, Pepper has worked for the Oregon Racing Commission (ORC) as the Supervisor of Account Wagering for the past six years. Part of her position

involves leading a steering committee for responsible wagering rules and practices. “I’m also working with industry experts to ensure that we have the best process for auditing. And I’m serving as the Chair for the Association of Racing Commissioners International Auditing Committee.”

In addition, Pepper is the Tribal Relations Liaison for ORC.

As supporters of the industry, Pepper and her husband, Chris, have attended major racing events, including The Kentucky Derby and The Belmont. “The Belmont was by far the best. We got to see a triple-crown winner (Justify), which is rare.”

## Choosing a Leadership Path

High school didn’t hold her interest; so, Pepper graduated early and joined the Army intending to complete a three-year obligation. While in basic training, she was asked if she would be interested in applying to West Point. At the time, she thought it would require a much longer commitment than she was willing to make (eleven years). So, instead, she became a tactical communication chief. Then she served as an Army Recruiting Station Commander and an Army Nurse Recruiting Station Commander.

“Around 1987, I was the top Army Nurse Recruiter in the nation. For the following two years, I was the top Army Nurse Recruiting Station Commander. This was not only a success, but it was also one of my greatest failings. I was young—in my 20s and thought working so hard meant no one could replace me.” But when Pepper left her station, the office fell apart because others were not ready to lead. “It was one of the best lessons I ever learned.”

After completing 12 years of military service, Pepper earned a science degree emphasizing environmental science. Initially, she had planned to go to medical or law school, but with three young children, she chose to go back into recruiting instead.

Pepper was hired as the Director of Career Services for the Art Institute. She was promoted to Regional Vice President of Career Services. While serving in this leadership role, she spent a great deal of time traveling around the country. At the same time, she also completed most of the requirements for a master's degree in business education from Marylhurst University.

“I have been fortunate to have both formal and informal leadership training. While in the Army, I completed a few leadership courses and have done a significant amount of self-study. I have had great mentors and have also learned a lot from many people who were not great leaders.”

### **New Priorities**

About the time she was getting close to completing her master's degree, life changed. “My mom was in hospice, and I had a new granddaughter.”

Rather than completing her degree and continuing in her role as VP of Career Services, she chose to shift gears to focus more on her family. As a result, she began her position at ORC—a position closer to home with less travel.

Service is also one of Pepper's priorities. A couple of highlights include being appointed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as an advisory committee member for homeless veterans between 2015-2017. She also enjoyed her time working with Team Rubicon, a disaster relief organization.



### **A True Globe-Trotter**



Pepper and her husband have traveled to almost every region in the world except for Antarctica. “The best trips are where we spend time with the locals. We always learn enough about the culture and language to be polite. For example, when we visited Nicaragua, we worked with locals to build houses with them; we felt as if we really got to know them.”

### **Becoming “Pepper”**

Both of Pepper's sisters have names that begin with the letter ‘P.’ Her parents named her Connie. “It was a name that I never felt was me.”

During a meal with her husband, she expressed her feelings about having been named Connie. As she was talking, she removed the lid from a pepper shaker to cover her food in her favorite spice. Her husband remarked, “You always wear black, and you love pepper. That should be your name!”

### **Just for Relaxation**

Spending time with family, gardening, and traveling are some of Pepper's favorite ways to relax. She also is committed to keeping fit. She starts the day walking her dog. Then she a virtual bike ride (a COVID adjustment). On weekends, she does yard work and hits golf or tennis balls. She recently completed a century bike ride for the American Lung Association.



**Advice for Others:** “Stay fit. Try new things. Appreciate each day!”

## Possible Health Benefits of Black Pepper

According to [Healthline](#), pepper, one of the most popular spices in the world, may have some evidence-based health benefits. Black pepper “is rich in a plant compound called piperine.” Studies indicate piperine has “strong antioxidant properties.” Piperine has also been shown to fight inflammation and possibly improve blood sugar metabolism. Researchers speculate that piperine may even have cancer-fighting properties.

## Upcoming Webinar: What a Financial Expert Keeps Inside His Playbook

Ben James, CFA, CFP, is the founder of Elevate Wealth Management. He is also the author of *The Playbook: 7 Fundamentals of Financial Planning*. Ben offers free quarterly webinars on the Playbook process.



The next webinar will be held on Wednesday, July 28, 2021, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The topic: “Ben is going to reveal what he keeps inside his personal Playbook.”

To register for the free July webinar, click [here](#).

## Reformed Carnivores at 60-something

By Cindy Eastman

It happened one evening when my husband, Bruce, suggested we watch the Netflix movie called “What the Health.” The Netflix description of this film reads, “This film examines the link between diet and disease, and the billions of dollars at stake in the healthcare, pharmaceutical and food industries.” I



would have never imagined that so many changes were about to take place, starting with that evening.

## A New Cook in The Kitchen

After watching it, my husband, Bruce, suggested we start eating plant-based foods. I agreed, but I was skeptical about how to learn to cook differently since cooking has never been my strong suit in the first place. Other changes were taking place at about the same time, and it made this transition much easier. Bruce decided to retire two years earlier than planned, and we suddenly had our roles completely reversed. Starting the next day, he has done nearly all of the plant-based cooking, and I’ve been working long hours as a health insurance agent. The fact that he’s doing nearly all of the cooking has been a very welcome relief.

Who would think two formerly committed carnivores in their 60’s could switch so fast and so easily to a plant-based diet? It turns out that Bruce is a much better cook than I ever imagined, and I really enjoy working like a fast-moving train. And, I like walking in and saying, “Hi, honey, what’s for dinner.” I can even channel Ricky Ricardo when I say that from the “I Love Lucy” show. He sets the plate down, and it’s overflowing with vegetables, accompanied by something like tofu, couscous, rice, noodles, and lots of flavor, some of which come from our garden.

## Diminished Cravings with Some Exceptions

Since the change in diet, we’re both feeling much better. We’ve both lost some weight which is a very good thing, and Bruce sleeps much better and says even his chronic allergies have improved. I believe that as time moves on, we’ll notice even more changes.

I was pleasantly surprised that I don’t crave meat as much as I thought I would. There are exceptions, however. I’ve learned it’s not a good idea to drive past a restaurant that specializes in fried chicken when I’ve missed lunch. Lucky for everyone, I’m a

responsible driver and didn't actually cross two lanes of traffic and aim for the driveway to that restaurant on a second's notice. The drivers around me don't know how lucky they were. I also learned that it's tough to be in Dallas celebrating with friends for four days straight and completely avoid meat. Dallas and meat go together like fish and water, hard to separate the two.

### Each of Us Can Make Positive Changes

So, who said people over 60 can't make changes, even big ones? Actually, it's our group that must make changes if we expect to feel good as we age and avoid diseases.

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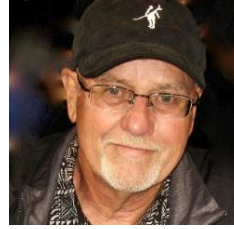
### Exercise and a Sense of Purpose

Reported in the April 2021 *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, "People with a greater sense of purpose in life may be more likely to engage in physical activity. At the same time, physical activity can contribute to a sense of purpose in life."

### Drawing on Life Experience to Create a Compelling Plot

Steve Jobs once said, "Creativity is just connecting things." He also suggested that the more experiences people had or the more they thought about their experiences, the more they could synthesize them in new ways.

Drawing on his background in finance, Allen Huffstutter engaged in the creative process when he crafted his newest novel, *Key Man*. Released in April 2021, this murder mystery includes a financial motive.



“Over the course of my working life, instead of eating lunch, I'd go for an hour-long run. During these runs, I'd let my mind wander. On one run, I had an idea that could net millions. Unfortunately, the scheme required committing murder.

“Rather than going to the dark side, I decided to create a plot for a novel in which the protagonist was willing to do just that. Given that scheme, the arc of the story from the first scene to the last was clear. Then all I needed to do was create backstories for the major characters so that their actions and interactions rang true.”

*Key Man* has already received rave reviews and is available on Amazon.

### Men's Health Month

“Celebrated each year during June, [Men's Health Month](#) brings awareness to the health issues all men face. Hosted by Men's Health Network since 1992, the month is dedicated to enriching men's health and wellness through a broad spectrum of national screening and educational campaigns.”  
[Unicityhealthcare.com](http://Unicityhealthcare.com).

### Men And the Dreaded Three-Letter Acronym: PSA

By David Reeck

You men over 50 years young, you senior men, you elder men ...many of us will develop prostate cancer. Some of us may die of prostate cancer.

Okay, now for the good news: When you get your periodic blood test for the normal stuff, like cholesterol, have your medical provider include a



PSA test. You need to know that number—it may save your life.

### **A Personal Experience with Prostate Cancer**

My story may be typical of men in their ‘golden’ years. About five years ago, my PSA was around the number that indicates you should take notice and take action. My PSA was three—anything above that number can become a concern for men over 60.

My medical provider suggested I visit a Urologist. I did that promptly. He did the ‘digital’ exam and said my prostate was not much enlarged but advised that I should have a biopsy, taking six samples. Okay, that did not sound very appealing. I imagined the worst.

A year or so passed. I got another PSA test. It was now 5. My medical provider again advised a biopsy. I put it off again. I thought the number might go down. I heard other men say that their numbers go up and down. Mine did not. Now it was 7. My medical provider proposed a deal: I would get another PSA test, and if the number was lower, we’d just monitor it with periodic blood tests. But if it was higher, I would promise to get a biopsy.

### **The Biopsy**

The next time I had my PSA test, the number was much higher. So now I was facing the reality of potentially serious cancer.

I did not know a good urologist, so I asked a friend, a former doctor who served in Vietnam. Bless this man. He suggested a surgeon from the Oregon Urology Institute in Springfield, OR. Great advice.

I went for the biopsy. It was not the painful event that I had imagined. Maybe not fun, but much better than a root canal! Now the wait for the result. It was not the best news. It was cancer in about half of the prostate. Now, I wanted the medical experts to rid my body of this cancer so that I could live and

support my wife and daughter for the next two decades, if possible.

### **The Surgery**

The next step was a bone scan to see if the cancer had spread. It had not, luckily. Next was a Cat Scan to see if cancer had spread to my other plumbing parts. It had not, luckily. Next was a robot-assisted surgery on March 19, 2021. (Note: the skilled surgeon controls the instruments.) This type of robot-assisted surgery needs smaller incisions, which have healed much faster than I imagined.

### **The Recovery**

Within the same day of surgery, I was walking around the hospital. The next week, I was averaging 2,000 steps, walking in my home and around the block and up and down the steps. The following week, I was averaging 5,700 steps, then over 7,000 steps in the weeks following.

Five weeks after surgery, a follow-up PSA was ZERO! I am blessed and lucky and said a big thank you to the big guy above. I will need to continue to monitor the PSA level and pay better attention to what I eat and drink. Now, I feel confident that I can look forward to enjoying more years on this earth with my wife and daughter, and friends.

*Please schedule your PSA test.*

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