

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

What Matters Most

As a grade-schooler, Bruce Frankel was “allowed to be the reporter” for his older brother’s 2-page, mimeographed newspaper called *The Item*. One of the stories he wrote was about a boy pretending to be Zorro as he “launched himself from a bedroom dresser to the bed. He planted his teeth into the wood headboard.” The *Miami Herald* picked up the story. Jokes Frankel, “I was recognized as a writer at 8.”



Years later, Frankel developed his craft and became an award-winning journalist and author. As a New York-based national reporter for *USA Today*, he covered some “big name” news, including the 1989 trial of organized crime boss, John Gotti. “During the trial, I would see Gotti in the hallway outside the courtroom. He wouldn’t answer my questions, of course. But, with his wise-guy expression, he’d turn to his associates and say, “Look who’s here, ‘Clark Kent.’”

Other stories Frankel covered included the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993,

international trafficking in nuclear-grade uranium, and “the tenures of three New York mayors—Edward Koch, David Dinkins, and Rudolph Giuliani;” those stories, though, weren’t what mattered most to him.

Recognizing a Bigger Purpose

Having grown up in the South, Frankel was keenly aware of social injustices and racial bias. He witnessed the mistreatment of Blacks and the antisemitism experienced by Jews, including his own family. His heart was in reporting that made a difference.

After graduating from college, Frankel worked for three years as an aide in a psychiatric hospital. Frustrated with how patients were treated on the psychiatric ward in the 1970s, he opted to try journalism as an adult.

Making a Difference

Frankel discovered that he had a “knack” for investigative reporting. “Several articles I worked on helped prompt the passage of state regulations and local efforts to improve the safety of people in vulnerable groups.” Among them was an article on the abusive treatment of “mentally-challenged residents at a notorious state hospital in New York.” Residents were “living in filthy locked wards and suffered other miserable conditions.”

The article won a national foundation award for investigative reporting. “These weren’t the ‘big name’ stories. But they are the stories of which I am most proud.”

Challenges and Changes

In 1993, Frankel was diagnosed with a blood-borne form of cancer. In addition to radiation treatment, he began hypnotherapy and recognized “an aching sense to begin living” the life he had hoped to live. In 1996, he left *USA Today*, but soon was working as a writer for *People*.

At last, at 51, he enrolled in an MFA program in poetry. At 53, nearing completion of the program, he had a heart attack. Shortly afterward, his 27-year marriage fell apart. “I became a part-time single-parent for two of my sons who were still at home.”

Writing about Aging and Meaning

Rather than returning to a regular full-time position, Frankel chose to write a book “about people who succeeded in significant ways after their 60th birthdays.” After interviewing, researching, and writing for two years, he finished *What Should I Do with the Rest of My Life?* His book’s ‘subjects’ helped him recognize the importance of “focusing on what is most meaningful to each of us. By being aligned with a purpose we believe is ours, by learning new skills or new knowledge, by focusing on the future rather than ruminating about the past, we can truly optimize our lives.”

Supporting and Representing Older Adults

Frankel is a partner, content officer, and community architect of Redstring, which builds digital communities. Stonewall Village NYC, one online community, is “a passion project that is helping grow an increasingly robust community to support older LGBTQ residents in New York.”

Two years ago, Frankel represented Pass it On Network at the United Nations during the International Day of the Older Persons. “It was the first time the president of the General Assembly addressed age advocates from around the world about the global importance of the journey to age equality. It was a proud day.”



Frankel is currently president of the [Life Planning Network](#) (LPN). The Network “is a national organization that educates and supports professionals helping people optimize the second half of life.” Through its “eCommunity,” LPN provides programs, content, and video communications for easy networking.

For Relaxation



Frankel and his partner, Leslie Shafer Koval, live “on the edge of an 18-acre pristine pond.” He relaxes by swimming in the pond in the summer, exercising most mornings, and taking long walks. He is learning to play the piano and enjoys cooking, good films, and reading. He is currently reading “Connie Zweig’s excellent book, *The Inner Work of Age: Shifting from Role to Soul*” and participating in a new LPN ‘Circle of Elders’ which “is using the book as a guide in exploring the adventures of becoming an elder.”

Advice for Others

Frankel suggests we follow our curiosity, take time to listen, honor the prompts that emerge” from ourselves, “undertake new challenges, and set goals. Other suggestions include aligning whatever we do with our values, learning to self-advocate, and continuing to learn. “Have a spiritual practice—regardless of what it looks like. And most of all, as Galway Kinnell writes in a poem, have “Tenderness toward existence.””

January 19th is [Tenderness Toward Existence Day](#)
“It is a special day to celebrate the quiet feeling of warmth, joy, and connection with all creatures on this beautiful planet we call home.”



Live Your Best Life as a Lifelong Learner

Embracing lifelong learning can improve our overall quality of life and can help keep our brains healthy as we get older. As noted in a 2021 [study](#) published in the *Delaware Journal of Public Health*, engaging in lifelong learning is one of the keys to reducing the risk of cognitive decline or delaying it.



Learning new skills, reading, listening to podcasts, and watching TED Talks are just a few of the many ways we can keep mentally engaged from the comfort of our homes. With proper precautions in a pandemic world, it is also possible to participate in stimulating groups such as [The League of Women Voters](#) or [Toastmasters](#).

Several colleges and universities offer [free or reduced tuition](#) or audit opportunities for older adults online and on campus.

Located

[Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes](#) provide structured personal enrichment opportunities specifically for older adults. Located throughout the country, fees and costs for courses vary but include a small annual fee and a minimal individual course fee.

Never stop learning!

Social Security and More: Free January Webinar

Elevate Wealth Advisors provides free quarterly webinars on topics related to financial planning. Using a proprietary process called The Playbook, webinar participants learn about the fundamentals of financial planning.

This month’s webinar will cover:

- An overview of The Playbook Process
- Social Security Myths & Mysteries
- Social Security Past, Present, and Future

When: Wednesday, January 26, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. PST.

Moderator: Ben James, CFA, CFP. Ben is the founder of Elevate Wealth Advisors and the author of [The Playbook: 7 Fundamentals of Financial Planning](#).



To register: Open link [here](#).

For additional learning opportunities, check out [Elevate Wealth Advisor’s YouTube Channel](#). In the latest [video](#), Ben explains the difference between a POD and a TOD. You can learn about these important estate planning tools and how to use them in less than 4 minutes.

Learn about Your Retirement Lifestyle Readiness



[Reed Dewey](#), retirement transitions coach and founder of [What’s Next Coaching](#), offers a free retirement readiness [assessment](#) involving 12 questions. It takes about 3 minutes to complete on your phone or laptop. Shortly after submitting your responses, you will get a life/retirement report with “valuable insights and resources for moving forward.” [What’s Next Assessment](#)

Addressing Perceptions about Aging



Jeanette Leardi was [featured](#) in our November 2021 Boomer Best U Newsletter. She is a social gerontologist, community educator, writer, blogger, and public speaker who has been actively working to change the narrative on aging.

Recently, Leardi was a guest on a Los Angeles morning [program](#), offering tips on communicating better with our doctors. Writing for Next Avenue in an [article](#) published on January 12, 2022, she addressed age bias in media photos. Check out her other [media](#) work to help change perceptions on aging. Also, visit her [website](#) to learn more about her work.

Encouraging Each Other

The first Boomer Best U Newsletter was published in April 2019. The purpose of this monthly newsletter is to provide information and stories that help encourage all of us to live our best lives.

Individuals who are featured each month have graciously shared their stories and knowledge for the benefit of all. Here's a summary of each feature story during 2021:

[January](#): For English Professor **Dr. Jillanne (Jill) Michell**, teaching literature classes and Shakespeare is part of who she is. Her passion and purpose were sparked at a young age.

[February](#): **Janon Rogers** owns a martial arts studio and holds a 4th-degree black belt in Taekwondo. She explains the benefits of martial arts training for all ages.

[March](#): Author of [Thriving 50+: The 7 Principles to Reinvent and Rebrand Yourself](#), **Wendy Marx** shares her reinvention journey and offers valuable insights.

[April](#): Navy Veteran and nurse practitioner **Bruce Eastman** shares how he discovered his love of medicine and Native American culture.

[May](#): **Marisa Fink** is a regional director for the YMCA, a world traveler, a biking enthusiast, and a Blue Zones advocate. Read about her passion for life.

[June](#): **“Pepper” Winn** is an avid bicycler, a world traveler, a volunteer, a former regional VP, and an Army Veteran. She currently works with the Oregon Racing Commission.

[July](#): **Danny Santos** has spent his life advocating for social justice. He has also served in four Oregon Governors' Offices and was a dean at a law school.

[August](#): **“Story Gordon” Hill** says he has entered his seventh 'stage of living.' At 83, he is working on a master's degree in English.

[September](#): **Dr. Connie Zweig**, a best-selling author and former psychotherapist, shares insights from her latest book, [The Inner Work of Age: Shifting from Role to Soul](#)

[October](#): Two former national park rangers, **Jim and Beth Houseman**, brought a community together to create an accessible, intergenerational community park and recreation area.

[November](#): **Jeanette Leardi**

[December](#): **Helen Laurence** said she didn't choose to become a poet; poetry chose her. Read about her journey and how she discovered her purpose.

Boomer Best U does not provide medical, dietary, legal, or financial advice. As appropriate, consult your doctor, a legal professional, or a financial expert when considering health-related, legal, or financial changes.

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