



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

Knowing When ‘It’s Time’

Scott and Angela Spence built ‘the perfect’ life together. They raised two grounded and accomplished children, developed a rich community of close friends, and built successful careers. They also lived in ‘the fast lane’ with numerous demands and related stressors. But post-COVID in 2022, the couple started recognizing that it was time for a major life change; they began reinforcing this reality by telling each other, “It’s time,” and so it was.



As soon-to-be ‘empty nesters,’ the midlife change the Spences chose took a lot of courage: It meant a significant reduction in their household income, a move to a new community in another state 125 miles away, and a degree of uncertainty as they started a new chapter. Yet, each of them is now quick to acknowledge it was the best possible decision they could have made.

The Life They Had Built

Having earned a master’s degree in business administration from Willamette University in Oregon, Scott saw his future in city management. He began his career as an assistant city manager in Sherwood, Oregon. Then, when a position for a public affairs director in Lacey, Washington, became available, the couple knew it was time to make a move. At the same time, Angela was accepted into a dental hygiene program in Portland, Oregon; this selective program was an opportunity she could not turn down.

For two and a half years, Scott lived in Lacey (with a population of approximately 29,000 at that time), and Angela lived with family in Portland during the week while only seeing each other on weekends. Though challenging, both focused on building their careers and the future they wanted for themselves and their children. They also bought a house in Lacey that Scott began remodeling to create the home they really wanted.

As a hygienist: After completing her dental hygiene program, Angela needed additional coursework and experience before practicing in Washington. She ‘hit the ground running’ in Lacey when she met all her requirements. As she explained, educating patients about the importance of good oral hygiene was starting to become a more central role in her position. Referring to a growing body of evidence,

“heart disease, clogged arteries, stroke, and diabetes could be linked to the inflammation and infections that oral bacteria can cause.”

As a director for a fast-growing city, Scott quickly became knowledgeable about the needs of a rapidly changing city. When the position became available, Spence was promoted to assistant city manager with many new responsibilities, more evening meetings, and additional challenges. On weekends, he continued to remodel and update the home they had purchased in Lacey.

As busy professionals and parents with active children: Fortunately for the Spences, Angela’s position offered some flexibility. Once they started raising a family—first a daughter and then a son—she could limit her practice to three days a week. Nonetheless, “life kicked into high gear ...as careers progressed, and the kids’ activities expanded.” Life became a balancing act in the Spence household. In 2011, Scott became the city manager. He had numerous additional responsibilities, including the city budget, union negotiations, and overseeing projects such as “establishing the Lacey Veterans Services Hub, expanding the Senior Center...and overseeing numerous economic development initiatives.” His evening meetings became more frequent, as did his numerous presentations in the community. Angela was able to pick up some of the load with the children, including shuttling both kids to multiple sports activities at different locations, music lessons, and helping with school projects.

“It’s Time”

With a daughter living in another state and finishing college and their son finishing his senior year of high school, the couple would soon be empty nesters. They had achieved their personal and professional goals, were financially secure, enjoyed a sense of accomplishment, and valued some close friendships. Yet they understood the stress of a fast-paced environment. Lacey had nearly doubled in size during the 23 years the Spences had called it

their home and was inching toward a population of nearly 58,000.

A Major Lifestyle Change: Astoria, Oregon

Having family members in Oregon, Scott started considering city management opportunities in the State. When a position became available in Astoria, Oregon, Scott applied and was hired. And, with highly experienced hygienists in demand, Angela quickly found a new position as well. After over two decades, the Spences had come home.

Although accepting a reduction in income, Astoria, with a population of just a little over 10,000 in 2022, “represented a definite change of pace; it was noticeable. Now settled in Astoria, both Scott and I walk to work every day,” and no longer must routinely drive unless needing to get groceries at Costco in a neighboring town.

“Scott walks our golden retriever, Seager (named after the Mariners’ Kyle Seager) every morning between 1 ½ to 2 miles before work, up and down the hills of Astoria. I do the same after work. We both feel our quality of life and overall health has increased exponentially with outdoor exercise, the change of pace, and the magnificent views of Astoria, anchoring the mouth of the Columbia River as it meets the Pacific Ocean.”



The Spences quickly learned that “the locals are warm and friendly.” People “from all walks of life are involved in community events that add to the lure of beautiful Astoria. For example, we recently attended a fun, roaring 20s costume casino night to raise money for the Historical Society. There is a cause or event for everyone” in Astoria.

Reflecting, Angela shares, “I think it is safe to say that we both believe our relationship is stronger today after 27 years of marriage, raising our children, and relocating to a brand-new community, than ever.”

For Relaxation

The Spences enjoy walking downtown for occasional lunches or dinners. They also like visiting local breweries or distilleries, the Sunday Market, art galleries and museums, exploring “interesting and unique shops, and walking along the “beautiful 3-mile riverfront, paved walk.”

In addition to thoroughly enjoying their new



community, the Spences like relaxing on the porch of their “1918 Craftsman home while drinking a cup of coffee or a lovely glass of

wine” and enjoying their hilltop view of the Columbia River.

The couple also enjoys playing weekly cribbage and domino games together—something they acknowledge was difficult to fit into their lives before changing their lifestyle. They are now looking forward to camping on the coast in their refurbished 1972 Airstream this summer.

Advice for Others

Angela: “Don’t let stuff own you. It’s shocking how much stuff you can accumulate in 20 or even ten years. Relationships and time with family are much more valuable.”

Scott: “Everyone knows when ‘it’s time’ to make a change; the difficulty is acting upon it...Ask yourself what is most important to you. This will guide you toward your true priorities. It will also remind you what to focus on when you’re

not...Slow things down. Try to be in the moment as much as possible. Gain a sense of perspective during life’s moments—even unplanned events in life. Practice gratitude and patience. John Lennon’s song, ‘Beautiful Boy’ exclaims, *‘Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making other plans.’*”

Astoria, Oregon History

The City of Astoria [reports](#), “As the oldest American settlement west of the Rocky Mountains, Astoria has close historical ties to the Lewis & Clark Trail. In 1811, John Jacob Astor, a New York financier, sent fur traders to the area and the trading post of Fort Astoria was established.”

Upping Your Walk

The health benefits of walking are well-known. For example, the [Mayo Clinic notes](#) that regular brisk walking can help with weight loss, reduce body fat, improve muscle endurance, and increase energy levels. This type of activity can also reduce stress levels and help manage or prevent conditions like heart disease, stroke, cancer, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes.

With the approval of your healthcare provider, upping your walk (e.g., hill climbing or incline walking) can offer additional benefits. A 2019 [article](#) on the Iowa Heart Center’s webpage reveals that incline or hill walking “increases muscle activation,” can burn up to 70 percent more fat than walking on flat surfaces, and can increase heart stamina, among other benefits.

If you want to increase the intensity of your walk even more and have no health problems preventing you from doing so, consider walking stairs as part of your regular routine. According to [Duke University](#), some benefits of climbing stairs include developing a higher aerobic capacity, potentially reducing the



risk of falls as we age, and increased bone density in post-menopausal women.

The image of the Astoria Column is courtesy of Angela Spence. This 125-foot monument draws visitors worldwide. Winding around it is a mural of the area's history, and a spiral staircase with 164 steps leads to an observation deck.

Prolonged Sitting & Health Risks for Older Women

Initially published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* and summarized in a March 2024 *MarketWatch* article, research suggests serious health risks for older women who sit more than 11 hours a day. A study involving nearly 6,000 women over sixty found that “women who sat for an average of 11.5 hours a day or more had a 57% higher risk of all-cause death and a 78% higher risk of cardiovascular disease death” within eight years compared to women who sat for nine hours or less per day.

Historic Oregon City

Oregon City boasts one of only four outdoor municipal elevators in the world. First built in 1915 as a hydraulic steel and wood elevator, it was replaced by an electric elevator in 1955. The elevator is 130 feet high.



Known as “the end of the Oregon Trail,” Oregon City was founded in 1829 and incorporated in 1844. A quick trip to the top of the elevator provides visitors with a view of Willamette Falls and some interesting nearby places to visit; it is only about a half-mile walk to the historic [John McLoughlin House](#) and approximately a 1.5-mile walk to the End of the [Oregon Trail Interpretive Center](#). (If you choose, there are stairs to the left of the elevator that you can take to the top.)

Personalized Bricks Available for the Plaza above Oregon City's Historic Municipal Elevator

If you are a history buff or want to stake your claim at the top of the historic Oregon City Elevator, you can purchase a brick with a customized inscription. To order:

<https://www.thatsmybrick.com/elevate/design-brick.php>

For more information, contact Ben James – Pdx914@gmail.com

Elevate Plaza Courtyard
Get your Brick at the Top of our Elevator

This is your chance to stake out your claim at the top of the Elevator in Oregon City! This year we start construction on our buildup at Elevate Plaza. The remodel will include a makeover of the courtyard that sits at the top of the Elevator. To help offset the cost, and most importantly to give you a reason to visit the Elevator - we're asking you to buy a brick!

- Memorialize your or a significant others achievement
- Honor your hero
- Remember your loved ones
- Share your Family Joy
- Advertise your business!

4 x 8 Bricks \$100

- 3 lines of 18 character personalization
- 3 lines of 10 character personalization with graphic available on left or right side includes spaces and punctuation



8 x 8 Bricks \$300

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That's My Brick!® can create a truly unique brick for you or your company. All approved graphic options can be found on: [thatsmybrick.com/elevate/graphics.php](https://www.thatsmybrick.com/elevate/graphics.php)

Replica Bricks

Want one for yourself? Order an exact replica of the installation brick ordered, except it has rubber feet to easily display on a desk or mantel.



Ordering Process

Personalize your brick by order online. Visit online at: [thatsmybrick.com/elevate](https://www.thatsmybrick.com/elevate)

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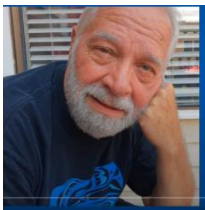
Contact for questions: Ben James pdx914@gmail.com

Inspiring Learning Opportunities

Jeff Nesler, featured in the [April 2023](#) Boomer Best U Newsletter, is the manager of Coming of Age, a national organization that helps people aged 50+ “live lives of passion and purpose.” Part of Nesler’s work involves producing in-person and online events. Three of the individuals he has interviewed were also featured in previous newsletters. If you did not have a chance to watch these engaging and informative live interviews on Zoom, you can now watch them at your leisure on YouTube (click on the names of the presenters):



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[Kate Durket, J.D.](#), “The Fairy Dog Mother, Running the Iditarod, ASL, and Advocacy”

[Emery Smith, Ph.D.](#), “A Sociologist’s Perspective: Lifespan & Aging, The Psychology of Hate Groups and More”

[Greg Cramer, Ph.D.](#) *What a Life!* “Greg Cramer’s Adventures in Winemaking”

Each guest has valuable insights and knowledge worth hearing. Also, you’ll discover that Jeff Nesler is a skilled interviewer who helps make these programs successful.

Select a Free Book on Retirement

Retirement Expert [Mike Drak](#), who has authored three books on retirement, is offering your choice of a free electronic book if you are willing to post a review on Amazon. You can choose from *Victory Lap Retirement*, *Retirement Heaven or Hell*, or *Lifestyle by Design*. You can also read about these books on Amazon. If interested, send a note to Mike at michael.drak@yahoo.ca, and he will send you the book of your choice.



daffodil seasons

helen laurence

daffodils swallowed

by lingering chill

bowed last year

to billows of snow

snowlight claimed

our hearts of course

yet we rued the loss

of daffodil promise

blooms this season

rise from sturdy bulbs

allowing us to revel

in yellow luxury

Helen Laurence is a Northwest poet featured in the December 2021 newsletter. She shared that she did not choose to be a poet; rather, it chose her.

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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