

FOREWORD

Herb Weiss charges boldly into the great universal experience of aging in this eclectic collection of newspaper columns written over the course of a long and distinguished career.

In these weekly columns, the Pawtucket-based writer breathes life into the endless stream of statistics, reports, plans, policy initiatives, reventatives, successes and failures related to aging that inundate the public consciousness on a daily basis. Through the voices of people who live with and through the challenges and rewards of aging, he tells their personal stories as they deal with issues ranging from the everyday annoyances of daily routines to the greater matters of life and death, joy and sorrow, love and loss.

Robert Frost once said "In three words I can sum up everything I learned about life—it goes on." Indeed it does, and Herb chronicles the journey integrating the research and the real-life happenings with wit and wisdom. He moves beyond the surface to explore the facts as well as the depth of feelings beneath it. In this era of speed and change, with eternal youth as a major goal, he takes the time to find the truth and then uses it to illuminate the many facts of aging with timeless observations delivered in lively readable portions.

His writing skills have been recognized multiple times, but only a special person could acquire the respect he enjoys. He is well known throughout the state of Rhode Island for being the scribe who gives the rest of us access to real life stories. I think of the movie "An Officer and a Gentleman," and reflect on the notion that to some people, "A Journalist and a Gentleman" would be an oxymoron. They do not know Herb Weiss. He is an extraordinarily kind individual who is genuinely concerned about others and especially older people.

He is the driving force in establishing a vibrant arts & culture community in his beloved city of Pawtucket. He has the ability to see possibilities in new and exciting ways. Not for Herb is the "gotcha interview" practiced by so many in his profession. The pages of this book feature the thoughts of many people whose names are instantly recognizable. They share their real experiences and thoughts because they are confident that they will be treated accurately and fairly because Herb Weiss is trustworthy.

The insights gained in this way stand the test of time because they tell the truth. The columns were relevant when written and are still relevant today to people of all ages. An example is "Here is My Advice to the Graduating Class of 2013." He notes with wry humor, "At press time I sit with a written commencement speech, yet with no invitation from a university or college to give it." Too bad. It is a good one."

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Herb's writing ranges from growing roses and taking the time to smell them to the loss of a beloved pet and finally a celebration of the famed Doolittle Raiders. He salutes the Greatest Generation with a commentary dedicated to Second Lt. Frank M. Weiss, his father.

This is a collection to savor for a long time—happy reading.

Kathleen S. Connell
State Director of AARP Rhode Island

PREFACE

Some people ritually read the sports or business sections, browse the stock listings or even glance at the comics. Yet a growing number of aging baby boomers and senior readers are turning to newspapers, electronic media and the Internet to learn more about aging issues.

With the graying of America, the *Pawtucket Times*, like many of the nation's news organizations, created an Age Beat in 2002 which continued until 2004, in which my weekly column covered a myriad of aging issues, including politics, ethics, long-term care, consumer issues, spirituality, pop culture, health care and even economics. Ultimately I returned in July 2012 to resume writing my weekly column.

Age Beat reporting continues today. Generations Beat Online (GBONews.org, initially called Age Beat Online) is the e-newsletter of the Journalists Network on Generations, edited by San Francisco-based journalist Paul Kleyman.

Now celebrating its 22nd year, the e-newsletter, a great resource for those covering aging, is distributed to more than 1,000 journalists and authors on aging.

Kleyman, a seasoned journalist, covers a wide spectrum of issues the media must spotlight in an aging American society.

GBONews.org reaches reporters and columnists at media from *The New York Times* and *USA Today* to the *Sarasota Herald Tribune* and—Yes!—the *Pawtucket Times*. It goes to National Public Radio, Public Broadcasting Service and commercial broadcasters as well as many online journalists and bloggers. And it reaches a growing number of reporters among the 3,000 ethnic media news outlets serving multi-cultural communities in the United States from *La Opinión* in Los Angeles to the *Irish Echo* in New York City.

Kleyman explained that coverage of the generations beat has never trickled down from media managers because they persist in believing that young people—especially the 80 million Millennials — are the key to advertising sales.

In fact, in radio and television, advertisers pay significantly less for “eyeballs” of those 50-plus (and even less for those over 65) counted by the ad-rating agencies like Nielsen than for audiences in the 18 to 49 age group.

Yet those who are 50 and older (including now the first Gen-Xers) hold 75 percent of the nation's wealth. They are not only wealthier, but healthier and longer-lived than their children and grandchildren.

Still, media marketers are locked in an erroneous 1950s model that says the old are stuck in their ways on fixed incomes and can't be sold new things. And that

means that media organizations, whether print or electronic, continue to produce less information about our aging society than mature consumers need or want.

But the newsbeat on aging goes on.

That's because it percolates up from the bottom of the newsroom, often with reporters and editors/producers in midlife who have experienced eldercare with their elderly parents or in-laws and discovered what a huge, untold story it is. Their personal experience gives them both the perspective and information they need to cover the issue in a balanced way, Kleyman said. One change from the past may be from new media technologies—social media, mobile and whatever is yet to come.

For more than 36 years, with more than 600 articles written or co-written in newspapers and trade publications covering aging, health care and medical issues, this writer has brought together the latest, most informative coverage of aging, health care and medical issues that aging baby boomers or seniors need to know: pertinent information that will assist them in better planning that just might enhance quality of living in their later years.

In 13 chapters, this book brings together a collection of “my best of” columns, published in the *Pawtucket Times*, and later the *Woonsocket Call*, each listing the date it was published.

Opportunities to enhance our lives in our later years have never been more plentiful or accessible. This collection of columns offers insights and practical information about how people 50 and over can take charge and enjoy a full and satisfying quality of life unparalleled in our history.

Even if the column was written years ago, and the person quoted is no longer in his or her position or even deceased, the insight is still factual and valuable. While most of my sources are from Rhode Island, their stories are universal and their insights applicable anywhere in the nation.

Throughout the articles you will find experts along with people over age 50 sharing their observations and insights about a myriad of aging issues, from caregiving, retirement planning, preplanning your funeral, choosing the right nursing home, to their thoughts about spirituality and death.

Everyone has a story to tell, a personal experience that just might provide a road map for aging better and living longer.

Like my colleagues on the Age Beat, I will continue to bring the latest, most informative coverage of aging, medical and health-care issues you need to know about.

Stay tuned.

Herb Weiss
July 2016

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