

# AGING GRACEFULLY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

By: Jeannetta Barrett

The Twenty-first Century. What beautiful words. We made it. The earth still stands; freedom still stands and we still stand. I love my life. I love being a senior citizen at this tremendous time when I can benefit from our wonderful medical advances. It is as if I have been given a grant of time to use foolish or wisely as I desire. The number of things I am free to do is almost endless.

One of the many things I do is spend time with family. There is no greater pastime than being with my children and grandchildren. A great freedom comes with being the grandmother. I can feel the tremendous love my grandchildren have for me. They are aware of my weaknesses yet accept just as I am. What an emotional high.

One of my goals is self improvement. Not the emotional do or die need I experienced as a younger woman but rather a mellow feeling of accomplishment knowing I can and will do better. My journey into self improvement is an exercise in low pressure attitude.

Another of my favorite pastimes is going to the Midvale Senior Center. It is as the title song of the TV sitcom CHEERS states; sometimes I like to go where everybody knows my name. I know the names of the other Midvale residents who attend the center and they know mine. There is a satisfaction that comes with sharing a few words with them each day. There is a bus that picks up those of us who prefer not to drive. During the ride to the center we pass the time in cheerful banter or serious discussion.

One of my great passions is reading. I like many of the modern authors. Writers of situation comedies, historical novels and factual texts, but I especially enjoy novels of mystery and intrigue. Even though I willing immerse myself in modern literature, I also enjoy rereading the great classics as well as other novels and books of poetry from my past. I am not much of a traveler so I am especially interested when the novel I am reading contains vivid descriptions of faraway places.

Dabbling in various artistic media is another way that I increase my pleasure and my knowledge. I have tried jewelry making, modeling polymer clay characters and scenes and cooking vegetarian meals. My most abiding passion is writing. I write children's stories to read to my grandchildren. I also write poetry but I do it mostly for my own satisfaction and keep that for myself.

There are many other things I intend to try as long as I have breath. But one of the most important things I do involves taking care of me. I plan to keep my independence as long as I am able. To accomplish this goal I must eat healthily, exercise regularly and sleep when it is needed. It involves showing gratitude by helping others when I am able and enjoying every sunrise and sunset. This is my life. It is a marvelous time for me to learn, to create, and to love.