



— JUNE & MARILYN'S —

GOLDEN ADVENTURE

By Author Robin R. Rinke

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GOLDEN ADVENTURE

Two childhood friends, June and Marilyn, have been exchanging humorous emails for years. While they currently live—in different states, they still share a friendship full of love, memories and wisdom. Now in their *Golden Years*, they are facing lifestyle decisions about the future that both have in common.

At Northstar Senior Living, we invite you to join these two best friends as they navigate the next chapter of their lives. By reading their fun, offbeat email exchanges, you just may find answers to your own questions about senior living—in an engaging story form.

“We can't be afraid of change. You may feel very secure in the pond that you are in, but if you never venture out of it, you will never know that there is such a thing as an ocean, a sea. Holding onto something that is good for you now, may be the very reason why you don't have something better.”

— C. JoyBell C.

Author: Robin Rinke

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, businesses, places, events, locales, and incidents are either the products of the author's imagination or used in a fictitious manner.

June & Marilyn's Golden Adventure

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CHAPTER | 1

Seeing the Future Clearly

*“These eyes are weak, They see much less,
Than yours they’ve seen much more They’ve
guided me through birth, through death,
Through grief, through hurt, through war”*

– Emily Nelson

Dear Marilyn,

Happy Wednesday...I’m giving you my weekly update one day early. Tomorrow, I’m going to see that ophthalmologist that I wrote to you about last week. I didn’t want to send you into panic mode thinking it was already Thursday!

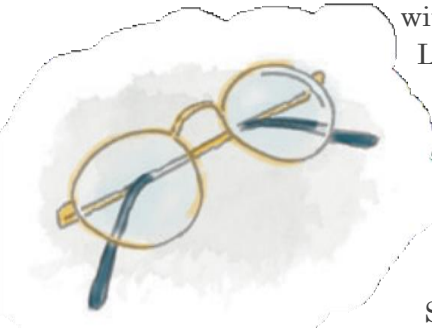
The gal from the appointment desk told me my vision could possibly be blurry for the rest of the day after the fluorescein angiogram test. I was afraid your weekly Thursday email would look rather funny if I attempted to write after the appointment!

So, anyway, lucky me! It’s not every day you get dye shot into your arm and have a picture taken while it slowly passes through the blood vessels of your eye! I’ll make sure and smile—might even send you a wallet-size photo.

Anyway, my eye doctor, you know, “Doctor Good Looking,” believes it’s the dry form of macular degeneration. He told me most people who have macular degeneration have the dry form, caused by aging and thinning of the tissues of the macula. He calls it, MAC-D and said it begins when tiny pieces of fatty protein form under the retina. He said eventually the macula may become thinner and stop

working properly. Thank God it's only the left eye. I can still drive with one eye. Well, kind of. I don't drive at night anymore. Nobody tells you what old age is going to be like when your 20...but, then again what do you care when you're 20? You think you're unstoppable!

The other night, I was reminiscing about when we were seniors at Camden High. Remember when we went to the Starway Drive-In



with Jimmy and Tony to see, "Some Like It Hot?" We were the talk of the school that night. Going to the drive-in was such fun in Tony's '59 baby-blue, Fairlane Ford ragtop—except he wouldn't let us eat popcorn or drink Cokes in it!

Still can't believe we were asked out by the star football players of the school. Then you went and "borrowed" your sister Mary's brand-spanking new, red, peep-toe pumps to wear on the date... except you forgot to tell her. She was so mad at you! But that polka-dot dress you wore just begged for them. I swear it took us three hours to get ready for that date, and then we both changed outfits at the last minute. Unstoppable. My Jimmy was such a charmer from the start—he was until his dying day. I miss him so much. He was the love of my life.

Oh, how I wish you'd never moved away from Camden. You're one of my dearest friends. Why did you have to go marry a Navy guy anyway? Tony would have been fine. He liked your sister's red shoes. Ha! You could've been the wife of a busy Camden plumber. Well, retired plumber now.

Earlier today I went to the Wednesday Bridge Club at that retirement community I've been telling you about. Cora was there again. Remember, I told you about her? The one with curly, red hair and funny laugh? Anyway, she had just gotten back from a Grecian cruise. She was going on and on about her trip. I swear it took me back to the time we went to Greece after college. It made me feel so young again! Cora had the whole group in stitches. Then we got

serious and played Bridge.

Honestly, I needed the reprieve. I felt old on Monday after a talk with my daughter Carol. She politely reminded me that I told her the same story two times already about the fire alarm going off in my condo last week. Anyway, here I thought I told my son Johnny, but when I talked to him yesterday, he said he knew nothing about it. Go figure.

Johnny was mad I did not call maintenance to shut it off; he does not like me climbing on a stool. I know those two kids worry about me. I always assure them it's just old age creeping in and to mind their own business. Funny how they're 55 and 60 and I still call them kids. Bless their hearts!

How is your hip since surgery? Is rehab hard on you?

So sorry to hear about your daughter's ring. How strange that it went down the sink and they couldn't find it! You can bet some lucky sewer rat is wearing it. Yet another reason you should have married Tony and stayed in Camden...he would have found it...ha. Please, say "hi" to Mr. Navy. I miss you both. I better get to bed—big day tomorrow. I'll keep you posted. That's it for now. Sorry, this was so long.

Take care and don't forget to eat dessert first.

Love your one-eyed friend,
June

CHAPTER | 2

Memories Are Forever

“Aging is not ‘lost youth’ but a new stage of opportunity and strength.”

– Betty Friedan

Dear June,

I know its Thursday, and you're having your procedure today—I just wanted to let you know I am praying for you and hoping for a good report. When you feel like your vision is better, send me an email with an update. You don't have to wait until our “Thursday” ritual. You are such a “follow the rules” kind of gal—always have been! I promise to hang the wallet-size photo of your eye in the post office under “Wanted.” It will be real “eye-catching.” What a hoot!

I get such a laugh when you mention old memories in your emails. Greece really was the trip of a lifetime for us two college girls! Remember us riding mules up to the fishing village with Petros, the hunk? My mule kept biting yours in the rear end. You were so mad.



And going to the drive-in with Jimmy and Tony—don't get me started! He never did find out we snuck Sugar Babies into his car. Sweet memories! Good Lord, that was a million years ago!

I'm glad you have the Bridge Club—you seem to really enjoy it.

The friendships sound fun. Sometimes Bill and I talk about how we miss our friends. So many of them are gone. Either they've moved closer to their kids or grandchildren or have passed away. We do have each other, which I am thankful, but our social life is a bit boring these days.

I know what you mean about your memory. Since hip surgery, I have lost my remote, ice pack and pain pills about a dozen times. Then I end up finding them all in the same old place. Bill laughs at me. I think he is secretly doing it on purpose. He swears he isn't.

Rehab is OK. It's not my favorite part of the day. Sometimes I worry I will not fully recover and end up with a limp forever. Bill has mentioned moving someplace with less up-keep and responsibility, so I can have a break from life. He found a senior retirement community in our area. It's a Presbyterian Home Community like the one you play Bridge at.

Bill goggled, "Northstar Senior Living" after I told him you were pleasantly surprised by it...and how much you talk about going there and playing Bridge. He found a community on their website and had them mail us their brochure. It looks like the same as yours with weekly housekeeping, linens done once a week, personal laundry, chef-prepared meals, health and wellness navigation, activities and even a pub! I have not given it much thought. I've just glanced at the brochure. My hip hurts too much to really care right now. But, let me tell you, having someone else who cooks and cleans sounds great right about now!

I really am sorry about your eye. Write when you can.

Your limp-along friend,
Marilyn

CHAPTER | 3

Be a Rule Breaker

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream."

– C.S. Lewis

Dear Marilyn,

OK, so I am breaking all the rules and writing to you on a Friday morning. See, I can break the rules!

Yesterday's procedure was not a big deal. The initial diagnosis was accurate. My eye is going downhill. Doctor Good Looking said it was uncommon for this to be happening to only one eye, so I feel blessed and will "look" on the bright side!

I can't believe Bill has been talking to you about moving! I'm tossing around the idea of moving into this one that I play Bridge at. Ever since I joined their Bridge Club last fall, I've been taking notes. One thing I've noticed is how happy they all seem to be. Most say it was the best choice they'd ever made and that they wished they'd made it sooner. Maybe they get paid to say that....ha. All of them do seem very happy – except for crabby pants Larry, but then he probably wouldn't be happy even if he lived at the Waldorf Astoria.

Anyway, you know me; I've been studying different communities in the area and talking to my financial advisor to get as much information as I can before deciding. I was not sure about pricing, but apparently, they have many options to choose from.

So far, this one is on the top of my list. I made a list of what is

important to me. Maybe you and Bill should do that, too? This place seems to have everything on my list. It's quite beautiful. The outdoor seating areas, gardens and waterfalls are gorgeous. I can even bring Skittles because they love dogs. Most of the time I feel like I'm still a couple years from making that kind of change. Other times, I feel as if I could move tomorrow. I'm afraid I'll miss my condo too much, but I do get lonely. Like you, most of my friends have moved out now.

My research has helped me understand independent and assisted living a bit better. It's not what I thought it was. I used to think it was an "old folks' home" like we had to put mother in – one step away from the grave.

Of course, the kids have been all over me to check out communities and get prices. Johnny has even brought me different brochures to look at. They just don't understand. I know they are trying to help. I guess I just want to make up my own mind about where I live.

Carol and Johnny are worried if I wait too long, I won't be able to live where I want. I guess they have a point. Moving sooner rather than later would allow me to choose the apartment I want while it's still available and I'm still healthy enough to enjoy it. I really want one that faces south – with a patio. Skittles loves to sit on my lap with the sun warming him when I read. And yes, I still read with one eye! My Kindle Fire has the large-print font. I'm reading a spicy romance novel right now. What you reading these days?

My kids also worry about my eyesight and always comment on how it's not easy for me anymore. Since when has anything been easy? Ever since Jimmy passed, my life has been complicated. He was such a good man...always took care of everything.

It is funny how all the bad memories fade and only the good ones remain. I guess that is how it is supposed to be.

The kids know I love my condo. Especially the nice and cozy reading room off the kitchen... it's always sunny and warm. Another factor is I still like to occasionally cook in the kitchen. Well, to be

honest, not so much anymore, but it's nice to know it's there if I want it. Do you cook much? I get sick of making dinner for one. When Jimmy was alive it was hard enough making dinner for two. I never eat the leftovers and it seems like such a waste. I liked cooking better when I had someone to appreciate it! I know going out to eat is not that great for my health. I always say I'm going to order a nice salad, but end up ordering the special and bringing the leftovers home thinking I will eat them for lunch the next day. That's probably where the fatty tissue behind my eye is coming from! Ha!

I also worry about all my stuff. Where would I begin to sort things out? It all seems so overwhelming at times.

I will be going to an Early Bird Piano Bar event with Joan next Friday. The community hosts the event on Fridays. I've not been yet, but Joan went last month with Norma (Norma moved in about a year ago) and had a ball. She said the band was great and played all the songs we like. Even Patsy Kline and Elvis! They even had a glass of White Zinfandel. Sounds like our kind of piano bar. Too bad you can't come with us.

Heal up, dear friend – you will not limp forever.

June



CHAPTER | 4

Cooking is Overrated

"I'm not aging—I'm marinating!"

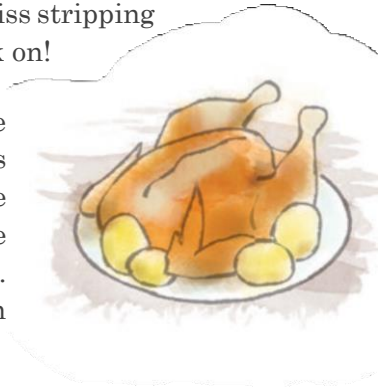
– Anonymous

Dear June,

Your email gave me a smile! So, what's the name of the spicy, romance novel you're reading? I just finished a historical novel – not worth the read, but had to finish it. I could use a new, good book. This rehab and recovery are taking longer than I thought. It's kind of hard to admit that we are not spring chickens anymore.

Speaking of chicken...I have found that it's too hard and takes too long to stand and cook. Bill has been doing the grocery shopping. He usually comes home with a rotisserie chicken, a variety of salads and delicious, gluten-free bread from the Fresh Market. I think I've gained 10 pounds. I don't have the heart to tell him that a little variety would be nice! He also hired home care to come in to clean and do the laundry once a week. It's just too much work for me, and Lord knows Bill has no idea how to do it. However, it is kind of nice not having to do laundry. And, i don't miss stripping the linens and having to put them back on!

If you haven't heard, we are preparing for Hurricane Zoe. She is headed our way this weekend. We have paid a local company to baton down the hatches– cover the windows and such. It is supposed to make landfall on Saturday afternoon.



This darn coast seems to have an open invitation for these crazy storms. Bill is all over it– once a Navy man, always a Navy man. I may not be able to be in touch for a bit because of storm.

That Early bird Piano Bar event sounds fun! I am glad you're looking into possibilities of independent living. There are a lot out there. Bill keeps pressing me to take a look at the one here – the one i told you about. Anyway, I think I will google them and take a peek. I am a bit curious.

Need to rest. I love you, dear friend.

Marilyn

CHAPTER | 5

Sit Back and Relax You Deserve It!

“Aging is not ‘lost youth’ but a new stage of opportunity and strength.”

– Betty Friedan

Dear Marilyn,

Wow...this week flew by! I'm so thankful that Hurricane Zoe missed you on the Coast. I bet Bill, Mr. Navy, was all over that storm! Weather Chanel 24/7. I missed your email last week and it had me a bit worried. I remember what a big hurricane did to your property once before!

Glad to hear rehab is going well and they are not too hard on you. Hopefully, in another couple months, you will be as good as new! Meanwhile enjoy the maid service! That's funny about Bill buying groceries. Make him a list– maybe he will pick up some of those stuffed peppers and crab cakes you love. So glad you have someone doing laundry! I hate making my bed, too– can't get my knee under the mattress to give it a lift anymore. The fitted sheets are always popping off the side!

I had my recap visit to the eye doctor today. Like I figured, the good news was I have one good eye. The bad news...I have one bad eye. Call me Blackbeard. The kids are frantic. They think I'm dying. Johnny wants me to sell the condo tomorrow and Carol is all over it as well. I swear they are ganging up on me.

Bridge Club was the same group— with one newbie. Her name is Barbara Bradford. Maiden name was Heinz. She was in the class behind us at CHS. Remember her? The long-legged brunette that dated Carl Bradford forever. I remembered her from marching band. She played the saxophone. Not very well I might add. Ha. I think you had her in Home Economics class? Barbara and Carl married after he graduated from Purdue. They moved and raised their kids in Lakewood. She said Carl passed away three years ago from a sudden heart attack. She recently moved to be closer to her daughter who lives in Camden.

I find it interesting meeting up with old school mates after all these years. Barbara seems like she is doing well. She says she's glad she made the move. She showed us her apartment after Bridge. It's a one bedroom with a den...and decorated very nice. You can tell she's a widow – flower arrangements everywhere, and the décor was all soft hues of pink and greens. You would have loved her doll collection.



Barbara's apartment faces south with a beautiful view of the fountains. I've decided that's what I want. I was pleasantly surprised at the room in the apartments. I asked her what she did with all her "stuff." She said she had a company help her sort it out and they did all the work. She sat back and pointed a finger to what she wanted to keep, what she wanted to give away and what went to the kids. She did not even have to pack or unpack! She said that the one bedroom was all she needed. I think I would still like a two-bedroom. So, I think the Villa idea is on the back burner since seeing her apartment.

Anyway, after Bridge we all ate at the Bistro in the community. It has a beautiful open seating atmosphere. Whoever designed the place sure thought of everything. I had a fabulous chicken and cranberry wrap that had a bit of minced celery, red onion and cashews. Fabulous! I like how this community has a few eating options. I think we will try a burger and beer in the pub next week!

Glad to hear rehab is going well. You'll be fixed up in no time.

The spicy, romance novel is called, "Second Time Around," by Karen Vixen. The sheriff is the hero who wiggles his way into the life of the new waitress in town— who of course is a recent widow. It's cheesy, but a fun read. Lots of twists with nosey townspeople.

Love you bunches,
June

CHAPTER | 6

What's Important to You?

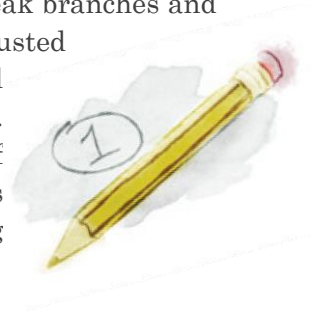
*"There must be a goal at every stage of life!
There must be a goal!"*

– Maggie Kuhn

Dear June,

What a weekend...yes, we are thankful Hurricane Zoe took a right turn instead of a left at the last possible minute. Bill nearly fell off his chair laughing at the Weather Chanel remark you made. You know him so well. The poor girls who come and clean are under his Navy microscope. He wants crisp corners on the beds, furniture that'll pass the white glove-test and a perfectly organized refrigerator. I'm surprised he doesn't put his boots out for them to polish! Poor dears. I slip them the "I know, he's impossible" look occasionally. Bless their hearts.

Bill had to go out and clean up the yard after the near-miss storm. The outer winds still managed to break branches and wreak havoc on our pool area. He was exhausted when he finally finished. We have our pool guy coming next week to repair damages. Those storms are costly! Bill said he's sick of yard work. Thank God his tomato plants survived. I think his garden is the only thing he still enjoys in the yard.



We took your advice, and both wrote down what we deemed important in a retirement community. My top three were: great food, a swimming fitness plan and healthcare if needed. He had four:

Golfing close by (of course!), a two– bedroom with a den facing north towards the mountains, a community garden area and a workout room with elliptical machines.

I looked up the website. They have all our wants and needs. We really like their apartments. Bill was excited I finally took a peek. He seems ready to move– especially since this last storm. He said the housing market is good in our area. I just don't know. Seems so overwhelming.

It's hard for me to fathom giving this up. I love my house; it's been my home for 15 years. I know what you mean by having too much "stuff." That moving company sounds like a dream– the one you mentioned. I know I would have to use something like that. I wouldn't know where to start in sorting and packing. The thought of it tips me right over.

Annie and Linda came by with Key Lime pie this week. Those two make me laugh. What precious daughters we have. We told them what we were thinking. They encouraged us to go for a visit. They liked the idea of us living closer to them and the grandchildren. I love that idea as well. I asked them what they would want in my house– I know I can't take it all. Annie only wants the English tea set we bought in London and Bill's grandmother's antique trunk. Linda wants the white bedroom set and my silver. They said the grandkids will take things as well. I guess I will have to have them over and see what they want. Can't believe I'm even thinking like this!

I do remember Barbara Heinz and recall that she married Bradford and moved away. Sorry to hear she lost her love. I hate the sound of the word "widow." It just sounds so lonely...I don't know how you do it. I would be lost without Bill. Glad you ran into her. Sounds like she would be a fabulous friend to have if you move in! Say "hi" to her for me.

I had Bill pick up, "Second Time Around" for me at the library. Can't put it down!

Love always, Marilyn

CHAPTER | 7

Take a Step Forward and Peek at Your Future

*“You may not be able to turn back the clock,
but you can wind it up again.”*

– Anonymous

Dear Marilyn,

I knew you would like the book. She is one lucky waitress! I like the part where the sheriff takes her on horseback to survey the property only to end up “head over teacup” in the creek. Bless her heart. She is a mess and so stubborn. I would have gladly let that sheriff help me out of the mud.

I finally made an appointment with the sales counselor at the community. My tour was yesterday. Everyone was so nice. I looked at a one-bedroom and a two-bedroom apartment, both facing south. I decided the two-bedroom was perfect size for me. Plus, it was on the first floor with a patio...just what I want. I tried to imagine my furniture in there. I know it won't all fit.

The sales director, Lori, was so helpful; she said it was typical to feel overwhelmed. She said most residents feel the same way and find that they bring the furniture and things they love and sort through everything else. I guess downsizing isn't so bad. I really don't need three sets of dishes, Jimmy's mini library of books and my dining set that seats 12! After seeing Barbara's apartment a few weeks back, I got excited about decorating my own. I might even go contemporary and hire an interior designer to help me.

I also meet with James, my financial advisor on Monday. I want him to look at the contract. I was surprised how affordable this lifestyle will be for me. The rent comes with meal allowance each month to do what I want with and the typical weekly housekeeping, laundry and linen service, utilities and all the activities. Apples to apples, it's close to what I pay now. And, should I need assisted living (help with daily living activities) it's all there under one roof.

Carol and Johnny are thrilled that I took this step. They want to tour with me this weekend. The kids like the idea that it is safe and secure for me, and I have a driver to shuttle me around to appointments. Johnny was happy to find out that they have a Health and Wellness program with a rounding doctor.

How's the hip? That's so funny about Bill and the white-glove treatment of the help. I went online and looked up the community you are looking at. Nice place! I can see why Bill would love it there. Those mountains are gorgeous. It looks to me like they have raised-bed gardening for him as well. He will enjoy that!



Miss you dearly,
June

CHAPTER | 8

No Fear

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream."

– Les Brown

Dear June,

We had another crazy week here. Annie and Jake's son Tyler, he's 25 now, decided sky diving was his new thrill. He ended up with a broken arm after being blown into a tree. Bill and I visited him yesterday. He'll recover– just another trophy scar to add to his collection. He is such a dare devil. He definitely takes after Bill.

I can't believe you are going forward with the move! Do you have a real-estate agent for your condo? How exciting. I think this will be great for you. You've always been very social and need more things to do. I think it is a great idea to hire an interior designer. Why not? Make it your own!

Bill has made an appointment with the sales counselor for three weeks from today. My hip should be able to handle the tour by then. It's still healing– taking its sweet old time. My strength is finally coming back, but I'm not telling Bill...ha. I'm liking the house cleaning and him grocery shopping. Thanks for the idea of being specific and writing down what I would like to eat; he's been a bit more creative at the store and the meals have become a little more diverse. He's getting



creative at the deli.

I guess those are all reasons to move to a senior living community. The house has become so big and making dinner – ugh. I never really thought about it until this hip surgery happened. I want to live life and do things I enjoy. Funny how things change? I've always been one to fight change. Not Bill, he loves adventure and new things. I guess if anything good came out of this hip surgery, it's a new mind-set on our next chapter and not being afraid of it.

I finished the book. Yes, she is one lucky waitress. Have you started a new one yet?

Time to make some sweet tea. I'll write again soon.

Love you more,
Marilyn

CHAPTER | 9

Moving Forward

"I believe the second half of one's life is meant to be better than the first half. The first half is finding out how you do it. And the second half is enjoying it."

– Frances Lear

Dear Marilyn,

Oh, my goodness! How in the world did we come to this crossroads of moving at the same time? I wish it was to the same place! I'm happy for you. I think the tour will be a real eye-opener for you both. It'll help you decide if it's the right fit. Make sure and eat the food. You said that was important. And, make sure and meet some of the residents. That'll tell you more than anything.

My financial advisor was very supportive of my move. So, I went ahead and met with a real-estate agent and have begun the process. I put a deposit down on the two-bedroom apartment I toured, so I would not lose it. Now I'm really getting excited! I have a showing on my condo this weekend already. These condos sell quickly once on the market. This move may happen fast. Barbara also gave me the name of her interior designer. I meet with him next week. I have been collecting pictures from magazines and on Pinterest to give him an idea of what I want. The sales gal, Lori, gave



me the contact name of the senior moving company. They will meet with me once the condo sells.

It's good to hear you are getting your strength back and even funnier to hear you have not told Bill. I don't blame you one bit. Who needs all that housework when you can play Bridge or be part of a book club all under one roof! I attended the book club last week and picked up a new one that was suggested as a good read. It's not a spicy romance, but the autobiography of one of the residents. Imagine that...he even signed it for me. His story is about his time in the Marines. It's fascinating. It is called, "Sea Stories and Fairy Tales," by Chuck Beveridge. Bill would love it – even though he is a Navy man.

I finally had the burger and beer at the pub this week after Bridge Club. It was fantastic. They make their own signature garlic, potato chips– I'm going to like this kind of pampered living! It's like I feel young again– alive.

Take care, dear friend,
June

CHAPTER | 10

Time to Rightsize Not Downsize!

“One of the reasons people get old—lose their aliveness—is that they get weighed down by all of their stuff.”

— Richard J. Leider

Dear June,

Wow! I hope the condo sells quickly. You sound very excited! I've not heard this excitement in you for a long time. Good job— I'm proud of you for tackling this new chapter like a pro!

Bill practically has all the suitcases packed for our little trip— and we don't leave until next week! We decided to spend the night. That'll give us time to really see how it feels and, like you said, meet some residents and sample the food.

I told Bill about the book you suggested. He found it the next day and devoured it in two days! He now says he wants to write a book about his time in the Navy— especially during the Korean War. He wants his grandchildren to have an understanding of what it was like. He has never had the time to do that. I think moving to a community will give both of us the time to do the things we always wanted to do, but never could fit in.



I had Bill bring down boxes from the attic the other day. I'm such a pack rat. Can't believe the things I've kept over the years. I've not even peeked at them since we moved here 15 years ago. I guess

I kept them because of the dear memories that are attached. I really don't need my CHS marching band uniform anymore or the bracelet I made at Camp Foley when I was 12. One thing I will keep though...I found a box of tickets and stubs from dates with Bill our first year of dating. Most of them are from Navy football games! I was thinking of having them put into a frame with a few pictures of us back then. It brought back warm fuzzies. He sure swept me off my feet— especially when he wore his football uniform and let's not even talk about him in his Navy Officer uniform.

I will leave you with this quote I read in this month's issue of the AARP magazine. Did you see this one? it's by Michael Pritchard: "You don't stop laughing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop laughing." So true! I miss laughing with you!

Love,
Marilyn

CHAPTER | 11

Out with the Old and In with the New

“The trouble is, when a number— your age— becomes your identity, you’ve given away your power to choose your future.”

— Richard J. Leider

Dear Marilyn,

The condo sold! I had two showings this weekend and the second showing made an offer. My agent said it is a single woman. She is in her early 60s and downsizing from a house (I like to call it “rightsizing”) not downsizing! Apparently, she lost her husband a year ago. It makes me feel good to know she fell in love with it. We negotiated a bit less than the asking price, but my agent said it was still a great offer. So now the new journey begins. She will probably end up with me in a few years from now! Circle of life.

I have back-to-back meetings with the senior moving company and interior designer for the next several weeks. I’m planning on moving in three weeks. I am not waiting for the close of the condo. No need. The senior moving company said this will be a stress-free move for me. It is not costing all that much for a stress-free move either.



They will even take my antiques that the kids and I don’t want and sell them for me. They also haul all the extras to the

thrift store.

Then, at my apartment, they unload and unpack everything the way I want it. I can't even tell you how much stress this has taken off my shoulders.

As you can see, I'm excited. Barbara Bradford is ecstatic about me moving in. I can see our friendship blooming. Hey, maybe you should send her your old marching band uniform. Ha. Even Crabby Larry shook my hand when he heard the news during Bridge Club and said it will be nice to have me living there. I think he just puts on that crabby air to get attention. He's actually kind of cute, even though he is an avid Patriots fan. I let him know right away that the Chicago Bears are my team!

Can't wait to hear about your trip. Excellent idea to stay the night— or even two. Yes, I did read the AARP magazine. I missed that particular quote, though. Thanks for sharing. Did you see this one from Stephen Richards? "When we age, we shed many skins: ego, arrogance, dominance, unreliability, pessimism, rudeness, selfishness, uncaring." Wow, it's good to be old!"

My love,
June

CHAPTER | 12

Don't Retire. Refire!

"In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years."

– Abraham Lincoln

Dear June,

What wonderful news on selling the condo! How are you keeping up with it all? My goodness, it is all happening so fast.

Sorry it has taken me a week to get back to you. As you know, we were getting ready for our own little trip...and then having to unpack when we got home took up my time. But we are so glad we went. It was great! We are in love with the community! You were right; it is nothing like we had thought. I saw vibrant "young" people like us enjoying retirement!

Bill said it was like heaven. He smiled the whole time we were there. We had the opportunity to meet a few of the residents over dinner on Friday night. The chef prepared three specials: Southern Shrimp and grits, New England Pot Roast and Blackened Catfish. Of course, Bill ordered the Shrimp and grits. I ordered off the menu and had Fried Green Tomatoes for an appetizer followed by Beet Salad with goat Cheese and then went with the Filet of Blackened Catfish special! The food and service were excellent. We were very impressed.



At dinner, we sat with Joy Lee and her husband, Tom, and a recent widow, Joyce, and a hilarious gentleman named Pete. They had nothing but great things to say about the community. It was so fun having a social evening out and enjoying a glass of wine before dinner during happy hour. Pete mentioned that he had moved there a year ago, with his wife. They really enjoyed being there together. When she got sick, she passed rather quickly, and Pete was thankful he had friends already established there and did not have to face life alone.

That hit me for some reason. I thought of my Bill. I would want that for him if anything were to happen to me.

They have so many things to offer— even a weekly ceramics class. You know I have always wanted to try my hand at that! Bill was excited about the men's weekly coffee, the weekly educational seminars and the work-out room. And, get this, Pete and Tom are both Navy guys and golfers!

We did not put down a deposit, but decided the two-bedroom apartment would be best for us. With the kids being a closer I will not need a bedroom when they visit. I will use one bedroom as a den. Maybe that is where Bill will start writing his book. The floor to ceiling window in that room faces a beautiful mountain. Very peaceful.

The kitchen is a bit smaller than what I'm used to, but then again, I'm not planning on cooking— so I don't really care. The granite counter tops and details in the home were beautiful. Bill would like to make one bedroom his office.

We have decided to talk to a real-estate agent and begin that process before we put down any money. Bill said he was going to set something up this week. I really like the idea of a stress-free move. Maybe there is a senior move company here I can use.

Here's to new adventures in senior living. Cheers!

Love, Marilyn

CHAPTER | 13

Let the Fun Begin

“The longer I live the more beautiful life becomes.”

– Frank Lloyd Wright

Dear Marilyn,

I'm writing to you from my new apartment! I absolutely love it. It was a stress-free move. I felt like a queen just pointing my finger at what goes and what stays. I'm a bit emotionally drained, but not physically. What a fabulous service to use at this time in our lives. My interior decorator was fast and has done such a great job. I will send pictures soon. Last night was my first night in my new place. It was strange locking up the condo door for the last time. But it felt good in a new way. Skittles has settled quite well.

I had a bouquet of fresh flowers waiting for me on my new “smaller” dining table from the wonderful staff. It said, “Welcome Home.” So sweet. How did they know I loved pink tulips? I must have mentioned it to Lori.

I woke up this morning and thanked the Lord for everything. I feel happy. My life has been rich. Not that I have not had my share of bumps and bruises along the way, but rich.



I had an Albert Einstein quote framed for my hallway that says:

"I have reached an age when, if someone tells me to wear socks, I don't have to."

Isn't that fabulous?! Ha. I love that quote. I'm beginning to love my life and my age. If you can't beat it, you might as well join it. I'm going to celebrate each new glorious day. I can already tell this was the best decision for me.

Carol and Johnny helped me out tremendously the past few weeks. They're very supportive and I'm definitely relieved that I made this move. I told them they would have to call so I could pencil them in with my now-busy schedule! I can tell they don't worry about me as much.

So happy to hear the trip went well. Sounds like you found the right place. It is important that you make friends and feel secure; we never know what tomorrow may bring. I bet Bill was thrilled to meet other Navy boys! How wonderful.

Can't wait to hear what the real-estate agent has to say about your house. It's a gorgeous home and neighborhood that is surrounded by so much to do. And Bill, being Bill, has kept up the maintenance on the house so well. He will be so happy not having to mess with a yard anymore.

Oh, my goodness, Marilyn, you're a pack rat! Honestly, a bracelet from Camp Foley? That one had me in stitches! And, great idea about framing the tickets and stubs from the first year of dating Bill. That is precious.

Well, time for dinner. I'll let you know how it goes. Barbara and another gal, Anita, said to meet them at 5 p.m. in the pub for a cocktail, and then we will have dinner in the dining room. Off I go with my blue sweater and pearls!

As always, your friend forever,
June

CHAPTER | 14

Move Forward with Confidence

“Change is inevitable – except from a vending machine.”

– Robert C. Gallagher

Dear June,

So happy the move went well, and you are so content! I'm thankful you did this before us. It has helped me in so many ways. Same fears I guess...change is never easy, but sounds like this one was great for you! I'm hoping it'll be for us as well. Bill has no doubt, but you know me. Always the doubter!

We met with an agent, but are also looking into a company that buys homes– they only work with seniors. You usually get a bit less than the asking price, but Bill said that pretty much is a wash when you consider fees, closing costs and so on if we were to sell it through an agent. It's called Moving Station, and they buy it straight out and you move in a month. We had no idea a company like this was out there. The sales gal told us about it. Bill has a call into the company to check it out. We could be looking at sending a deposit sooner than we thought. We'll know by next week.

I have continued my rummaging through old boxes of memories from the attic. I needed to do that on my own. I have one box left.

The kids came over last weekend and have taken what they want. Thank God my hip has finally turned a corner and I feel much better. It was kind of fun watching them decide what they wanted to bring to their homes. Even the grandkids took little things they felt

attached to. Billy Jr. took Bill's ship collection. As usual, Bill is more excited than me about this next adventure, but that is Ok. I love to see him smile. I will eventually get on board with all the excitement of moving. It just takes me a little longer.

I forgot to mention in my last email that Bill found that moving company that sounds like the one you used. Apparently its national.

Send those pictures soon. I can't wait to see your new place!

Love,
Marilyn



CHAPTER | 15

Hello Social Life

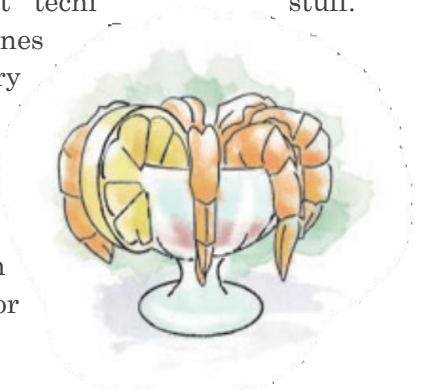
“Strangers are just friends waiting to happen.”

– Unknown

Dear Marilyn,

Attached are the pictures I promised. Crabby Larry, who is not all that crabby after all, has a digital camera and did the honors. He even helped me download them onto my computer. I guess he took a class here at the community on all that “techi” stuff.

I really do love the navy and yellow tones with the white framework. It's very relaxing. My favorite room is the bedroom— so feminine. I'm glad I went with a queen—size bed rather than the king. Skittles and I do not need a bed that large anymore. He seems happy in his new home. The patio makes it easy for me to take him out.



I have been busy, busy, busy. Hardly time to sit down and catch my breath! Last night, 14 of us went to the Chicago symphony. It was so great to get out in the evening. We all rode on communities' bus. I did not realize how “not being able to drive” at night had really put a damper on my social life these past few years. Now I can do anything! The driver for the town car for personal appointments is very nice as well. I have used that service many times now. Driving Miss Daisy!

Next Thursday I'm having a housewarming party. I invited some of my friends from the condo group over to see the new place. The

staff is sending up wine and appetizers for the event. I thought I'd also bake a lemon cake with ice frosting. Housekeeping cleans on Thursday so that's why I picked that day. Not that this place gets very messy. I'm never home! Wish you could come.

Book Club suggested another great book this week: "Boomers In A Millennium World." It's like a handbook for seniors to help us

understand today's lingo and what's hip these days. Apparently, I need to know that saying "get a grip" does not mean the grab bar in the bathroom, and a "Foodie" is someone who loves gourmet food and not a naughty word. It's quite enlightening. I tried a few words on the kids, and they looked at me like a deer in headlights. Oh, if I only could have taken a picture of their faces when I said, "Wanna go hang out in the pub for a brew and chill?"

I was interested to hear about the company that buys houses. What did you decide? So many options these days!

I love you dearly,
June

CHAPTER | 16

One Day at a Time

"If you have the courage to begin, you have the courage to succeed."

– David Viscott

Dear June,

Well, it looks as though we are proceeding forward with the big move! We have decided on selling the house to that company I told you about. It's certainly less hassle and we can move forward faster than waiting for the house to sell. Bill is anxious as all get out to get to there! He says the mountains are calling him. I tease him and call him Captain Von Trapp.

I think the excitement is starting to kick in for me as well. We'll make another trip to finalize everything– I hope the Villa we looked at is still available. Bill talked to the sales gal and she said another couple was looking at it this week, but so far it is still available. So, we are going again this weekend to put down a deposit.

It rained here yesterday, and my hip gave me a little more pain than usual. But all and all, I'm healing up nicely. By the time we move I won't need the walker anymore. Thank God! I'm so tired of dragging it around with me. When I found my bedazzle machine up in the attic, I thought about glitzing up the darn thing...but, I'd rather burn it.

I'm scheduled to meet with our senior moving company after we get back. So happy to have that service. I wonder if they help sort through shoes. Ha. You know I have a million pair. I certainly don't

need to lug them with me.

The pictures you sent of your place are fabulous! I absolutely love the navy and yellow colors you chose. You're right—they look great with the white wood trim. Your bedroom is so you! Crabby Larry took some good shots. Sounds like he found a new friend? Maybe you're just what he needed. Glad Skittles made the move without too much fuss. He's always been an easy-going dog. Or should I say, "He's so chill?" That book of Millennium lingo sounds like a funny read. My grandkids would think it was a hoot if I read it.



My head is spinning thinking of everything that needs to be done. I keep reminding myself to just take one day at a time. No need to fret over change. Everything always has its universal way of working out in the end! Reminds me of that Deepak Chopra quote: "All great changes are preceded by chaos."

Your emails are a special treat to my week.

Marilyn

CHAPTER | 17

No Room for Fear

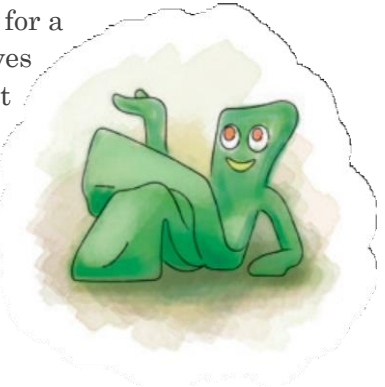
“Learn to say ‘no’ to the good so you can say ‘yes’ to the best.”

– John C. Maxwell

Dear Marilyn,

Your emails are a special treat to my week as well, dear friend! I'm so glad things are working out for you and Bill. You are going to love the change, I promise. Being here is the best thing I could have done for myself! So much to do...and the carefree lifestyle is great! The food is fantastic! Everything is better when you don't have to cook, clean and pay property taxes. We owe it to ourselves to be pampered. Heck, that's why they call them the Golden Years— full of life and fun.

I signed up for the daily, morning yoga class. Don't laugh! I just got back from my first class. My body has not seen that kind of flexibility since gymnastics camp in middle school. It was a real experience. I was able to do the “Tree” pose for a whole three seconds. The rest of the moves made me look like a pretzel. Joan was next to me, she goes every morning and promised me that I will get more flexible each week. Just call me Gumby! I really liked it. I have a painting class at 2 p.m. today as well. I think its watercolor. Maybe they will let me finger paint. We will see how that goes.



Crabby Larry (actually, his name is Larry McDermick), had dinner at our table last night. I may have judged him wrong. He was the Good Humor Man, telling jokes left and right during dinner and all through dessert. He's Irish and has a funny little grin that shows off his dimples. It's so nice to have friends to dine with. It's one of my favorite parts of being here. The conversations are so enjoyable. He is a retired dentist and likes Wheel of Fortune. He has nice teeth. Ha!

I have a quote for you on being anxious and being afraid. Found this one in my Aging Gracefully magazine.

Walter Anderson said: "Nothing diminishes anxiety faster than action."

So, go for it Marilyn! Why not? As you know, life is too short to not have fun and enjoy it! Glad the hip is healing up— can't wait 'till you can dump the walker.

Love,
June
(Gumby)

CHAPTER | 18

Get Out of Your Comfort Zone

“Great things never came from comfort zones.”

– Neil Strauss

Dear June,

You had me in stitches with the yoga ordeal! I can just picture the look on your face, grimacing as you try the moves. Good for you. After I read your email, I looked up yoga on my iPad. This quote came up from Yogi Bhajan and seems appropriate: “The attitude of gratitude is the highest yoga.”

It reminded me of you. You’ve always had a great attitude about life and have been grateful. So even if you can’t do a few of those poses, you have the highest yoga. I love how you just get out there and try new things. It encourages me...not that I will try yoga, but to do things I’ve always wanted to do and been too afraid to try. Like ceramics.

We put a deposit down on the apartment with the marketing director, Tara. We also met with the move in coordinator, Mandy, who helped us with paperwork. I loved your navy and yellow motif and just might be a copycat! The senior moving company will go up there and measure and so forth to see what furniture of ours will fit and where to place it. Then they’ll devise a plan with us.

I told Bill I want to purchase a new dining table – something smaller with leaves if we need it. I also want a new chandelier for over the table. The apartment comes with one, but I want something a bit bigger with crystals. I’m even tossing around the idea of new

living room furniture. It wants something with my new colors in it. The interior decorator I am using has been very helpful. I'm selecting a few pieces of artwork this week he thinks will shape the living room nicely. I think Bill's happy to see me embracing the move.

So glad you are settling in with new friends. Larry sounds like a character. I'm looking forward to dinner with new friends like that. My brain works better when I have stimulating conversations. Even just laughing with others makes me feel good. We could use that.

How did the finger painting go?

Love,
Marilyn



CHAPTER | 19

Celebrate Retirement. Celebrate You!

“Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of.”

– Benjamin Franklin

Dear Marilyn,

I'm thrilled to hear you put down a deposit! And, yes, you must buy some new items for the new place. It's part of the fun. That sofa has been in your house for 15 years. Time for an upgrade! I found four dollars' worth of coins and a doggy treat in mine when the movers came. I'm flattered that you are going with the same color motif. I have added a pop of coral as well.

I tried out the salon here. Janelle was my stylist. She suggested a shorter cut with more poof on the top. I let her go for it. It's a new, sporty look. Even Larry noticed I had it cut. He said I looked nice. Ha. I haven't had a man tell me that in a while. It only takes five minutes to style; perfect for the pool. I love the Tai Chi exercise class here. The instructor is in her 50's and is pushy, but in a good way. Really makes us work!



Carol and Johnny came for dinner last night. It was nice to see them. I made a reservation for them in the dining room with me.

They loved the food— I made them try the gourmet chips for an appetizer, and then Carol had the Fresh Catch of the Day with mango salsa, and Johnny had the Filet with mushroom sauce and garlic mashed potatoes. I was excited to introduce them to some of my new friends. They kept commenting on how refreshed I looked. I didn't know I looked tired in the first place. Probably all this “centering” I am doing in yoga! It's supposed to help you feel at peace. I don't know, but if it shows on my face, I'll take it.

Not much else is new. Just busy having the time of my life. Pretty soon you will be moved in and writing to me from your new home. You and Bill will love it.

Say hello to Bill from me.

Happy moving day...I suspect I won't hear from you for a bit. When your computer is up and running, give me an update!

Take care,
June

CHAPTER | 20

Home Sweet Home

"Lighten up, just enjoy life, smile more, laugh more, and don't get so worked up about things."

– Kenneth Branagh

Dear June,

We are here! Bill is like a little kid. He said he feels like he's at camp. I've been a little slower at joining in things. It's more my speed. The move was seamless except for my shoes. I didn't give up as many as I should have. The local thrift shop will be seeing my face soon. Funny, but now I don't seem to mind getting rid of them.

I feel at home. That's a relief. I did worry a bit that I wouldn't. It just feels right here. We moved in officially Saturday, so we have had a few dinners. Each night we've had different residents ask us to join them at their table for dinner. I really have enjoyed it. Bill and I would eat in front of the TV most nights back home. This is such a social group – lots of laughs at the table. Getting to know the residents will be great fun. Bill went golfing with a group of men, followed by lunch at a restaurant in town. I rested and read a bit. He signed up all by himself and hopped on the bus with Pete and Tom, his new Navy buddies.



The apartment is darling. I love the colors. I attached a few pictures. Too bad you can't send Larry over with his camera – we snapped these with my iPhone! We had a nice welcome basket in our kitchen with treats,

wine and pamphlets on touristy things to do in the area. It was nice. I might open the wine and have a glass with lunch! Ha.

Thanks again for sharing your moving adventure with us. Like I said, it helped me in our move. Change is hard, but worth it. Here's to the Golden Years!

I love this May Sarton quote in a book I'm reading: "Do not deprive me of my age. I have earned it."

With that, I will sign off for now.

I love you dearly,
Marilyn

CHAPTER | 21

Relax and Enjoy

“Life isn’t about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.”

– George Bernard Shaw

Dear Marilyn,

Larry and I are doing more and more together. I really do enjoy his company. A group of us meet in the pub each night before dinner for a cocktail. I never thought I would ever date again.

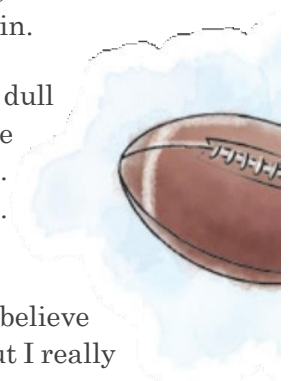
Football season has begun...go Bear’s. Never a dull moment. The gigantic, big–screen TV in the theatre is the hang–out for most of us on Sunday nights. Barbara even bought pom–poms for all of us girls. Touchdowns have become quite entertaining!

My watercolor painting is nearly finished. Can’t believe I did it; not that daisies in a field are all that hard, but I really had no idea i could paint! I decided to hang it in my entry area.

I love the pictures you sent. You’re right, Bill looks happy. So, do you. Your place is gorgeous! The picture of you and Bill playing Bocce Ball is adorable. Your hip must be feeling better! I know what you mean about having dinner with friends– I love it!

I’m so happy for both of us. Look at where we both are– and enjoying our lives!

Love you much! June



CHAPTER | 22

New Adventures Await...

*“Life must be lived, and curiosity kept alive.
One must never, for whatever reason, turn his
back on life.”*

– Eleanor Roosevelt

Dear June,

I'm also happy you and Larry are having fun. Who would have thought?

Ceramics class is a riot. My vase was a bit lopsided, but Bill said that it has character. I told him that he is a character!

Yes, my hip has been doing very well.

Exercising in the pool has helped me tremendously. I try to work out four times a week on my own and then take a class twice. My friend Joy lee is a delight. She has helped me adjust to the move, and we have had a few outings in the town together. We just hop on the community bus and go!



I have been thinking about getting a dog, but we are so busy most days I would feel bad leaving it all alone...do you find that? Bill does not care one way or another – “as long as you’re happy,” he says. Bless his heart. They do offer dog services here. So...maybe?

Send another book suggestion my way. You always find the good ones.

I must cut this short. Bill and I are going on an outing— a boat tour and lunch.

Take care. I will write again this weekend since this was so short. I need to fill you in on the kids.

Miss you!
Marilyn

***PS:** Please mail Bill the spicy, beef jerky he loves from Kroger. I can't seem to find it here.*

CHAPTER | 23

Dancing with the Stars

"It's better to dance than to march through life."

– Yoko Ono

Dear Marilyn,

I promise to send Bill the Chicago Jerky!

Larry and a bunch of my friends and I signed up for ballroom dancing. They will hold it in the ballroom on the third floor on Wednesdays. The kickoff is a huge "Dancing with the NorthStars" event in the ballroom the week before the classes. We are supposed to dress up. What to wear? Help!

I started a new painting. This time, I'm trying my luck with a sunset on the ocean. I took an old picture I snapped when Jimmy and I wintered in Destin years back. Regular Picasso!

Yoga is getting easier. I can hold that "Tree" pose for more than 10 seconds now!

I'm sure your vase is gorgeous. What a fun hobby. Knowing you, nobody could tell it was crooked. You've always been such a perfectionist. If you make one with a crack in it, you can name it after me. You know I've always been a crackpot. Ha.

Nothing new with the kids on this end; they stop by about once a week. That's about all I can squeeze in. They like to have dinner with me, and I enjoy it. They don't seem to worry about me as much

anymore. What a relief!

So glad to hear your hip is back working like new! Nothing like pool therapy to heal up the aches! My friend Barbara goes to a pool for her arthritis and she swears it is a Godsend.

It just thrilled my heart to hear you and Joy lee have become friends. You, my dear, are a wonderful friend. She is blessed!

Take care and see you soon. I will leave you with this quote from William Shakespeare: "A friend is one that knows you as you are, understands where you have been, accepts what you have become, and still, gently allows you to grow."

My love to you and Bill,
June

***PS:** How fortunate are we to be healthy enough to enjoy this time of our lives! I am having a ball...I can tell you and Bill are as well.*



The End

Your Notes

We hope reading June and Marilyn’s golden Adventure inspires you to follow in their footsteps and begin exploring senior living options for the future. Here are a few questions to help you get started.

Feel free to contact us anytime to schedule a visit. We can help you picture what your next chapter might look like at one of our Northstar Senior Living Communities.

List what is important to you in a senior living community:

What does “moving at the right time” look like to you?

Do you fear change, but think trying new things sounds fun? List some things you'd like to try:

List your biggest fears about living in a retirement community:

“My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.”

– Maya Angelou

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