

Human Values in Aging Newsletter – May 1, 2009

AARP Office of Academic Affairs
H.R. Moody, Editor

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LEAVING A LEGACY

I once was sitting in a restaurant with Rabbi Zalman Schachter talking about the search for meaning in old age.

Suddenly Reb Zalman turned to me and said, "You know, this search for meaning all comes down to a simple question: Are you saved?"

Hearing this, I was puzzled and I thought to myself, well, he is a clergyman, is this a theological question? "No," said Reb Zalman, "I don't mean it in a theological sense but in a computer sense.

Are you saved? Have you downloaded your life experience for coming generations? Have you started doing your legacy work?"

For more on the psychology of generativity, look at *OUTLIVING THE SELF*, by John Kotre (Norton, 1996). For details see:

<http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/69/50738/2289/0/T/ghll.html>

For more on the Reb Zalman Legacy Project, visit:

<http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/61/50738/2290/0/T/ghll.html>

GROWING OLD IN HOLLYWOOD

News Flash, this just in: Hollywood doesn't like aging.

The latest example? Brooke Shields, whose career began as a baby model at age 11 months. At the end of this month, she turns 44, and she's not happy about it.

Shields says "I'm proud of my longevity more than anything else" yet says "I wish I had the face I had a decade ago, but I don't."

Shields admits there are movie stars who prevail with age: e.g., Diane Keaton, Glenn Close, both in their sixties. She notes that "When you see certain women that we knew when we were younger, like Angelica Huston and Isabella Rossellini, and they've grown older in the public eye, what you're responding to is their whole life imprinted on them."

(Us Magazine, Apr. 20, 2009)

She's on to something there. Consider the case of Italian postwar film star, Anna Magnani, when a make-up man tried to erase her wrinkles and she is reputed to have said, don't take out a single one: I paid for each of them. For an in-depth examination of the human face as a window into the soul, see James Hillman, **THE FORCE OF CHARACTER AND THE LASTING LIFE:**

"The last years confirm and fulfill character... Aging is no accident. It is necessary to the human condition, intended by the soul."

For excerpts from Hillman's book, visit:

<http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/62/50738/2291/0/T/qhll.html>

GENERATIONS...Again

As some readers know, I'm a skeptic about over-generalizing about cohorts (otherwise known as "generations," as in Greatest Generation, Boomers, etc.) A lot of nonsense has been written on this subject, and much of it boils down to what I call "cohort-alotry:" that is, exaggerated generalizations, bordering on stereotypes, which ignore the conundrum of age, period and cohort, not to mention varieties of ethnicity, class and gender.

Still, we can't get away from talking about generations and occasionally there are insights to be had about this matter.

So consider a recent publication by the authoritative Population Reference Bureau, now available at:

<http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/63/50738/2292/0/T/qhll.pdf>

MAKING AN ELDER CULTURE

"Aging changes consciousness more surely than any narcotic; it does so gradually and organically. It digests the experience of a lifetime and makes us different people - sometimes so different that we are amazed, embarrassed, or even ashamed at the person we once were."

These are words of historian Theodore Roszak from his new book THE MAKING OF AN ELDER CULTURE.

To read an excerpt from the book, visit:

<http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/64/50738/2293/0/T/qhll.html>

LOST GENERATION

Do young people have a gloomy view of the future and of their life after age 50?

For a more hopeful, and paradoxical, answer to that question look at the prize-winning video produced by AARP's "U@50" contest, which gave cash awards to college students who created the best short video depicting life after 50. A big winner was "Lost Generation," now viewed more than 5 million times on YouTube:

<http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/65/50738/2294/0/T/qhll.html>

BOOKS OF INTEREST

TRANSFORMING TALES: How Stories Can Change People, by Rob Parkinson (Jessica Kingsley, 2009).

STILL GOING STRONG: Memoirs, Stories, and Poems About Great Older Women edited by Janet Weinberg (Haworth, 2006).

NO ACT OF LOVE IS EVER WASTED: The Spirituality of Caring for Persons with Dementia, by Jane Marie Thibault and Richard L. Morgan (Upper Room Books, 2009).

WEB SITES TO SEE

MEDITATION. Researchers are finding confirmation that meditation has significant health benefits. For details, visit:

<http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/66/50738/2295/0/T/qhll.html>

AGING AND CREATIVITY. For a new blog devoted to this subject, visit:

<http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/67/50738/2296/0/T/qhll.html>

EARTH DAY AND AGING. Earth Day has just passed (Apr. 22), but issues of environment and aging loom large. For more on this point, and "rogue scholarship on aging," visit:

<http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/68/50738/2297/0/T/qhll.html>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MEMORIAL FOR ELDERHOSTEL FOUNDER. (May 3, 2009, Ventura, CA). David Bianco has organized a memorial service to celebrate the life and legacy of Marty Knowlton, co-founder of Elderhostel. 2:00PM at The Top of the Harbor Room, the Crown Plaza Ventura Beach Hotel, 450 East Harbor Boulevard, Ventura, California. Those who attend the service will be invited to share their stories of Marty. A reception follows.

HISTORY OF AGING: "Who Owns Old Age?" (May 7, 2009, New York, NY). Lecture by Charles Rosenberg, Professor of the History of Science at Harvard, sponsored by the New York Academy of Medicine. 5:30-7 PM, 1216 Fifth Avenue at 103rd Street, New York, NY. For details, visit: <http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/69/50738/2298/0/T/qhll.html>

PURPOSE IN THE SECOND HALF OF LIFE: "Finding Meaning and Purpose in the Second Half of Life" (May 8-9, 2009, Longmont, CO). Weekend workshop with Maureen Dobson, of the Sage-ing Guild, and Rosemary Williams, of the Purpose Project, offering an exploration of opportunities and transitions in midlife. Friday, May 8, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. and Saturday, May 9, 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. For cost, registration and other details, contact Rosemary Williams at rtw@perfx.ne or call (303) 919-7575

JEWISH HEALING: "Midrash and Medicine: Imagining Wholeness" (May 11-13, 2009, Monterey, CA). The Kalsman Institute on Judaism and Health and the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center is sponsoring a conference on healthcare and Jewish healing. Presentations and interactive workshops draw from midrash scholars, health and spiritual care providers, and artists creatively engaged with illness, wholeness, and spirit. For details on registration, contact: Yael Green, Conference Coordinator at (213)765-2666 or visit: <http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/70/50738/2299/0/T/qhll.html>

AGING BOOMERS: "2nd Annual Forum on Boomers and Civic Engagement" (May 12, 2009, White Bear Lake, MN). 8 AM to noon, sponsored by Century College and Vital Aging of Minnesota. Featured speakers include: Lester Strong, CEO of Experience Corps, Washington D.C.; Jim Scheibel, former Mayor, St. Paul and former Director, AmeriCorps and VISTA; as well as CEOs from Minnesota nonprofits. Registration fee is \$10, which includes continental breakfast. To register on-line go to: <http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/53/50738/2300/0/T/qhll.html>

ART AND MEMORY LOSS. (May 13, 2009, Milwaukee, WI). David Greenberger and the Paul Cebal Stage Ensemble will perform "Cherry Blossom Apple Picking Time," musical monologues inspired by Greenberger's conversations with people with memory loss. At the Historic Pabst Theater. This event serves as kick off for a Think Tank event, "How to Radically Transform

Activities in Long Term Care." For tickets visit:

<http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/54/50738/2301/0/T/ghll.html>

For information about the Think Tank and Public Forum visit:

<http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/55/50738/2302/0/T/ghll.html> or call the Center on Age and Community at (414) 229-2740

LECTURE SERIES ON AGEISM sponsored by the Center for Creative Aging (Chicago, IL). 5:30 to 7 PM. May 14, Mary Catherine Bateson, "Ageism and Changing Consciousness;" May 21, John Callaway, "Reflections on Aging and Ageism;" May 28, Lilian Rubin, "60 On Up: The Truth about Aging in America." Room 1115, Harold Washington College, 30 East Lake Street, Chicago, IL. Admission is free. For more information, call (312) 553-6091 or visit them at: <http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/56/50738/2303/0/T/ghll.html>

THE SACRED IN AGING AND ART: "Honoring the Sacredness of Aging through Art" (1:30 PM, May 14, 2009). Webinar briefing by Alicia Fahr, Ph.D., Director of the Living with Dignity Center and sponsored by the National Institute of Senior Centers and the National Interfaith Coalition on Aging.

For registration and participation, visit:

<http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/57/50738/2304/0/T/ghll.html>

MEMOIR WRITING: "LifeLines: A Weekend Writing Retreat"

(May 15-17, 2009, Round Top, TX). Writing our past in the present can be a life line to a future filled with hope, as in this women-only weekend retreat led by Lisa Dale Norton and sponsored by Story Circle. For details and online registration, visit:

<http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/58/50738/2305/0/T/ghll.html>

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT: "Spiritual Development and Realistic Optimism" (May 20, 2009, Boulder, CO). Lecture by Robert Atchley, author of SPIRITUALITY AND AGING (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2009).

Sponsored by Interface at the Mapleton Center, 311 Mapleton Avenue, Flatirons Conference Room, 2nd floor, Boulder Colorado.

Continental Breakfast from 7:30 to 8:45 am. Details available at:

<http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/59/50738/2306/0/T/ghll.html>

SPIRITUALITY OVER THE LIFECOURSE. (June 3-5, 2009, Durham, NC).

The Second Annual Meeting of the Society for Spirituality, Theology and Health is devoted to "Lifecourse Perspectives on Spirituality and Health in Diverse Religious Communities."

At the Washington Duke Inn and Golf Club. Open to the public.

For details and registration, visit:

<http://msg1svc.net/cgofx/173248/60/50738/2307/0/T/ghll.pdf>

MEANING: "Finding Meaning in Later Life" (June 15, 2009, Woden, Australia). Presentation at the Hellenic Club, by Rev. Elizabeth MacKinlay and Ms. Gabrielle Brian.

