



# WOMEN'S CENTER

208-885-6616

Corner of Idaho and Line Streets

Vol. 25, No. 3

November-December 1996

## Reflections on Middle Age

by Susan Palmer

Although I am entirely confident that turning 40 left me unscathed, I confess that it prompted me to ponder the definition of what constitutes "middle age."

I posed several social survey-style questions to the students enrolled in my introductory sociology class. To prevent them from second guessing the purpose of the survey, I threw in one frivolous item—"In the definition of 'middle age,' at what specific age does it begin?" To my surprise, the mode (most frequent response) and median (midpoint) were both thirty-five! I had been middle-aged for five years without knowing it!

One student, in particular, offered the best definition—"Middle age begins whenever your children become teenagers." Although I am uncertain how effective a deterrent to teen pregnancy this insight might be, its veracity has undoubtedly influenced many of my friends to postpone the onset of middle age. Several have timed it so that, by this definition, they reach middle age in their late 40s or early 50s.

Lest the childless believe they can avoid middle age altogether, there are other markers and indicators that middle age is unavoidable. One of those may be anticipating the inevitable family reunion planned for the 50th anniversary celebration of one's parents. More sobering, however, is that for many, middle age arrives prematurely when forced to deal with parental long-term care decisions or funeral arrangements before there is an opportunity to marvel at the achievement of a 50-year union.

The preponderance of "Forty Happens" and "Chronologically Challenged" artifacts suggest we are supposed to loathe growing older. Although I fret about middle-age issues like adequate retirement planning, an appropriate curfew time for our 15-year-old, what cashiers and waiters see when they fail to card me, and a shifting center of gravity; overall I enjoy getting older.

It is a challenge to articulate what is so enjoyable about growing older without sounding maudlin or cliché-like. Yet most middle-aged people I observe are highly self-motivated and productive. Perhaps we've internalized our parents' voices so well that no one needs to tell us any longer what needs to be done. We see it and just do it.

For the most part, there's more gray everywhere. Not just at our temples or beneath our cranium, but in the issues around us. What was once black-and-white and simple is now confounded by our enhanced ability to grasp the complexities—the gray areas.

We also take mortality more seriously. Growing older generally reduces our previous youthful carelessness and irresponsibility. We're less cavalier about how we live. Not that we are afraid of death, just more familiar with its face.

Although I wouldn't give any of those things up for everlasting youth, I don't mind it when people say, "You don't look that old!" Borrowing from Gloria Steinem (in reference, however, to turning 50), I reply, "This is what 40 looks like."

## Auntie Up!

The honorable governor of Idaho issued a mandate for all state institutions of higher education to tighten their belts. Yet things are already so lean the collective response has been, "Please . . . send belts!" The Women's Center is no exception.

Although the Women's Center staff said it is not the season, nor the time, I retorted, "It is never the season, never the time!" I am far more brazen than they, and the truth must be told. The Women's Center needs your help. I intercepted their wish list and dare to publish it here sandwiched between your campaign contributions and holiday savings. I explained to them that supporters like you would find it in the bottom of your pocketbooks to come to their aid. Here is their wish list.

## AUNTIE ESTABLISHMENT

Although I may be revealing more than I should about her identity, this anonymous humor columnist is NOT an employee of the Women's Center. Her popular columns have been on a volunteer basis to-date. The staff believe her talents warrant some token stipend. Think what an honor it would be to boast, "I am an Auntie Establishment supporter!"

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Women's Center regulars would like to see the library enhanced by subscriptions to local newspapers such as the *Moscow-Pullman Daily News*, *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, and *Boomerang*. The timing of this request with the hiring of a new *Daily News* editor is purely coincidental.

## PROGRAMMING

Women's Center programs have been well-received by the community and the media despite the fact that the Women's Center has no budget for its brown-bag lunch programs. Every scheduled special guest has agreed to a one-time, gratis event. However, last year's biggest program—*Entangled Lives*—required considerable panhandling to sponsor. The Women's Center would like to sponsor more programs of that quality and magnitude. Generous donations help.

## REFRIGERATOR

Although the existing refrigerator is a dorm room model, the Center could use a more spacious one. Despite the elbow grease offered to clean it each semester, its distinctive odor refuses to vacate.

## PHOTOCOPY MACHINE

The current copy machine is estimated to be younger than the editor, but older than the work-study employees. You must see it to believe it! A 1980s model would suffice.

Send your contributions to the Women's Center, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho 83844-1064.

—Auntie Up!



## No Rest for the Wicked

Dear Sisters,

I have tried every remedy known to woman to shake my first cold of the Moscow season, but to no avail. I have consumed Linus Pauling-sized doses of Vitamin C, held my head over steaming basins of hot water and Vicks' VapoRub, and drunk mug upon mug of gin, honey, and lemon. My dears, it's true—there is no cure for the common cold. So, I have decided to throw out the honey and lemon, trade the mug for a highball glass, and crack open a bottle of tonic water. Why should a virus have all the fun?

And now, somewhat relaxed, I feel the old familiar desire to rant. (What are they putting in tonic water these days!) My subject? Oh, let's do taxes. We have been bombarded this election season with percentages—one percent initiatives, fifteen percent cuts. What does it all mean? I heard a DJ declare recently that if he were in a town hall debate, he'd ask the presidential candidates to explain why, if you make more money, you should pay more taxes. Ladies, Mr. DJ doesn't need to gain the president's ear; Auntie Establishment is happy to explain progressive taxation using the time-honored apple metaphor. Ethel has an apple. H. Ross has a barrel of apples. A fifteen percent flat tax would leave Ethel with 85% an apple, and H. Ross with enough to make several pies, a few dumplings, and some apple cider. (In fact, H. Ross earns about a million apples a day, but why split hairs?) I don't begrudge H. Ross his feast, but it seems to me that Ethel will clearly feel the greater pinch.

In other news, much has been made of late about Hillary Rodham Clinton's recent trip to Disney World. It seems she rode the *Tower of Terror*—a ride simulating a 13-story drop in a malfunctioning elevator—not once but three times. The pundits wonder what Mrs. Clinton's fondness for the *Tower of Terror* signifies. (A pundit, my dears, is usually a pale, type-A personality who is prominently featured on news analysis shows. See: John McLaughlin.) Come November 7, will she force her husband to revive the omnibus health care bill? Will she fire the rest of the White House travel office? Will she purchase more dubious southern swampland?

Ladies, your auntie will tell you what the *Tower of Terror* signifies: it means that Hillary Clinton has a pulse. (Gasp.) And what's more, I'll go out on a limb here and declare that I believe Elizabeth Dole is also alive and well. I watched her on C-Span last night, working a crowd in Ohio. Now, my politics are three miles to the left of Ralph Nader's, but by the end of her speech, Elizabeth had nearly convinced me to join the DAR. Sisters, in Magic Kingdom terms, Bill and Bob are the teacup ride—their wives, however, are definitely E tickets.

There's an obvious conclusion here, sisters, but I leave that to your own good sense.

To your health,

*Auntie Establishment*  
Auntie Establishment

## Savory Moments with Auntie Pasto

Greetings My Culinary Cousins,

We are only three days into the celebration of Native American Month, and already the first snowfall has blanketed the Palouse. As I recover from my obligatory seasonal cold, I find myself nostalgic for my good friend Ruth Anne and all the good citizens of Cicely, Alaska. The Native Americans there welcomed everyone to join the celebration of the legend of the Raven, who brought sun to the world. Ruth Anne participated by baking this black bread. Her recipe appears in *The Northern Exposure Cookbook, A Community Cookbook from the Heart of the Alaskan Riviera*, by Ellis Weiner, Contemporary Books, Chicago, 1993. To share your family recipes with Auntie Pasto, write to: Auntie Pasto, c/o Women's Center, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho 83844-1064. You can find Auntie Pasto's recipe box on the web. Surf to the UI Women's Center Home Page <<http://www.uidaho.edu/~wcenter/>>.

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### RUTH ANNE'S RAVEN BREAD (MAKES 1 LOAF)

Cornmeal to dust baking sheet	1 large egg, at room temperature
1 cup buttermilk	¼ cup dark molasses
2 teaspoons instant coffee granules	2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1½ cups all-purpose flour	1½ cups rye flour, preferably stone ground
½ tablespoon baking powder	1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt	

Preheat oven to 375°. Lightly grease a baking sheet and dust with cornmeal.

In a large bowl, beat egg with an electric mixer. Add buttermilk, molasses, coffee granules, and vegetable oil one at a time, mixing well after each addition.

Combine flours, baking powder, baking soda, and salt and sift into the liquid mixture. Stir well with a wooden spoon.

Dust hands with flour and knead dough lightly for about 30 seconds, working in all the flour. Form into a ball and then flatten somewhat to create a round loaf that is approximately 8" across. Place on prepared baking sheet.

Lightly dust the top of loaf with flour. Using a very sharp knife that has been dipped in flour, cut a shallow "X" across most of the top. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes, until bread sounds hollow when lightly tapped on bottom.





# BROWN-BAG LUNCH PROGRAMS WOMEN'S CENTER

Free! Public Welcome 12:30 p.m. Women's Center Lounge November-December 1996 885-6616

**NOV 5**  
Tuesday  
**CECILIA'S CIRCLE** This foursome of young women, skilled in the traditions of the Baroque, reveal the rare beauty of the masterworks of women composers along with the more familiar music of the Baroque. JULIE ANDRIJESKI, violin, VIVIAN MONTGOMERY, harpsichord, ANNE MARIE MORGAN, viola da gamba/cello, and JANEY YOUNGDAHL, soprano, explore women in music from medieval times to the jazz era. **This performance-discussion by Cecilia's Circle will be held in the UI Administration Auditorium. Their formal concert will be held the prior evening in the UI Administration Auditorium.**

**NOV 7**  
Thursday  
**LOOK INTO THE 21ST CENTURY WITH PRESIDENT HOOVER** University of Idaho President ROBERT HOOVER wrote, "While no one can predict exactly what the next millennium will bring, it doesn't take a psychic to see dramatic change on the horizon for most of our societal institutions—including education in Idaho (*Lewiston Morning Tribune*, 9-22-96)." Join the president at the Women's Center for a discussion of our visions for the future and how we meet the needs of the diverse populations served by the University of Idaho. Perhaps he will have a post-election analysis to share with us by then. We extend a special invitation to students, community members, faculty, and staff who have not yet met President Hoover.

**NOV 13**  
Wednesday  
**WITH THE NEZ PERCE DURING ALLOTMENT—E. JANE GAY** LOUISE BARBER, Alfred W. Bowers Laboratory of Anthropology, UI, will narrate a slide collection of this extraordinary exhibit. Jane Gay, novice photographer, left a remarkable legacy of the time (1889-1892) she spent in Idaho on the Nez Perce Reservation. Gay traveled to Idaho as a companion to anthropologist Alice Fletcher, a nationally-prominent Indian rights' reformer who had been appointed to allot the Nez Perce Tribe. Allotment (owning property by individual right) was intended to force Indians to convert from their mutually supportive tribal ways into property-owning citizens with equal rights. Gay took more than 400 photographs and wrote 27 lengthy letters telling of their experiences. This program is scheduled to coincide with the conclusion of UI Native American Month (October 16-November 17).

**NOV 19**  
Tuesday  
**COPING STRATEGIES FOR THE HOLIDAYS** Panicked about getting holiday letters or cards out on time? Anxious about the arrival of relatives and in-laws? Unable to stretch your dollars to make your loved ones' holiday wishes come true? Having trouble maintaining the holiday spirit? CAROLYN WYATT, Counselor, joins us to share stress management techniques and coping strategies for the holidays. This special program is provided by the State of Idaho Employee Assistance Program.

**NOV 20**  
Wednesday  
**WOMEN'S CENTER TRADITIONAL THANKSGIVING POTLUCK** We provide the turkey! You provide your favorite Thanksgiving dish. This eighteen-year-old mouth-watering tradition is not to be missed! Join the Women's Center staff and supporters again this year to celebrate the season and companionship. Come by about noon. There is usually still food on the table well into the afternoon.

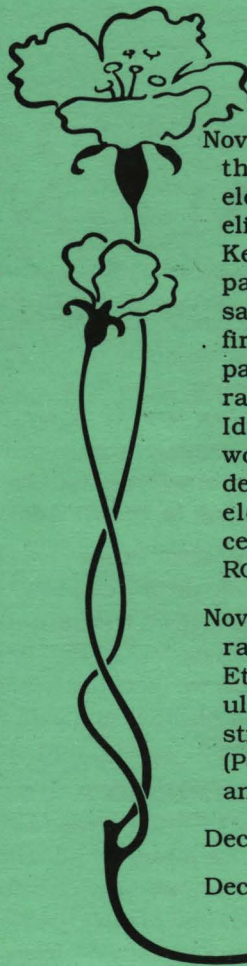
**DEC 3**  
Tuesday  
**LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS—ONE WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE** JULIE was infected with HIV during a blood transfusion several years ago, only to learn about it much later. The spouse of a minister, mother of three children, and sister to a brother who also lives with AIDS, Julie offers her unique perspective on living with HIV/AIDS. Although she breaks the stereotypes, Julie is an advocate of the position that it doesn't matter how you get it. This program is for everyone, whether touched by HIV/AIDS or not. Julie joins us at the Women's Center as part of AIDS Awareness Week. She participates in a speakers' bureau collaboratively sponsored by the Spokane County Health District and the Spokane AIDS Network.

**DEC 4**  
Wednesday  
**HOLIDAY ART FAIR [10:00 A.M.—3:00 P.M.]** By popular demand, most of last year's area women artists are returning to the Women's Center Holiday Art Fair and we've added a few more! Make headway on your gift-giving list at this festive event. View the expressions and creations of local female artists such as REBECCA ROD, LINDA CANARY, JENNIFER ROD, AMY WILSON, GWEN SNOW, AND GERRI SAYLER. **If you are an artist who would like to participate, call the Women's Center to see if we can arrange to include you. Space is limited.**

**DEC 11**  
Wednesday  
**AUNTIE PASTO'S HOLIDAY COOKIE RECIPE EXCHANGE** AUNTIE PASTO will make a cameo appearance accompanied by her favorite holiday treat at this tasty event. Merely bring a sample of your cookies (1-3 dozen or so) for others to taste, and an ample number of photocopies of your favorite holiday cookie recipe. Unlike most exchanges, participants leave with only your recipe (not your cookies) and their palates wanting more. Arrive with one recipe, leave with a handful!



**THE WOMEN'S CENTER NEWSLETTER** is published six times during the academic year. It includes announcements and information about the many services and programs offered by the Center to the University and regional communities. There are also items of general interest about women's and men's issues. If you have announcements or information to include in subsequent issues, please let us know. Suggestions for changes, improvements, or additional items are always welcome. Disability access is on the north end of the building through the TAAC. A taped copy of the newsletter is available on request for the visually impaired.



November 5—ELECTION DAY. Over the last three presidential elections, only 52.5% of women eligible to vote from the state of Kentucky actually voted, compared to 76% in Utah over the same period of time. Utah ranks first in the country for women's participation in voting. Kentucky ranks 50th. In both Utah and Idaho, the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote in presidential elections is celebrated this election year! Idaho women, celebrate a century of suffrage—ROCK THE VOTE!

November 5—CAMPUS FORUM on the ramifications of introducing Ethnic Studies to the UI curriculum will take place in the Administration Auditorium at 7:00 p.m. (Periodic election updates will be announced during the forum.)

December 1—AIDS AWARENESS DAY.

December 21—WINTER SOLSTICE.

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**University of Idaho**

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