

**SENIOR MOMENTS**  
By *jean cherni* Column for 01/16/2010

**AGING SHOULD BE A CONTINUING ADVENTURE**

I was both fascinated and somewhat envious as I read a recent New York Times article about people who view old age as a never ending adventure. Pictured balancing on the wings of a small, prop plane with only a few wires to hold him in place, Tom Lackey age 89, is shown wing walking. Tom took up this dare-devil activity to help relieve the grief of losing his wife. He has wing walked across the English Channel and hopes to soon be the first person of any age to wing walk “across the pond”, both ways. Also pictured was Ilse Telesmanich 84, riding a camel in Australia and I must admit, she looked a lot more secure and comfortable than I did when I tried the same feat during a trip to Morocco. Elderhostel has now changed its’ name to Exploritas to reflect the idea that the urge to explore, to see and experience the unusual, the totally out of the ordinary, has no age limitations. John Weinstein of Adler Travel in Hamden informs me that he now offers an even more extensive selection of trips especially designed for senior travelers and the demand for them increases each year. Incidentally, Mrs. Telesmanich, now 90, sprained her ankle on her last trip but still plans to hike in South Africa this summer. Rescue experts feel older people may be safer in many activities than their younger counterparts because seniors are more prepared, know what their limits are and aren’t as prone to show off or act foolishly. My feeling on the matter is that I’m just as likely to take a fall here in Branford as I am while sightseeing in Turkey and if I should fall while visiting the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, at least I will

have that memory to savor during recuperation. Unfortunately, the cost of trip cancellation and evacuation insurance (both advisable) is much more expensive as we age.

Of course, “ageless explorers” aren’t necessarily just those who love to travel. Men and women who are life-long learners, always taking up challenges such as learning to paint, to become an expert at bridge or yoga, learning a new language or returning to school---- these folks are living their “bonus years” to the fullest. Your local school district offers many stimulating classes through the Adult Education programs and for a wonderful variety of short term classes held during the day, be sure to look into The Institute for Learning in Retirement. (Phone 1-800220-0458 for information). The current AARP Bulletin features a long list of free online sites where you can take classes or listen to famous lecturers. I tried the web site “Open culture” and found I could download lessons for 37 different languages, 250 free courses on anything from Archeology and Art History to the Politics of Food (is broccoli Democratic or Republican fare?) Two other intriguing web sites are Videolectures.Net and Wonder HowTo. Other seniors have found self-fulfillment through meaningful volunteer work. For help in matching your skills to volunteer opportunities go to [www.volunteermatch.org/](http://www.volunteermatch.org/).

The start of a new decade is a good time to re-assess what you want from life and what makes you really happy. Do not let others discourage you... you know your own talents and capabilities and what makes life exciting for you. Standing still is more dangerous than daring to move ahead. Be open to new possibilities... take a risk... try something new.... take the road less traveled!

