

**GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT**



**Dear colleagues and friends - Greetings**

Since my last letter we have experienced severe riots in London and other major cities causing deep concern among those of us who care for society and by no means least, the youth of the UK.

Now the courts of Britain daily attempt to bring justice to those who have offended the law whether due to wanton damage to property, common assault or behavioural problems often related to alcohol, drug abuse and previous criminal activity.

The question has to be asked to what extent do we 'oldies' accept any responsibility for the above behaviour, for the problems of society today? After all we were involved with young people throughout our working lives with the YMCA one of the largest youth movements nationally and internationally. We talk with some pride of the times we helped 'Johnny' or 'Jeanie' to take a different path from that of a violent nature for either him/herself or to others.

Certainly raised by 'offenders' in courts were such words as, "Well you know what it's like I got caught up with the crowd" – "I became somebody else for it is not my nature to break shop windows and loot the shops of their goods" etc.etc. You know it might well have been the 'Johnny's' of our experience or perhaps their parents or grandparents.

Occasionally when reading of the offences and personalising the 'culprits' in court a saying keeps buzzing through my head, "How can I believe what you are saying when what you are is drumming in my ears?" Out of the confusion of those words we can but say "I did my best", "I trusted in God", "I prayed with or for Johnny at the time", even with honesty, "There but for the grace of God go I"

Recently by contrast with the above I read from cover to cover Jim Thomson's research 'papers' now published under the title,

**"The work of the YMCA National Movements and the World Alliance of YMCAs with refugees and rehabilitation 1945 -1995"**

and marvelled that I completed my YMCA service of

some 44 years without being fully aware of the amazing work of my/our colleagues before who worked for the YMCA in the meanest of circumstances during those years of war and post war. They gave of their service over and above the call of duty in circumstances beyond my ken. Not only does Jim share factual figures from the YMCA Archives in Geneva but speaks with personal knowledge of many colleagues and their outstanding service work among refugees and displaced persons. Here I draw your attention to how you can obtain a copy of Jim's Research Document elsewhere in this Newsletter.

In closing I share with you a sobering thought. One of our older colleagues has asked me with sincerity to read a lesson at his funeral service, there is an 'order of service'. What a privilege! He shares that his Priest will advise me at the appropriate time.

It is time for me to wish you all seasonal greetings and a long and happy life.

**Jim Lamb**

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The European Commission has just announced an agreement whereby English will be the official language of the EU rather than German which was the other possibility.

As part of the negotiations, Her Majesty's Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a five year phase-in plan that would be known as "Euro-English".

In the first year, "s" will replace the soft "c". Certainly, this will make the sivil servants jump with joy. The hard "c" will be dropped in favour of the "k". This should klear up konfursion and keyboards can have 1 less letter.

There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the sekond year, when the troublesome "ph" will be replaced with "f". This will make words like "fotograf" 20% shorter.

In the 3rd year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling can be ekspekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Governments will enkorage the removal of double letters, which have always ben a deterrent to akurate speling. Also, al wil agre that the horrible mes of the silent "e"s in the language is disgraseful, and they should go away.

By the fourth year, peopl wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing "th" with "z" and "w" with "v". During ze fifz year, ze unesesary "o" kan be dropt from vords kontaining "ou" and similar changes vud of kors be aplid to ozer kombinations of letters.

After zis fifz yer, ve vil hav a reli sensibl riten styl. Zer vil be no mor trubl or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi to understand ech ozer. Ze drem vil finali kum tru! And zen world!

Hi David,  
Good old Dick Martin gave me a crash course in basketball refereeing just before Gaye and I went to YMCA Gaza, to develop the refugees camp youth programme.

Straight off the plane Gaye and I were welcomed thus: "This is Mr Neil and Mrs Gaye" (Gaye and I still address each other like that!)

"Mr Neil has come to teach us Basketball and Mrs Gaye what do you think you can do for us?" (What a question! How to make someone feel welcome!)  
Mr Neil we have assembled our team who played at Casablanca in 1968 would you like to referee for us?

Neil, "Oh I hardly think you want me to referee. I'm sure I'm not up to your standard"  
BIG mistake. In Gaza if you can change a light bulb you are a qualified electrician. From that moment on my basketball sessions were doomed. After 30 seconds play I realised the standard of the Casablanca team was so low I could have refereed it without Dick Martin's help. Elsewhere Gaye and I did a lot for Gaza basketball and raised the average score per game from scores like 8 each to the low 40s. Not good but better.  
I never went to see Dick to tell him that tale and now I never will. But ironically I quoted his wise words only yesterday, (18-8-11) at an inter county golf match where I played, before I read of his death,

Gaye and I have been married for 40 years on August 27th. We have been celebrating all year!!  
From **Neil (Sjoberg)**

Hi David,  
Thought I would let you know that I am grateful to receive the bi-monthly newsletters from the Y's Retired of UK.

This has provided me with great opportunities to keep in contact with many of my YMCA friends.

Having worked in Scotland for some years with the 'Y', it has been a wonderful experience attending the Scottish Y's. Retired meetings which are held twice a year.

Doreen and I are celebrating our Golden Wedding Anniversary on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2011. Still keeping fit and well to enjoy the planned celebrations.

Best wishes to you and all in the Y's retired.

**Bob (McConkey)**

Thanks David for the newsletter. Will read it soon, we are in Mallorca at Soller at the moment the boat is now running brilliantly and we have been anchoring all the time as mooring fees in marinas are very high, 58 euros a night for our small boat.  
The weather is brilliant and settled and we are swimming a lot as that is the coolest way to enjoy ourselves in the heat of the day.  
Will be in touch when we return in mid September

**Phil & Ann (Heath)**



Hi David and Sue

I'm very involved with Bath Churches Together, currently Executive Secretary - a fancy title of my predecessor who didn't want people to confuse him with an office clerk!!

We have become an active network of Churches and Christians, linked closely with other networks..... my main platform at the moment is that of Christians sharing their faith through worship, service and witness..... Note Christians!

We're finding that members of the 69 Bath church congregations respond to a greater degree when they feel that we are addressing them direct and not through some institutional structure. I could go on forever!!

Many thanks for all your work for Y's retired... I'm not very active at meeting with retired colleagues but appreciate the Newsletter.

Perhaps you can put me in touch with Brian Barratt re the plaque in London... When Paternoster Square was demolished (late 80's) the plaque was rescued and eventually replaced near to the original site. The re-positioning of the plaque was recognised when we added a temporary plaque celebrating the 150th anniversary in 1994. I hope Brian has discovered the new site...

Love to all  
**David (Pendle)**

Dear David,

Thanks for copying me into to the newsletter. I have noted the comments regarding the plaque in Paternoster Square - when I get back from holiday I will go and have a look and see what we might be able to do!

Hope you are well.

**Ian (Green – National Secretary)**



Dear David,

By the time the next Newsletter is in circulation I will have spent 25 days, or thereabout in hospital recuperating after a operation to remove my bladder.

May I thank all colleagues and friends who have kindly kept me in their prayers over recent months. It has meant so much to Rosamund and myself to know that you are near

All our love to all – **Roy (Weaver)**



It will be nice to catch up with all the news of the retirees, with whom, sadly, I am out of touch, apart from Tony and Jenny Miles whom we meet twice a year or so. I'll be 75 next February and enjoying life.

I had a successful back operation two years ago, and now arthritis is slowly making its presence felt, but apart from that both my wife and I are in reasonably good nick. We still travel a fair bit, visiting India every year during the winter.

Our eldest son has gone past 40. Our daughter is living precariously in the financial world but as an ex-army officer, enjoying the challenge. She and her husband and daughter live in Andover.

Our youngest works for the NHS in Camden and is relatively secure in his job - a good thing as he has two young children and wife to support!

What news from your end? Are you truly and fully retired? It is hard to believe that this young man from Barnard Castle, fresh-faced, soft spoken, barely 25 years old and introducing Annie Lenox's song to the YMCA College students, is retired! Our love and best wishes to you and Sue.

**Chandu (Christian)**

26<sup>th</sup> August 2011

Dear Brian,

Thank you for your letter of 19<sup>th</sup> August – I hope you are well?

I did pick up concerns regarding the plaque in Paternoster Square from the recent newsletter of Y's Retired and promised David that I would make some enquiries.

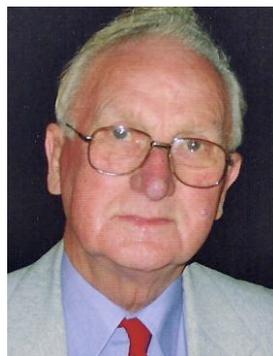
You are quite correct that the original plaque was in a sorry state of repair and following the renovation of Paternoster Square some fifteen years ago was removed.

However, I am pleased to say that following discussions with the owners of the buildings a new plaque was erected and unveiled by The Archbishop of York at the conclusion of the service to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Alliance of YMCAs held in 2005. To set my own mind at rest I have just popped down the road and can confirm that the new plaque is in fine fettle! I will ensure that an annual inspection is carried out although I don't anticipate any work being required for a number of years yet.

Thank you for bringing this to my attention – I have copied David Smith into this letter for his information.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely - **Ian Green**  
Chief Executive



When in 1976 the Board of Management of the Nottingham YMCA appointed Bill Bates as the Association's Programme and membership Secretary, they were not to know at that time what a great asset he would prove to be to the YMCA. Bill quickly identified himself with those involved in the various range of established activities and

demonstrated his natural ability to get alongside people. Multi-gyms are now numerous in the city centre and suburbs. Shortly after Bill's arrival 35 years ago, the YMCA was the first to install this new style fitness facility. Bill was quick to see the potential for those concerned for bodily fitness and grasp the opportunity to promote this new activity. People came from the city and those living in the suburbs and membership quickly increased to 1000 plus.

Bill's enthusiasm for people then led him to launch the 55 Club, a meeting place for both genders who at the age of 55 or over had been made redundant with little chance of finding new employment.

The response from the public was very positive. A committee was quickly formed and with Bill's guidance and advice the 55 Club became one of the YMCA's major weekly events.

One of the aspects of Bill's character was that he would put his heart and soul into anything he undertook. This became apparent when in the early 80's with the support of Mencap, he brought into being the YMCA Gateway Club, which would prove to be his crowning achievement. The need for such a club in central Nottingham was greatly appreciated by its members who enjoyed a wide range of activities including outings and active participation in Christmas carol services. Such was Bill's enthusiasm to provide the very best for the Gateway club membership that Doreen (Bill's wife) of 272, Wollaton Vale, Nottingham, NG8 2GP, and his son Keith and Keith's family became actively involved.

Bill possessed a God given gift to value people regardless of their age, colour or social status and he touched the lives of many people. I feel greatly privileged to have worked with Bill and I shall greatly honour the memory of a splendid man. Bill passed away on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2011 from – **Arthur (Bennett)**

You may well have received an expression of sincere thanks and appreciation for your donation towards the £20k cost of the YMCA Memorial. Through the support received from many individuals, local associations and trusts, it is pleasing to report we have almost reached our target. The order has been placed with a highly regarded firm of stone carvers and will be sited early Summer next year (2012)

Many thanks – **Sam (Johnston)**

## I remember when?

### What I Want In A Man!

Original List: age (20 something)

1. Handsome
2. Charming
3. Financially successful
4. A caring listener
5. Witty
6. In good shape
7. Dresses with style
8. Appreciates finer things
9. Full of thoughtful surprises

### What I Want in a Man, Revised List (age 32)

1. Nice looking
2. Opens car doors, holds chairs
3. Has enough money for a nice dinner
4. Listens more than talks
5. Laughs at my jokes
6. Carries bags of groceries with ease
7. Owns at least one tie
8. Appreciates a good home-cooked meal
9. Remembers birthdays and anniversaries

### What I Want in a Man, Revised List (age 42)

1. Not too ugly
2. Doesn't drive off until I'm in the car
3. Works steady - splurges on dinner out occasionally
4. Nods head when I'm talking
5. Usually remembers punch lines of jokes
6. Is in good enough shape to rearrange the furniture
7. Wears a shirt that covers his stomach
8. Knows not to buy champagne with screw-top lids
9. Remembers to put the toilet seat down
10. Shaves most weekends

### What I Want in a Man, Revised List (age 52)

1. Keeps hair in nose and ears trimmed
2. Doesn't belch or scratch in public
3. Can tow a RV or drive a Motor Home
4. Can cook a BBQ
5. Doesn't re-tell the same joke too many times
6. Appreciates a good TV dinner
7. Helps with the housework

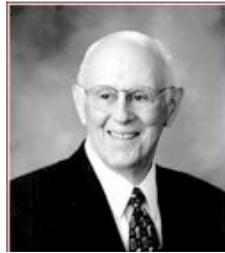
### What I Want in a Man, Revised List (age 62)

1. Doesn't scare small children
2. Remembers where I have put things
3. Can still tow a van without causing chaos on the road
4. Only snores lightly when asleep
5. Remembers why he's laughing
6. Is in good enough shape to stand up by himself
7. Usually wears some clothes
8. Doesn't notice my facial hair and wrinkles
9. Remembers where he left his teeth
10. Stops trying to tell jokes

### What I Want in a Man, Revised List (age 72)

1. Breathing.
2. Doesn't miss the toilet.
3. Remembers where we both live.

## JOHN O'MELIA



**“John has been a giant in the YMCA international arena, he will be tremendously missed” So wrote WFYR President Jerry Prado Shaw informing of the death of John O'Melia on Aug 25<sup>th</sup> 2011**

We members of the Y's Retired have strong reasons to be grateful for John's commitment to purpose, wise counsel and friendship. Back in 1983/84, the late Geoffrey Peters and I became involved in protracted correspondence with John in connection with his vision of a world wide body of YMCA retirees, initially in affiliation with the North American body NAFYR. After many exchanges, a draft Constitution was formulated and again thanks largely to John's initiatives, a conference held in Canada in 1994 led to the foundation of the World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees. The event involved representative of the then known six national organisations of YMCA retirees, of which Y's Retired of the UK was one. Throughout this process and subsequent triennial reunions held in USA in '97, 03 and 06 affiliates have greatly increased. I have had reason to greatly value John's encouragement, guidance and above all his friendship.

Inter alia, John engaged in protracted studies and consultations on the thorny issue of secured retirement benefit in cases where national movements make no such provision. Although so far unresolved, ongoing studies on the difficult issues owe much to John's initial actions in the matter.

The Movement of YMCAs and retirees in particular have cause to be thankful for the life and witness of John O'Melia. **Reg (Wake )**

## RESEARCH DOCUMENT COMPLETED



**I have now completed the researched and very informative document recording the history of :-  
“The work of the YMCA National Movements and the World Alliance of YMCAs with refugees and rehabilitation 1945 -1995”**

If you are interested in purchasing a copy, I would do a print re-run, but very regrettably have to make a small charge of £10 for each copy required and the postage. I am happy to do this and since printing only takes two or three days, I can see how the numbers shape up and act accordingly.

I would be grateful if you would place any orders by using my email address [jcbthomson@aol.com](mailto:jcbthomson@aol.com) I am away in Thailand till late October after which I will be in contact with any potential customers.

Kind regards - **Jim (Thomson)**

## YMCA CLASS 1960-61 HAPPY REUNIONS

The YMCA class of 1960-61 have had many happy Reunions at Arnside Cumbria and decided to donate a bench seat to the Arnside Parish Council. With the inscription:



YMCA CLASS 1960-61 - HAPPY REUNIONS  
(excellent reflection of the photographer - Ed)

The handing over ceremony was attended by Mr David Willacy Chairman of the Arnside Parish Council, Paul Harper cut the ribbon, and we drank a toast, remembering especially "Absent Friends" who couldn't be with us for whatever reason.



It is our hope that many visitors to Arnside will sit on the seat and enjoy the beautiful view across the River Kent estuary. The bench is situated near to the toilet block, along the Promenade, opposite the 'Fighting Cocks' pub. So if you visit this part of the world please feel free to sit on the seat!!



### Paul (Harper)

(pictured above from left to right are standing Peter Brookes, sitting Ted Milburn, Paul Harper, Barbara Kent and Freda Scott.)

## JOHN KNOX in SAN DIEGO - WFYR



I got back to Scotland after the WFYR meeting on Tuesday. In brief it was a very successful, useful and hardworking meeting in San Diego. A few points I would like to mention at this stage:

1. Area reports: This provided useful information from all areas. The Europe presentation went well and considerable interest has been expressed in the European Youth Festival in Prague and the Golden Ticket idea was welcomed. I shall make sure that the WFYR group are kept informed of developments should they not keep in touch through the Festival web page. When I gave the presentation the suggestion was made that a meeting of the WFYR might piggy-back off Prague in 2013 but my feeling is that as the next World Council meeting is in 2014, that is not likely, but that's a personal opinion. No decision regarding our next meeting has been made.

2. Secours Speciaux: We had a good session considering the Secours Speciaux programme led by Bonnie Mairs who sends her greetings to Reg. I can let you have more information regarding this if you wish but Reg will be well informed regarding this fund.

3. Global retirement initiative: There was also a lengthy and thoughtful debate regarding the possibility of establishing some global retirement initiative for those in countries who retire with no pension provision due to the situation in those countries. This is not an easy one and has been debated with World Alliance officers over many years but without any positive results due to a variety of issues. WFYR is having another careful look at this and again more information will be available as the debate continues.

The WFYR meeting piggy-backed on the meeting of American Y's Retired with 200 attendees. With them too, word was spread among some of the Prague Youth Festival, so who knows!

Quite a few mentioned David and his much appreciated contribution at the Hong Kong Conference last year - greetings from many David.

### John's full report attached as a separate report emailed to all Members

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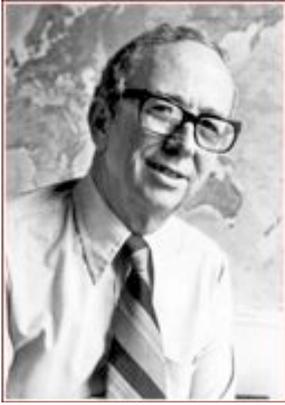
Two elderly gentlemen from a retirement centre were sitting on a bench under a tree when one turns to the other and says: 'Slim, I'm 83 years old now and I'm just full of aches and pains. I know you're about my age. How do you feel?'

Slim says, 'I feel just like a newborn baby.'

'Really!? Like a newborn baby!?'

'Yep. No hair, no teeth, and I think I just wet my pants.'

# Obituary of Harry A. Brunger



## A Man Of And For The People Of The World

The Reverend Harry Albert Brunger, whose ministry literally stretched around the world, died August 15, 2011 at Pilgrim Place in Claremont, California where he had been a resident since 1992. He was 91 years of age.

A native of the Midwest, he was born on November 10, 1919 to Clifford and Ethel Brunger in Grand Ledge, Michigan, one of five children.

He graduated in 1943 from Michigan State University where he met his wife to be, Grace Nahstoll. He continued his education with a Master of Divinity degree from Yale Divinity School in 1946 and was ordained by the Presbytery of Connecticut Valley. He and his then young family continued living in New Haven, CT where he served as Assistant Minister at the United Church-on-the-Green.

Having become involved with the YMCA in his youth through the Hi-Y, he continued his interest in the YMCA and was recruited by the International Committee of the YMCAs of Canada and the USA to work with the youth in Canton (now Guangzhou) China in 1947. Two of those years China was under Nationalist rule and the third year under the People's Republic. Because of the turmoil in China during those days he was seconded by the YMCA World Service program in 1950 to the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong. There, his focus was on work with refugee youth. He additionally became Chairman of the Mencius Foundation facilitating educational opportunities and services for Chinese youth and the creation of the interdenominational and international Chung Chi College which has now merged with other universities and is known as the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

In 1961 The Brungers were transferred to the Middle East. Following a year of Arabic study in the British Foreign Service Middle East Study Centre, his YMCA work once again focused on refugee youth, this time with Palestinians. During these tumultuous years in Beirut he also was liaison with the YMCAs in Egypt, Greece and Turkey.

In 1975 the Brungers moved to Morningside Gardens in New York City when he became Executive Director, YMCA of the USA, World Service Education and Income Production. In 1980 he became head of International Relations for the YMCA relating to programs in China and the Middle East. In 1985 he was appointed permanent Representative of the World Alliance of YMCAs to the United Nations Economic and Social Affairs Council. During these years he also represented the International YMCA at the National Council of Churches and Church World Service; served on the board of Christianity and Crisis magazine and on the Advisory Committee of Legacy International; was active in Riverside Church, the Presbytery of New York, the Yale Club, Rotary International etc.

Upon retirement In 1985 he was greatly honored for his many years of work with the YMCA by being inducted into the YMCA Hall of Fame. Though retired, he continued his involvement with the YMCA becoming an important link between the YMCA of the USA and the YMCA of China and leading many YMCA delegations to China.

In 1992 he and his wife retired to Pilgrim Place in Claremont, California where they continued to be involved in their community. Rev. Brunger served for many years on the Board of the Inland Valley Council of Churches (now renamed "Inland Valley Hope Partners") where he received its Ecumenical Social Justice award. He was active in the Claremont Presbyterian Church, serving on many Commissions. He was involved in the formative days of Progressive Christians United and a longtime Board member of the area UNA/USA. His work with youth continued through his mentoring of International Students at the Claremont Colleges. At Pilgrim Place he spurred the efforts for the building of the Aquatic Fitness and Exercise Center, served on the Admissions, Ethical Investments, Napier Center and other committees. He was especially known as the "Coffee and Donut King" for running that booth at the annual Pilgrim Place Festival for many years.

Following the death of his wife, Grace, in 1996, the Rev. Brunger and fellow Pilgrim Marilyn Farnham Isler, formerly of Rowayton, CT and with a professional YWCA background, were married in 1998.

In addition to his wife, Marilyn Isler Brunger of Claremont, the Rev. Brunger is survived by his sister, Alice Bouknight of Savannah, Georgia and a brother, Clarence Brunger of Grand Ledge, Michigan. He is also survived by his sons and daughters-in-law, Scott and Ann Brunger of Maryville, Tennessee and William and Melinda Brunger of Houston, Texas; and by his daughter and son-in-law, Muriel Brunger and James Gerkin of Skokie, Illinois. There are also his grandchildren: Matthew and wife Carrie Brunger of Knoxville, Tennessee, Joel Brunger of Hilo, Hawaii, Christopher Brunger of Houston, Texas, Jonathan and wife Carrie Brunger and great-grandsons, Gabriel and Isaac of Missoula, Montana. The Rev. Brunger also leaves his step-family: Peter Isler and Miriam Torres of San Diego and Peter's daughters Marly and Megan of LaJolla; Jennifer Isler Kaul and Timothy Kaul and daughter, Mackenzie of Anthem, Arizona; daughter-in-law, Jean Buffham Isler of Stamford, Connecticut.

He was predeceased by his son, Harry Edward "Ted" Brunger; by his brothers, Ronald and Earl Brunger and by his stepson, Stephen Kirk Isler.

Memorial services for the Rev. Brunger was on Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2011 at 3pm at Claremont Presbyterian Church, 1111 N. Mountain Ave. in Claremont, CA.

Memorial contributions in honour of the Rev. Brunger may be made to : YMCA of the USA-World Service, Attn: Mary Tikalsky, 101 N. Wacker Dr., 16th Floor, Chicago, Illinois 60606; to Pilgrim Place-Napier Center, 625 Mayflower Road, Claremont, CA 91711 or to Claremont Presbyterian Church-Mission Commission, 111 N. Mountain Ave, Claremont, CA 91711.

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After being married for 44 years, I took a careful look at my wife one day and said, "honey, 44 years ago we had a cheap apartment, a cheap car, slept on a sofa bed and watched a 10-inch black and white TV, but I got to sleep every night with a hot 25-year-old gal.

Now I have a £500,000.00 home, a £45,000.00 car, nice big bed and plasma screen TV, but I'm sleeping with a 65-year-old woman. It seems to me that you're not holding up your side of things."

My wife is a very reasonable woman. She told me to go out and find a hot 25-year-old gal, and she would make sure that I would once again be living in a cheap apartment, driving a cheap car, sleeping on a sofa bed and watching a 10-inch black and white TV. Aren't older women great, they really know how to solve **your mid-life crisis!**