Book Review

AGING IN COMMUNITY
Janice M. Blanchard, Editor;
Bolton Anthony, General Editor   Chapel Hill NC: Second Journey Publications, 2013

As a member of the Second Journey board, I am especially proud of this commissioned book on *Aging in Community*. Many of the articles are accessible on the Internet in the special issue of *Itineraries* (Fall, 2012), the e-newsmagazine of secondjourney.org.

Aging with spirit can be an exciting journey if we broaden our vision to seek innovative ways to foster aging in community. It is time for us to embrace our interdependence – to move past the North American focus on independence.

The dreams of older adults for a good old age call out for change beyond the two modern established paths: old age in an institution or aging in place (often isolated, without support). Austerity budgets everywhere and humankind's threatened relationship with the earth add to the emerging cry for new alternatives. Charting a third way, this *Aging in Community* collection of 40 brief essays, poems and paintings offers an excellent resource to promote reflection, group conversation, and action.

Older adults are seeking community for their aging years. Bolton Anthony (General Editor) identifies some of our spiritual longings: to rediscover ourselves and live more authentically, to live simply, to reconnect with nature, to age with community. Bill Thomas and editor Janice Blanchard list values for an aging community: inclusive, sustainable, healthy, accessible, interdependent, and engaged. Wrapping up the book, Blanchard shows the parallels between these values and the baby boomers' Woodstock era values – communitarianism, egalitarianism, environmental responsibility, integration of body, mind and spirit, and social activism. The time is now for some aging boomers (perhaps many) to reach again for these values.

This book engages us with many stories of creating and living within intentional communities, intended to foster healthy and interdependent aging. The book is threaded with wisdom gained from experience with highly varied approaches to creating community for older adults – some involving innovative cohousing designs, many involving principles for building social architecture. Particularly appealing to me are the various strategies for time banking (e.g., Senior Time Units) to keep track of giving and receiving services, for community work days, and for increasing neighbourliness among generations.

The Village Model, now expanding across America from the first Beacon Hill Village, offers these hallmark characteristics: self-governing; consolidate/coordinate services for members; create strategic partnerships with community agencies to avoid duplication of services; serve persons' individual needs; promote volunteerism, civic engagement and intergenerational connections. These 'not-so-big' communities create their own social support system to fill their specific needs, always incorporating the great strengths and spirits of their members.