

HEALTH



How I Find Balance

D. Larraine Andrews, 61, sole tax practitioner, High River, Alta.

NOW I'M MORE OR LESS RETIRED, BUT BACK IN 1999, after working for KPMG for years, and before that for some smaller firms, I went out on my own to work toward my other goals of writing and travelling. I've always been a writer — I freelanced for magazines and newspapers when I worked full time.

When I started out on my own, I built a nice little base of clients and tried to get year-ends that were spread through the year. I also worked on contract for a smaller accounting firm during personal tax season, which was a nice boost. I worked really long, hard hours, but I could plan my year out for travel. And I was still writing. I've written two guidebooks: one to the Cowboy Trail in Alberta, and this latest one, *Great Walks of the World*, which covers six continents — everything except Antarctica. If I'd continued working at a big firm, I could have made much more money, but I made a conscious decision to walk away from that. My colleagues are always saying, "Boy, you're so lucky you can travel," but there was a cost involved in making those decisions.

It didn't just sort of happen — I planned for it. I knew what I was giving up, but I also knew what I was hoping to get: time to write, travel and feed my endless curiosity about the wonders of the world. — *As told to Wendy Haaf*

STRESS-BUSTING TIP OF THE MONTH

Grab the saltshaker

LOOKING FOR A REASON TO INDULGE this Thanksgiving? According to research published in the journal *Appetite*, eating salty foods may help stave off stress. The University of Haifa study looked at US data on 10,000 individuals and found that rates of depression and stress were higher among those who consumed less salt, with the effect being even more pronounced for women. The researchers suggest that salt cravings may be a biological defence against stress. — *Tamar Satov*



Bad blood can lead to high blood pressure

INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT may increase the risk of hypertension in older adults, research from Carnegie Mellon University finds. The study of 1,502 healthy adults aged 50 and older tallied the number of negative interactions — eg., excessive demands, criticism or disappointment — with partners, family and friends. Blood pressure was taken at the initial assessment and four years later. Those with a greater frequency of adverse social encounters were more likely to develop hypertension within the four-year period — but only if those negative interactions were between friends and extended family. Poor relations between partners and children did not make a difference. — *TS*