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Written by Phil Hudgins, senior editor of Community Newspapers Inc., which publishes the White County News.

Need a project for your retirement years? Take Beverly's advice

By Phil Hudgins

Beverly Bruemmer reminds us what retirement really means. It's not about sitting in the swing on the back porch and watching the grass grow. It's about sitting in the swing on the back porch with a bunch of cats and making up stuff.

That's what Beverly has been doing since 1997, when she retired after 33 years of teaching elementary school in Carrollton, Ga. Well, she's not in that swing the whole the time, but that's where she likes to write. She and her cats—Hampton, Marmalade, Misty Lou and Little Bit—have spent many happy hours in that swing.

“How can anybody be bored?” she asks. “There's too much to do. There's too much to learn. It's been a discovering journey, doing fun things that you want to do and never had the time to do before. Now you can do them and enjoy them—and I'm not pressured.”

Actually, the writing thing began with Ginger Giffin, a friend who admits her sense of humor is as weird as Beverly's. Ginger and Beverly came to see me at my office several years ago, and although the meeting didn't result in a column or publication of a book or anything else, it was one of the funniest interviews I've ever had.

At the time, they were working on “Doublewide Divas.” It was about two women, Shuga Vanderbilt and Sissou Morgan-Steen, who moved back to Paradise, their hometown, after being away for 35 years. Shuga never made it as a country music star in Dollywood, and Sissou never found her fortune after the great lumber fire. So they moved to the trailer park of their childhood, Eden Mobile Home Estates, where their neighbors had changed. One of them now was W.D. “Well Done” Fox, the local taxi driver who worked at Pork and Ride, a barbecue delivery and taxi service.

You get the idea. “Doublewide Divas” is funny, but it was never published. “It will be,” Beverly says. And HBO is considering the story for a series, she says, “but you know how that goes.”

So, instead of feeling defeated, Beverly settled down with her cats and turned out books she published herself: “To Market, To Market in the Big Red Truck,” a children's book, activity book and CD, which have done well; “The Moose Who Lost Christmas,” another children's book coming out in July; and “The Joy of Thankfulness,” a daily journal for jotting down events, persons, places and things that bring you joy. She's also working on a series to teach children about the United States. (You may check out her books at www.bevbruemmerbooks.com.)

The “Big Red Truck” is based on a true story, by the way. It's about her father, J.B. Morgan, and son, Morgan, riding from Buchanan to the Farmer's Market in Atlanta to pick up produce. It's a nice story.

“It's a whole new door opening,” Beverly says. You just find what you want to do and do it. And don't let the naysayers discourage you, Shuga.

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