

Fresh Artists in the Wall Street Journal on May 9, 2011

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THE GOOD LIFE

Second Acts

What do you do for an encore? Here are portraits of people who are taking new paths and changing their lives.

By KRISTI ESSICK

DAVID WEINBERG

AGE
62

HOME
Brookline, Mass.

FIRST/PRIMARY CAREER
Pathologist

CURRENT PATH
Professional photographer

WHY THIS PATH
'As a pathologist, I dealt constantly with images, and I was an early adopter of digital imaging as a research tool. Leaving my career in medicine allowed me the time to pursue my lifelong love of photography.'



David Weinberg



Krista Reimer

BARBARA CHANDLER ALLEN

AGE
62

HOME
Philadelphia

FIRST/PRIMARY CAREER
Art museum administrator

CURRENT PATH
Founder and head of a nonprofit supporting art education in public schools

WHY THIS PATH
'Working in inner-city schools late in life, I [was] appalled by what these kids did without. I realized the sum total of my life had equipped me with not only the resources to fix some stuff, but the passion to do it.'

DONALD ARTHUR

AGE
66

HOME
Bronx, N.Y.

FIRST/PRIMARY CAREER
Bookkeeper

CURRENT PATH
Marathon runner and educator

WHY THIS PATH
'The one thing I learned from my transplant experience is, "I am my brother's keeper."'



Deborah Logan



Eliad Laskin

LISA SCHWARTZ

AGE
55

HOME
Bedford Hills, N.Y.

FIRST/PRIMARY CAREER
Management consultant

CURRENT PATH
Farmer/cheese maker

WHY THIS PATH
'I just knew I wanted to get closer to nature... and produce something of value with my own hands. I find the farm to be healthy, satisfying, spiritual, fun and seductive.'

A Life in Images

In his 28 years as a medical pathologist at Brigham and Women's Hospital, a teaching hospital in Boston affiliated with Harvard Medical School, David Weinberg filled several different roles: researcher, associate professor, clinician and ultimately an information-technology director.

"I loved my career, because I had the latitude to shift directions and departments to suit my changing passions," he says. "But I ran out of passions in the medical field in my mid-50s."

He took his time figuring out what he wanted to do next. "I took many night courses, considered becoming a financial planner, almost launched a technology business, and looked into other art disciplines," says Dr. Weinberg, age 62, who lives in Brookline, Mass., with his wife of 37 years, Louise.

Becoming a professional photographer, as it happens, was something that grew from seeds planted years earlier: a long love of amateur photography, and his work in manipulating digital images of human cells. In 2005, he signed up for a yearlong digital photography program and cut the cord with his job, relying on a small pension and personal investments to pay the bills.

Ms. Weinberg had made a radical career change herself a few years earlier, from clinical social worker to abstract painter. That and Dr. Weinberg's own gradual immersion in the art school world convinced him that his photographic journey would center on the artistic. Today, he does little commercial work.

His main focus is art photography; he has shown his work in galleries in New York, Boston, and Florida. But some of his photos serve a social purpose. His portraits of homeless women in Boston generated an exhibition and book, and were used in events to raise awareness about homelessness.

"I don't want to be solely in

the art world," he says. "I also want to make a contribution."

Dr. Weinberg works out every day and serves on the board of the Boston nonprofit Heading Home, which offers shelter to homeless and low-income people. Otherwise he is in his Allston, Mass., studio or out shooting. He is currently working on architectural photography and a self-portrait project.

"I do photography full time. It's a real job," he says. "I follow a lot of blind alleys, and that's very gratifying but also very time-consuming."

Marathoner's Marathon

Donald Arthur, age 66, is newly diagnosed with emphysema and recently had spinal surgery. Neither, he says, will stop him from reaching his goal: completing a marathon in each of the 50 states. He runs to promote organ-donor awareness.

"I am either going to do the last races on my own two legs, riding on a hand-crank bike, or have my ashes carried over the finish line by a friend—but I will finish," says Mr. Arthur, who retired from his job in accounting in 1998 and lives in New York. He has run races in 32 states so far. Mississippi, in 99-degree heat, was his toughest yet.

For most of his life, Mr. Arthur was a self-described "workaholic and couch potato" who smoked, ate poorly and drank too much alcohol. His unhealthy lifestyle caught up with him in 1995, when he became ill with heart disease. He was saved by a heart transplant a year later.

"In the cab to the hospital to get my transplant, I told God if he spared me, I would get healthy and devote my life to helping others," says Mr. Arthur. "Someone had to make the ultimate sacrifice so I could live, and I had to find a way to pay that back."

A few months after his transplant, Mr. Arthur joined what is now called Achilles International, a New York-based group that supports disabled athletes, to start getting in shape. A coach suggested he push himself to run a marathon.

"At first I thought he was crazy. But then I thought, maybe my donor would have wanted to run a marathon," recalls Mr. Arthur, who received the heart of a 25-year-old male.

He ran his first marathon in 1997. Two years later, he ran a marathon with his donor's brother—an emotional experience. But it wasn't until 2006 that he struck upon the idea to run a marathon in every state, publicizing his quest and asking for donations to support charitable causes. He is co-founder of Transplant Speakers International, a nonprofit that encourages transplant recipients and donor families to share their stories. He is also active in several organ-donor awareness organizations and continues to support Achilles International.

When he isn't training, Mr. Arthur, who is married, spends four days a week speaking to high-school students in New York, educating them about the dangers of alcohol, drugs and cigarettes.

"If every day I am not doing something to make a difference in someone's life, I have wasted my whole day," he says. "And I don't have any time to waste."

Making Charity an Art

Barbara Chandler Allen navigated through diverse careers: museum registrar, stay-at-home mother, design consultant and director of an educational foundation. Today, at 62, she has combined the skills gained from her varied jobs to run Fresh Artists, a nonprofit she founded in 2008 to provide art supplies to needy public

schools.

"Fresh Artists combines everything I love—art, education, children, philanthropy, and leading and running a huge project. So it's the most fun I've ever had," says Ms. Allen, who works up to 14 hours a day. "I have to be torn away from my work every evening."

That work begins in the classroom. Children in struggling K-12 schools are invited, in effect, to become philanthropists, licensing their drawings and paintings to Ms. Allen's program in order to help other children. Fresh Artists digitally photographs the most striking artworks to make large-format reproductions, which are given to corporate donors as thank-you gifts. The organization then uses the funds to deliver art supplies and programs to cash-strapped public schools.

"This is real, curated art—not doodles," says Ms. Allen, who notes that everyone wins: Companies make tax-deductible donations and get modern artwork to decorate their offices; disadvantaged schools get free art supplies; and the children who make the art, often living in dire circumstances, feel good about the recognition they receive and their ability to help others.

Ms. Allen runs the organization with her younger son, 29-year-old Roger Allen, who, as creative director, is the only full-time employee. Dozens of volunteers round out the organization, which so far has installed 830 artworks in corporations and donated more than \$120,000 in art supplies to schools.

Ms. Allen loves art. She served as registrar for the Philadelphia Museum of Art for years, a job that involved managing behind-the-scenes logistics for programs such as traveling exhibitions. She says she also relishes a challenge. She once threw herself into the role of development director for an inner-city charter high school, though she had never worked in education.

While Ms. Allen says the pace of running Fresh Artists is "not for the faint of heart," she has

no plans to slow down. She lives on a small income and plans to continue working for at least seven more years to expand the organization.

"As my days on Earth shorten, I'm more focused on giving everything I've got."

Days of Goats and Cheese

Lisa Schwartz routinely gets up before dawn and puts in 80-hour workweeks, something she was used to as a management consultant in Manhattan in the 1980s. But now, instead of Wall Street executives, she spends her days with goats.

The 55-year-old Ms. Schwartz owns and operates Rainbeau Ridge, a working farm in Bedford Hills, N.Y., about 40 miles from her former stomping grounds. The business produces farmstead goat cheese (cheese made from goat milk produced on Ms. Schwartz's farm), grows seasonal vegetables, and plays host to classes for children and adults. She lives on the farm with her husband, Mark, who works in finance but also helps run the operation.

Earlier in her career, Ms. Schwartz worked at Data Resources, the New York Stock Exchange and Booz Allen Hamilton as a management consultant. But after more than a decade in the business, she became a stay-at-home mom.

"I realized I couldn't do both jobs well, and it was either gun it toward partner or get off the train," she says. Starting in 1989, she focused on raising her two children and on nonprofit work, including creating a preschool program for economically disadvantaged youths and land-preservation projects.

Ms. Schwartz fell in love with food while in Japan, where the Schwartz family lived for four years in the late 1990s for her husband's job. She spent her

days exploring farmers' markets, studying Japanese cuisine, cooking and "learning to appreciate a deep cultural passion for food."

When the family returned to the U.S., she says, she found the country in the midst of a "foodie awakening," and began to think about ways to build a career around her new passion. Farming, though, was a big jump. "I had no experience," she says. "But I just woke up one day and knew I wanted to farm the land."

To learn about goat-cheese making, Ms. Schwartz pored through articles online, visited local farms ("I stalked goat farmers") and learned by trial and error. She also lived on a goat farm in France to study husbandry and traditional production methods. Her first purchase: two goats in 2002.

Today, Rainbeau Ridge is a fully licensed dairy with four full-time employees. It produces several types of cheese sold in New York restaurants, local shops and farmers' markets. Ms. Schwartz is particularly proud of awards that her cheeses have won from the American Cheese Society.

"Farming is an authentic way to live, but it's also exhausting and not exactly highly profitable," she says. In the spring, she works 14 hours a day, seven days a week—and also wakes up during the night to watch over baby goat deliveries.

While Ms. Schwartz plans to continue farming for as long as she's "physically able," she hopes to make the business self-sustainable in the future to make time for other pursuits.

"Farming is my second act, not my closing act," says Ms. Schwartz, who plans one day to apply what she has learned in farming to philanthropic projects in Africa and India.

Second Acts looks at the many paths people are taking in their 50s and beyond. The profiles are by Kristi Essick, a writer in California. You can reach her, and let us know how you're starting over in later life, at next@wsj.com.