

livfun

Washington Oakes

MAY 2012 • ENJOY THE JOURNEY

Adventures of Roland Van Haeften

Roland grew up in India at the time of the British Raj, a reign of 89 years. His father worked for the Colonial Government as a Senior Civil Servant. The government provided paid servants to serve their senior officers. The number of servants depended on the rank of the officer. His father was entitled to five servants. These included a cook, who was Christian, the driver was a Muslim, a Mali (water carrier and gardener) was Hindu as was their Ayah (nanny), and the Sweeper, who handled all the very dirty menial jobs, was an “untouchable,” the very lowest class in Indian society.

All the servants spoke Tamil only, a south Indian language. He and his brothers and sister learned to speak Tamil at a tender age from their Ayah. He recalled, when working at Boeing, trying out his Tamil on some Tamil-speaking engineers. They were highly amused, saying, “Roland, that is dreadful low-class Tamil. Where did you learn to speak like that?” India has a very class-conscious society.

I asked Roland to tell me some of the fun things they did as children. It was fun and exciting almost every day, he said, spent hunting, fishing and swimming in the wild and lots of field sports like cricket, field hockey, soccer and tennis at school.

It was refreshing to hear that Roland and his siblings felt it was a privilege to go to school, and not an imposition.

He went on to tell me many of the experiences he had with life, like when he and his uncle were chased by a wild elephant. He was staying with his uncle, a tea plantation manager. They were returning from a fishing trip after catching two good-sized “mahseer,” a great game fish. On the way out, walking along the river bank, he noticed a small herd of elephants way up on the hillside. He asked his uncle if they were “tame” elephants and was assured they were, because they were all wearing bells.

Coming to the same spot on the way back, this herd of elephants was much lower down the hillside. When the elephants saw them, one of them broke away from the herd and charged. Roland’s uncle shouted, “It’s a wild one, Rol, run!” They had no idea an elephant could run that fast. In fact, he was catching up, so the uncle shouted, “Make for the river,” which they did – followed by their “Chokria” boy carrying the two fish. He dared not drop them for fear of his life!

They all crossed the shallow river half-running, half-swimming and made it to the far bank. Looking back, they saw the elephant standing still at the water’s edge. He was slowly swinging his trunk from side to side. He was having fun laughing at them! Sometimes a wild elephant will infiltrate a tame herd for the sake of safety and company.

This same uncle was also quite a hunter. He shot a bear once and, while examining it, realised it was a mother with cubs. No sooner had he done that when the enraged father bear attacked him from the rear, tearing off his scalp. He was completely bald thereafter and it left him with three long deep claw marks on his head.



Roland Van Haeften

(Continued on back)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Locations Arts and Crafts, AC Bistro, Bistro Brain Gym, BG Bus, B Dining Room, DR Game Room, G Health and Wellness, HW</p> <p>Lobby, L Multi-Use Room, M Piano Lounge, P PrimeFit Gym, Gym Private Dining Room, PDR Therapy Room, T</p>	<p>Birthdays Claire Huyler, 7th Elsie Fitzpatrick, 8th Corrine Karas, 9th Bill McCafferty, 10th Joyce Sorenson, 13th Katie Meadors, 18th Paul DiBianco, 30th Florence Miller, 31st</p>	<p>Massage by Appointment, T 9:00 PrimeFit: Swimming, L 9:30 PrimeFit: Exercise, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:30 Catholic Communion, G 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:00 Mystery Ride, B 1:30 Bean Bag Baseball, P 2:00 Billiards, G 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 3:15 Giant Crossword, P 7:15 <i>Pinochle, G</i> 7:30 <i>Scrabble, Bistro</i></p>	<p>9:30 PrimeFit: Defying Gravity, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 Coffee Klatsch, Bistro 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 10:30 Hobby Lobby, B 11:30 Balance Builders, Gym 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:30 Movie Matinee, P 1:30 Easy Walk Group, L 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 7:00 Pauper Poker, G</p>	<p>Audiologist by Appointment, T 9:00 PrimeFit: Swimming, L 9:30 PrimeFit: Exercise, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 <i>Train Dominoes, Bistro</i> 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 10:30 Trinity Bible Study, G 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:00 Billiards, G 1:00 Everett Mall, B 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 7:00 <i>Pinochle, G</i></p>	<p>10:00 Yoga, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 10:30 Resident Council, G 11:30 Balance Builders, Gym 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 2:00 Billiards, G 2:00 Jon Pressman Music Social, Bistro 3:30 Balloon Volleyball, P 7:15 Bingo, M</p>	<p>CINCO DE MAYO 9:00 PrimeFit Exercise, P 9:30 PrimeFit Exercise, P 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 Show and Share, Bistro 10:00 AOK Club, G 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:30 Wheel of Fortune, G 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 3:00 Easy Walk Group, L 3:00 Root Beer Social, Bistro 5:15 Snohomish Senior Center Dinner, B 7:00 <i>Cribbage, G</i> 7:15 Movie Night, P</p>
<p>Church Transportation, B 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 Sports, PDR 1:30 Crafts With Cris, Bistro 2:00 Worship Service, M 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 3:00 Bowling Social, P 7:15 <i>Travelogue, P</i></p>	<p>8:00 New Day Northwest, B 9:30 PrimeFit: Exercise, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 <i>Discussion Group, G</i> 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 11:00 First Presbyterian Communion, P 11:30 Balance Builders, Gym 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:00 <i>Bridge, G</i> 1:30 Neighborhood Walk Group, L 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 7:00 Movie Night, P 7:15 <i>Bingo, M</i></p>	<p>Massage by Appointment, T 9:00 PrimeFit: Swimming, L 9:30 PrimeFit: Exercise, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:00 Joy Ride, B 1:30 Bean Bag Baseball, P 2:00 Billiards, G 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 3:15 Giant Crossword, P 7:15 <i>Pinochle, G</i> 7:30 <i>Scrabble, Bistro</i></p>	<p>9:30 PrimeFit: Defying Gravity, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 Coffee Klatsch, Bistro 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 11:30 Balance Builders, Gym 1:30 Bookmobile, Bistro 1:30 Easy Walk Group, L 1:30 Movie Matinee, P 2:00 Malya Muth Music, P 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 7:00 Pauper Poker, G 10:45 Pilchuck Glass School, B</p>	<p>9:00 PrimeFit: Swimming, L 9:30 PrimeFit: Exercise, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 <i>Train Dominoes, Bistro</i> 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:00 Billiards, G 1:00 Marysville Shopping, B 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 7:00 <i>Pinochle, G</i></p>	<p>10:00 Yoga, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 11:30 Balance Builders, Gym 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:15 All-Resident Meeting, P 2:00 Billiards, G 2:00 Jon Pressman Music Social, Bistro 3:30 Balloon Volleyball, P 7:15 Bingo, M</p>	<p>9:00 PrimeFit Exercise, P 9:30 AAUW Meeting, M 9:30 PrimeFit Exercise, P 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 Show and Share, Bistro 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:30 Wheel of Fortune, G 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 3:00 Easy Walk Group, L 3:00 Root Beer Social, Bistro 7:00 <i>Cribbage, G</i> 7:15 Movie Night, P</p>
<p>MOTHER'S DAY Church Transportation, B 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 Sports, PDR 1:30 Crafts With Cris, Bistro 2:00 Worship Service, M 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 3:00 Bowling Social, P 7:15 <i>Travelogue, P</i></p>	<p>9:30 PrimeFit: Exercise, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 <i>Discussion Group, G</i> 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 11:30 Balance Builders, Gym 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:00 <i>Bridge, G</i> 1:30 Neighborhood Walk Group, L 2:00 Healthy Steps, P 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 7:00 Movie Night, P 7:15 <i>Bingo, M</i></p>	<p>Podiatrist by Appointment, T Massage by Appointment, T 9:00 PrimeFit: Swimming, L 9:30 PrimeFit: Exercise, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:30 Catholic Communion, G 1:00 Mystery Ride, B 1:30 Bean Bag Baseball, P 2:00 Billiards, G 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 3:15 Giant Crossword, P 7:15 <i>Pinochle, G</i> 7:15 Charles Spring Music, Bistro 7:30 <i>Scrabble, Bistro</i></p>	<p>9:30 PrimeFit: Defying Gravity, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 Coffee Klatsch, Bistro 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 10:30 Chuckanut Manor, B 11:30 Balance Builders, Gym 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:30 Movie Matinee, P 1:30 Easy Walk Group, L 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 7:00 Pauper Poker, G</p>	<p>9:00 PrimeFit: Swimming, L 9:30 PrimeFit: Exercise, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 <i>Train Dominoes, Bistro</i> 10:30 Bible Study, P 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:00 Alderwood Mall 1:00 Billiards, G 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 7:00 <i>Pinochle, G</i></p>	<p>10:00 Yoga, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 11:30 Balance Builders, Gym 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 2:00 Billiards, G 2:00 Jon Pressman Music Social, Bistro 3:30 Balloon Volleyball, P 7:15 Bingo, M</p>	<p>ARMED FORCES DAY 9:00 PrimeFit Exercise, P 9:30 PrimeFit Exercise, P 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 Show and Share, Bistro 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:30 Wheel of Fortune, G 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 3:00 Easy Walk Group, L 3:00 Root Beer Social, Bistro 7:00 <i>Cribbage, G</i> 7:15 Movie Night, P</p>
<p>Church Transportation, B 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 Sports, PDR 1:30 Crafts With Cris, Bistro 2:00 Worship Service, M 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 3:00 Bowling Social, P 3:30 Million Dollar Quartet, B 7:15 <i>Travelogue, P</i></p>	<p>9:30 PrimeFit: Exercise, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 <i>Discussion Group, G</i> 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 11:30 Balance Builders, Gym 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:00 <i>Bridge, G</i> 1:00 Joy Ride, B 1:30 Neighborhood Walk Group, L 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 7:00 Movie Night, P 7:15 <i>Bingo, M</i></p>	<p>Massage by Appointment, T 9:00 PrimeFit: Swimming, L 9:30 PrimeFit: Exercise, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:15 Hillcrest Elementary, P 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:30 Bean Bag Baseball, P 2:00 Billiards, G 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 3:15 Giant Crossword, P 7:15 <i>Pinochle, G</i> 7:30 <i>Scrabble, Bistro</i></p>	<p>9:30 PrimeFit: Defying Gravity, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 Coffee Klatsch, Bistro 10:15 Mindport and Boundary on the Bay, B 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 11:30 Balance Builders, Gym 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:30 Movie Matinee, P 1:30 Easy Walk Group, L 1:30 Bookmobile, Bistro 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 7:00 Pauper Poker, G 7:15 Gary Hood Music, P</p>	<p>9:00 PrimeFit: Swimming, L 9:30 PrimeFit: Exercise, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 <i>Train Dominoes, Bistro</i> 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:00 Billiards, G 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 7:00 <i>Pinochle, G</i></p>	<p>10:00 Yoga, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 11:30 Balance Builders, Gym 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 2:00 Billiards, G 2:00 Jon Pressman Music Social, Bistro 3:30 Balloon Volleyball, P 7:15 Bingo, M</p>	<p>9:00 PrimeFit Exercise, P 9:30 PrimeFit Exercise, P 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 Show and Share, Bistro 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:30 Wheel of Fortune, G 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 3:00 Easy Walk Group, L 3:00 Root Beer Social, Bistro 7:00 <i>Cribbage, G</i> 7:15 Movie Night, P</p>
<p>Church Transportation, B 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 Sports, PDR 1:30 Crafts With Cris, Bistro 2:00 Worship Service, M 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 3:00 Bowling Social, P 7:15 <i>Travelogue, P</i></p>	<p>MEMORIAL DAY 9:30 PrimeFit: Exercise, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 <i>Discussion Group, G</i> 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 11:30 Balance Builders, Gym 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:00 <i>Bridge, G</i> 1:30 Neighborhood Walk Group, L 2:00 Healthy Steps, P 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 7:00 Movie Night, P 7:15 <i>Bingo, M</i></p>	<p>Massage by Appointment, T 9:00 PrimeFit: Swimming, L 9:30 PrimeFit: Exercise, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:30 Catholic Communion, G 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:00 Mystery Ride, B 1:30 Bean Bag Baseball, P 2:00 Billiards, G 2:00 William Graham Music, P 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 3:15 Giant Crossword, P 7:15 <i>Pinochle, G</i> 7:30 <i>Scrabble, Bistro</i></p>	<p>9:30 PrimeFit: Defying Gravity, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 Coffee Klatsch, Bistro 10:00 Meerkerk Gardens, B 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 11:30 Balance Builders, Gym 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:30 Movie Matinee, P 1:30 Easy Walk Group, L 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 7:00 Pauper Poker, G</p>	<p>9:00 PrimeFit: Swimming, L 9:30 PrimeFit: Exercise, P 10:00 Posit Science, BG 10:00 Coffee and Conversation, Bistro 10:00 <i>Train Dominoes, Bistro</i> 10:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 11:30 PrimeFit Gym, Gym 1:00 Billiards, G 2:30 Games (Your Choice), Bistro 7:00 <i>Pinochle, G</i></p>	<p>Transportation Monday 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Tuesday 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Wednesday 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Thursday 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Friday 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday 9:30 a.m. Grocery Shopping</p>	

WASHINGTON OAKES

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Adventures of Roland Van Haeften (Continued)

Closer to home, there was always some danger or other. There were many snakes, mostly cobras. "When the summer heat was intense, they would come inside our house to cool off, usually in the bathroom which they would gain access to through the waste water drainage pipe. They would coil around the base of our large galvanized bath tub. It was our mali's job to keep the tub filled with water carried from the well." Usually it was their mother who would shout, "Boys, there's a snake in the bathroom!" and one or two of them would make a mad rush for their "weapons of choice" – their field hockey sticks – and, without any thought of the danger, proceed with the dispatch of the cobra.

I asked Roland about tigers. He mentioned the book "The Maneaters of Manipore." In this book, there is mention of the villagers who, when they walk in the jungle, wear masks with the faces facing backwards. He'd only seen one tiger in the wild. This was while riding a bus from Mysore. The driver stopped suddenly and pointed to a large rock on the hillside about 100 yards away. And there, sprawled on this rock, was a large tiger casually surveying his kingdom!

Panthers, he said, were more common and would often prey on the villagers' cattle and goats. His cousin, the tea planter's son, was approached once by the villagers pleading, "Saab, a panther has just killed one of our goats, would you please come shoot it?" He was playing tennis at the time. He picked up his gun, went and shot the panther which was still feeding on the goat, and then returned to his game of tennis.

Roland graduated from high school in 1940. At the time of the British Raj, it was known as the Senior Cambridge Graduation Exam. Exam papers were prepared in Cambridge, England, and were sent back there for grading. At that time they were living close to the Madras Flying Club. Roland was fascinated by watching little bi-planes practicing take-offs and landings. Eventually he won a flying scholarship and joined the Madras Flying Club where he gained his A-1 license. This allowed him to fly with passengers on limited types of planes.

Shortly after WWII broke out in Southeast Asia, he volunteered to join the RAF assuming that, with his credentials, he could become either a fighter or transport pilot. To his great disappointment, he was not selected. His color-blind test showed that he did not meet the requirements for night flying. He had to settle for training as an airplane engine technician, serving at bases in Bengal in the east to the Pakistan/Afghan border in the west.

His last airbase posting in the far west was an interesting one. The runways were built on an ancient caravan trail, part of the Silk Road which stretched from Constantinople to Peking. It was known as the Silk Road because the main item of trade was silk. Under a treaty agreement with the local tribes, the RAF would close down all operations at the airbase for three days twice a year to allow the caravans to pass. It was demobilized in 1946 and, in 1947, India got its independence, marking the end of the British Raj. It also marked the end of the privileged and happy way of life they enjoyed under the Raj.

In 1948, he moved to England and spent two years in Miles Aeronautical College before going to work at Hawker Siddeley Aircraft, best known for the Hawker Herrier Jump Jet. In 1967, he was hired by Boeing as a design engineer to work on the 747. He went to work on the very first one that went off the line, serial # PA001; it was delivered to PanAm. Roland worked with Boeing until his retirement in 1989. He was there for 23 years.

I asked him if he trusts flying in airplanes. Are they safer these days? He says he thinks they are, after seeing how they are tested in large test rigs where they are subjected to all manner of stress, compression, tension and twisting loads well above anything they are liable to encounter in extreme turbulence and weather conditions. Sounds like a good life, doesn't it?

