

LA Fridays with Bob & Tom
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Introduction to a New Activity

Just retired or about to take that leap? Are you wondering, “What do I do next?” Making the transition from work to retirement means no more early morning calls, weekend work, frustrating commutes. However, working also means a feeling of productivity, achievement of goals, social interaction, learning and a structured routine. The question for many of us is how do I translate these positive aspects of work to retirement, and truly enjoy and make the most of our new freedom and time?

Tom, a retired lawyer, and I, a retired scientist, have come up with an answer for us. Every Friday beginning mid-morning for 3-4 hours we explore a location in Los Angeles that we have researched and found potentially interesting. After visiting the venue, we discuss its attributes (or negatives) over lunch at a local restaurant. We have eclectic tastes, driven by a desire to learn about the city in which we live. During the past 3 years we have been to a vast array of places and engaged in activities as varied as openings at art galleries and kayaking in the bay. We find our Friday visits to be challenging, instructive and great fun, so we commit to it weekly.

We call this activity affectionately, “LA Fridays with Bob & Tom”.

To date we have been to 112 different venues and our list keeps growing. Our Friday outings have enhanced our friendship, broadened our outlook and taken us to some of the most surprising, off-beat and fascinating places in LA. And we have met fellow visitors from other parts of the U.S. or abroad who have enhanced our visits with critiques, unique perspectives, and new friendships

Our LA Fridays have been so informational and entertaining that we felt others might be inspired to follow suit. Each week, you will find a posting describing the place we have visited and what we saw and heard. This is our first weekly posting on the UCLA Longevity Center website and on the UCLA Longevity Center Facebook page. We hope it will inspire you to find a friend and get out to experience some of the privileges of retirement to open new doors, gain insights and knowledge, and foster a friendship.

We hope you will share your favorite places with us and we will add them to this posting. Please let us know if you have suggestions about how to better make this blog newsworthy and helpful to you.

Following is our first recommendation: The Great Wall of Los Angeles

Great Wall of Los Angeles

A great place to start your Friday adventures is the Great Wall of Los Angeles, one of the longest murals in the world. Created by Los Angeles artist Judith Baca along with hundreds of community teenagers and

other artists, the wall is a half mile of vividly colored panels. (See <http://sparcinla.org/programs/the-great-wall-mural-los-angeles>).

We traveled to Coldwater Canyon Avenue in Valley Glen to begin the half mile series of vignettes depicting California's diverse ethnic groups. Their contributions and struggles to overcome obstacles range from prehistoric natives of California gathering their crops, Chinese builders of the transcontinental railroad laboring away, brutal treatment of Mexicans, and the American Zoot Suit Riots of the 1940's, to name a few. We both were struck by how relevant the panels are as we continue to deal with issues of diversity.

Plenty of street parking made the visit easily accessible and the mural affords a pleasurable day outdoors with lots of great conversation, walking exercise, and a terrific visual and informational experience.

Restaurants: South of The Great wall is Ventura Blvd, which runs east-west on the map. Lots of excellent restaurants for lunch. Take a look on Google,"Restaurants near the Great Wall of Los Angeles" and take your pick.

Note: Neither the authors or UCLA Longevity Center have any affiliation with recommended venue sites or restaurants. Recommendations are solely those of the authors and are provided herein solely for consideration by its readership.

ROBERT BLAUNSTEIN, PhD BIO

Robert (Bob) is a PhD physicist whose career has spanned academia, government and private industry. As a faculty member of the Department of Physics at the University of Tennessee, a Branch Chief at the United States Department of Energy and Vice President of an American International Group Company, his scientific endeavors include radiation physics, environmental research, environmental insurance and nanotechnology.

Originally from the East Coast, Bob was seduced by his sons and their families (and the California weather) to leave Washington, DC after retiring in 2010. While recovering from culture shock, Bob found many outlets to reconcile his eclectic interests. As a member of Senior Scholars for over six years he continues to take courses in a myriad of subjects ranging from film to art history to brain science and finds great intellectual and social rewards in Senior Scholars and the Plato Society.

As a latent artist, he sketches scenes about town once a week with an artist friend from his college days and is attempting to learn to play the electric guitar.

On moving to Los Angeles, he found Tom Jacobson, another recent transplant. They became great friends and decided to explore their new town together leading to over 113 sites in our city. Dubbed "LA Fridays with Bob and Tom" they are happy to share their experiences with others.

Bob lives in Brentwood with Phyllis, his wife of 56 years, an education policy executive. They have two sons and four grandchildren, one of whom plays a guitar a lot better than Bob.

THOMAS JACOBSON BIO

Thomas (Tom) is an attorney who practiced trial and constitutional law in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Born in 1938 in Bamberg Germany, he was one of the youngest passengers on the ill-fated voyage of the Damned, the SS St. Louis, turned away from Cuba in 1939.

Tom represented local civil rights activists and Dick Gregory and twice argued cases successfully in the United States Supreme Court. In 1970 he was the Democratic candidate for Wisconsin Attorney General.

Retiring in 2008, he and wife, Peggy, moved to California to join their two sons and four grandchildren, and enjoy the warm weather.

Tom has kept busy as a member of Senior Scholars and Plato for the last six years keeping his brain stimulated and active. Yoga and swimming have kept his body in shape.