

'Embrace of Aging'

Finding the recipe for a long life

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Filmmaker Keith Famie interviews chef Milos Cihelka while bow hunting for deer.

Local filmmaker Keith Famie realizes you can't beat Father Time.

But there are ways to slow him down.

"When you hit 50, something psychological triggers in your mind," said Famie, who lives in Novi and turns 52 in February. "You're on the other side of the [fence](#) — you know you have less years and for some reason, time goes by so much quicker."

Since appearing as a contestant on *Survivor: The Australian Outback* in 2001, Famie has focused his energies on producing documentaries. His latest one, *The Embrace of Aging*, touches on a topic that everyone can relate to:

Growing old

The documentary, set for a fall premiere, is a series of interviews with men of all ages from around the world. Famie explores how they handle growing old, both in a physical sense and a spiritual one.

“I'm hoping through the film and being engaged by the stories and the doctors and the scientists, that it will serve as a wake-up call — even if it's a kid helping out his dad,” said Famie.

“At some point you have to make the start, whether it's a diet or exercise. Otherwise it's just a vicious circle.”

How to stay young at 81

“I teach school all over — culinary school — so that keeps me busy four days a week, five hours a day,” said Milos Cihelka of Bloomfield Hills, former chef of the Golden Mushroom. “I still work out — I'm still able to do 40 pushups at one time. I still climb trees to bow hunt.”

One of several subjects featured in Famie's documentary, Cihelka said maintaining his youthful energy at the ripe old age of 81 is just a matter of clean living and staying busy.

“My wife and I, we eat healthy,” he said. “I don't want to call it a diet exactly, but we have eliminated practically all butter from our food. And we eat a meatless dinner maybe three-four times a week.”

He shoots enough deer during bow hunting season to pack his freezer with venison for the entire year. Otherwise, the couple will enjoy a little fish or chicken occasionally.

For breakfast, it's oatmeal every morning. No sugar or honey. Just banana slices.

“I stay busy,” Cihelka said. “I don't have much time to feel sorry about myself or anything like that. I stay busy and time flies by pretty quick. If I was sitting around and watching television all the time, I would get disgusted with myself and the situation.”

For kicks, Cihelka will go hunting — and not just for deer. He shot a bull elk in New Mexico in 2007. That same year, at age 77, he also went on a cougar hunt in Utah.

“My wife wasn't too happy about that one,” he admitted.

Feeling important

Famie is also a former chef who once owned several restaurants in the Royal Oak area. He now spends his time behind the camera. He already has two similar documentaries lined up for production: One is about women and how they age; the other is about Alzheimer's.

For this documentary he shot more than 90 hours of film and traveled the world, from Sardinia to Okinawa — to interviewing radio legend Dick Purtan.

He said some common threads to age in a graceful manner include a good diet, exercise, staying busy — and finding a way to have meaning in your life.

“Psychologically, men by nature are hunters and providers,” said Famie. “When you get in your 60s and 70s and it slips away, that really plays havoc on your psyche. Older men in particular need support from others. They need to feel they still are important.”

For his part, Cihelka offers even more succinct advice: Turn off the television.

“I might watch a hockey game — maybe some football or baseball games,” he said. “But otherwise I never sit in front of the TV.”

Not even for the reality cooking shows?

“A lot of that stuff is fake,” said Cihelka, who was certified as the country's first master chef in 1981. “I can see right through it. There were some good chefs in the old days, and I would watch them work with interest. These days, a lot of these ‘culinary stars’ I don't particularly like.”

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