



BOOKS

# Chester County Spotlight: The Inspiring Story of a Great-Grandma's Journey

September 12, 2022 - by MyChesCo



“You are never too young and never too old to follow your dreams” and living proof exists in 90-year-old, Chester County resident, Nancy Jane Newman. One doesn’t expect a Great-Grandma to be doing lofty things, but done it she has. Ms. Newman recently published her first book entitled *The Very Small Adventures of Anne Katrine*. The next three in the series are in manuscript. She’s been telling the story for years to her children and grandchildren, yet only recently put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard). Why? Because “you only live once and it has always been one of my dreams,” says Newman.



*Nancy Jane Newman*

This middle-grade fantasy debuts 10-year-old Anne Katrine and is a delightful children's chapter book filled with friendship, magic, and escapades. This Harry Potter-like fairy tale begins shortly before Anne Katrine's eleventh birthday, a date upon which her grandmother has promised to share a magical secret. Unfortunately, things do not go as planned.

With the passing of her grandmother, Anne's parents fly to Denmark to take care of family affairs. Mysteriously, their plane disappears over the Arctic Circle and a not-so-coincidentally, the arrival of some very strange strangers sets off a chain of events that begin Anne's adventures and transforms her life.

Anne may be young and occasionally timid, yet she is full of inspiration and determination. She makes new friends with a silly young owl named Dumbert and two miniature Danish elves named Yul and Nissa. The elves need to decrypt a set of secret instructions in order to return to their homeland of Norlin (Land of the Arctic Sun) and replenish their supply of magic. Without knowing it, Anne holds the key. During their travels, the imaginative Anne Katrine courageously learns many life lessons along the way.

The story feels like a cross between the Chronicles of Narnia and Circus Mirandus; magical, yet without an overwhelming amount of magic. If Harry Potter had a younger, muggle sister, she might be Anne Katrine. And if the North Pole had two expatriate elves, they might be Yul and Nissa. Large black and white illustrations decorate every chapter-head.

Whether soaring through the air on the back of an owl, befriending elves, or sharing a meal inside the trunk of a tree, this enjoyable and playful book boasts 4.5 stars on Amazon, has rave written reviews, and comes highly recommended! Kirkus Reviews says, "Newman's delightful story is reminiscent of 'Snow White' and 'Cinderella.'" An Amazon reviewer says, "Aside from being a captivating adventure, I would recommend this book for its educational value. It gently teaches important life lessons, such as how to manage one's inevitable mistakes along the way."

60-year-old [Delaware County](#) resident, Scott Newman (Nancy's son and publisher) says, "many people stop pursuing their dreams because they believe it's too late or they're too old. What they forget is that keeping your mind active staves off the aging process." The book's author goes on to say, "your age should never be a stumbling block in the way of following your dreams."

"Life is better when you are pursuing your goals," continues Nancy Jane. "I've been writing poetry for years, yet this is my first published novel." She goes on to say, "I love the writing part, but I know nothing about publishing. That's where my son, Scott, came to the rescue. Without him, the story would have ended up in a box or a desk drawer." Like Anne Katrine and her friends, the Newman's found that no matter what you want to do, if you can find others who will accompany you on your journey you are more likely to reach success.

If you would like to pursue your dreams, here are some hints the Newmans suggest to help you achieve success.

1. Build a picture of what your goal is and pin it up somewhere you can see it every day.
2. Take the first step toward that goal as soon as you can.
3. Continue taking small steps. Completing them adds satisfaction and momentum.
4. If you hit a hurdle or get stuck, talk it through with someone you trust.
5. Review your progress regularly, make adjustments, and ask for more help if you need.
6. Celebrate milestones achieved along the way.

Limiting beliefs, fears, doubts, and excuses; these are the things that will hold you back. The ability to achieve starts in your mind. The acronym YOLO is often used in social media. It means “You Only Live Once.” The implication is to take active steps towards your dreams, today, no matter how old you are. Undoubtedly, there will be times you will feel like you have failed. “I don’t believe in failure,” says the younger Newman. “A person succeeds or they learn. There is no reason to place a stigma on trying.” Indeed, in the eyes, hearts, and minds of your friends and loved ones, if you visualize your goals and take steps towards them, you become inspiring. And you will live a happier, more fulfilling life when you try.

This book is a great gift for children and grandchildren 8-12-years-old and is available through Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, libraries, and other fine bookstores. An eBook should be available by the end of the year (2022). Visit [www.VerySmallAdventures.com](http://www.VerySmallAdventures.com) for more information.

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