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ABOVE FIFTY - The price of oil closed above \$50 a barrel on Monday 7/31/17 (\$50.23), the first time above the \$50 threshold since 5/24/17. The price of oil closed at \$53.72 on 12/31/16 (source: NYMEX).

CUT IN HALF - There were 6.98 million out-of-work Americans as of 7/31/17. There were 14.60 million out-ofwork Americans as of 7/31/09 (source: Department of Labor).

WE RENT - 95% of the new households created in the USA in the last 10 years were comprised of families that are renting, i.e., 8.13 million new renter households out of 8.56 million new households (source: Census Bureau).

An 83-year-old woman wrote this to her friend. The last line says it all.

Dear Bertha,

I'm reading more and dusting less. I'm sitting in the yard and admiring the view without fussing about the weeds in the garden. I'm spending more time with my family and friends, and less time working. Whenever possible, life should be a pattern of experiences to savor, not to endure. I'm trying to recognize these moments now and cherish them.

I'm not "saving" anything; we use our good china and crystal for every special event such as losing a pound, getting the sink unstopped, or the first Amaryllis blossom.

I wear my good blazer to the market. My theory is that if I look prosperous, I can shell out \$28.49 for one small bag of groceries.

I'm not saving my good perfume for special parties, but wearing it for clerks in the hardware store and tellers at the bank.

"Someday" and "one of these days" are losing their grip on my vocabulary. If it's worth seeing or hearing or doing, I want to see, hear and do it now.

I'm not sure what others would've done had they known they wouldn't be here for the tomorrow that we all take for granted. I think they would have called family members and a few close friends. They might have called a few former friends to apologize and mend fences for past squabbles. I like to think they would have gone out for a Chinese dinner or whatever their favorite food was. I'm guessing; I'll never know.

It's those little things left undone that would make me angry if I knew my hours were limited. Angry because I hadn't written certain letters that I intended to write one of these days. Angry and sorry that I didn't tell my husband and parents often enough how much I truly love them. I'm trying very hard not to put off, hold back, or save anything that would add laughter and luster to our lives. And every morning when I open my eyes, I tell myself that it is special. Every day, every minute, every breath is a gift from God.

People say true friends must always hold hands, but true friends don't need to hold hands because they know the other hand will always be there.

Life may not be the party we hoped for, but while we are here we might as well dance!

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