

## **Too Much Paradise? Ask the Binders**

by Jim Lenburg

Arriving on their sailboat, Barbara and Stan Binder fell instantly in love with the island of Providenciales in the Turks and Caicos. Several visits later, they decided to retire there. Stan built what he calls “a modest resort” where they lived for nearly eight years.

At first the island of Providenciales was a paradise. From their home, they looked out at a beautiful seven-mile stretch of beach with powdery white sand and crystal clear water. The restaurants were fabulous; the seafood was fresh. They could play, play, play and overcome the stress caused by the overachiever lifestyle they had lived stateside.

They took long walks on the beach, learned to snorkel and scuba dive. They played dominoes with friendly local residents called belongers, and shared their lives with fellow expatriates. As the years passed, however, they found “paradise” less appealing.

The island’s population swelled from 5,000 when they arrived to 25,000 several years later, much of the increase coming from an exploding expat community. As the population grew, so did the cost of living and the belongers became less welcoming to foreigners. Buying groceries or paying bills became frustrating as they found themselves standing in long lines for almost everything. Health care was minimal; serious health issues required a flight to Miami. They found little intellectual stimulation.

After seven years they began to look for another community to retire. Asheville did not captivate them at first blush, but a subsequent visit a few months later did the trick. Stan said he found an excellent source of New York style bagels and a superb sushi restaurant!

Most importantly, they found OLLI and all it had to offer. Beginning in 2008, they lived in Asheville part-time; they moved here permanently in 2012. Barbara joined a women’s group and Stan joined a men’s group. Both enjoy taking classes; Stan has taught three classes, including a well-received course he called *Seeking Coffee, Tea and Cake in Asheville*.

Both Barbara and Stan were born in New York City. Barbara graduated from Hunter College; Stan from City College of New York. Barbara began a long career helping students with learning disabilities while Stan worked as a CPA and later managed several medium-sized businesses in Florida, Georgia, and Oklahoma. Their last stop before retirement was New Jersey where both became frustrated with their jobs and determined it was time to retire.

The Binders ultimately built a house in the Riceville section of Buncombe County and today they are happy to call the Asheville area home as they celebrate their fifty-fifth year together. Only occasionally do they miss their island paradise.