



Driving Miss Norma: One Family's Journey Saying "Yes" to Living

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When Miss Norma was diagnosed with uterine cancer, she was advised to undergo surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy. But instead of confining herself to a hospital bed for what could be her last stay, Miss Norma—newly widowed after nearly seven decades of marriage—rose to her full height of five feet and told the doctor, “I’m ninety years old. I’m hitting the road.”

And so Miss Norma took off on an unforgettable around-the-country journey in a thirty-six-foot motor home with her retired son Tim, his wife Ramie, and their dog Ringo.

As this once timid woman says “yes” to living in the face of death, she tries regional foods for the first time, reaches for the clouds in a hot air balloon, and mounts up for a horseback ride. With each passing mile (and one educational visit to a cannabis dispensary), Miss Norma’s health improves and conversations that had once been taboo begin to unfold. Norma, Tim, and Ramie bond in ways they had never done before, and their definitions of home, family, and friendship expand. Stop by stop, state by state, they meet countless people from all walks of life—strangers who become fast friends and welcome them with kindness and open hearts.

Infused with this irrepressible nonagenarian’s wisdom, courage, and generous spirit, *Driving Miss Norma* is the charming, infectiously joyous chronicle of their experiences on the road. It portrays a transformative journey of living life on your own terms that shows us it is never too late to begin an adventure, inspire hope, or become a trailblazer.

Driving Miss Norma: One Family's Journey Saying "Yes" to Living Details

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From Reader Review Driving Miss Norma: One Family's Journey Saying "Yes" to Living for online ebook

Merry Miller moon says

Thank you to Shelf Awareness for the free ARC of this book. I really wished that I had heard of Miss Norma's story before this book, rather when Miss Norma was living her adventure/life. This is the true story of a truly remarkable woman and the loving family that helped her live out her life in the final months that she had remaining. Tim, Miss Norma's son and his partner, Ramie have written a wonderful book.

POSSIBLE SPOILERS AHEAD Shortly after the loss of her husband, Miss Norma is diagnosed with cancer. A cancer that is rapidly increasing and at ninety years old, she is only given months to live with chemotherapy. After discussing her options with her son, Miss Norma decides not to live out her final months in a sterile hospital environment, rather she wants to live. Tim and his partner Ramie along with their standard poodle, Ringo have retired early and spend their time driving around the U.S. and Mexico in their RV. Tim and Ramie have discussed her options with Miss Norma and she has decided she would like to join them in their rv/living/traveling adventure. Their traveling exploits are highlighted on a Facebook page that Ramie has set up. Next thing you know, Miss Norma is doing things that she only dreamed she could've done in the past-such as riding in a hot air balloon and riding in a convertible in a parade. This is a truly touching and at times heart breaking account of one remarkable woman's fight to truly live her life.

Warning-you will probably cry while reading this-but you will also laugh a lot. Thank you for sharing yours and your mother's story with us, Tim Bauerschmidt and Ramie Liddle.

Pamela says

Yes . . . Yes . . . YES!!!! A thousand times YES!

This THIS THIS MAGNIFICENT MEMOIR!

I absolutely LOVE this memoir! This amazing adventure . . . This beautifully and honestly written travelogue . . . This awe-inspiring, 'CAN DO' journey . . . This amazing end-of-life road trip . . . This DARING to LIVE even when dying book infused me with so much hope, and joy, and encouragement. I want to buy a copy for each of my children.

FIVE GAZZILION STARS..... PROPER REVIEW TO COME.....

Robin says

I finished this morning and how I got through it without sobbing out loud is a miracle. Everyone is going to fall in love with not only Norma and her family (including Ringo), but everyone who embraced Norma and made her feel special. And Norma is a woman after my own heart. Not only does she love to read, but she loves to shop for new clothes and keep her hair permed. :-) I want to be just like her when I grow up and

also hope to face what she did with the grace and dignity she displayed. As one who is still enamored of the "RV lifestyle," I also loved the stories of being on the road.

This reminded me of David Rosenfeldt's DOGTRIPPING, the true story of how he and a gang of caring volunteers moved 25 dogs cross-country via RV. That's another one made me both laugh and cry.

Thanks to HarperCollins for the advance reading copy in exchange for an honest review.

Katie says

This was a "blind date" book - one of those fun books wrapped in brown paper at the bookstore with a few hints about what might be inside. I think this one just said, "Epic family journey". So, one \$3 donation later and I had this book in my hands.

The book is both a family memoir and a travel log. The authors, a couple, write about taking their 90 year old, dying mother (in-law) for an epic road trip around the U.S. The authors are travelers, never really staying in one place for more than a few months and living pretty much exclusively out of their camper. When Miss Norma gets diagnosed with cancer, they invite her to stay with them in the RV. She agrees and goes on to have a bunch of adventures. Eventually, I guess Miss Norma was became a Facebook sensation who made also made the national news and did the morning talk show circuit, but I missed all that.

While I really enjoyed hearing Miss Norma's story and was touched by her journey and ability to embrace her remaining days, I found the authors to be a bit insufferable. They both seemed so damn put out about taking care of their mother (in law). Like it was really messing with their oh-so-enlightened, media-free, holier-than-thou lifestyle. And, I hated that the story became about them and what they got out of the trip, with Miss Norma there as sort of a prop for their own journey toward self-discovery. I'm sure they are good people and they definitely did a good thing by Miss Norma, but the tone was a bit hard to take.

Cyndi says

After following this story on Facebook, I was awaiting the release of this book when I fortunately won a copy through HarperOne publishing and Goodreads. The book is an inspiring story of newly widowed Miss Norma at age 90 and then is diagnosed with cancer. This book chronicles the last year of her full life as she shows that it is better to choose to be adventurous, try new things and meet new people. She shows that we should be open to opportunities and look for ways to make life more enriching. Miss Norma did just this with the help of Tim and Ramie who selflessly provide her with joy, in the small things as well as once in a lifetime opportunities. Each one was as important as the other to Miss Norma. This tiny woman made an impact and this book will stick with you. Hopefully we can all remember to say YES to living!

Janice says

Just at the time that her husband has died, 90 year old Norma is diagnosed with uterine cancer. Norma lost a daughter to cancer several years prior to this, and knows the challenges ahead of her, the life with radiation and chemo, hospital stays, and pain. As Norma thinks over what to do with whatever life she still has, she is

given an offer from her son, Tim Bauerschmidt, and his wife, Raimie Liddle, to travel with them in their motor home. Norma tells her doctor that she has decided to forgo the treatment, and wants to "hit the road". Thus begins a year long adventure, one that takes Miss Norma across the country, visiting whatever places she tells her family she has wanted to go, trying food she never even knew about, and having all kinds of adventures. She has always wanted to see Mt. Rushmore, so they go there; and the Grand Canyon, and place after place, zigzagging all over the country. Norma had a secret wish to go hot-air ballooning, and to try whale watching--and does both.

As they travel, Raimie begins writing a Facebook blog about Norma, and their trip--with Norma's permission. Norma is a quiet, retiring woman, and can't imagine that anyone would be interested in her life or what she is doing. But their followers develop into the thousands, and Miss Norma becomes an honored guest in towns and cities they pass through.

This memoir, written by Tim and Raimie about their trip with Norma, is compelling and touching. Tim's relationship with his mom deepens during this year, and Raimie develops a deep love and respect for her mother-in-law. And we can't forget Ringo, Tim and Raimie's dog, who grows to be mostly Miss Norma's dog, in their life on the road. There is lots of joy and laughter in this book, as well as the sadness with the knowledge that Miss Norma's life will soon come to an end. But what an incredible way to spend ones final days, with people she loved, making new friends, and exploring places she had only dreamed of getting to visit. I loved this one!

I chose this book for the reading challenge in A Book for All Seasons, Topic #4, Here to There, about a journey.

Elke says

Wat is Norma een gewelegide vrouw! Daar kunnen we allemaal het een en ander van leren. Het verhaal is hier en daar wat overdreven (erg Amerikaans), maar dat ter zijde is het een geweldig boek. Mijn eerste biografische boek van het jaar en ik vind het een welkome afwisseling. Ik ben erg blij dat ik dit boek heb mogen lezen!

Louise says

For Norma alone, I would give 5 stars! Norma was a sweet yet tough lady who made an awesome decision at the end of her life to make the most of every last moment. The reason for my 2 stars is down to the authors!

This story didn't end up following the spiritual and emotional journey I expected it to. Instead SO much of it was focused on the attention and fame that they got out of it. It said it all to me that Norma's diary at the end mentioned nothing about the fame aspect, whereas Tim acknowledges himself that fame was one of the "big themes" in their journey for him and Ramie.

Ramie delivered self-indulgent paragraphs about all the charity work she's done and how hard it was for her accepting she could "only" help this one person instead of all the people she normally does... and I was beyond belief when she put Norma feeling unwell down to a potential homophobic reaction to her lesbian friend's wedding. I mean seriously?? It was that unbelievable to her that an old lady with terminal cancer may be ill at "inconvenient" times??

Initially, I enjoyed Tim's chapters, but then his also started becoming littered with references to people falling over themselves to give them freebies and the celebrities they met. At one point he even remarked how "powerful" their family had become for inspiring a "billionaire" to spend more time with his family, as if that was somehow more powerful and touching than inspiring an average or poor person to do the same.

After losing my nan earlier this year to cancer, I expected this to be an emotional read and to relate strongly to everyone involved. Although I loved reading about Norma, I couldn't relate to the authors at all. I think they missed so many opportunities to really reflect on their growing bond with Norma and the realisations they were making about life, rather than that being a tiny element and the rest being about everyone who gushed over them. As much as I'm sure their intentions were all positive, they didn't show the best of themselves at all!

That being said, Norma clearly loved her final days and I'm sure behind the scenes that was always the focus. "Bravo Norma! I <3 you!" [Paulo Coelho] xx

Shelly says

I wasn't aware of Miss Norma before I saw Shelf Awareness was doing a giveaway of this book. I won the book and really enjoyed it. It's inspiring. Also it reminds me why I love memoirs and it's a shame that I rarely read them anymore. I find people's personal true stories to be fascinating.

Cindy Burnett says

Driving Miss Norma is an absolutely fantastic read. In the midst of these trying times, this book restored my faith in humanity and had me either laughing or crying the entire time I was reading it. When I started reading Driving Miss Norma, I was unfamiliar with the Facebook page that chronicled 90-year-old Norma's extended journey across the United States with her son and daughter-in-law, Tim Bauerschmidt and Ramie Liddle, and their dog Ringo. I chose not to seek out the Facebook page but instead read the book and let the story unfold as I read. If you are not familiar with the story, I would encourage you to do the same. There were so many fun surprises and entertaining tales, and I was very glad that I had not spoiled the book by checking out the Facebook page first.

Norma, Tim, Ramie and Ringo visited a wide range of locales. We frequently road trip as a family so I enjoyed reading about Norma's experiences at places we have visited ourselves like South Dakota. It was so fun to hear Norma's thoughts on Mt. Rushmore, Wall Drug, the Corn Palace and the Black Hills. I also added a number of places to our travel list after reading about them in this book.

Facebook created a platform for Norma's story and allowed so many kind people to open up their homes and towns to Norma, Tim and Ramie. I do not want to spoil the book so all I will say is that Norma brought out the best in people across the country. Time and again, I was amazed and impressed with the treatment she and her family received as she traveled.

The authors chose to alternate chapters which I felt was a very effective way to relay their tale. While much of the book focuses on the places they visited and the people they met, I was glad that Ramie also addressed their role as caregivers and how difficult that job can be, especially if you are traveling in an RV with a 90-

year-old woman. My one complaint about the book was that no pictures were included. I read an ARC so that may be one of the items that will be added before publication, but photographs would really enhance the story.

I think everyone should read Driving Miss Norma; it is such a beautiful story. Thanks to HarperOne for the chance to read this ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Cheri says

!! NOW AVAILABLE !!

4.5 Stars

At the advanced age of 90, Norma Jean Bauerschmidt from Presque Island, Michigan had just lost her husband when she was given a diagnosis of cancer. Instead of spending days, months or longer staying in a hospital, or living a life spent in and out of the hospital, surgery, treatments, she opted for a different kind of medicine. Love. Family. Time.

She hit the road with her son Tim and his wife Ramie – and oh, yes, their dog Ringo, a Standard Poodle, living in a motor home and driving around the country following Norma’s dreams of places she’d longed to visit, but never had. Life has a way of getting in the way of dreams sometimes – but she’d had years of that, and now she was going to see as much as her body would allow.

“I think I’d like to come along.” was what she said.

It was as simple as that. And in the space of a breath, we began to plan a road trip with my frail, grieving mother knowing that our lives would be utterly transformed.”

Oh the place you went, Miss Norma!

Wisconsin!

Well... it may not sound all that exciting, but when you get to be 90 and have never even visited one of the states next to you, it’s another accomplishment, it’s something you’ve never done before.

Hot air ballooning!

“It was Norma who broke the silence. Her gloved hands lay gently on the leather-wrapped edge of the basket and her knitted prayer shawl covered her head and shoulders. The bright sun illuminated her face. She was glowing inside and out, just like the balloon. She looked up at Tim, a huge smile on her face, and she said, ‘Dad would have liked this.’”

Whale watching! The Grand Canyon! Hilton Head! Savannah! You sat in fields of lavender!

You rode in a parade... and so much more.

Ramie had created a blog for the travels before about her and Tim’s adventures, now she created a facebook

page, "Driving Miss Norma," adding Norma's journey along with theirs. Hesitantly, thinking that their few followers would let her know by the lack of "likes" if this wasn't working. As it was they really didn't have that many to worry about, but Norma's journey slowly became their journey, too. People recommended places to stop, offered their homes or to meet up with them if they were coming through their area. They loved this journey she was on, and let her know.

Thirty-two states showed their love in various ways, and as these things tend to grow, as way led onto way, and time passed, what grew was the number of people supporting her cause. From less than a hundred to thousands of people offered her encouragement and support. At first, Norma didn't understand why anyone out there would even know about her, or when they heard her story, why they would even care, but why complain when you're getting a few wonderful meals here and there, some trinkets for her "*squirrel drawer*."

Beyond that, Norma knew that somehow, her journey was helping others, a priceless gift.

Thousands of miles, thirty-two states, monuments, National parks, hotels, and more than the occasional Home Depot or Wal-Mart parking lots were visited, a home for their home for the night.

Told in alternating chapters between Tim, her son, and his wife Ramie, this covers a lot of ground. There's some of the family history courtesy of Tim, and a different perspective from Ramie. There's a very balanced view of the difficulties involved in living with someone whose health is precarious, and being honest when it felt like it was time to take a break. Most of all, there is love and joy. So much joy.

What a lovely tribute to a courageous and loving woman and her family.

Recommended! (Tissues are also recommended)

Pub Date: 2 May 2017

Many thanks for the ARC provided by HarperOne

Janet says

Wonderful inspiring story! May all of us have the courage to face death (and life) like Miss Norma did. What more could one wish for than adventure, the closeness of loved ones and a death free of artificial constructs.

MsChris says

I adore Norma! I followed along on Facebook with their travels and was so excited to read the book. While I enjoyed it, I was also a little disappointed. It felt dry and they told me about their adventures but didn't really show me their adventures. I feel as though I know them little more now than when I started the book.

A book you should definitely read... But maybe don't rush out and buy it.

Copy provided by the publisher through Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.

Sherri Thacker says

A very heartwarming story! I remember reading about this woman on the news. She's really great!!

Marika says

Ah, readers you are going to love Miss Norma. Who wouldn't love a woman who when give a diagnosis of cancer tells the Dr. "I'm ninety years old. I'm hitting the road." Shy Norma then hits the proverbial road with her son and daughter in law in an RV and starts visiting places that she's never been to. And she hasn't been to many at all. Readers will want to start saying yes to life after reading this. And have a tissue with you as you read.
