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Oprah hasn't called? Didn't get chosen for "I want to be a Hilton?"

"Just because Oprah hasn't called to fulfill your wildest dreams or you didn't get tapped for 'I want to be a Hilton', doesn't mean that you can't put together your own dream life," asserts Carol White, author of *Live Your Road Trip Dream – Travel for a year for the cost of staying home* (RLI Press, 2004, www.roadtripdream.com). "While getting selected by Oprah! or chosen for a 'Hilton-style makeover' may be your fondest wish, there are many things *you* can do to make your own dreams come true."

White, who along with her husband Phil, took off and traveled the country for a year as part of making their own dreams come true, knows a lot about how to make travel dreams happen.

"The first thing you must do is set a date. It doesn't matter how far in the future that date is, setting the date makes it real," says Carol. "Once you have committed to the time you will leave on your dream trip, then everything begins to fall into place – a self-fulfilling prophecy" adds Phil.

"We're not trying to make it sound too simplistic, because there are lots of details to be arranged to make long-term travel happen, but if all you do is dream and wish, the chances of it ever happening are remote. Once you have made the commitment to yourself, your friends and family will begin to realize you are serious, and begin to help you make it a reality," says Carol.

She goes on to encourage others, "People we met all along the way had some version of a road trip dream in their heads, but couldn't figure out how to extricate themselves from their daily lives to go live their dream. Whether it is a road trip, a trek through Asia, a backpacking trip through Europe or a sailboat trip around the world, it seems that everyone has an extended-travel dream. When we returned, I did some research and found that there was no guide to help people through all the issues and details, so we decided to write one to encourage all the retiring baby boomers to go have this fabulous experience for themselves."

According to a Del Webb study, baby boomers rate travel as their #1 expenditure in retirement and are out exploring our country by the thousands. But it isn't just retirees setting out on these long trips. Gen X-ers, Richard and Amanda Ligato decided that their lives had become "too narrow," so they saved

money, quit their jobs and traveled Latin and South America, as well as Africa, in a VW Camper for nearly three years, covering almost 60,000 miles. They have chronicled their journeys in a new book, *Wide-Eyed Wanderers* (Pop-Top Publishing, 2005, www.vwvagabonds.com).

The Whites go into great detail in their book not only about how to manage your life back home while you are gone, but also provide would-be travelers with tips about everything from what to do with your house and cars, to how to budget and pay for such a trip, to how to manage relationships while you are gone, to what to do about mail, bills and investments.

Their final piece of advice? Don't over plan your trip. It is the serendipitous adventures that happen along the way that are the most precious and if you have planned out every detail, you will either miss the greatest moments of the trip, or find yourself undoing plans along the way.

"Too many things, both good and bad, will happen, and if you've planned your every moment like you would on a vacation, we guarantee that you will feel like you are on a forced march, instead of a travel journey of joy and exploration," warns Carol. "Long-term travel is not like a vacation where you observe and enjoy your destination; it is a *journey* to be savored and incorporated into who you are" she concludes.

So, if you too have a dream that Oprah! hasn't fulfilled, and Mrs. Hilton hasn't knocked on your door, then open your own door – make your own dreams come true. The Whites can show you how.

For more information on planning your trip, to order your copy of the book, or to invite the Whites to speak to your organization about taking your trip of a lifetime, go to their website at www.roadtripdream.com. The book is also available from online retailers or your favorite bookstore.

About RLI Press: RLI Press is a full-service publisher of travel related materials. Incorporated in 1999 by Phil and Carol White, RLI Press is a DBA of Retirement Lifestyles, Inc., an Oregon Corporation.