

a BRIEFING on OJAI as it MAKES the NEWS of the WORLD

Onward rolls the saga of the elephant on skates

Ojai has long been a haven for skaters, even if it did take nearly 15 years to build the Ojai Skate Park. Some longtime residents may remember one local skater who stood 8 feet 2 inches tall and weighed 8,700 pounds: Tarra, the world's only roller-skating elephant.

Tarra was captured from her home in Burma in 1974 and brought to Simi Valley, where she spent her days confined to the back of a truck. Carol Buckley, a local student and elephant lover, became Tarra's primary caretaker. With Buckley's help and two pair of extra-large skates, Tarra quickly learned the tricks of the roller-skating trade.

Buckley and Tarra eventually moved to Ojai. "Residents probably remember Tarra hiking the road into Lake Matilija with her three dogs and two African pigmy goats in tow," Buckley says.

For years, Buckley and Tarra traveled the country performing at zoos, circuses, on television and in motion pictures. But finally, Tarra traded in her skates for a paintbrush and watercolors. Yes, Tarra is also an artist.

Where is this phenomenon now? Tarra, who turned 37 this year, is retired at the Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee, which was co-founded by Buckley.

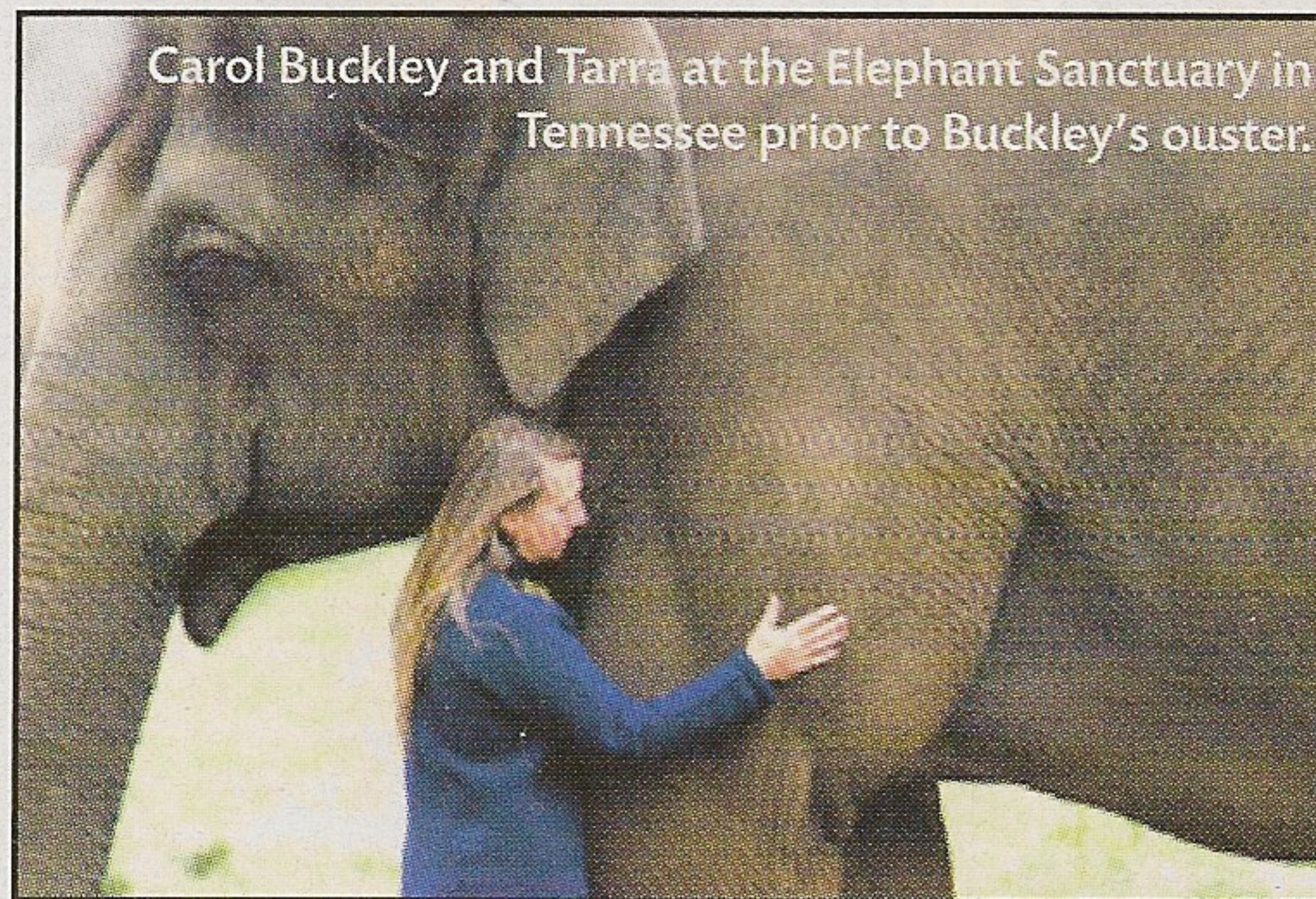
Buckley calls Tarra "my sole inspiration for the Elephant Sanctuary in

Tennessee and one of the most well-adjusted elephants I have had the privilege of knowing."

Tarra's retirement hit a few bumps recently, though, as Buckley was ousted last fall as executive director of the Elephant Sanctuary she founded. She was ejected from her house on the property, and barred from visiting Tarra. Buckley is countering to regain custody of her elephant. On Oct. 27, a judge denied her motion to request visitation, ruling that since

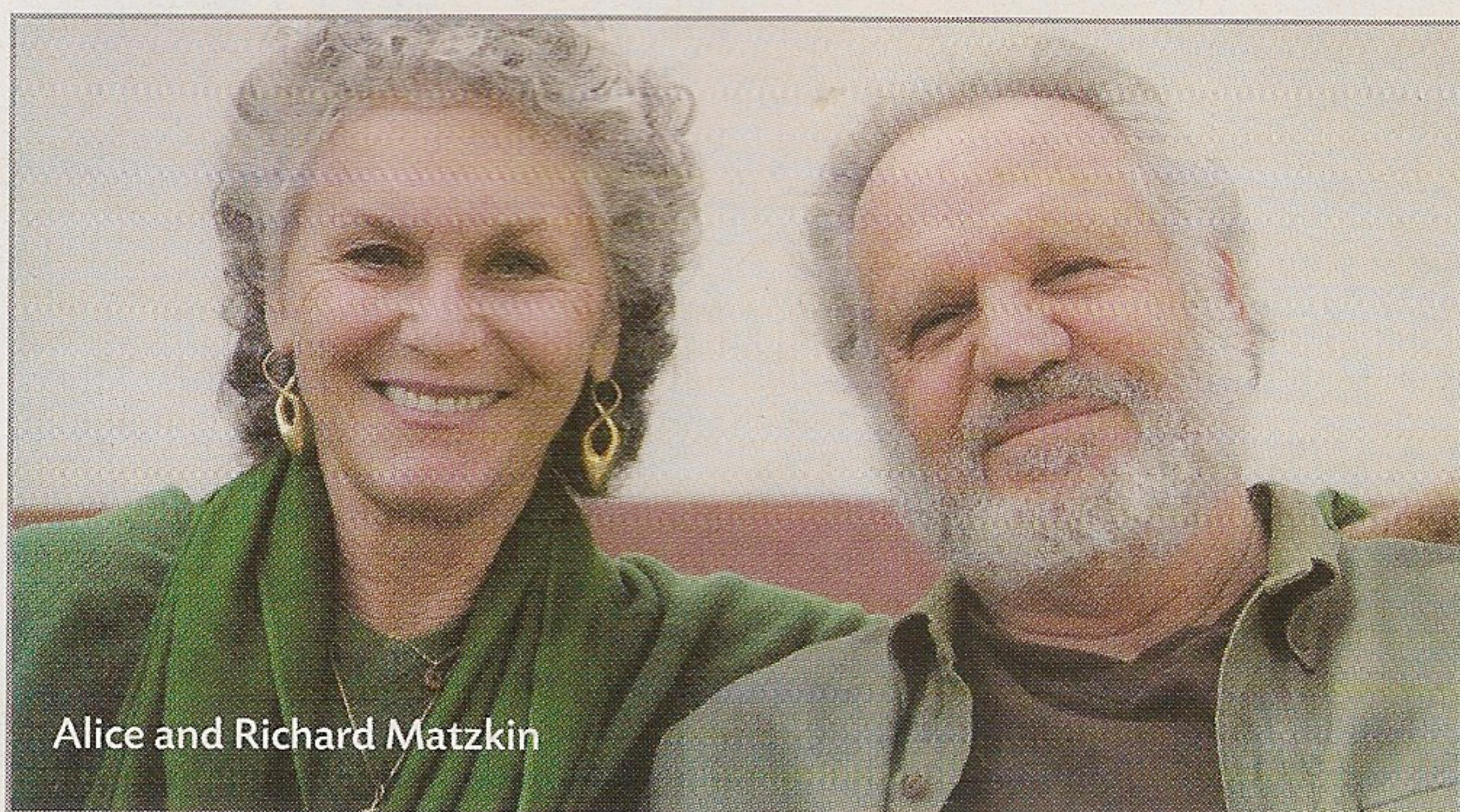
Tarra is the property of the Elephant Sanctuary, she is not subject to custody proceedings.

— Submitted by
Rebecca Unruh



OJAI NOTES

'Healthiest Brains' found in Ojai



Alice and Richard Matzkin

Keeping your mind and body healthy is not just about eating right or finding the time to hit the gym, it's also about pursuing passions that enrich your everyday life. An Ojai couple is living proof of that.

Earlier this year, the National Center for Creative Aging's America's Brain Health Index launched a campaign recognizing this year's "Beautiful Minds." The honorees are 11 Americans who have stood tall against the toll of age

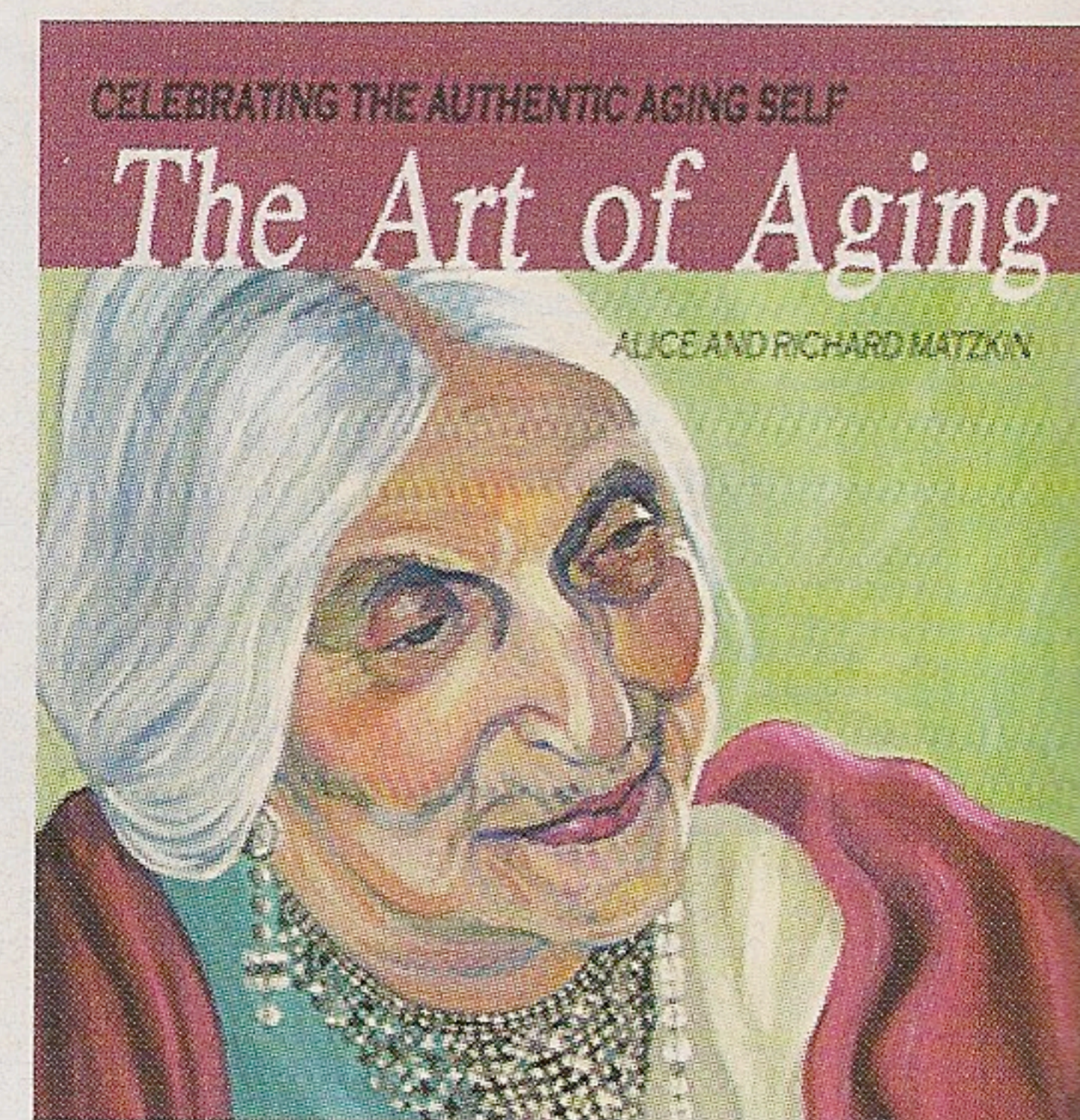
by keeping their minds active and healthy. The idea of the campaign is to inspire other Americans to reach their highest potential and keep their bodies and minds in tip-top condition, no matter their age. Two of these "beautiful minds" belong to Ojai's own Alice and Richard Matzkin.

Alice said, "When we saw the contest for the Beautiful Minds we thought it would be fun to enter as we feel that we are living our lives

in creative and fruitful ways. Being artists — painter and sculptor — we have successfully and gratefully used paint, canvas and clay to look for the positive side of growing older and to work through our fears about aging."

The Matzkins drew on their experience to write an award-winning book, *The Art of Aging: Celebrating the Authentic Aging Self*. "When we are working in our studio, we are ageless and free. There is no time, no worry. Just the joy in the present moment."

To learn more about the Matzkins and their work, you can view their website at matzkinstudio.com.



— submitted by Rebecca Unruh