

# On Their Own, on the road

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Postmedia Network

Eric Whitehead has always viewed travel as a way to connect with new cultures, people and places – ever since he and friend Murray Jupe took a road trip across America at the start of the 1970s.

That experience, with all of its ups and downs, formed the basis of his first book, *Then There was One, the Ultimate 70s Road Trip* – but also shaped his approach to travel, and to life.

With a family of his own, Whitehead continued to travel. Every year for 20 years, he and wife Karen would pack up their sons Gavin and Adam and head out on the open road for two to three weeks – getting lost, finding new friends, learning life lessons.

Even after their kids grew up and moved out, Eric and Karen continued to travel,

despite initial qualms. The big question, Whitehead says, was “are we going to be able to tolerate each other for 24 hours, without the kids to buffer? We did make up our minds to focus on what we had gained, not what we had lost.” And by keeping to the same budget they had when the family of four was travelling together, they were able to “hop on planes and go to places we never would have been able to afford.” Vietnam. Cambodia. Peru, and other South American countries. Every continent “except Australia. That one is on the wish list.”

Whitehead has now written a series of travel books, filled with photos that detail both his travels with the family, and with Karen. His latest, “On Our Own”, chronicles ten of the trips the couple took, largely off the beaten path.

“We’re not ones to jump on a bus and take a tour of Europe,” Eric says. “We’re certainly not ones that are going to go sit on a beach for a week.”

The adventurous approach makes for interesting reading, and inspiration. “If you want to learn about people and culture and religion, you can’t read enough books to get close to what you get by travelling.” It is, he says, *real* education.

There are limitations. Right now, Karen is still working, which limits the amount of time they can take for their travels.

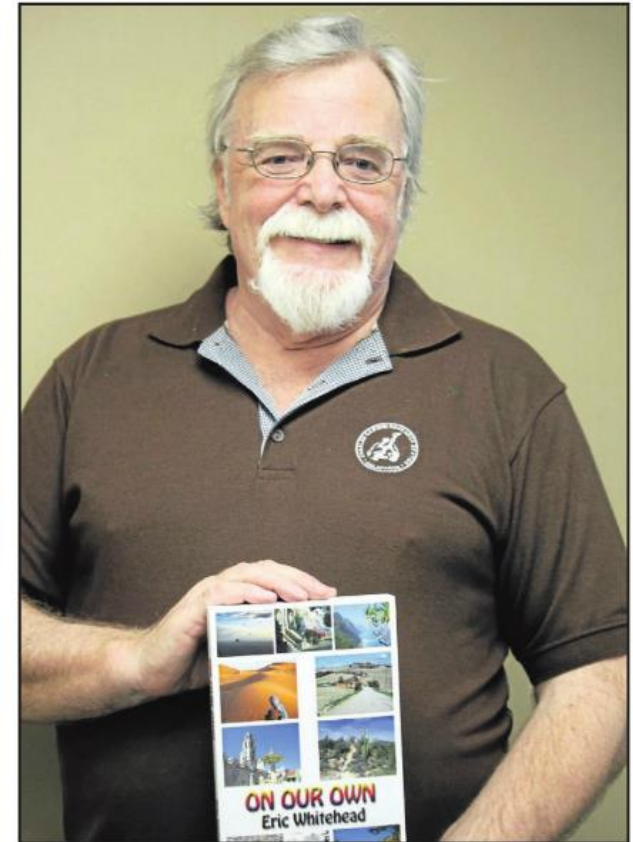
And rising security risks have restricted their travel choices. “It certainly alters where we would consider going by ourselves,” Eric admits. “It’s not worth the risk... Unfortunately, there really, truly is nowhere that is safe. There are some places that are safer.”

In flying around the world, they have flown into airports where security was strict, and some where “there is virtually no security at all. I don’t know which is worse.”

The couple have been together for 39 years, and show no signs of slowing down – and no regrets, although, says Eric, “I’m sure there are times she wishes we had taken the money we spent travelling, and used it to buy a nicer house.”

On Our Own is now available for \$25, plus shipping and handling, at [thatroadtripbook.com](http://thatroadtripbook.com), or contact Whitehead at [ewhitehead@rogers.com](mailto:ewhitehead@rogers.com).

In March of this year, Eric and Karen took a two and a half week cruise on an expedition ship to Antarctica, led by a team of scientists. It was an eye-opener, that brought home the reality of climate change – but that’s something for his next book.



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Eric Whitehead, Innisfil author, with his latest travel book, *On Our Own*.