

The Savvy Senior Journal

Fancy Floats, Fireworks and Family

By: Robin R. Rinke

When I think of the 4th of July, I naturally think of my hometown, Forest Lake, Minnesota. The 4th of July celebration was the largest event of the year for our small town of 10K.

Our town's celebration was so amazing that it was named the 4th of July Capitol of the state of Minnesota.

Fancy Floats

Back in the day, the two hour parade brought in all of the state celebrities, officials, beauty queens, marching bands, oodles of candy and gorgeously decorated, fancy floats.

The town also hosted a carnival, firework display and a Bingo tent.

Fireworks

Our lake home was directly across from town. My family always hosted a huge party after the parade. In the evening we had the perfect view of the firework show right from our beach - sometimes we would load up the pontoon and park in the middle of the lake with hundreds of other boats to watch them. I remember hearing all of the "Oooooohh's and Ahhhhhh's" echoing across the water as the sky lit up with the vast array of brilliant colors and designs.

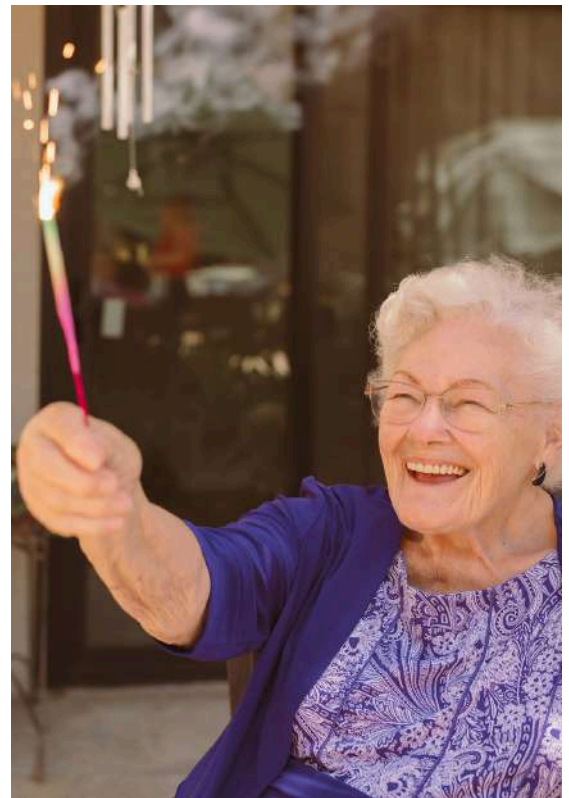
I also remember the year my brother and our cousins were blowing up cow pies with Chery Bombs in the cow pasture across the street. My brother ended up at the emergency room with a thumb tip that was half blown-off and one of the cousins ended up with cow pie all over his face. I stuck to the safety of sparklers and enjoyed waving the little, fiery, magic-wands in the dark.

Family

One thing I remember about the picnic is one of my aunts would always bring that dreaded Jell-O salad with all of the shredded carrots and celery. Whoever thought that recipe was a good idea was wrong. It always melted into my baked beans.

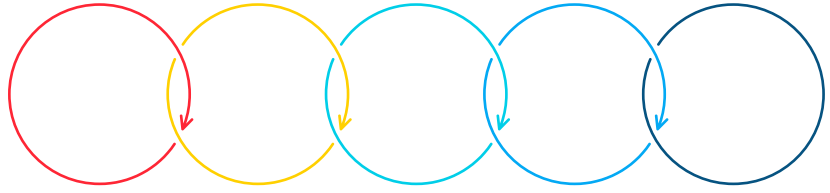
All day long us kids had fun swimming, boating, waterskiing and eating a BBQ picnic with family and friends; such fun memories.

This year marks the 100th year anniversary of our town's 4th of July celebration and I will be at the parade waving my little flag, entering the boat parade and probably lighting a sparkler that night with my grandchildren to celebrate our nation's birthday!



Let the Games Begin!

Guest Author, Hollie Kemp



Sports are something that unites the nation. People of all ages, backgrounds, and beliefs can come together to watch and celebrate the athletes who have worked so hard for their spots at the games.

“The spirit of sportsmanship transcends borders and unites the world.”

The 2024, Paris Olympics, starts on July 26, and runs until August 11, 2024. The world will watch as France takes a fresh new approach to hosting the games. The opening ceremony will take place along the Seine with an expectation of several hundred thousand spectators celebrating the athletes.

This year's Olympics will run at different locations around the city of Paris, making it a new and immersive city experience for all.

The Olympic games date back more than 3,000 years, with the first games taking place in ancient Greece. The Olympics have evolved over the years, but they remain the foremost games for athletes worldwide. The Paris Olympic Games will feature swimming, weightlifting, fencing, gymnastics, and more. For a full update on the game and to see the latest photos and updates, visit:

<https://olympics.com/en/paris-2024>



Featured Article

Part 7 of My 12 Realizations of: AS I GET OLDER

By: Paul Scanlon

BOUNDARIES ARE FOR ME, NOT FOR YOU.

Your boundaries are for you. They are not for other people.

I wish it would have come sooner as an occurrence to me that I was relating to others without boundaries.

I got into a lot of exhausting burnout relationships because I didn't understand boundaries.

Now I understand them more and I'm growing in my understanding.

Your boundary doesn't need to be approved by someone else for it to be a boundary.

Boundaries are about self respect, not someone else's respect for you.

A boundary is about you - respecting you.

Set a boundary because of self respect, self healing, self protection, self care and self love. That is why you set a boundary.

It's not for their care and their love of you, because they may not love you at all in the same way, after you set a boundary with them. It changes their space in your world.

A boundary is about, "these are my rules of engagement in a relationship." It's not their rules. They have their rules and you have to respect their boundaries.



If you've never set boundaries and you start doing it, people are going to freak out.

- What do you mean you don't want to have coffee with me anymore?
- What do you mean you are not going to return my calls?
- What do you mean?

A boundary isn't saying, "I want you to stop yelling at me." Setting a boundary is saying, "If you don't stop yelling, I'm going to leave the room."

See the difference?

This way empowers them to choose whether they do or not.

By YOU saying, "If you don't stop yelling, I'll leave the room," empowers YOU.

And a boundary is about empowering you, not controlling someone else.

**Be watching for Part 8 of this
12 Part Series in the
August 2024 issue
of
Savvy Senior Journal**



Pros and Cons of Senior Romance

By Terri L. Jones

So how is dating different now?

Gone are the days when you choose to date someone just because of their looks or sex appeal. According to the survey conducted by Choice Mutual, trust was most seniors' highest priority in a relationship, followed by honesty and communication. Sexual attraction ranked a distant eighth. You're also not playing around or playing games anymore. You want a deep connection.

While you may feel at a disadvantage because of your more advanced age, your past experiences can work in your favor. Seniors have good ideas in mind of what's going to work for them and what isn't. They've dated enough, they've been married, they've been in relationships, they know what they're looking for. Most of the reasons older adults seek a partner are pretty much the same as their younger counterparts: companionship, emotional support, affection, etc. However, these aren't the only motivations.

Often, it's a case of simply not wanting to depend solely on your children, friends, and neighbors for help or things to fill your time. By leaning on a partner instead, you're able to retain the same dynamic as you've always had with the other people in your lives, particularly your kids. And because you have more time to have fun in this stage of your life, you may be looking for a cohort to join you in your adventures. In fact, one study found that shared interests may be more important than shared beliefs in senior relationships.

A significant other in a senior romance can also help you manage health problems and has even been found to increase longevity.



The why nots?

Unfaithful or abusive partners or unfulfilling past relationships may make you gun-shy about exploring another union. And even if you didn't have a negative experience in the past, people who have been in decades-long relationships may feel there's no need to go there again. What's more, seniors often don't want the responsibility or the heartbreak of caring for a declining partner.

If you've lived alone for years, you may question whether you can adjust to sharing your space. (I can tell you from personal experience that I'm still getting used to it after a whole decade!) You also may be afraid that becoming part of a couple again will infringe on your newfound identity, autonomy, and lifestyle.

Many older women who want companionship are worried about living together or getting married because they lose some independence. Many are afraid of taking on household chores or losing financial independence.

When there's a desire for intimacy but concern about merging lives, many couples choose to live apart together (LAT), which means that each person maintains their own residence and the bulk of their lifestyle. This arrangement can take a lot of the day-to-day stresses out of the relationship, like taking out the trash or who ate the last bagel, while focusing on what's important: the relationship itself.

On top of other qualms, you may also be worried about how your family, particularly your grown children, will react to your senior romance.

Things You May Not Know About the Month July

- **Around 150 million hot dogs are consumed on Fourth of July. It is estimated that \$6.78 billion will be spent on food this year reported by the National Retail Federation (NRF).**
- **When the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, 2.5 million new people lived in the U.S. Now 243 years later, 327.2 million people live in the U.S. per google 2018.**
- **Americans spend \$1 billion on fireworks annually. Alabama imports roughly \$19,400,000 according to CNBC.**
- **More than 14,000 firework displays are put on across the country on July Fourth with Macy's Fourth of July Fireworks Display being the largest in the United States.**
- **In 1804, the White House hosted its first Fourth of July celebration.**
- **August 2, 1776 is when most of signers formally signed the Declaration.**
- **It wasn't until 1938, The Fourth of July was actually declared a federal holiday.**
- **Dating back to 1785, Bristol, Rhode Island is home to the world's oldest Independence Day celebration.**
- **The only member of the Continental Congress to formally sign the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, 1776 was John Hancock.**
- **The Yankee Doodle song was originally written by British army officers in attempt to make fun of backwoods Americans.**
- **John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Monroe were all United States Presidents who died on the Fourth of July.**
- **July 4th is also celebrated in the Philippines. The country was recognized as an independent nation in 1946.**
- **In "Treasure Hunt 2", Nicholas Cage predicted there was a treasure map but the actual message "Original Declaration of Independence dated 4th July 1776" is written upside down on the back of the Declaration of Independence.**
- **Massachusetts was the first state to declare Independence Day a holiday in 1781.**



Healthy Heart, Mind, & Soul

Friends Have Healthy Benefits...

There's nothing better than a good friend – one you can call when you're feeling down; those you're the first to go to when something great happens; the ones you can always count on. While it's true that as we age, friends may come and go, there's plenty to be said for those who stay – and the ones we make along the way.

Did you know that socializing beyond your normal friend and family group can have physical benefits, too? A study in *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* found that those who have more variety in their social interactions spent less time being sedentary.

Friendship can decrease the risk of cognitive decline. Socializing can help improve brain function and sharpen cognitive abilities. It can also lower the risk of dementia.

Social contact with family members, close friends or new friends increases positivity.

Those surrounded by a vibrant social circle are less depressed, isolated, and lonely. Many people find that they are at their happiest when they are around their friends and loved ones. Whether this is because laughter is contagious or because friends provide a sense of belonging, socialization can boost mood, increase feelings of happiness – and may even help you live longer!

Some older adults may choose to expand their social circles by joining senior centers; however, many seniors find that a senior living community offers a wider variety of programs, activities, and benefits – along with expanded possibilities for engagement and socialization.

Cheers to old and new friends!



Food For Thought...

Scoops = SMILES

By: Elizabeth Cruz, RCFE, MPH

Summer has recently commenced and will last until September 22, 2024. July is National Ice Cream Month, and this is the time of year when ice cream consumption peaks. In fact, the demographic that consumes the most ice cream is persons 55+ beating out the kiddos. This frozen treat gained popularity in the 1920's with the Volstead Act which established Prohibition in the United States. The Prohibition lasted from 1920 until 1933 and was a factor in the increased popularity of ice cream amongst the masses.

The inability to sell alcohol legally and innovations in storage, production and refrigeration had companies such Anheuser-Busch and others switching gears to stay afloat financially. During this time ice cream even became portable with inventions like the Good Humor bar developed by Harry Burt. Like all delicious treats there are some obvious cons if one should overindulge, such as weight gain, and heart disease. On the flipside there is a myriad of pros, that have folks continuing to come back for another scoop.

Scoops = SMILES, besides those basic ingredients of milk, sweeteners, and mix ins when you eat ice cream endorphins like dopamine and serotonin are released. The result is less stress, more good feelings and SMILES. Top three flavors, Vanilla, Chocolate and Cookies and Cream. I assure you flavors have come a long way too, my most recent ice cream outing was to a spot called Licked in Oak Park where I enjoyed a scoop of Lemon Meringue and my daughter had Strawberry Hibiscus. Take note of those big SMILES!



Assisted Living 101

As seniors navigate the nuances of older adulthood, there may come a time when certain challenges of physical, mental and emotional health become increasingly difficult to manage. And while the prospect of making the transition to an assisted living community can feel scary or overwhelming—for both seniors and their caregivers—the truth is that this option may actually support a greater quality of life for you or your aging loved one.

Of course, feeling confident that this lifestyle is the right one for you or the senior in your life depends on having accurate information about the realities of assisted living. The more honest insights you have at your disposal, the more equipped you'll be to decide if and when assisted living is the best path forward.

Beginning with the Basics

Depending on where you are in the knowledge-gathering process, it may be helpful to start at square one: understanding exactly what assisted living is, whom it is suited for, what types of care and support it provides, and how it differs from a nursing home.

What Is Assisted Living?

Truthfully, there is no single definition for assisted living with regard to the services and care a community will provide. There is, however, a common understanding of assisted living as a residential offering for seniors or other individuals that require a certain level of nursing care and other daily support services. An assisted living community generally provides residents with a blend of housing, care and daily assistance, and applies a particular emphasis on activities that help seniors become stronger, healthier and more social or active.

Whom Is Assisted Living Suited For?

Assisted living communities are ideal for seniors who require assistance managing the tasks of daily living. A senior who struggles with ongoing tasks such as getting in and out of bed, bathing and/or managing their medication may be an ideal fit for life in an assisted living community, as these environments are staffed with care professionals around the clock.

What Services Does Assisted Living Provide?

Assisted living communities provide just that: assistance, at whatever level a resident may require to navigate daily life—while still managing most activities on their own. Residents in these communities do not require constant care, but rather still maintain a level of independence. You may, for example, be able to get around on your own, but you might have some difficulty getting dressed or doing laundry. Staff members working at the community are available to help with those tasks.

The level of support and care seniors can expect to receive at an assisted living community does vary depending on the options in your location. Therefore, it's important to consider which communities provide the services you or your aging loved one need.





Unveiling the Reality of Religious Scams Targeting the Elderly

In an age where technology connects us globally and information flows freely, one might assume that vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, would be shielded from exploitation. However, a particularly insidious form of exploitation continues to thrive, religious scams targeting the elderly. These scams prey on faith, trust, and a desire for community, leaving victims financially devastated and emotionally shattered. Let's delve into this troubling phenomenon and explore how we can protect our seniors from falling victim to such schemes.

The Predatory Nature of Religious Scams: Religious scams take advantage of the deep-seated beliefs and values held by individuals, particularly the elderly, who may be more devout or trusting due to their life experiences. Scammers often pose as religious figures, charities, or organizations, leveraging familiar symbols and language to gain the trust of their victims. They use a variety of tactics, including phone calls, emails, and even door-to-door visits, to initiate contact and manipulate their targets.

Common Forms of Religious Scams:

- **Fake Charities:** Scammers create bogus religious charities or organizations, soliciting donations for purported causes such as helping the poor, supporting missionaries, or funding religious initiatives. These scams can be difficult to detect, as they often mimic the names and missions of legitimate charities.
- **Miracle Cures and Blessings:** Exploiting the desire for healing or spiritual blessings, scammers peddle fake religious artifacts, miracle cures, or blessings for a fee. They may claim to possess special powers or connections to divine forces, preying on the vulnerable and desperate.
- **Investment Schemes:** Some religious scams masquerade as legitimate investment opportunities, promising high returns or guaranteed profits to investors who support religious causes. These schemes often involve complex financial arrangements and can result in significant financial losses for victims.

The Devastating Impact:

The consequences of falling victim to religious scams can be devastating, especially for the elderly who may be living on fixed incomes or limited savings. Beyond the financial losses, victims may experience feelings of betrayal, shame, and disillusionment, as their faith and trust are shattered by those who exploit them.