

An Anthology of
Timely Tidbits and Fascinating Factoids for

Savvy Jersey Seniors



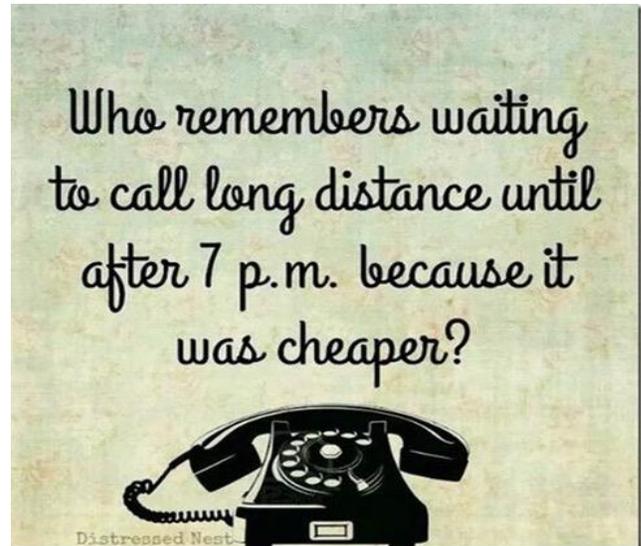
Advice, Humor, and Miscellaneous Words of "Wisdom"
For & About Seniors

Volume 3, Numbers 3 & 4 • March and April 2022

Welcome!

In this double-issue edition of *Savvy Jersey Seniors* for March and April of 2022, we present:

- the link between decluttering and dementia,
- why housework may be a key to keeping your brain sharp,
- the advent of over-the-counter hearing aids,
- why good fingernail hygiene is important,
- why almost half of people over the age of 50 report having the best sex of their live, plus
- more "fascinating observations" on being a senior that you can pretend that you made up...and use to poke fun at yourself and your friends.



We also continue our look at the avocations and hobbies of our readers. In this issue Pitman's Charlotte Ryan tells us about her career as an award-winning amateur photographer. By the way, please don't forget that we always welcome your ideas for any topic that you'd like to see us tackle. And, as noted, we're especially interested in the avocations and hobbies of our readers. Just drop us a note at savvyjerseyseniors.com.

Decluttering and Dementia

You might think de-cluttering would make it easier for people with dementia to do daily tasks. Not so, says a new study from the United Kingdom. "It is generally assumed that a person with dementia will be better able to carry out daily tasks when their home space is tidy and clutter-free," said professor Eneida Mioshi.

The study included 65 people with either mild, moderate, or severe dementia. They were asked to carry out daily tasks such as making a cup of tea or a simple meal. Their ability to do these tasks was assessed in two locations: their own homes and in a fully furnished research facility meant to replicate a home setting. The research facility was free of clutter while the participants' homes were left as they were and had varying amounts of clutter.



Occupational therapist Julieta Camino said, "We thought that the complete absence of clutter in our research bungalow would play a beneficial role in helping people with dementia with daily living activities. But we were wrong."



Housework May Be A Key To Keeping Your Brain Sharp

Are you looking for a way to stay mentally quick and physically strong? Start scrubbing. Researchers say housework may be a key to keeping your brain sharp as you age. A new study found that in older adults, cleaning house was tied to a better memory and attention span, and stronger legs, which helps prevent falls.

Housework is a purposeful activity performed by many older adults and represents a significant share of their self-reported moderate-to-vigorous physical activity. As

such, it's a key complement to recreational physical activity. In the study group, light housework included window cleaning, changing the bed, vacuuming, mopping and chores involving sawing, painting and repairing.

The researchers noted that their study doesn't prove housework causes sharper thinking or better balance, only that there appears to be a link.

Seniors Wary of Covid Scams

Are older people more likely to fall for COVID-19 scams than younger generations? Despite a prevailing mentality that older people are less up to speed on the latest technology and 21st century scams, new research suggests that cautiousness concerning scams does not vary between age groups.



By October 2021, the US Federal Trade Commission reported more than 270,000 COVID-19 fraud cases that cost their victims a total of more than \$580 million.

But according to research published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, older people are not more likely to respond to these scams than younger or middle-aged people, despite being the target of scammers.

Instead, older people are significantly more wary of the claims the scam messages are making than younger generations.

Hobbies and Avocations: Photography

Pitman, NJ resident, retired college professor, and award-winning amateur photographer , and *SJS* reader Charlotte Ryan shares some thoughts on her adventures in the world of photography.

"I enjoy sharing my vision, spirit, and the 'fortuitous luck of light and timing' through photography," says Ryan. "The art of photography need not intimidate those who consider themselves technology troglodytes. Consider your cell phone as a path to a new avocation. Many phones have excellent cameras with incredible zoom and macro availability.

"Prepare to be astounded by the level of choices, quality, and price as you begin your research. In addition, a plethora of online tutorials, classes, and photography groups stand ready to be your faithful assistant.

"If you prefer actual human interaction, there is no better social and educational opportunity than joining a photography club. Your newly found tribe will gladly provide excellent advice, gentle critiques, and perhaps some fine wine choices.



"Field trips with my clubs have included Laurel Hill Cemetery at night (with special permission from an employee) and a Cape May event we titled 'Trash the Dress Day'. We assembled on the beach and photographed a club member wearing a wedding dress knee-deep in the Atlantic.

"Whether with a club or solo, there is no limit to what and where your discovery lies. I've become an explorer of naturally created portals, rocks, and crevices as well as unusual doorways, and windows. It brings to mind the philosophy of singer, writer, and poet, Leonard Cohen, 'there's a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in.'"

Charlotte has exhibited in local libraries and galleries from Art Space in West Cape May, to fundraising for The American Littoral Society in Red Bank. Her images are

currently at the Mullica Hill Art Center and Pitman library.

Notecards are available at Words Matter bookstore in Pitman. She has been the recipient of several Rowan at Gloucester County College Juried Art awards. You can visit her website: www.charlottesweb.vpweb.com.



OTC Hearing Aids Are on the Horizon

Over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids are a new category of hearing aids that consumers may be able to buy directly, without visiting a hearing health professional, sometime this year.

These devices are intended to help people with perceived mild-to-moderate hearing loss. Like traditional hearing aids, OTC hearing aids will make sounds louder so that some people with difficulty hearing are better able to listen, communicate, and participate fully in daily activities.

In addition, OTC hearing aids will be regulated as medical devices by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

OTC hearing aids will be an alternative to today's FDA-regulated hearing aids, which are currently only available from hearing health professionals, such as audiologists, otolaryngologists (ear, nose, and throat doctors), and hearing aid specialists. The hearing health professional fits you for the hearing aid, adjusts the device based on your hearing loss, and provides other services.

When OTC hearing aids are available, you will be able to buy them directly in stores and online, where today's hearing aids are not available. You will fit them yourself, and you may be able to control and adjust the devices in ways that users of today's hearing aids cannot. Some OTC hearing aids might not look like today's hearing aids at all.

45% of Those Over 50 Report Having "Best Sex of Their Lives"

A new survey of 2,000 Americans aged 50 and older found that 45% reported having the best sex of their lives as they've aged.

In fact, the results showed that one in eight respondents have sex at least five times a week.

Conducted by OnePoll, the survey found that 35% are surprisingly more intimate than ever before and the same amount said their sex drive is higher than when they were younger.

More than a third of people over 50 would like to be more intimate but don't have the time (38%)—likely because 42% claimed they were "always working," while 39% were living with others or often have family coming over.

Nearly half of those whose kids are out of the nest said their sex life had improved dramatically.



Although some Americans 50 and older don't have as much time to be intimate as they'd like, more than half said they take advantage of their free time by being intimate with their partner (56%).

Good News: Seniors Experiencing Decline in Serious Cognitive Impairment

The percentage of older Americans reporting serious problems with memory and thinking has declined in recent years—and higher education levels may be part of the reason, according to a new study.

Researchers found that between 2008 and 2017, the proportion of older U.S. adults reporting "serious cognitive problems" declined from just over 12% to 10%. The reasons are unclear, but an increase in Americans' educational attainment over time seemed to account for part of the trend.

In 2008, 13.6% of women reported serious cognitive problems, a figure that declined to just under 11% by 2017. Meanwhile, men showed a smaller relative decline—from 10.2% to 8.8%.



Esme Fuller-Thomson of the University of Toronto says the decline in cognitive problems is encouraging. "Most older adults are functioning at a high level, and continue to contribute to society and thrive," she says. Many studies have linked higher education levels to a lower risk of impaired thinking and dementia, according to Fuller-Thomson.



Good Finger Nail Hygiene Is Important

Our finger nails are the index of well-being for our entire body. The manifestations of several critical diseases were first detected within the dirty nails. Because finger nails can be the breeding ground of harmful bacteria, it's important to practice good nail hygiene.

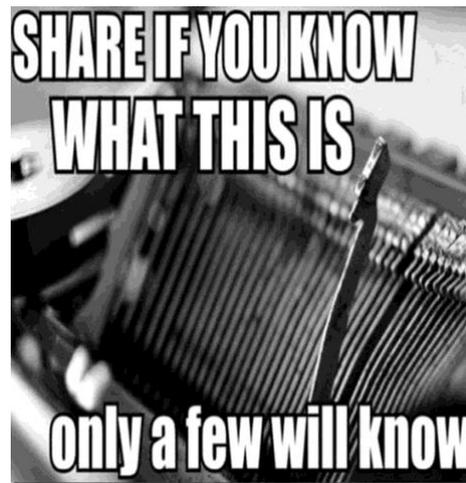
Here are some tips:

- *Keep your finger nails dry and clean.* It prevents bacterial and fungal infections from growing under the nails.
- *Keep hands and nails moisturized.* This helps avoid the cuticles from overgrowing.
- *Do not chew your fingernails.* It has the potential of damaging the nail bed as a minor cut can cause infection. Moreover, when we bite our nails, germs enter our mouths directly.

- *Be gentle towards hangnails.* Never pull off your hangnails. Rather, be gentle towards them and carefully clip them off. Stop using those products which are harsh on nails. Always go for acetone-free products.
- *Go for a regular nail checkup.* If you have a persistent nail problem, consult a doctor or dermatologist for an evaluation.
- *Do not share your nail clipper.* Try not to share your nail clipper, as they contain germs. Wash the nail clipper with lukewarm water and wipe with a soft cloth.

Do You Remember...?

Typewriters with "keys"? Or mechanized lists of alphabetized contact names? Or their successors, the Rolodex?



Day-Long Regular Movement Beats Gym Visits

A new study says that even daily gym visits don't have the positive impact that day-long regular movement does. In fact, the study authors say, people who do choose a regular gym activity as their only workout may be less fit than people who are on the move during the day. "The biggest challenge we see is the tendency to do what we call 'substitution,'" says Jason Fanning of Wake Forest University.

Substitution is when a person does a regular gym activity—be it a class or a workout—and then compensates in a negative direction, feeling they've already succeeded in their daily workout and weight-management goals.

"When (a short period of) vigorous activity replaces the regular, things like walking the dog and other activities, it can lead to a regaining of weight as well as a loss of muscle mass," says Fannin.



Positive Thinking Aids Those With Family History of Heart Disease

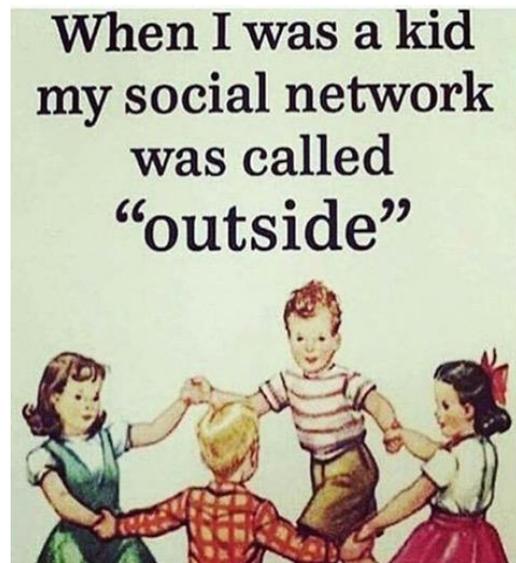
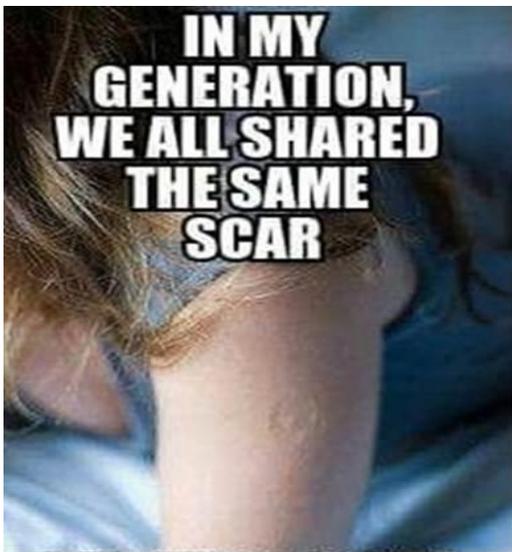
People with a family history of heart disease who also had a positive outlook were one-third less likely to have a heart attack or other cardiovascular event within five to 25 years than those with a more negative outlook.

That's the finding from Johns Hopkins expert Lisa Yanek, M.P.H. The finding held even in people with family history who had the most risk factors for coronary artery disease.

Positive people from the general population were 13 percent less likely than their negative counterparts to have a heart attack or other coronary event. Yanek and her team determined "positive" versus "negative" outlook using a survey tool that assesses a person's cheerfulness, energy level, anxiety levels and satisfaction with health and overall life.



But you don't need a survey to assess your own positivity, says Yanek. "I think people tend to know how they are." There is definitely a strong link between positivity and health. Additional studies have found that a positive attitude improves outcomes and life satisfaction across a spectrum of conditions—including traumatic brain injury, stroke and brain tumors.



Forging New Friendships Is Essential

Forging new friendships during your golden years may require a little extra effort. As you get older, common life changes such as the loss of a spouse, loss of hearing or vision, retirement, and issues with health and mobility can take their toll on your social life and, by extension, your well-being.

Friends, however, are essential. That friendships improve physical and mental health isn't news to John Moore, DO, an Aetna medical director and senior health specialist.

During his 17 years of practice, he saw a marked difference in the health outcomes of older patients who were socially active compared to those who weren't.

The difference was especially clear among people who had complex, chronic conditions like diabetes or emphysema and had to stick to a daily regimen of medications and healthy routines.

"Patients who were socially engaged tended to have better outcomes despite their complex conditions," says Dr. Moore.



"They could have diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, congestive heart failure, or all three things, and still be doing better because of their improved mental health, their regular social activities, and their dedication to taking care of themselves so that they could continue their regular social activities."



Studies have found socializing can strengthen the immune system. It can help us recover more quickly from illness, lower blood pressure and the risk of heart disease, sharpen memory and help us even get a better night's sleep.

Socializing can also improve our odds of living longer. According to one study, people with strong connections to family and friends have a 50% greater chance of outliving those with fewer social ties.

Friends can strengthen our immune system, help us recover more quickly from illness, sharpen our memory and even help us live longer

Another Trip Down Memory Lane

Do you remember having to make covers for your school books from brown paper bags? Or having to defrost the freezer compartment of the family refrigerator? Or playing outside from dawn till dusk on long summer days...with a break for lunch (maybe). Or "family dinners" at the same time every night?



Downsizing: Why Do It?

There are generally five reasons why people decide that they need to downsize:

1. Maintain a "safe" home.
2. Prepare for a move to a smaller home.
3. Minimize the cost of a planned move.
4. "Declutter" so that a home on the market looks "larger" and will sell more quickly.
5. Distribute items they are giving up "their way."

And some tips on how to get started:

1. Start now...don't procrastinate.
2. Work a pace that suits you...rest along the way.
3. Give yourself plenty of time, so that you don't make "rash" decisions you'll regret later.
4. Enjoy the process...re-read those old letters, chuckle at the clothes you and your friends and family were wearing in those people in those ancient photos.
5. Most important...remember that it's your relationships that you really treasure, not your possessions!

The People Who Make SJS Happen:

Our contributors include (in alphabetical order) Daryl Albury, Karen Berg, Lucille Bondi, Lou Ciavolella, Courtney Colletti, Churchill Huston, Antoinette Maciolek, Charlotte Ryan, Barry Sparks, Phyllis Weber, and Jared Willmann.

Contact Us:

And remember that if you have story ideas, comments, or criticisms, you can e-mail us at savvyjerseyseniors.com.