

Gym Rat Rantings

by Bob Ring



The Joys of Old Age

Lest you think I always harp on the negative, like the problems of old age ... this month I'd like to spout off about the joys of old age.

With a few exceptions, we can look around the Fit Center at our fellow exercisers and agree that we indeed made it – made it to old age that is. I say “with a few exceptions” because Shelley must be allowing some young studs and honeys to join us at the gym – probably just to keep our heart rates up and wandering eyes exercised.

To many of us, **leisure time** is one of our current joys. Or maybe I should say non-directed time, away from the jobs we retired from, or the kids who (finally) moved out. Whether it's golf, hiking, gardening, new hobbies, those classes you've always wanted to take, volunteer work, reading for pleasure, or just “vegging out” in the TV chair, it's great to have the freedom to do it and the time to really enjoy it. As one of you put it to me, we are released from most of our obligations. Our time and our activities are our own!

Of course **grandchildren** are a joy of older age. What do they say, “Children and pets keep us young.” Some of you probably have great grandchildren. How about that! Do you feel like the patriarch or matriarch of your family? Here again though, at this stage we usually visit our grandchildren, seldom live with them 365/24/7. And thank God! We get to do all the fun things and then return home to renew our energy without any burdens of moral responsibility – that's their parents' job.

Travel is certainly a perk of old age. At least while we can still get around to enjoy it. These days we're more mobile; we like to take lots of short trips. We still drive; we're savvy about airports and train and bus stations. We've earned our senior discounts and offers from younger travelers to help with luggage. We're on the internet choosing those exciting tours to our dream places. We're working down our “bucket list” of places to see before we die.

New friends are definitely a benefit of old age. We put ourselves out there, meeting people to form new relationships and to have fun. We go to the movies, have lunch, play cards, join book clubs, taste wine, travel together, or go shopping. Whatever ... the payoff is pleasant companionship – and for a lucky few of us, a second love. Many of us come to the Fit Center regularly for exercise, but just as important, to keep up friendships and be available for help and support when someone is ill or injured.

Most of us older age people are happy because we **appreciate life** and make the most of what “we have been dealt,” so to speak. We try to actually live those trite sayings: “one day at a time” and “take time to smell the roses.” And you know what; there are a lot of roses out there and may you have many days ahead to enjoy them.