

An Anthology of
Timely Tidbits, Personal Stories, and Fascinating Factoids for

Savvy Jersey Seniors



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

Volume 3, Numbers 9 & 10 • September/October 2022

Welcome!

In this latest (double-issue) edition of *Savvy Jersey Seniors* for September and October of 2022, we present some first-person thoughts on four of the many interesting things that seniors across the region are doing, including:

- Why you should say "yes," if you're asked to volunteer,
- How just going for "a walk" during the Pandemic turned into a passion for hiking,
- Why you might want to consider ballroom dancing as a new hobby...studies have shown that it is "the best exercise to keep alert as one ages," and
- What it's like to serve as a caregiver for a loved one...and plan for a future when you might not be able to fill that role.

We also have the usual esoteric potpourri of topics, which this time includes:

- Attitude as the key to a long life,
- Whether Boomers are "sicker" than previous generations,
- The benefits of a dark bedroom, and
- Why only 7,000 steps a day may be a path to better health.

And, of course, we'll continue to share 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.

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 we've noted previously, we're especially interested in the avocations and hobbies of our readers.



In that vein, we really want to hear about the volunteer efforts that seniors across South Jersey are making on behalf of the literally thousands of non-profit organizations that serve our region. Just drop us a note savvyjerseyseniors.com.

How To Tell If You're Really Old

Here, thanks to BuzzFeed is a list of five things you might have done. According to BuzzFeed's Dave Stopera, if you've had to do at least 15 of the 32 listed at the site below, you are certifiably "really old." You can check out Dave's entire list at <https://www.buzzfeed.com/daves4/2000s-problems-checklist>.

Check off all the things you've done...



Said these exact words... "Call me back after 9 when my phone is free"?



Printed out directions "like a dang barbarian"?



Or worse, been forced to go inside a gas station to ask for directions?



Had your favorite VHS tape come out of the player looking like this?



Looked up movie times in a newspaper?



Had to keep a handwritten list of numbers in a drawer to remember everyone's digits?

It Started With A Walk Around The Neighborhood

It began with the Pandemic, says Thomas Edison State University's Senior Director of Communications executive and Ewing resident, Vikki Monaghan.

"My husband Bill joined me, and we found some trails in local parks that helped. The dogs stopped to sniff every bit of flora and fauna along the way, and nature became intoxicating for all of us. We learned we could walk longer and farther than we had imagined and walks soon became hikes. And so, it evolved.



"Locked in the house and working remotely, there was just nowhere to go. No new

restaurants to explore. No retail therapy wandering the aisles of Home Goods. And tur two Corgis just kept looking at me plaintively. And so, we went for a walk.

"Once around the neighborhood, became three-times-a-day around the neighborhood. And soon that was as boring as scrolling Netflix for a new movie.



"We really took off once I discovered the [AllTrails](#) app. The free app lets you search for trails in a given area and categorizes them as "easy, moderate, or hard." An added \$30 subscription gives you the ability to download trail maps for use in the wilderness where cell service is shaky. No more fear of getting lost when the blue blazes on the trees suddenly disappeared.

"And no matter where we are, we can always find a trail nearby, whether we need an hour walk to stretch our legs or a three-hour climb for some exercise.

"Invest in some sturdy shoes, maybe a small backpack for your water bottle and that sweatshirt you will want to shed half-way through the hike and get out there."

Walking Or Hiking Opportunities Across the Region...And Beyond

According to Vikki, there is an abundance of good walking or hiking nearby. You can start off with the flat trails of [Wharton State Forest](#) in the Pinelands or join bird-watchers seeking migrating species at [Edwin B Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge](#) near the shore.

The [Sourland Mountains](#) offer more challenging climbs in Central Jersey or there is a short 1-mile hike near Lambertville called [Goat's Hill Overlook](#) that rewards you with sweeping views of the Delaware River and the majesty of changing leaf colors this time of year.

"Before you know it, you'll progress to the Delaware Water Gap's [Mount Tammany](#) in the northern part of the state where you crisscross the Appalachian Trail and a bear encounter is not out of the question," says Vikki.

As the world has re-opened the Monaghan's new vacation plans include National Parks. A few years ago, they visited [Lassen Volcanic National Park](#) in northern California. "Unfortunately, the nearby Dixie wildfire cast an orange glow and rained ash down upon us as we navigated the otherworldly beauty of thermal pools at the aptly named Bumpass Hell Trail," recalls Vikki.



But it was "a fantastic experience" and inspired Vikki and Bill to hike three of [Utah's five](#)

[national parks](#) this past Spring. Visits to see their daughter in the Bay Area of California now include a day hiking the [Dipsea Trail](#) and hopefully soon, a trip to [Yosemite](#).

Vikki adds that if you feel that you're not ready to get out there yet, read [A Walk In The Woods](#) by Bill Bryson for some inspiration and a good laugh.

Advice From An Award-Winner: If Someone Asks You To Volunteer, Say 'Yes'"

As Nancy Gulick tells the story, when she retired from Rutgers University after a 37-year career as an Assistant Dean of Academic Advising, she wasn't sure what the next chapter of her life would bring. Her husband, John Drozdal, had coached many people through life transitions and he suggested that she take six months to explore different options. Just two months later, Nancy was asked to be on the Board of Interfaith Caregivers.



"I was certainly familiar with the good work Interfaith Caregivers did in our local communities, but I previously did not have the time to be involved. So, I said 'yes,' not realizing where that three-letter response would lead.

"Since joining Interfaith Caregivers in 2012, I have met many talented and thoughtful people who have served on the Board.

"I was a Board member for six years, including two as chair. Bob Mirabello and I organized the first Interfaith caregivers Haddonfield House Tour and co-chaired the event for five years. Through the tour I met many generous Haddonfield residents who supported our mission

by opening their houses to the community and others who toured the seasonally decorated homes.

"For the past four years I have been serving the clients, the heart of Interfaith Caregivers' mission. I have driven them to their doctors, hairdressers, grocery stores, theater classes and even bingo games. These connections were challenging during Covid but with the creative thinking of the Interfaith Caregivers staff, we worked it out with masks, social distancing and much caring. The clients' stories are always fascinating and each one is unique.

"On a personal level, I've been married for 11 years to John, a current IC Board member and Haddon Heights classmate from first through twelfth grades. We reconnected after we both were widowed. A few years ago we moved from Haddonfield back to our original hometown of Haddon Heights. My life has been 'interesting' and filled with unexpected twists and turns—like our clients!

"So, if someone asks you to volunteer, say 'Yes'! It will lead to meaningful changes in your life and in the lives of others." [*Nancy was named Interfaith Caregivers 2022 Volunteer of the Year.*]

Ballroom Dancing: A Great Way to Socialize...And Stay In Shape

Want a fun way to socialize, stay in shape, and have a great outlook on life? Something you can do no matter what your age? International corporate compliance law expert Joe Murphy says that "studies have shown that ballroom dancing is the best exercise to keep alert as one ages. It is creative, semi-athletic, social, and fun."

A founder of the region's premier ballroom dancing organization, Dance Haddonfield, Murphy adds that you don't even need a partner. "At Dance Haddonfield everyone dances with everyone else.

"What if you are an introvert but still want to meet people? That is me exactly," says Murphy.

"The lessons change partners often and so you meet everyone.



"Plus, Ballroom etiquette is that girls can ask guys to dance and one is expected to say yes unless you do not know that dance.

"Two left feet? Perfect, we have dancers with two right feet – you'll have a ball!

"We have two 45-minute lessons and then an open dance."

"The beginner lesson starts at 6:45 pm and open dancing is from 7:30 to 10:00. Just \$10 for the whole thing, and that includes dinner catered by China King. The intermediate lesson starts at 6pm for just \$5 more.

"You dance for just a few dollars with money left over every Sunday night," says Murphy.

For more information, would-be dancers can visit www.dancehaddonfield.org.

When Family Comes First...Serving as Caregiver For A Loved One

This story comes to SJS from our friend Deanne Farrell who is Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations at Rowan University in Glassboro.

Deanne writes "My friend, Connie, is a 60-year old living in Voorhees who serves as a support person for her 56 year old brother, who lives in Cherry Hill and was just diagnosed at the age of 48 with high functioning autism.

"Connie's support of her brother includes helping to schedule doctor appointments and going with him to be a second set of ears.

"She also assists with managing his finances to make sure bills are paid on time, connecting him with various social services, and encouraging him to 'streamline' some of his 'collections' when it seems his house is filling up.

"Recently Connie started thinking about her brother's future, should she not be around as long as he is.

Through a network of caregivers of adults on the spectrum Connie found Planned Lifetime Assistance of New Jersey (PLAN NJ), a nonprofit organization that helps families of people with intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities or with mental health challenges.

"The assistance comes in areas such care coordination, guided oversight of financial affairs, and compassionate actions to enhance quality of life.

"Connie is currently in the process of developing a LifePLAN for her brother, and is working with staff at PLAN NJ to put the tools and resources in place so that he can have a safe, secure, and rewarding life, even if she is not around to care for him," Deanne adds.

10 TIPS FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS

1. Seek support from other caregivers. You are not alone!
2. Take care of your own health so that you can be strong enough to take care of your loved one.
3. Accept offers of help and suggest specific things people can do to help you.
4. Learn how to communicate effectively with doctors.
5. Caregiving is hard work so take respite breaks often.
6. Watch out for signs of depression and don't delay getting professional help when you need it.
7. Be open to new technologies that can help you care for your loved one.
8. Organize medical information so it's up to date and easy to find.
9. Make sure legal documents are in order.
10. Give yourself credit for doing the best you can in one of the toughest jobs there is!

CAREGIVER ACTION NETWORK CaregiverAction.org



Attitude May Be Key To A Long Life

The key to a long life may be your attitude. Researchers at Harvard have studied the impact of optimism on women's life spans, finding that optimism was associated with greater longevity, such as living past age 90.

The research team used a psychological measure of optimism in which participants rate their feelings in statements such as, "In uncertain times, I usually expect the best."

The study found that the most optimistic quarter of women were likely to have a life span that was about 5% longer. They had a 10% greater likelihood of living past 90 when compared to the 25% of women who were the least optimistic.

Optimistic people may be better at regulating their emotions during stressful situations, have more favorable biological profiles, such as lower levels of inflammation, and greater social support.

Are Boomers "Sicker" Than Previous Generations?

Unfortunately, there's some discouraging health news for baby boomers. Americans born between 1948 and 1965 are more likely than the generations that preceded them to have multiple health problems as they age, a new study shows.

And many develop two or more health conditions up to 20 years sooner than folks from other generations, too.



I'M SO OLD I CAN
LAUGH, COUGH,
SNEEZE, AND PEE ALL
AT THE SAME TIME.



Researchers looked at nine chronic conditions: heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes, arthritis, lung disease, cancer (except skin cancer), depression symptoms, and trouble with memory and thinking skills.

Among adults with multiple chronic health problems, arthritis and high blood pressure were the most common for all generations.

But higher rates of depression and diabetes drove the surge in chronic conditions seen in Boomers, the investigators found.

Fungal Infection Most Common Cause Of Thick Nails

Thick nails can affect not just fingernails but toenails, too. The affected nails can be unsightly or cause discomfort. And thick toenails, if left untreated, can worsen and cause pain.



There are many potential causes of thick nails. By understanding the causes, a person may be able to prevent thick nails from forming and treat them quickly:

- Fungal infection is a common cause of thick nails.
- If nails unexpectedly change, consult a doctor to rule out underlying conditions.
- Treatment depends on the severity of nail changes and the underlying cause.
- Preventing thick nails by avoiding infections and irritants, and keeping nails dry.

People may overlook thick toenails in the early stages. However, as the nails get more obviously thicker, they may notice several symptoms, including:

- Brittle, easy-to-break nails,
- Bad odor from the nail,
- Nails lifting easily from the nail bed or not seeming fully attached to the nail bed,
- Difficulty in cutting or trimming,
- Easy splitting or cracking of the nail,
- Dirt or other debris under the nails, and
- Pain or discomfort.

You should contact a doctor if you notice your fingernails or toenails thickening or changing color or texture.

Seniors May Not Need 75% Of Antibiotics Prescribed

Three in four antibiotics prescriptions for patients 65 and older aren't needed, according to a recent study.



BE ANTIBIOTICS AWARE

SMART USE, BEST CARE

"For elderly patients, the stakes of these unnecessary prescriptions are high," said Eric Young of University of Texas Health Science Center.

"In older adults, inappropriate prescribing in primary care is associated with a wide range of adverse outcomes, including emergency hospital attendances and admissions, adverse drug events, and poorer quality of life."

Overall, 11 percent of these 5.7 billion adult patient visits studied resulted in antibiotics prescriptions, the analysis found.

Do I really need antibiotics?

SAY YES TO ANTIBIOTICS when needed for certain infections caused by **bacteria**.

SAY NO TO ANTIBIOTICS for **viruses**, such as colds and flu, or runny noses, even if the mucus is thick, yellow or green. Antibiotics also won't help for some common bacterial infections including most cases of bronchitis, many sinus infections, and some ear infections.

Antibiotics are only needed for treating certain infections caused by bacteria.

Antibiotics do NOT work on viruses.

To learn more about antibiotic prescribing and use, visit www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use

BE ANTIBIOTICS AWARE
SMART USE, BEST CARE

CDC

Antibiotics should be prescribed only for bacterial infections, which can include strep throat, bloodstream infections, bacterial pneumonia, urinary tract infections and some types of ear infections.

Antibiotics are ineffective against viral infections, such as the flu, and shouldn't be used for viral illnesses.

Keeping Your Bedroom Dark Has Surprising Benefits

Keeping your bedroom dark not only helps you get a good night's sleep, but may significantly lower your odds of developing three major health problems, a new study suggests.



"I just don't feel right unless I get my normal eight hours of semiconscious drifting in and out of sleep."

conditions, only that there may be a link. Dr. Kim said there may be a biological explanation beyond disrupted sleep that ties light to an increased risk for obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure.

Older men and women who used night lights, or left their TV, smartphone or tablet on in the room were more likely to be obese, and have high blood pressure and diabetes, compared with adults who were not exposed to any light during the night.

"Maybe even a small amount of light at night is not so benign, it can be harmful," said lead author Dr. Minjee Kim of Northwestern University.

The study doesn't prove that exposure to light during sleep causes any of these health

Most Males Who Die By Suicide Don't Have Mental Health Problems

A majority of American men who die by suicide don't have any known history of mental health problems, according to new research by UCLA professor Mark Kaplan and colleagues.

"What's striking about our study is the conspicuous absence of standard psychiatric markers of suicidality among a large number of males of all ages who die by suicide," said Kaplan. He found that 60% of victims had no documented mental health conditions.

Further, males without a history of mental health issues died more frequently by firearms than those with known mental health issues, and many were found to have alcohol in their systems, researchers noted.



In 2019, males accounted for 80% of all suicide deaths in the U.S. Suicide is the eighth-leading cause of death among males 10 and older.



Some Ways To Manage Anxiety And Stress

If you're feeling anxious and stressed over the recent adversity and hard times, you are not alone. Thousands of Americans are in the same boat.

Whether you're worried about the unsettled economy, your job, or the not so peaceful

Managing Anxiety



Cognitive Reframing

Examine & challenge your thought patterns to gain different perspectives on situations, ideas, or relationships



Thought Records

Write down your thoughts and reactions to slow your thinking and put into words what's in your head and heart



Behavior Activation

Incorporate activities that make you feel more positive, comfortable, and happier into your daily life



Exposure Therapy

Through visualization and gradual exposure, slowly work your way up to being able to physically tolerate your fear



Behavioral Experiments

Write your predictions of what may happen, test the experience, compare your predictions and actual outcomes



Stress Reduction

Use breathing exercises, grounding activities, or muscle relaxation to combat the physical effects of anxiety



Guided Discovery

Ask questions to reflect on the underlying beliefs to your thoughts, thought patterns, and conclusions

20 Therapy Tools to Manage Anxiety & Distress

ZENCARE.CO

protests, each of these are disturbing. If ignored, they can affect your mental and physical health.

Stress can be a physical reaction to feeling confused and frustrated by a situation. It will affect your sleep, eating patterns, and emotional health.

Here are some tips to manage stress.

- **Practice Meditation or Prayer:** Sit and breathe deeply for a minute or two. Then visualize white light or a sense of goodness flowing through your body while continuing the deep breathing.
- **Exercise:** Walk outside for at least 30 minutes a day. Being outside in nature helps you stay healthy and releases negative thoughts and tension.
- **Eat Nutritious Foods:** Add more vegetables, fruit, legumes and healthy snacks and less sugar and meats. High levels of sugar and carbohydrates can raise your stress level and play havoc on the immune system.
- **Take a Break from the News:** The latest news can throw your stress into a tizzy. So, don't tune in all day. Go outside and look at greenery and flowers.
- **Journaling:** A popular way to rid stress is to record your feelings and to write about your confusion, frustration, and anger. Be sure to

write what you're grateful for and perhaps three uplifting things that happened that morning or the day before.

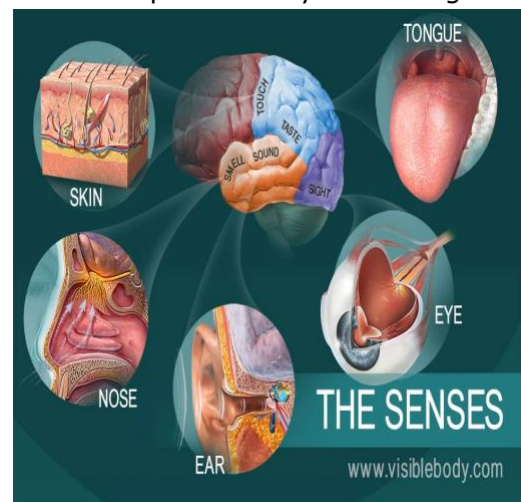
- **Talk with a Friend:** Just talking to someone about how you feel can be helpful. Talking distracts you from your stressful thoughts and releases built-up tension by discussing it.

New Study Suggests All Five Senses Can Be Compromised By Aging

Most people don't consider that all five senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch—can be compromised by aging. A new study suggests multi-sensory loss is very common in older adults. As much as 94 percent experience a loss of at least one sense or more.

Out of the 3,000 people in the study, 64 percent had at least one sensory deficit, 38 percent had two, and 28 percent had three, four, or even five.

Only a quarter of the participants had a sense of taste that could be categorized as "fair," while nearly half had a sense of taste rated "poor."



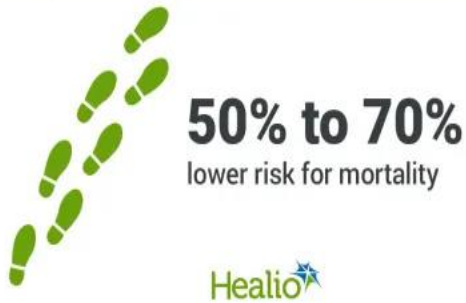
Dr. Jayant Pinto at the University of Chicago says many physicians underestimate the

dangers that can come with loss of taste, including reduced nutrition or consuming spoiled food, both of which can make a person seriously ill.

In addition, a loss of the taste sense likely means a decline in the sense of smell, since much of what we identify as the experience of eating is part of olfactory processing.

A Path to Better Health: 7,000 Steps

Adults who took at least 7,000 steps per day experienced a:



A Day May Go A Long Way

The fitness goal of 10,000 steps a day is widely promoted, but a new study suggests that logging even 7,000 daily steps may go a long way toward better health.

Middle-age people who walked at least 7,000 steps a day on average were 50% to 70% less likely to die of any cause over the next decade, compared with those who took fewer steps.

Lower risk of premature death was observed for both women and men, who took 7,000 steps are more, according to results.

Results showed that people appeared to gain more health benefits the more steps they took, with the greatest statistically significant reduction in mortality risk between 7,000 and 10,000 steps. After that, the benefits leveled off. There was no relationship between step intensity or speed and mortality.



Simple Leg Exercises Can Build Strength

Three simple leg exercises you can do while seated at your computer, sitting on the couch or in your favorite rocking chair can help you build strength and improve mobility.

- **Heel slides:** Start off seated in a comfortable position toward the end of the chair. Keep both feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart. Extend one leg and flex the foot by pointing the toes toward the ceiling. Keep the heel stable on the ground. Pull the heel as far

back toward the chair as you can, while still keeping it in contact with the floor. Do up to 12 reps and then switch to the other leg. Do at least three sets.

- **Knee extensions:** Start off in a comfortable position with your spine against the back of the chair. Leading with your toes extend one leg until it is parallel to the floor. Hold that position for at least three seconds, then bring the leg back down.

Do the same for the other leg. Do at least eight sets.

● *Calf raises*: Begin in a comfortable position with your back firmly pressed against the backrest. With both legs forming a 90-degree angle with the chair, lift both heels toward the ceiling while the toes are planted on the floor. Hold the position for three seconds before bringing the heels back to the ground. Do up to 20 reps of three sets.

Cartoonist Randy Glasbergen's "Thoughts" On Aging

Finally, some "thoughts" on being a senior from one of the great chroniclers of the vagaries of aging, Randy Glasbergen. See more at glasbergen.com.

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"What's the world coming to? Everyone at my class reunion had their identity stolen by some old person!"



"You're talking to your wallet again!"



"I tried smiling once. It made my gums bleed."

GLASBERGEN
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"I recommend hip replacement surgery for older men who aren't as hip as they used to be."

The People Who Help Make SJS Happen:

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