

## Turning 60 Has Its Ups and Downs

As fate would have it, today is my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. Not everyone achieves this advanced age, and I owe it all to clean living and blind luck.

I'm serious. You could do everything within your power to maximize your longevity and have it all be for naught. The odds may be infinitesimal that you'll ever be hit by a falling satellite, but on a planet this size - every now and then - someone gets really unlucky.

That's not to say you shouldn't be trying. A common sentiment among folks my age (and older) is, "Had I known I'd live this long, I'd have taken better care of myself."

Years ago, I began reading the obituaries every day (don't laugh - this will happen to you), and a distressing number of people younger than I are in them. Often they are victims of traffic accidents, but a surprising number succumb to random diseases. The most distressing obit I read recently indicated a 57-year-old died of "natural causes." *What?*

That's the medical equivalent of "Oh, well, that's to be expected." That seems awfully casual to me. Actually, I find it alarming that people my age could die at any moment from "natural causes." I don't even know what to watch out for.

Even though it's none of my business, I have developed a perverse interest in what causes people to leave this earth. When I read an obituary that fails to include this information, I'm certain this person died from some malady so horrible that it can't be printed in a family newspaper. I worry that I don't know what to worry about.

Mortality aside, my advanced age is underscored every time I fill out an online form that has a dropdown list for the year of my birth. About 25 consecutive years appear in the window and I have to scroll down the entire length almost three times to find a number that's close.

Another irritating reminder of aging is that my memory isn't what it used to be. It's to the point now that I can no longer set something down briefly where it "doesn't belong" and have a reasonable hope of remembering where it is later.

I'll still do that, but I force myself to speak the following words out loud (to the object I'm setting down), "This may be the last time I'll ever see you." That's sometimes enough of a mental marker for me to remember where it is.

Sometimes. Despite my having the above conversation with it last month, my cell phone went missing and it's still lost. I keep going through my daily routines thinking I'll run across it, but no luck so far.

In anticipation of that phone's almost-certain eventual misplacement, I originally loaded a security app onto it that allows me to access and activate its GPS tracking via the Internet. Unfortunately, I have no idea which app I loaded on it or what web site to go to, let alone what my username and password might be.

I activated a second phone shortly after I lost the first one. Within three days I misplaced it as well, but I eventually found it and gave it a good tongue-lashing. However, as I write this, I have no idea where my reading glasses are – it has been three days since I've seen them (so to speak).

On the bright side, one of the good things about living this long is that I have amassed a lot of life experiences that would probably allow me to keep from repeating my mistakes if I could remember what they were. Nevertheless, I'm looking forward to becoming 61 next year assuming I can avoid dying from satellite hits or "natural causes."

*Writers Group member Dave Parsons is aging rapidly, often at the business he co-owns on the Coralville Strip.*