



Surviving as a Senior



By Eleanor Rodgers, MD

An ad for a digital camera reads, "so easy to use you won't need help from your children."

A RECENT ARTICLE ON AGED EMPLOYEES tells how needs were satisfied for both employers and employees. The usefulness of the active aged, active either mentally or physically, is being recognized. Doctors may be less likely to toss off aged patients with a pat and a few kind words and may recognize that treatments for keeping living comfortable and stable and curative may be as valuable for the aged and the community as the same for youth and the middle aged. This article tells the story of a Senior Division in a cosmetics factory and the workers who state "it's good not to be competing with the young, not having to listen to their talk nor their music."

What we seniors accomplish is best tackled during morning hours. If I were more knowledgeable about physiology, I would know exactly why. Fatigue has something to do with it, I suppose. My dog, Michael, is full of pep in the a.m., grooming and walking his hedgehog toy and begging for an outdoors run. By noon he's napping until the mailman aggravates him sliding letters through the mailbox onto his floor. Then he's napping again, rejuvenating.

There's that problem with memory. Coffee and tea caffeine may help, perhaps a piece of chocolate, but loss seems inevitable. Wonderful ideas slip away too soon. But, they can be written down before they slip and other adaptations may be made for deficiencies. My busy physician cousin confessed years after carotid surgery that he had lost some speech, but carefully learned to substitute words and expressions. When the words returned, he didn't need them.

An ad for a digital camera reads, "so easy to use you won't need help from your children." We don't want to ignore our children's and grandchildren's abilities, but we hope to take their help and also continue our independence.

Where we live has a lot to do with what happens to us. Sacramento is in the national news. Not only because of a championship King's basketball team, but because energy production has been messed up. It is impossible to keep the calamity local or stateside and its management defects have become national.

Also, Sacramento is a hotbed of managed care and that fame has come to haunt it. Physicians are leaving, dissatisfied, and new ones are wary. Now there appears to be a physician shortage.

Still, simple living goes on. Schools put on their PTA sales for good works, squirrels run along the telephone wires, crows dare the cars to run them off the streets, garage sales spring up on weekends, dog walkers persist and wherever bird feeders are set out, little birds congregate. As usual. Family homes are painted and repainted and plumbing renewed. As always. Sacramento retains a core of stable citizens and families and the

active elderly. The City began on the edge of an unpredictable river and, through decades, has mastered several disasters. It will again. Time-tested senior citizens will help. And don't forget the power of the Senior citizen vote.

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