

# Cutler Bay NEWS

JANUARY 17 - 30, 2017

communitynewspapers.com

305-669-7355

## Please remind me again that age is just a number

BY ERNIE SOCHIN



To paraphrase the old MIT joke: "Several years ago I could barely spell octogenarian and now I am one."

As if I needed to be reminded, my gorgeous granddaughter, Natalie, interrupted dinner the other night to advise me that I am now more than eight decades old. Well, thanks for that.

Big deal you say? For me it is. Frankly I had not been aware of my aging until hitting that magic 80 number, which I am advised is just that, a number.

As I have aged I have noticed a very gradual decline of my physical and mental abilities, but nothing serious enough for me to be really concerned. Lately, however, that seems to have changed a great deal.

We all admit to having memory problems and they do get worse as we age. Fortunately I am still at an age where eventually that name that I am searching for will suddenly pop into my head, but it is usually an hour or so after I needed it in a conversation. I have heard the same complaint from many of my peers.

You would never think of it happening to me but each week when I turn on my computer to begin paying my bills I end up totally frustrated and tend to make a lot of mistakes. My assistant bookkeeper suggests that I go back to the days when we simply wrote out a check to pay our bills and keep copies in a big box.

Now, of course, I have a magnificent program that allows me to pay bills electronically, transfer funds, make and pay loans, and just about anything involving finance. This is great as long as everything in the computer is working properly and that I am not the least bit tired or groggy from my daily activities. Boy, have I made some doozer mistakes!

I am still trying to figure out all the things that can be done with my iPhone and I think I have about 10 percent of it down pat. Fortunately, I have a bunch of grandchildren to help me out when I get into trouble, which is quite frequently. How do those little runts get to learn so much about these extremely complicated devices to the point when they more or less laugh at me for being unable to do what to them is just basic stuff.

Okay, I admit that I am not a rocket scientist, but when I was younger, and that was a long time ago, my hobby was amateur radio and I used to build and operate all kinds of electronic equipment, transmitters, receivers, and all the stuff that went with them. Many people thought I was some

kind of genius. Naturally I thought anything technical or electronic that would come along later would be duck soup for me. Wrong again!

Mechanically, I still know how to hold a screwdriver and a wrench, the problem being that I simply do not know what to do with them. I recently had to change a lightbulb in my closet. My assistant maintenance person insisted that I call an electrician. Do you know how embarrassing it would be to call an electrician to screw in a lightbulb? My maintenance manager would not allow me to climb the one or two steps on a stool to reach the lightbulb.

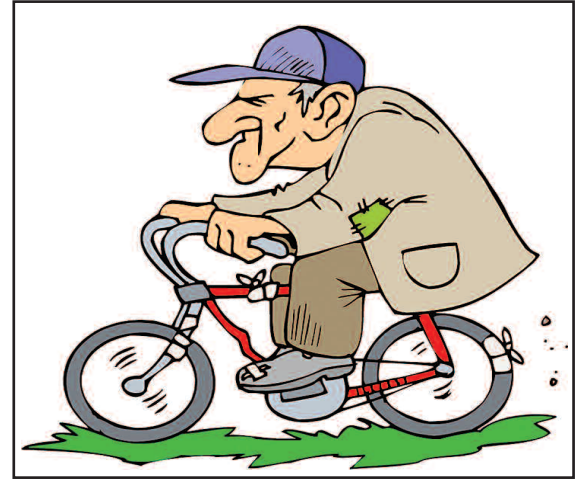
Of course, she had quite a few stories, as I have also, about senior citizens falling off ladders and stools and doing extreme damage to themselves. I really don't see myself in that category, but the boss is the boss.

You probably all recall my famous toilet seat story which took place when I was much younger and only a septuagenarian. The story is that I took on what I thought would be a simple task even for me, and that was to change a toilet seat. We all know that there are two bolts that hold the seat to the toilet and all I had to do was unscrew them and replace the seat.

Unfortunately the bolts were somewhat rusted and my wrench would not loosen them so I did the natural thing, got a hammer and screwdriver and tried to break them open so that I could remove the old seat. It worked except that I learned at that time that toilets are made into halves with an invisible seam separating them. When I tapped the bolts with my screwdriver the 2 halves came apart and flooded the entire bathroom and hallway with toilet water. My assistant maintenance manager was livid.

Several weeks after that I tried to do what any home handyman should be able to do and that is replace one of those little handles on an outside faucet. I did it and it looked great except it was at a slight angle. No problem for Mr. Fix-It. I grabbed my biggest wrench and gave the fixture a slight turn to straighten it out, at which point it sliced off from the wall perfectly flat with water pouring everywhere and my only choice to shut off the main water supply, naturally right in the middle of my laundry manager placing a load into the washing machine. Well I'll be damned if I'm going to call a plumber to replace a 99-cent water handle.

My lawyer-daughter had a great suggestion that I leave the house whenever any of these chores need to be done; call a service man who knows what he's doing to do the work, and then have me show up at the last minute saying, "why did you have to call a service man? I could've done that myself." This, of



course, would save me the humiliation that was sure to follow.

I own a golf cart which occasionally requires a little bit of maintenance, usually simple stuff that I think I can do myself. Just recently I spent almost an entire day trying to replace one of my headlights. Yes, I know any idiot can do that. Well not this idiot! I had to call my favorite golf cart repair man, Tim Taylor, to come and fix it because I was simply too busy to work on it. Oh boy!

Physically I had been a very active tennis player until I recently fell flat on my face while chasing down a ball. I decided it wasn't worth all the abuse my body was taking just to play a sport. You have all seen me riding all over the place with my bicycle. I still do, but much less now that I had my recent bicycle accident. That seemed to take some of the fun away.

I was at my local gym the other day complaining to some of my gym buddies about how old I was getting, etc. Their reply: You're still here aren't you? Giving that some thought, I realized I should be thankful for what I am able to do and enjoy that as much as I possibly can. Yes the weights at the gym have gotten much heavier lately but that is probably due to the imports being used by the gym. I can't explain it in any other way.

Fortunately, my town established some time ago what are called term limits — a very smart move. As a result, I am no longer able to serve the town as vice mayor as I have been doing for the past 10 years.

I will say this: I truly enjoyed virtually every minute of the time I spent in helping to build Cutler Bay into one of the most envied towns in South Florida and hope that my successors will continue to do likewise.

Happy New Year.