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Leave It to Geezer

Jerry Zezima

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Sunday February 11, 2024

Leave It to Geezer

By Jerry Zezima

The day after I turned 70, I got an email urging me to buy burial insurance.

“Now more than ever, it’s time to make sure your family is protected,” it said. “You may qualify for amazing rates on burial policies!”

I was sure I didn't qualify because I am not — at least so far — dead.

But I began to wonder if reaching a milestone, which is better than having a kidney stone, makes advertisers think you are not long for this world.

Even if you are still alive, you may be considered so decrepit that you will need to spend all the money you plan to leave to your family, which in my case would keep them in the lap of luxury for about a week and a half, on such geezer necessities as hearing aids, walk-in bathtubs, liposuction, hernia mesh implants, and knee or hip replacements.

I've gotten email pitches for them, too.

When I told this to my mother, Rosina, who will turn 100 in November and is sharper than I am (so are houseplants, but that's another story), she said, "Even I don't get these emails. They must think I'm dead."

Granted, Mom already has hearing aids, all the better (or worse) to pick up my stupid jokes.

"Maybe I should take them out when you're here," she said.

Her knees give her a lot of trouble, which means she will be sidelined for the baseball season. But at 99, she's too old to get replacements.

"I'd bounce back from the surgery," she said, noting that she has recovered from several broken bones in the past decade, "but I don't like hospital food. So I'll use my walker and do laps around the house."

"I may be 70, but I'm not too old for a knee replacement," I said.

"Do you need one?" Mom asked.

"No," I replied.

"How about a brain replacement?" she inquired.

"I haven't gotten any offers," I said.

"Keep checking your email," Mom said. "It would be worth the money."

My wife, Sue, who is my age, agreed.

"You could probably use one," she said.

Since we are about to begin a bathroom renovation, I asked Sue if she wanted a walk-in bathtub.

"No!" she said. "What am I, 90?"

Sue also said she gets emails about burial insurance and knee replacements.

“They must think I’m old,” said Sue, who is very youthful.

I admit that we should consider getting hearing aids because we frequently can’t make out what the other one is saying.

“You don’t listen to a word I say,” Sue will say.

I know she says this because every once in a while, I am actually listening.

Other times, Sue will start to say something while she is walking away. When I don’t respond, she will say that I am not paying attention.

If I do respond, she will say that she was talking to herself.

When I say something, it’s usually not worth listening to.

And when we are watching TV, one of us will ask the other to turn up the volume.

“Alarming fact: More than 48 million Americans hear so poorly that their quality of life significantly suffers as a result,” one hearing aid ad claims.

I hear what they’re saying, but I am going to pass up this tempting offer. In fact, I am going to ignore all the other email pitches I have been getting since I turned 70.

“Let’s print them out, dig a hole in the backyard and dump them in,” I told Sue. “Then those annoying companies could pay us for burial insurance.”

—Jerry Zezima

Jerry Zezima writes a humor column for Tribune News Service, which distributes it to newspapers nationwide and abroad. He is also the author of seven books, *Leave It to Boomer*, *The Empty Nest Chronicles*, *Grandfather Knows Best*, *Nini and Poppie’s Excellent Adventures*, *Every Day Is Saturday*, *One for the Ageless* and his latest, *The Good Humor Man: Tales of Life, Laughter and, for Dessert, Ice Cream*, all of which are “crimes against literature.” He has won eight awards from the National Society of Newspaper Columnists for his humorous writing.