## Senior Moments
with Emma Edwards

# Shaking nuts from family tree

I have been on a long adventure working on both sides of my family genealogy.

Working on such a project, as I suspect many of you have, is revealing. I have learned that every family tree produces some lemons, some nuts and a few bad apples.

I had my DNA taken two times in the last few years and I am working with three genealogical organizations: Familysearch.org, Ancestry.com, and FamilyTreeDNA.com.

There are many other search organizations and maybe some of you have interacted with them or become a member.

I suspect you've heard the expression, "I'm having more fun than a barrel of monkeys." Well, that is the absolute truth. Last week I learned that my grandfather was born in 1841 in Devonshire, England. Seventeen years later, he came to our country with two of his brothers and moved their wholesale butcher company here.

He died in 1896 of pneumonia. My father was born in 1886, so he was only 10 years old when his father died. I never knew that.

I can't help but wonder if losing his father at such as young age may have contributed to my father's troubled life as he was the baby in a family of seven children. It was a real treat when I found an obituary for the grandfather I'd never been blessed to meet. In the obit, he was described as "well known both in the city of Detroit and throughout the state and had many friends."

I even found my grandfather's draft registration.

I share these details because I want to encourage those of you who have not searched records for your family's origins to do so during this time of being homebound.

I ran into a cute cartoon the other day of two little children talking about their grandmother. One says, "When Grandma was young, she had to walk all the way to the TV to change the channels." Wow! In my case, we didn't have a TV until I was almost out of high school. On Wednesday evenings we went to the neighbor's home to watch broadcaster Arthur Godfrey.

Hopefully, we will have a bit of snow by the time this column hits the newsstands, which reminds me. I'm often asked where a person can buy this amazing news-filled Warrenton newspaper.

Well, for sure come Thursday afternoon of every week you will find the latest issue at our local Main Street Market. Even our gigantic Fred Meyer proudly carries a stack of our local Columbia Press. It can also be purchased at Warrenton Mini Mart, Warrenton Community Library and The UPS Store.

And not just because I am a columnist, but I believe it is the best buy for 50¢.

Oh, and it is available online on a subscription basis. Go to www.thecolumbiapress.com to get an online subscription or to have a copy mailed to you. Call Publisher/Editor Cindy Yingst at 503-861-3331 for any questions.

In the meantime, don't tell me you are bored ever again. Even if you don't have a computer, head over to the library and go to one of those genealogy sites. Or call the Astoria Mormon Church, which has genealogy experts twice a week who can assist you.

## Financial Focus
with Adam Miller

# With ultra-low rates, are bonds a good investment?

If you've been investing for many years and you've owned bonds, you've seen some pretty big changes on your financial statements.

In 2000, the average yield on a 10-year U.S. Treasury security was about 6 percent; in 2010, it had dropped to slightly over 3 percent. And, for most of 2020, it was less than 1 percent.

That's an enormous difference, and it may lead you to this question: With yields so low on bonds, why should you even consider them?

Of course, while the 10-year Treasury note is an important benchmark, it doesn't represent the returns on any bonds you could purchase.

Typically, longer-term bonds, such as those that mature in 20 or 30 years, pay higher rates to account for inflation and to reward you for locking up your money for many years.

But the same downward trend can be seen in these longer-term bonds, too. In 2020, the average 30-year Treasury bond yield was only slightly above 1.5 percent.

Among other things, these numbers mean that investors of 10 or 20 years ago could have gotten some reasonably good income from investment-grade bonds.

But today, the picture is different. (Higher-yield bonds, sometimes known as "junk" bonds, can offer more income, but carry a higher risk of default.)

Nonetheless, while rates are low now, you may be able to employ a strategy that can help in any interest-rate environment. You can build a bond "ladder" of individual bonds that mature on different dates.

When market interest rates are low, you'll still have your longer-term bonds earning higher yields (and long-term yields, while fluctuating, are expected to rise in the future).

When interest rates rise, your maturing bonds can be reinvested at these new, higher levels.

Be sure you evaluate whether a bond ladder and the securities held within it are consistent with your investment objectives, risk tolerance and financial circumstances.

Furthermore, bonds can provide you with other benefits. For one thing, they can help diversify your portfolio, especially if it's heavily weighted toward stocks.

Also, stock and bond prices often move in opposite directions, so if the stock market goes through a down period, the value of your bonds may rise. And bonds are usually less volatile than stocks, so they can have a "calming" effect on your portfolio.

Plus, if you hold your bonds until maturity, you will get your entire principal back (providing the bond issuer doesn't default, which is generally unlikely if you own investment-grade bonds), so bond ownership gives you a chance to preserve capital while still investing.

But if the primary reason you have owned bonds is because of the income they offer, you may have to look elsewhere during periods of ultra-low interest rates.

For example, you could invest in dividend-paying stocks.

Some stocks have long track records of increasing dividends, year after year, giving you a potential source of rising income. (Keep in mind, though, that dividends can be increased, decreased or eliminated at any time.)

Just remember that stocks are subject to greater risks and market movements than bonds.

Ultimately, while bonds may not provide the income they did a few years ago, they can have a place in a long-term investment strategy. Consider how they might fit into yours.

*This article was written by Edward Jones and submitted by Adam Miller, financial advisor at the Astoria office, 632A W. Marine Drive. To reach him, call 503-325-7991.*

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