Senior Moments
with Emma Edwards

How an understanding of math helped my violets

We seniors seem to have fun pondering unusual things, such as the fact that this year has four months with five Fridays and five Saturdays each.

So, if you're one of the many seniors considering re-entering the work force, study the following carefully.

It's good to find a job where you get paid every Friday.

Want to know why? Well, there are companies that pay simply by the hours clocked in while others pay monthly or bimonthly.

Think about it. Getting paid every Friday gives you four extra paychecks a year, right? In seeking employment, we don't often have a choice, but it's something to keep in mind.

There are so many jobs available in our area right now.

My first job (in 1950) was at a branch of a finance company.

I proudly made 75 cents an hour. I was paid every Friday. I wonder if I made more money in months with five Fridays?

In retrospect, working for a finance company didn't make me a math genius.

Come to think of it, there are things I'm unlikely to achieve in life including math proficiency.

Many of you know I pride myself on raising beautiful violets.

Let me brag a moment: Once I took a staircase picture of 12 of my violets all in amazing bloom!

I have a tray of only eight violets now, with only one in bloom.

Back to math now.

It dawned on me that I might have been overfertilizing the violets with my magic flowering solution.

So I measured the volume of my water in my green watering can and then tried to figure out how much of the solution to put into said amount of water.

For the life of me, I could not figure out the breakdown of how much to use.

The directions on the liquid plant food said to give one ounce per one gallon of water.

So how much to add to my one and a half quart watering can?

I got as far as "1 ounce equals 2 tablespoons" and was stumped.

My Bend granddaughter and her hubby dropped in one day last week.

So I brought up my dilemma.

They studied it and the granddaughter proceeded to draw a "pie" and divided it up and on and on.

I watched in amazement as she came up with an answer of 10 milliliters of liquid fertilizer per my one and one-half quarts of water.

Right or wrong I just went with it. Wish me luck!

Friday jokes are endless, but one of my favorite is this one: "Give a man a fish, and he'll ask for a lemon; teach a man to fish and he'll leave work early on Fridays.

Financial Focus
with Adam Miller

Don't run out of money in retirement

If you reach retirement with a significant amount of assets, you've done a great job of saving and investing. But now comes another challenge – making that money last.

You might think that this task, as important as it is, won't be as hard as accumulating the money in the first place. Yet, a sizable number of people have reached a different conclusion.

In fact, 36 percent of retirees say managing money in retirement is *more* confusing than saving for retirement, and 56 percent say they wish they had budgeted for more unexpected expenses in retirement, according to the Edward Jones "Age Wave *Four Pillars of the New Retirement*" study.

What steps can you take to become an effective money manager during retirement?

• *Set your goals*. Your money management needs will certainly depend, to some extent, on what your goals are for the coming years. Will you travel extensively? Stay close to home and pursue your hobbies? Or maybe even open a small business? Once you identify your vision for retirement, you can estimate how much it will cost, which will then dictate much of your spending and saving needs.

• *Stick to a budget*. If you've followed a budget throughout your working years, there's no reason to stop now – in fact, budgeting may be even more essential when you retire. Of course, you don't necessarily want to force yourself to be as frugal as possible – after all, you worked hard, saved and invested so you can enjoy a comfortable retirement lifestyle. Look for reasonable cost-cutting opportunities, such as eating out less often or eliminating streaming services you don't use.

• *Don't underestimate health care costs*. Even when you're on Medicare and pay for supplemental insurance, health care costs could still be one of your biggest expenses during retirement. Initially, budgeting for $4,500 to $6,500 per person annually may be a good starting point for traditional health care expenses in retirement. However, depending on your health, prescription drug usage and other factors, your costs could be higher or lower. And you may also want to estimate long-term care expenses as part of your plan.

• *Look for senior discounts*. Once you're a senior, you may be able to find discounts on a wide range of items and activities, such as movies, transportation, groceries, gym memberships and more. By taking advantage of these discounts, you can save a surprising amount of money and ease pressure on your cash flow.

• *Establish a sustainable withdrawal strategy*. For decades, you've been putting money into your IRA and 401(k). But once you're retired, you will likely need to start taking withdrawals from these accounts.

It's essential that you don't withdraw so much early in your retirement that you eventually run the risk of outliving your money. You may want to work with a financial professional, who can analyze your entire situation – assets, expenses, lifestyle, expected longevity, etc. – and recommend a sustainable withdrawal rate.

Keep in mind that once you turn 72, you may be required to take out a certain amount each year from your 401(k) and your traditional IRA, so you'll want to incorporate these withdrawals into your overall income strategy.

Do whatever it takes to become a good money manager during retirement.

You'll find that it's well worth the effort.

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