

MICHAEL N. GRAHAM

Quick Run—It's the AARP

I never disliked the AARP, in fact of the many organizations and associations that look after their members in Washington, actually I think they are one of the best. They genuinely have the interests of seniors in mind from lobbying against legislation that most dumb ass legislators want and will hurt their constituents to providing an array of benefits that even include discounts on travel or insurance among other things.

They don't hold conventions that show off guns that can kill many in a matter of seconds to appeal to base instincts of those members who attend. Rather their gatherings are much tamer, highlighting everything from insurance plans to best diapers for incontinence—in other words, a full range of subjects.

In fact, I will go further in my disclosure about feelings for the AARP, when I left my advertising agency in Washington, DC and moved to New York to another agency, AARP became one of my old agency's largest clients. The irony of all that was I was the only person at my agency, age wise, who could qualify for their membership.

So, what was my beef? I think it really boils down to something very basic in my peculiar, odd way of thinking—to me, their envelope in my mail screamed “you're old.”

It didn't matter to me that you could save 15% on auto insurance or at a Best Western motel, it said you are now at a stage of life when you are moving into the winter of your existence, hey pal, spring and summer have long gone. I am not sure why their mail that had on the envelope “we haven't heard from you” had such an effect on me. After all I didn't get that much mail anyway so I should be happy, the postman knew I was an old geezer and my dogs didn't care as long as I fed them.

But it all seemed that I had crossed this threshold and the threshold was defining me even though I had not gotten to 60---the letters started coming while I was still in my mid-50's. Wham, right into the garbage can, even despite my old agency asking would I come in, so they could run some advertising strategies past me since I was the only one old enough there to understand desired outcomes.

So that was it, I was running away from getting old and I was manifesting my rage at AARP envelopes. Suddenly now I was getting to the age of retirement, an age where in my mind I became less relevant, less important, less connected and I was scared.

Despite the downturn and uncertainty in the economy at that time, I still thought most saw retirement was more about travel, golf courses, proximity to bathrooms and getting the right doctors, not overlooking AARP membership benefits, cooking classes, saving on bulk purchases of Pepsi or Vodka at Costco, along with thinning hair line, drooping breasts and fattening waistline. In other words, most senior oriented preoccupations relating to those glorious (in other's minds) golden years aging process was what some consider sheer bliss. In my mind, the word "bliss" was interchangeable with "hell."

What to do? I had to run to find an adventure and stay young.

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