

# Depreciation: A Partially Avoidable Pain in the Assets

By Joe Klock, Sr.

Around the midpoint of the last century, I attended a class in real estate appraising. At the time, I was a rookie in the industry, which was later to provide a comfortable living for Firstwife and me, plus a gaggle of begats.

Imprinted in my memory to this day is a pronouncement by the instructor, Dr. Kurt Somebody, whose German accent also still echoes clearly. The precept was, in his words, that "all life is engaged in an inexorable march to ze junk heap; zerefore, ve must always strive to minimize ze impact of depreciation."

He was referring to the fact that the sworn enemies of profitable property ownership were physical deterioration, deferred maintenance and functional obsolescence.

Undeniably, unless they are repaired, replaced, updated and/or otherwise cared for, present buildings are future piles of rubble.

Although Dr. Kurt was alluding only to the fate of neglected real estate assets, I have learned (as will you, gentle reader, if you haven't already done so) that the same rule applies to our bodies - the most intimate of our lifelong dwelling places.

This opusette is about the aging process, in which we are all involved, albeit at different stages of development, redevelopment, repair, decay or "ze" aforementioned depreciation.

Composer/pianist Eubie Banks, more famous for having penned the words and music to, "I'm Just Wild About Harry,"

less famously said, "If I'd known I was going to live this long, I would have taken better care of myself."

Not a surprising comment, this, from a man who lived to the impressive age of 96, but an unexpected observation by one who smoked cigarettes for all but the first ten of those years.

Aside: By contrast, Wayne McLaren, one of several "Marlboro Men," kicked the smoking habit at 49 and the bucket at 51.

To say the least (and, one might say, the most) about aging, it ain't no game for sissies, but is almost always preferable to the only known alternative.

Mind you, at 85, I still have fully a quarter of my life ahead of me, assuming that I break the current world record for longevity - and fully 92% of it

remaining, should I better the survival achievement of Methuselah. (If you're not up to biblical speed, think of Larry King on steroids.)

Second aside: A contemporary Geezer recently wrote to me, expressing the belief that "we'll be getting out just in time, given the current problems and future threats facing the nation and the world."

From my present point of view, there is something to be said about that attitude, although I remain confident that more than a bit can, should, and will be done about what might rain on the parade of our descendants' futures. I write this without intending to be either a Pollyanna or a Klockeyed optimist. (Sorry, but I've long wanted to use that pun, so why

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...continued from page 8. not here and now?)

All that said, I'm keenly aware that most of today's problems and threats will outlive me; and I'm realist enough both to buy green bananas in small quantities and to evaluate 30-year roof guarantees with minimal excitement.

Back on the subject at hand: A practical view of healthy living is pursuing a lifestyle that slows the rate of dying - a process which some killjoy scientists claim begins at age 21, just shortly after the retreat of acne and parental restraint.

Basically, that's a bum rap, but it sits high on a totem pole of things we can't do anything about, so why sweat it?

Credited to Bill Gates is the remark that, "Life is not fair; get used to it," with which I concur. (Still, I can't resist adding how little trouble I'd have getting used to his circumstances, even at my

present stage of antiquity.)

Clearly, the best strategy is to pursue a behavioral pattern of physical, spiritual and psychological prudence in order to minimize the ravages of advancing age.

"Zose factors of physical deterioration, deferred maintenance und functional obsolescence," quoth Dr. Kurt, "are unforgiving foes," and he was as right as tomorrow's rains.

On the other hand, there was a very old guy who proudly boasted to an interviewer that: "I've never in my life smoked, drunk booze, eaten unhealthy foods, or engaged in excessive sexual activity, and I'll soon be celebrating my one hundredth birthday!"

"Really?" he was asked, "and just how?"

Again to say the least, a point worth pondering.

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