

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Gone Country

By Mikie Baker

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When you reach the stage in life where both of your parents are deceased, you begin to ponder your own mortality. After many nights of porch sitting, I have come to accept the inevitable – you can stay young forever if you quit reading your mail.

When did the end begin? For me, it was in my forties. I had heard rumor of the dreaded mid-fifties when your body started to wrinkle, droop and sag. It was discussed in whispers about the AARP card showing up in the mail. What I wasn't prepared for was receiving my application at the ripe old age of 49.

Talk about terrified. The American Association of Retired Persons was stalking me. Isn't there a law against scaring a middle-aged woman to death?

Then one of my 50-something buddies told me about the great discounts I could get, the travel deals and all the hip people who were featured monthly on the cover of its glossy colorful magazine.

Reality set in. It was time to give up my Cosmopolitan subscription, though I must admit I still skim through the "thirty wild ways to please your man" articles in the grocery store checkout line.

After awhile, I no longer feared AARP in my mailbox. No, I had bigger things to worry about – the deluge of hearing aid ads that followed.

"What?" you say? Exactly.

I'm still tossing the offers of new, bionic miracle ears because not understanding what people are saying has become rather entertaining for me. When someone says, "Can you help me find the mustard in the

fridge, please?” I usually hear, “Stan, who has free custard, is in France eating cheese.”

But yesterday, my whole world caved in after visiting the evil mailbox. I must be getting really decrepit because now I’m being courted with “Make your bath a haven. Not a hurdle.” Have I finally reached the age where my bathtub has become the enemy?

I couldn’t even stand to give a passing glance to this four-color brochure monster. In fact, I had to have a serious discussion on the porch with Stroke of Genius.

After pouring an extra large glass of wine, I plopped down in my sitting chair (which is still wooden and not electronic yet) and announced, “I received some disturbing news in the mail today.” SOG sighed and said, “What? Did the property taxes go up again?” I replied, “No. Worse than that. It’s no longer safe for me to take a bath on my own.”

I handed the evil communiqué to SOG who did something rather odd. He got all excited and said, “This walk-in shower is great! Let’s remodel the bathroom!” Do you think people who are concerned about their safety in the shower should really be using hammers and power tools for a room remodel?

Since the old boy was so thrilled with the idea and couldn’t find his readers, I was forced to read all the handy-dandy features to him.

Investing in my “independence and personal safety” reaps great benefits – “Hydrovescent Therapy warm air bubbles that sooth away aches and pains.” Guess it’s time to give up Aleve, too.

But the part of the brochure that bothered me the most was the limited time \$1,000 off coupon on the back. You know what the limited time was? One month. That’s it? I’m at the age where I’m that close to kicking the bucket because I shower too much?

No thanks. I’m sticking with my regular bathtub. It’s much easier to drown me and my aging sorrows in there.