

Traditions.... News from Traditions Wealth Advisors

Trip of a Lifetime

Told by Brien L. Smith CFP

My wife, Kathy, kept reminding me, this is a "Trip of a lifetime". We have returned from almost 2 weeks in Europe visiting our son who is in the seminary in Rome. My wife, my oldest daughter Kellie (who worked at TWA for 8 years until 2007), and her husband Chris, and I headed for Rome Friday morning June 24th from Houston. Landing at the airport in Rome we found it under construction, and definitely in need of an upgrade. Even a severely disabled person had to disembark the jet on to the hot tarmac and had to ride a bus to the terminal. The rest of my family might not have taken note of this, but I could not help to have my macro-economic mind in gear observing this and thinking this is the epitome of the chaotic, but beautiful, city of Rome. We spent the next 3 days touring Rome with our son, Chris. Yes, my son and son-in-law are both named Chris. The Vatican and Rome are wonderful, but Rome can seem somewhat disorganized. This is how they drive, as well. We did not dare rent a car in Rome, but when we hired a taxi we would hang on for our dear life, as they do not drive similar to us at all. If there are any stripes on the street at

all, they are pretty much ignored. It was not uncommon for our taxi drivers to veer into the other side of the street (where oncoming cars were) or in to the bus and bike lanes and they would squeeze in to the tightest spaces between a city bus and another Fiat. However, they did not wreck and my son said he has never seen a wreck in Rome. They also do not talk on their cell phones or text while driving either. We toured many Churches and tourist spots which was the big industry in Rome. We also had to pay cash for our B&B apartment and many restaurants, as the Romans and Italians distrust their government much more than we do and do not want any paper trails from a credit card that their government tax authority can trace. The government "tells" them what their income should be (similar to our property taxes) and it is up to the Italians to prove that they make less income than the government suggests they do. From Rome we took a nice train to the small town of Verona, Italy. We biked throughout the town and again I did not see much industry, but quite a bit of tourism. Verona is the home of Romeo and Juliet where we en-



The Smiths at the Vatican

joyed a one night stay. The next morning we caught an early train to our next stop in Salzburg, Austria.

Salzburg was probably our favorite stop as it is a gorgeous middle sized town of about the same size of Bryan/College Station except for the weather and surrounded by the Alps. Like Verona and Rome, Salzburg was a mid-evil aged town with beautiful architecture of their buildings and Churches. What we really enjoyed was that the classic movie "Sound of Music" was filmed here. So we had to take advantage of the "Sound of Music" bike tour. Being on the border of Germany and Austria, Salzburg did have more industry than just tourism. I noticed quite a few "Pharmacia" or drug stores which appeared to be privately (See Trip of a Lifetime–Page 4)

TWA Welcomes Michael Maerz To the Staff

Traditions Wealth Advisors is pleased to announce and welcome Michael Maerz as the newest member of their team. Michael will be responsible for client services as well as marketing needs for TWA and its partner firm, Spirit Fiduciary Partners.

Michael comes to TWA most recently from the Courtyard by Marriott hotel guest services. Michael received several letters of recognition from both guests and the staff for the outstanding services he provided. Prior to working for Marriott, Michael worked for the TJX Corp (T. J. Maxx). With 30 years of experience there, Michael worked as an Area Merchandising Lead, Cash Office Manager and Corporate Trainer for new store openings. Most recently, he served the local store in both the Merchandising Manager and the Operations Manag-

er capacity. As a member of the management team in the College Station store the store increased in volume by 3 million over an eight year period.

“I have lived in College Station for 21 years and love living here. College Station is my home” says Michael. He is a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church where he serves in many ministries. At church, Michael is currently active in the retreat program (ACTS) serving on the leadership (Core) committee. Michael has served on 5 men’s retreat teams and most recently was the co-director of the retreat held in January, 2016.

“Michael is excited about his position at Traditions Wealth Advisors. He is looking forward to serving our clients and growing with TWA. Michael will “be an asset to the team by making



sure we take care of all of our valued clients”, says Brien L. Smith, CFP®, CEO.

A graduate of Southwest Texas State University (Texas State), Michael received his BBA in Business/Management in 1982.

5 Important Documents to Assist with Estate Planning

There are many different steps to building a strong estate plan so once you pass away, your loved ones will not have to deal with tough decisions during a stressful and emotional time. These five documents are a great start to making the transition of your assets as smooth as possible for your relatives. 1)Durable power of Attorney--Naming a trusted person as your power of attorney so that if you become physically or mentally incapable of making decisions, he or she can make them for you

2) Advanced Medical Directive--This document outlines your medical and

life extending measures so that your loved ones do not have to make those hard decisions.

3) Last Will and Testament—A If you become physically or mentally incapable of making decisions, he or she can make them for you.

2) Advanced Medical Directive— This document outlines your medical and life extending measures so that your loved ones do not have to make those hard decisions.

3) Last Will and Testament— A clear legal guide to how your assets will be distributed.

4)Trusts— Talk to you financial advisor about what type of trust is best for your individual needs.

5) Letter of Instruction— a private letter, not legally binding, that explains to your heirs the thoughts behind your will and trust .

It is important to store these documents in a safe place, and to look over them regularly. Also, make sure these documents whereabouts are known to the appropriate people



Social Security Timing Decisions

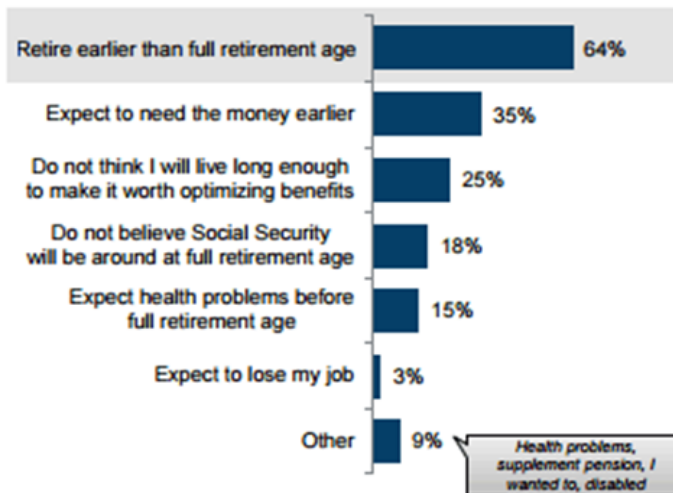
Aug 3, 2016 / By Margarita Abramova,
Horseshoorn Assistant Editor

August Chart Talk: The age when Americans file for Social Security can strongly impact their retirement income over a lifetime. Here's why they choose to claim this benefit earlier or later in life.

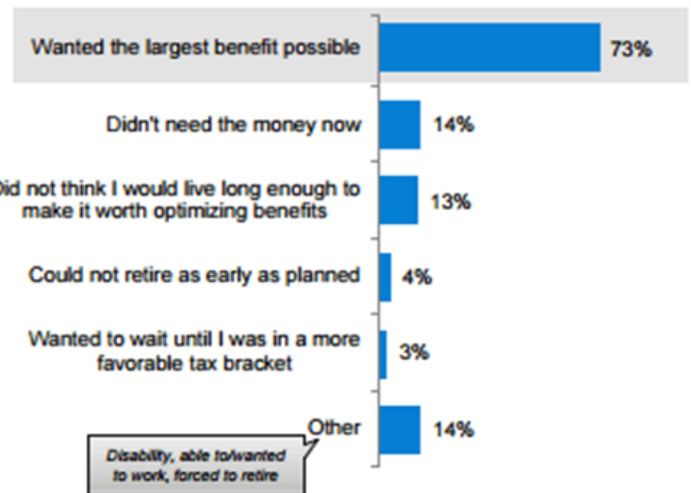
Of those people who want to take their Social Security benefits before full retirement age, about two-thirds (64%) cite early retirement as the biggest reason, followed by the expectation that they will need the money (35%), and the belief that they won't live long enough to make ben-

efit optimization worthwhile (25%), a 2016 Nationwide Retirement Institute Consumer Social Security Survey reports. Individuals who decide to delay Social Security benefits cite wanting to maximize their benefits as their biggest motivation.

Reasons Would Start Drawing SS Early*



Reasons Would Start Drawing SS Later



Meet Our Interns

JOSHUA AMELUNKE- Joshua is from The Woodlands, TX where he graduated from Concordia Lutheran High School in 2012. As a member of Trading, Risk and Investments Program (TRIP), he is currently pursuing a BBA in Finance and a Masters of Financial Management from the Mays Business School at Texas A & M. Prior to joining TWA, Joshua held a position at Trafigura Trading LLC in Houston. Joshua enjoys running, working out and reading. His post-graduate plans include working in energy finance/ trading. **ALYSSA HODGE-** Alyssa comes to Texas A & M from Seguin, TX, where she graduated from Navarro High School. Alyssa

is a Finance major at TAMU and has been competitively shooting shot-guns for 10 years. Alyssa is a member of the TAMU Trap & Skeet team as well as the Texas A & M Cupcake Club. Alyssa is excited about her new position at TWA and hopes to learn a lot about the financial industry. **RICHARDO (RICK) GONZALEZ-** hails from Laredo, Texas where he graduated from United High School in 2012. Rick is one of 24 students in the Professional Program of Accounting at Texas A & M University where he will get his Bachelors Degree in Accounting and his Masters in Financial Management in the Spring of 2017. When Rick is not studying or working

he enjoys watching sports and movies in his spare time.. **JOSH HARRIS-** graduated In 2012 from Wakeland High School in Frisco, Texas. In May of 2016, Harris finished his undergraduate in Finance from Mays Business School. Currently, he is working on his Masters of Financial management at Texas A & M, which he will complete in December 2017. Josh has earned the rank of Eagle Scout and has been a server in a local Mexican restaurant for the past 3 years. In his free time , Harris enjoys participating in events hosted by the Century Men's Society, a men's organization which he co-founded in 2014

A Trip of a Lifetime...continued from page 1



operated, as opposed to Italy where there were very few "Pharmacia" and if you found one at all in Italy, they only had one brand of each item. No selection of aspirin, just one brand and the government sets the prices. They had quite of bit of retail, including numerous high end shops, as well as a famous salt mine close by, just over the border in Germany. We took a tour of the salt mine deep under a Bavarian mountain, however when I inquired I was disappointed to find out it was owned by the German state government of Bavaria, not by a private concern. The mine was excavated 450 years ago, when Kings ruled over Europe and salt was a very coveted and expensive commodity. Today the salt mine is much more automated and salt is not as expensive as it was 450 years ago. Another industry in Austria is microbrew houses for beer. And we found an inexpensive 600 year old beer garden at a monastery in Salzburg called Augustiner, named after the Augustine monks that brew the beer.

Our last stop on the train was Munich,

Germany. We stayed at a few construction cranes in Germany house in a nice village that I did not see in Italy. The BMW (must be 100k population exec. and his wife were not pleased to be called a city in Germany) without air conditioning. However, they might not need it as the temperatures only varied from mid 70s F. down to 49 degrees F. on the morning we left Munich. While in Munich we rented a car and I drove on the autobahn (not nearly as fast as some who blew by me in the fast lane). Again, like Italy, I saw no texting or cell phones in use by any drivers (of course it is hard to do while driving a stick shift standard transmission car). With the rental car, we were able to visit the spectacular Neuschwanstein castle that was the inspiration for the castle in Disney's Sleeping Beauty movie. This castle was built by Bavarian king Ludwig 2 but never finished completely (but mostly), as he ran out of money and had too much debt. His Kingdom of Bavaria was captured by the Prussians and he had no taxing base (always a good idea for adequate cash reserves and not too much debt!). Again we found a beer garden next to a monastery. However, this time I was able to talk to a BMW executive while eating my pork and beer. It was interesting to listen to him and his wife's opinion of Angela Merkel and the Brexit. Although a good economy, Germany still has a little socialist democracy leaning. I noticed quite a few construction cranes in Germany that I did not see in Italy. The BMW exec. and his wife were not pleased with the U.K. as they knew that meant that Germany and it's taxpayers would have to foot more of the debt for Greece, Portugal, Spain and possibly Italy. The German couple also complained that the E.U., from Brussels, Belgium, even regulates how curvy their bananas can be. We also had a bike tour in Munich with a Scottish tour guide. Our seasonal worker had quite an adamant opinion on the "Brexit" and predicted his homeland of Scotland would leave the United Kingdom and then join the E.U. He said that the Scots were more liberal, closer to the Germans. While he exclaimed that the Brits were more conservative like the U.S. Munich is a large metropolitan city of 1.5 million people and has quite a few large multinational corporations headquartered there, like BMW. In fact, the new Munich airport was the epitome of the Germans versus the Italians. It was clean, organized, large and new, but not as friendly as the Italian people or its airport. Speaking of warm, we then flew home to the oven we call southeast Texas. From 49 degrees with very little, if any, humidity to 98 degrees with high humidity and a heat index of 108 degrees in the same day. Although, hot in the summer, we love this place we call home. Is it time for Aggie football? Let me know if you would like more details of this trip.