

Young Love?

Here in the western world we are obsessed with youth. Our media is saturated with images of the young, beautiful and happy selling us products on the back of the promise that we will become like them if we should only buy this face cream or that car or this insurance policy. The fantastic and circular equation this fallacy is based on seems to be that youth=beauty=success=desirability=love=happiness=youth etc. One only has to look at our icons of romance to see the indelible link between youth and romance. In fact, two of our most famous romantic icons, Juliet and Pocahontas (as lauded by Peggy Lee in the classic love song ‘Fever’) were so young at the time of embarking on their turbulent romances that they would not, today, be considered of legal age. In amongst all this, one could easily be left with the impression that beyond the age of thirty, all hope for romance is lost. Happily this is not so! Our senior citizens are getting involved in the dating game in their droves. [blossomup](#) Actually in all probability they have been doing it for years but the older generation, certainly in Britain, are renowned for their discretion almost to the point of coyness. Luckily for social analysts and writers like myself, a convergence of recent phenomena makes it possible to now gain a much fuller impression of just what our seniors are getting up to! Recent years have seen an explosion in the number of ‘silver surfers’, that is to say people of retirement age or above who are web literate to a greater or lesser extent and are making regular use of the Internet. The same period has seen a rapid growth in the online dating industry. The result of these two phenomena is that we can see quite plainly, looking at the figures, that it’s definitely not just the young folks who are looking for love online. A recent study carried out by my company revealed over 14,000 active dating site users over the age of 65 compared to an average age group membership of just over 25,000. With numbers like this it’s understandable that seniors are regarded as an important demographic by us in the online dating industry and hardly surprising that classes in Internet dating are springing up at places like the Pleasant Hill Senior Centre in Contra Costa, California. With a population that is increasingly ageing as the baby boom generation reach their 60s and take a greater knowledge and awareness of current and developing technologies into their later years, it can only be expected that this phenomenon will increase. And so it should be! Why should the spring chickens get a monopoly on the joys of spring?