

Peter Vannucci: How a Local Senior Gold Medalist Stays Fit

By Tara Martinez

For the last several years, 82-year old Peter Vannucci has made local headlines for his gold medal-winning performances at the Long Island Senior Games. Born in Little Italy and raised in Flushing, Vannucci's life has been filled with all the ups and downs of an adventurous but stalwart New Yorker. From participating in school sports and church musicals as an adolescent to lifeguarding at Jones Beach for 18 years, he has made being active a lifelong habit.

For Vannucci, who lives in Northport, competing in the Long Island Senior Games was a no-brainer. He found out about the games from his wife of 60 years, Joan Corkery Vannucci. "She read about the games in the paper and told me about them. So, I entered in 2004. I felt that since I was competing in my age group that I could enjoy it. Have some fun with it. I started when I was 74. Let me tell you, time goes by fast when you're having fun!"

Among his other interests are life insurance for Baby Boomers, as he is a semi-retired certified financial advisor, and sports. Once active in high school sports, Van-

nucci's current fitness routine consists of water sports, weight training and various household tasks. "I go to a personal trainer twice a week and I swim four to five times a week. I do different exercises. I stay phys-



Vannucci and Sondra Rose were crowned LI's first "Savvy Seniors" King and Queen.

I am physically active around the house. I have an acre property and a big house so there are a lot of things to do. I also take vitamins."

His motivation for staying fit is what Vannucci calls the "alternative." After suffering a heart attack in 1993 and overcoming cancer in 1997, he insists that activity and

weight management are key points in anyone's fitness. "What motivates me is the alternative way of life and that's letting a heart attack or cancer prevent me from doing what I want to do. I was 210 pounds when I had my heart attack. I am now 150 pounds, only 10 pounds more than when I started as a lifeguard at 17. Weight is very important in staying healthy. Do not carry extra weight on your body."

Vannucci's advice for other seniors looking to get in shape? "Walking, swimming and stretching are things that anyone can do. You can get just as much out of a proper walk as any other exercise. It's also good to get one of your buddies to work-out with you. When you have someone else, you're more apt to follow through. Lots of people have good intentions but when someone is going to meet you at your door at eight in the morning, you're going to be there for them," he says.

He also wants other seniors to know that he's always available to help at anytime. "If anyone has any doubts or hang-ups about what they can do, give me a call. I'm all too happy to help." Peter can be contacted at 631-261-2116.

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