



**the professor is in!**

By **Dudley L. Poston, Jr.**,\* Dominion Resident

# I'm a "Lucky Few" How About You?

In my last column in *Life @ The Dominion*, I wrote about birthdays, the months and days when we were born. I was born on November 29, a very unpopular birthdate. My granddaughter Kara was born on September 15, a very popular birthdate.

In this column, I'll talk about generations. A generation is a "birth cohort," a group of people who have in common the fact they were all born during the same years. Generations are important because if we understand them and how they differ, we'll be better able to understand ourselves and others. Most of us have children and parents and grandchildren and bosses from other generations we're trying to figure out. If we approach them the same way we approach ourselves, we're going to make mistakes. If we really want to understand them, we need to know when they were born.

I was born in 1940, so I'm a Lucky Few. Jason Smith, the Publisher of *Life @ The Dominion* was born in 1979, so he's a Gen X'er. My friend Jon Trautman, who writes the monthly beer column

for *Life @ The Dominion*, "What's Hoppin," was born in 1946, so he's a Baby Boomer. *Life @ The Dominion* team members Barbara Neisendorf, Story Finder, and Sara Kenworthy, Editor/Content Coordinator, were born in 1953 and 1969. So Barbara's a Baby Boomer and Sara's a Gen X'er.

What are you? Check your birth year in the table on the opposite page, and you'll find your birth cohort. There are eight different birth cohorts starting back in 1871. Their names tell us something about them and their lifetime experiences.

The first, the **New Worlders**, were born between 1871 and 1889. One-quarter of them immigrated to the U.S., and the U.S. was then known as the "new world," so people who moved here were known as New Worlders. A famous New Worlde is Army Corporal Alvin C. York, who in World War I killed 25 enemy soldiers and captured 132.

The next group, the **Hard Timers**, were born between 1890 and 1908. They lived during an era that included a world war, a disas-

trous economic depression, and then another world war, a string of calamities that all but smothered them. They're also known as the Lost Generation. The Medal of Honor recipient Lieutenant Eddie Rickenbacker is a Hard Timer.

The **Good Warriors** were born between 1909 and 1928. The youngest Good Warrior today is 92 years old. About 1.7 million of them are still alive. They have their name because they did almost all the fighting for the United States in the Second World War. A famous Good Warrior is General William Westmoreland who commanded U.S. forces in Vietnam from 1964 to 1968. Tom Brokaw wrote a book about them, *The Greatest Generation*.

The next is my cohort, the **Lucky Few**. We were born between 1929 and 1945. We're "few" in number compared to the previous and later cohorts (see the table), and we're "lucky" because we've enjoyed higher employment rates and a greater variety of social opportunities than people in other cohorts. Another name for us is the Silent Generation. We're disciplined, value-oriented, and loyal. Famous members are Elvis Presley, General Colin Powell, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

The fifth cohort, the **Baby Boomers**, were born between 1946 and 1964. There was a "boom" in the numbers of babies born after World War II when the birth rates skyrocketed. Almost 76 million babies were born, nearly double the 44 million Lucky Few babies. Boomers are extremely competitive, due to their large numbers. Bill Clinton and George W. Bush (both born in 1946) and Barack Obama (born in 1961) are Baby Boomers.

The members of the sixth cohort, **Generation X**, were born between 1965 and 1982. They have their name because marketing people couldn't decide what to call them. They were young children in the 1970s and 1980s, a time of shifting societal values. They're also known as the MTV generation and as the Latchkey

generation. They are resourceful and problem-solving but have the most credit card debt of any generation. Famous Gen-X'ers are Shaquille O'Neal, Beto O'Rourke, and Jennifer Lopez.

The seventh cohort, the **Millennials**, also known as Generation Y, were born between 1983 and 2001. There are loads and loads of Millennials (almost 85 million alive in 2019) because their parents, who were the Baby Boomers, were large in number. So when their parents had babies, lots of babies were born. Demographers refer to Millennials as the "Babies of the Baby Boom Babies." Millennials are also known as Boomerang Kids because many of them have returned to their parental homes after living elsewhere. Millennials are marrying late, at average ages of almost 30 (males) and 28 (females), and having children later. Thus they are starting later than Baby Boomers and Gen-Xers at building home equities, so on average, they have much less housing net worth. They are curious and question authority. Famous Millennials are Mark Zuckerberg, Lady Gaga, and LeBron James.

The members of the last birth cohort, **Generation Z**, were born between 2002 and today. This cohort is still being formed and doesn't yet have a final name. They're called Generation Z because the preceding cohorts are Generations X and Y. I think a good name for them would be the Divergents because they have such diverse backgrounds. Also, the younger members, those born after 2007, are the first-ever U.S. birth cohort that is more nonwhite than white. They are digital and ambitious. In 2022, roughly 20 million will be voting age. Their political clout will grow in the coming years.

So, the next time someone not your age does something you can't figure out, ask yourself, "What generation do they belong to?" Maybe that will tell you why they behave the way they do. Maybe the contexts of their lives are having an influence.

**EIGHT BIRTH COHORTS**  
by Years of Birth, Age Range in 2020, and Numbers Born and Now Alive

Birth Cohort	Years of Birth	Age Range in 2020	Number Born, Total	Alive in 2019	(Number Born per Year)
New Worlders	1871-1889	None living	approx. 30 million	None	(1.6 million)
Hard Timers	1890-1908	None living	approx. 25 million	None	(1.3 million)
Good Warriors	1909-1928	92-111	57.6 million	1.7 million	(2.8 million)
Lucky Few	1929-1945	75-91	44.1 million	20.9 million	(2.5 million)
Baby Boomers	1946-1964	56-74	75.8 million	69.9 million	(4 million)
Generation X	1965-1982	38-55	62.2 million	73.9 million	(3.4 million)
Millennials	1983-2001	19-37	74.5 million	84.9 million	(3.9 million)
Generation Z	2002-present	0-18	72.4 million	77.3 million	(4 million)

**\*Dudley Poston is a retired professor of demography and sociology from Texas A&M University in College Station. He and his wife Patricia live in The Gardens area of The Dominion.**