

The Ukiah DAILY JOURNAL

Ukiah - Rehearsals for retirement

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I retired a little over a year ago and thought I'd face an endless assembly line of misery: mentoring children and volunteering at the library and going to the senior center to play hopscotch and eat soggy greenbeans. But it's better than that.

When you're retired you can start drinking as early in the morning as you want and your boss won't say a thing. You don't have to not get things done until the weekend when you retire, because you can just not do them period.

Here are a few other things I have found that make life easier once you've hit the retirement hammock:

- Sell your lawnmower. First of all mowing your lawn is hard work, plus last summer you let your lawn die when you quit watering it because of the drought. This means you can also sell your garden hose.
- Sell your car. Right away you'll be saving money on car payments, insurance, registration and repairs. Better yet sell your wife's car, then hide the extra set of keys to yours.
- Burn down the garage. All you'll lose are heaps of rubbish you've accumulated during the last half century. And if you do it right maybe you'll get some insurance money for all those autographed first edition collectible books you had out there, and the yacht and the gold ingots and the Rolls Royce.
- Throw away all your clothes except the ones you're wearing and whatever's in the laundry basket.
- No reason to keep the washer and dryer, eh?
- Get a dog. You'll appreciate the good companionship, especially after you've sold your wife's car.
- Take some classes. Learn new things. Remember, you're only as old as you think you are, and if you act like you're 11 years old and in elementary school maybe Health and Human Service will give your wife money to take care of you. And more money for you to take care of her.

- Attend a lot of funerals and memorial services. They're free, plus you can pick up a lot of tips on how to run a funeral in case your wife dies first. And after the services there's usually free food. And single women.

- Whenever you meet new people be sure to spend a long time boring them with stories about how busy you are. Provide details about the hours you volunteer at the library, mentor children, pick up relatives at SFO, etc. This will lessen the likelihood anyone will think you are available to help them make a dump run, clean their basement or pick them up at SFO.

- Mandatory: Fill out and return whatever documents Publisher's Clearinghouse sends you.

- Make appointments with Dave Eyster (DA's office) and Linda Thompson (Public Defender's) to see if any interesting criminal trials are on deck. Trials are great real life dramas. Lives hang in the balance every day. You'll soon have favorite lawyers and others you don't care for, just like Big Time Wrestling. Admission free.

- Grow some vegetables. It's on every list of Things To Do for geezers. Probably one of those Bucket things.

- Forget the Bucket List rubbish. There is nothing more pathetic than frail baby boomers hobbling around Machu Picchu, or having their picture taken at Wrigley Field or taking a cruise to Alaska. Life ain't a checklist. If you're worried that friends at your funeral will review your thin list of accomplishments (visited Poe's grave at midnight, once met Joe Montana at a autograph session) you're better off dead.

- Don't bother keeping up with technology because you can't. And who cares? It's like trying to keep up with pop music. You spend all that money and time on the latest music and what do you wind up with? Headphones vomiting (c)rap into your ears. Same with cyber waves of increasingly difficult techno advances providing ever-diminishing satisfaction.

- Send money to groups you think are doing good things. If you're a lefty, why not send \$20 a month to Green Peace or whoever it is trying to stop the Willits bypass? If you lean conservative, throw money at the Cato Institute or Dick Cheney. You're old. You can't do the stupid marches and protests and other time-wasters anymore, so send money to people who can.

- Make sure that when you die they don't stage one of those crummy Celebration of Life events. Demand a dignified funeral with mourners wearing black and acting somber. Hire B-level Hollywood starlets to weep and hurl themselves on top of your casket as it's getting hauled out the door by Mendo College football players. Pipe in Brahms. Have someone dignified read from the Old Testament, throwing in some Latin. Arrange for actors to pretend they're your children and have them stage a big battle for the estate with your real kids out in the parking lot.

Fake the whole thing, have it videoed and you can laugh a long, long time, or at least until your kids murder you in your sleep. Video that too.

Time's running out. Have some fun.