

Members Quarterly

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President's Message

Baby Boomer Blues

What to do next

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President

As the giant cohort of baby boomers reach their desired retirement age, many of them are wondering what to do next. They have been kings and queens of their domain for so many years that they are reluctant to give up their positions of power and influence. They are also in much better physical health than any previous generations. If they have been moderate in both the use of vices and regular exercise, they are likely to be in better mental health as well.

It's not surprising that many boomers are choosing to stay at work as long as they can and in some cases longer than their employers may want. That's too bad for employers, but with the near death of any form of mandatory retirement legislation, there is little they can do about it. Many more of this golden generation are glad to get out of the rat race of their current employment. The challenge they have is what to do next.

It seems to me that there are at least three possible cures for these baby boomer blues. One is to start your own business, either as a consultant to sell your knowledge and experience back to previous employers or go into a completely new field. I don't have figures for Canada, but in the US over 10 percent of all new businesses are now being started by people over 65.

Alternately, they can start a new career- as a volunteer. Years ago I heard about a retired American CEO who took a job as a Wal-Mart greeter because he was bored. You could do that but it would be much more rewarding to give your time and energy to a worthwhile cause. There are community and educational organizations right in your own community who could benefit from your expertise. You didn't work all your life so that you can end up with a blue apron greeting customers, did you?

The other option is to go back to school. Maybe you always wanted to take a woodworking class or even learn to paint landscapes. You might have always wanted to get that second degree that you postponed when you ran out of time or money. You might even want to take the plunge and enrol in that doctorate program. You may never use it to teach or at work, but it is something you always wanted, so why not go for it?

There are almost as many ways to cure the baby boomer blues as there are boomers. And that's a lot. Find your own remedy by finding your own passion. Then you can enjoy the next twenty years of life even more than your working career.