



Sewing taught here

Irene MacKinnon (right) tells student Opal Turnbull how to master a technique on the sewing machine during a class session in "Super Sewing for Adults." The instructor winds up her classes each term with a parade of fashions, the result of her students work and topped with a commentary of tricks of the trade for her guests. Classes for all levels of ability begin in Farmington Community Center the week of April 3. Registrations are taken by calling the center, 477-8404.

Retirement plan adds enjoyment

By TERESA BANAS
Retirement can be the tarnished twilight of one's life—a time of resignation and failing mental and physical health.

Or it can be anticipated with active desire for seeking new experiences and interests.

Thomas Northey, a former research consultant for the Michigan Education Association (MEA), was commissioned by the MEA to write "Easing into Retirement," a self-help manual for those approaching the "golden years."

Not surprisingly, Northey, 69, recommends taking the second view of retirement.

"One purpose for writing the book is to help people plan for retirement so that they can enjoy it," Northey says. "Pensions and social security are made for minimal living. So I try to get people to plan ahead."

In his book, Northey cites a 1973 study by a psychiatrist at the University of Washington School of Medicine. It states retirement is the most stress-producing event in one's life.

Approaching retirement even topped pregnancy, death of a close friend, or a child leaving home in terms of stress produced.

Northey says people today are encouraged to retire earlier than in the past because of today's economic climate and inflation.

CITING THE GOVERNOR'S last state of the state address, Northey says government encourages early retirement. Gov. William Milliken proposed a task force to investigate pre-retirement planning.

Northey says he didn't experience any problems prior to his retirement because he planned for it.

He suggests health care should be of primary concern when approaching retirement. People should then examine their financial situation and plan activities for their free time.

"The hardest person to discipline is yourself—and how to handle free time," he says.

Northey suggests people research how successful retirees have coped with retirement, develop hobbies and find things to do that interest them.

Men have more problem areas than women in planning leisure activities during retirement because they were overly disciplined in their work.

Northey says. Even their friendships were often only confined to the work place.

"Women have adjusted better because they have so many other things that they like to do—like crafts," he says. "Men need more leisure activities."

Through his discussions and lectures, Northey found people were greatly concerned about two factors of retirement. Their greatest concern was the effect of inflation on their futures, as retirees usually have to cope on fixed incomes.

A CONCERN THAT often materialized during his communications was the loss of prestige when workers (especially men) leave their jobs. Northey says retirement is a great "evener."

"Now the foreman and the factory worker are on the same level. You're no longer the supervisor of schools but just a retiree."

Northey stresses that prestige is an artificial creation and therefore nothing to become anxious about.

Another form of friction as a result of loss of prestige can be found in the household—between a husband and wife.

"She gets her social security checks the same as he does," Northey says. "He no longer is the head of the household as he was before."

Northey finds the best way to enjoy retirement is through service to others. He says people who have spent their lives accumulating money to support a family and buy a home should now travel, enjoy life and volunteer their time to others.

Northey's book is under revision and the new version should be done in about six weeks. It will include a new chapter on housing for retirees.

He cites the advantages of selling a home to supplement income. He says the law favors those over 65 who sell by offering a tax break.

Northey says while his book applies to retirees of many occupations, there is one chapter that deals with the pension program for retiring school employees.

Copies of "Easing into Retirement" can be obtained by writing to: Michigan Education Association, Box 672, East Lansing, Mich. 48823. The cost is 50 cents for the book plus 50 cents for postage.

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