

retirement memos

Margaret Miller

Retired writers have eyes on money market

So far it's mainly free. Hitting the freelance writing market was one of the objectives my husband Joe and I had in mind when we retired to Florida.

For so many years we had written and edited on such a tight schedule. There had been so often the feeling of regret for having to leave a subject that seemed to demand more time, understanding and words.

And certainly, we were sure, there were all kinds of publications out there ready to snap up our fine writing. All we need do was suggest.

After nine months and a lot of queries to publishers, we're not particularly sad but definitely wiser. We're much less naive about the amorphous thing called the freelance market, and we know we have a lot more learning to do.

WE FOUND OUT quickly what we should have realized in the first place — that this place has more than its share of retired writers and many before us have staked out their claims.

We're getting an education in form letter rejections. The most-used phrase is that the suggestions and offerings we mail off "do not meet publication needs at the present time."

But we continue to pore over the thick Writer's Market guide we purchased, and we study suggestions in a couple of other how-to books on freelancing that have come our way. Maybe we can learn to take better aim at more receptive markets.

And a little success tells us to keep trying. A former co-worker on these newspapers put us in touch with the editor of a national United Methodist magazine, and I was jumping-up-and-down delighted when his answer contained an assignment instead of a "No thank-you."

That magazine now has printed one article, and the editor has in hand several more he ordered. We also are trying the services of a small literary agency that has better contacts than we do and indicates some of our efforts may yet be saleable.

THEN RECENTLY we made the acquaintance of an enterprising woman who is publishing visitor magazines for chambers of commerce. We thought

she showed rare intelligence in appreciating our capabilities, and we've been busy ever since putting out editorial material for these publications.

There's a big catch in all this, though. Payment upon publication seems to be the rule, at least for neophyte freelancers like us. And for journalists used to seeing their efforts in print within hours or days, it's a long wait for publication and an even longer one for payment. We definitely give priority to the filling of this space. We love the checks that arrive.

A FEW DAYS ago we were working our way through a pile of articles to be sent off, visitor guide information and public relations work we volunteer for church and civic association.

Margaret Miller was Suburban Life editor for Observer Newspapers for 16 years. She and her husband Joe have retired to Florida, where she writes Retirement Memos.

Jaycettes look back on 25 years of service

The year of 1983 marks the 25th year of community service for Farmington Area Jaycettes. Guided by many dedicated women since 1958, the chapter has provided the community with a host of projects through its efforts and donations.

Last month, past and present Farmington Jaycettes celebrated their silver anniversary with dinner and dance, and a review of those years given by the chapter's current president, JoAnn George.

The Farmington Area Jaycettes had been in existence for 12 years prior to the time the auxiliary was chartered with 18 members. The chapter's first president was Pat Hamlin, who worked out the constitution and got the group's first community service projects under way.

That year the auxiliary took children living in Sarah Fisher Home to the circus, distributed food baskets to the needy and helped the Jaycettes with their millionaires party.

Through the years projects have been added or scrapped as the structure of the area and its needs changed, some have been one-time projects; others are annual events.

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