



retirement memos  
**Margaret Miller**

## Habitually, we vary

Joe and I have known for years that we have several specific differences in our approach to life.

He used to say I always underestimated time and money. True, of course. I tended to work out that neither the time I allotted nor my household cash would quite stretch over all they were supposed to cover.

I didn't miss by much. But regularly, I would be five minutes late and \$5 short. He tended to over estimate. He was always early and had cash left.

Neither of us has changed. The difference are ingrained and recognized. And in retirement we see these and other variations more clearly, perhaps because we operate more or less in the same place most of the time.

ONE OF THESE involves work habits. Joe always gets to the task at hand as quickly as possible. I nearly always procrastinate.

Given a writing chore, for instance, he sits down at the typewriter and bats it out, hardly pausing, until he's finished. Whereas I pour another cup of coffee, check something in the newspaper, put something away, make the telephone call I had better not forget. Even when I wend my way to the typewriter, it isn't at all hard to interrupt me.

This isn't new, of course. My former colleagues will attest that I always accomplished more as a deadline approached. But it comes through more

clearly now with a close-at-hand opposite example and the interruptions excuse now largely removed.

ANOTHER DIFFERENCE we've noted is our preference for finishing up or leaving a bit. I seem to leave drawers and closet doors a crack open. Joe not only closes his but goes around closing after me. He also has been known to put away a couple of items left on the sink when I do dishes, and at dinner he always serves up all the food in the pan.

He's training me in the use-it-all-up-to-avoid-leftovers way of life, but recently it backfired. After our daughter and her family visited, we ate up all the leftovers so well that we had to dash out for snacks when we had some unexpected visitors.

My leave-a-bit habits extend to my work, too. Joe would have a set of columns written, reyped and ready to mail, all at one sitting. But I've always found a number of reasons to pause in my monthly stint, and I may just leave the retyping until tomorrow.

I'm not convinced this retiree is going to learn many new tricks. But recognizing old ones is a plus at this stage of life.

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

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The first session at Meteor is followed by an outdoor shoot at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 8. The final of the three sessions is back in Meteor at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 11.

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