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Your Retirement To-Do List: Enjoy Each Day

by Suzanne B. Corriell

CONGRATULATIONS! You have now become the envy of millions of twenty- and thirty-somethings: your workweeks are now free. But the trouble with retirement is that you never get a day off. So how will you spend your time?

Television's *Dancing with the Stars* and *America's Best Dance Crew* have been an inspiration to many to take up dancing. Group lessons, weekly dances, and dance weekends are a great way to meet new people and travel. For singles, there are also classes for line dancing or modern dancing. Community centers or local dance studios may have extensive offerings, including more exotic fares such as Zumba and capoeira. Such centers also may offer fitness or yoga classes.

Many seniors also take part in travel-and-learn programs such as Exploritas, formerly known as Elderhostel. Friends can get together by bunking in college dorms while taking courses in history, literature, or geography, for example. You can learn more about such programs at <http://www.exploritas.org>.

You may have heard of the ominously titled book, *1,000 Places To See Before You Die* by Patricia Schultz. Schultz highlights some of the world's most unforgettable locations and gives advice on the best times to visit. There is also now an accompanying website at <http://www.1000beforeyoudie.com/>. You might happily find that you are already able to check some of these fantastic locations off of your to-do list, but this book recommends others that you never knew existed.

There are some fantastic travel websites that highlight some of the best travel deals. Kayak (<http://www.kayak.com>) is a travel search engine that collects information from hundreds of websites and allows you to find the best price or the best schedule for your travel, often allowing you to book directly from the carrier. Frommers (<http://www.frommers.com>) allows you to search for

trip ideas or fares, travel tips, and advice. Some travel carriers, hotels, and destinations, such as Amtrak and the National Park Service, offer senior and AAA discounts. Members of AARP can save even more.

Of course, you don't have to be on the go all of the time. For those who would rather spend time at home, many community centers or colleges offer culinary classes, including courses on wine or beer-tasting. What a way to be a life-long learner! Avid moviegoers may want to use Netflix (<http://www.netflix.com>), a delivery service that allows you to create your own list of requested movies (and many television series) and to rank films that you've seen. Based on your preferences, the service then suggests movies that you might like. Booklovers can find reading groups at their local library or take advantage of GoodReads (<http://www.goodreads.com>). Like Netflix, GoodReads allows you to input what you've read as well as what you would like to read—but you can also share your lists with fellow readers, write reviews, or join an online book club. Some libraries also offer computer classes that give you a head start on software such as iPhoto.

Do you wish you'd kept in touch with friends from high school, college, or law school? There's no need to wait for a reunion to catch up. Online sites such as classmates.com or Facebook (www.facebook.com) can allow you to locate and communicate with friends near and far, old and new. With the capability to post links, videos, and pictures, these sites are a great way to stay up-to-date with all of those people. But be forewarned: these websites can easily turn into a way to waste many hours.

If you'd prefer to meet others in person who share similar interests, Meetup (<http://www.meetup.com>) is a great resource. Meetup is a community-building (and friendship-building) tool that allows people with shared interests

to set up in-person meetings and develop informal clubs. You can browse by location to see what Meetup groups are in your area—or you can set up your own group if your interest isn't covered. Best of all, Meetup groups can be formed about anything—including foreign language skills, Scrabble, movie or restaurant outings, and sports.

You may also find yourself with more time to tinker around the house. For advice on home projects, you can find numerous sample projects and how-to articles at <http://www.doityourself.com/>. Local hardware stores, as well as chain retailers such as Lowe's and Home Depot, also typically offer weekend or weeknight classes or seminars for free or little cost. If you are exceptionally ambitious, some community centers offer extensive classes in topics such as reupholstery and frame making.

With budget cuts and hiring freezes, many local organizations need assistance. You can use the skills you used in your work life and share them with others now that you are retired. For a thorough list of volunteer and pro bono opportunities, please refer to "Your Second Season of Service Is Just Beginning" by Donna Bausch in the April 2008 *Virginia Lawyer* http://www.vsb.org/docs/valawyer/magazine/vl0408_vall.pdf. You don't have to limit your volunteerism to just your legal skills. If you have talents as a gardener, a yogi, or a pianist, you're certain to find a volunteer opportunity to use your skills or teach a new generation of potential enthusiasts. Animal shelters are especially in need of volunteers these days. Maybe you'll even find a furry friend to keep you company during your free time.

As Calvin from the comic strip *Calvin and Hobbes* observes, "There's never enough time to do all the nothing you want." Enjoy!