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A new life after retirement

By **Kellie B. Gormly**
 TRIBUNE-REVIEW
 Tuesday, August 1, 2006

Dora Lee Rosenfeld, a retired interior designer, recently found her highest career calling -- making jewelry -- and is pursuing it at age 73.

"This is really me. This is like my soul mate. This is what I'm supposed to do," says Rosenfeld, a Penn Hills resident, who is pouring her energy into her new craft and business despite arthritis. "I really feel like it will take off if I work hard.

"There's just something about making the jewelry. ... It makes my heart go bling!" she says.

Rosenfeld -- who makes jewelry primarily out of big, flashy rocks and has started selling it on www.getyourrockson.com -- is one of many folks who find, at least vocationally, that life actually can begin at retirement. Whether they open a new store, pursue independent freelance work or turn a hobby into a sales venture, people can start new careers after retirement that usually are more enjoyable than their previous life careers.

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Washington, D.C. And about a third of self-employed people begin their businesses after age 50.

Part of the reasons for post-retirement ventures, Rix says, is the increase in life expectancy, which leaves people wondering, "What am I going to do for 30 years?" Older people today also are healthier and better educated than their predecessors, she says, and they have the opportunity to pursue interests that they didn't have time for earlier in life.

"They don't want to do nothing, at least initially," Rix says.

Robert Daley of Peters, Washington County, says the word "retire" isn't in his vocabulary -- and besides, he never has been much into fishing or golfing, which are common male retirement activities. The former corporate finance executive, who often worked 80-hour weeks, now works 35 to 40 hours a week as an independent investment adviser with Ohio Township-based Allegheny Investments.

"At this point, I'm basically my own boss," says Daley, 65. "I like to do things. ... I like being active, I like working with people, and I like finance."

Many retirees, such as Rosenfeld, are able to transform a creative hobby into a business, and they are able to enjoy thoroughly the work without worrying about finances as much as they did when they were younger. Patricia Hutchison of Harrison, a former culinary arts teacher who retired in 2001, opened a home-based business in March called Patch's Doll Designs. She sews doll clothes and her husband, Ernie, makes doll furniture. The couple have been selling their creations at festivals and through word of mouth, and they are working on launching a Web site.

today expect to work in their retirement than the workers of previous generations. As many as half of retirees-to-be begin transitioning into some type of other employment or business before they fully retire, whether for financial or other reasons, says Sara Rix, policy adviser for the AARP headquarters in

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"I really loved my job, but let's face it -- nobody wants to have a rigorous schedule," says Hutchison, 60. "With doing this, I'm still having fun, but the schedule is my schedule, and our time is our time. ... This feels more like fun than work."

Patrick Lynch of Economy, Beaver County, turned a stained glass hobby into a business he opened with a partner last October -- "Techa Mantu," which deals stained glass and picture frames. But that's only the beginning: Lynch, 62, says he hopes to start programs that help people switch careers, and overcome drug and alcohol dependency, also through his business.

"It's an opportunity for me to use some of my creative gifts," says Lynch, a former Department of Defense intelligence specialist. "I'm the kind of person that likes to be able to take ideas for a product or a piece of art from conception to completion."

Kellie B. Gormly can be reached at kgormly@tribweb.com or (412) 320-7824.

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