

California Sons in Retirement (SIR)

By Harry Hubinger, SIR Growth & Mgt. Comm.

First of a four part series about retirement.

Rob, our recently retired fictional hero, is discovering the downsides of not devoting a full day, every day, to his boss and his long-time employer.

Retirement was great at first. He slept in a bit each morning and read the paper before getting dressed. The long “honey-do list” was attacked and admittedly the easier jobs went first. He laid out detailed plans on how to handle the minor remodeling he and his wife had discussed so many times. He found Lowe’s and Home Depot less crowded than he was used to on the weekends. He had always loved golf and long walks and now began to investigate how to enjoy them at his leisure. There was even a list of local attractions he’d always meant to visit, and they now appeared within the realm of possibility. He even enjoyed having lunch with his wife whenever she wasn’t off to one of her activities. The thought of volunteering flicked in and out as well. Unconsciously he even expected a call or two from his employer or old business associates to ask him to do a little part-time fill-in work to help plug that gigantic hole he must have left at work. But oh – the six-month anniversary was coming up, and things were not as rosy as he had hoped.

First and foremost, he was bored. The camaraderie and intellectual stimulation he had had at work was somehow missing. The major in-depth conversations about sports and politics he had enjoyed with fellow workers was now limited to his wife. He knew how she felt about most topics as she did about his opinions. You can go over this just so many times. They had had a great time on that trip to Europe but after three weeks together he was secretly glad to be home. The call from his employer and other business associates never came, or if they did he got the feeling that they really didn’t care about his opinion any more.

Golf presented its own problem. All the guys he used to play with on the weekends were unavailable during the week, and when he checked about joining them on the weekends he found the foursomes filled. When he wandered down to a local course he found he either played alone, there was no opening as a retired group filled the course, or he was matched with three others who dialogued

among themselves and left him to wander along – sort of left out.

Our hero Rob was bored. Sure he loved his wife, but with the exception of their kids and their house, they had begun to lead somewhat separate lives. There had to be some answer to this, and it came in a most unexpected way. One early Tuesday morning he tossed his golf clubs in the car and headed for the local course. He had breakfasted by himself because his wife and three of her friends were off on an “adventure” in San Francisco, and he was left alone. The yard projects looked too painful to work on for the third day in a row; and besides, he was bored – so off to the course he went.

His heart sank a bit when he saw the parking lot loaded with cars – and well it should have. The pro behind the desk listed the first opening a full two hours away from his arrival time. With nothing else to do he left his name on the list and headed for the putting green to while away the time. Frankly, it was pretty full as well. Rob’s curiosity peaked, and he asked the pro what was going on.

“Every Tuesday morning the SIR group takes up ten starting times from us.”

Rob wandered back out to the putting green and, screwing up his courage, asked one of the other “puttees” what the deal was.

“SIR stands for Sons in Retirement. There are over one hundred and fifty branches with some twenty thousand members in Northern California. There are no dues, it is non-political, there is no religious orientation – the sole purpose is to help retirees, or semi-retirees enjoy themselves. They play golf, go on local trips, play bridge, go fishing, go bowling, travel overseas, have classes on computers, etc.”

Rob’s newfound friend handed him a SIR business card and invited him to this fellow’s SIR branch for lunch the following week. Rob was intrigued, but a little bit hesitant. He never thought of himself as a “joiner” other than maybe a service club or two. Well, maybe he’d go home later and think about it all. There had to be a catch somewhere, and he was sure he’d find it.

(Next--Part 2: Rob learns about the SIR organization. Originally published in ALIVE East Bay)

For more information about SIR check out the SIR Branch 93 website at: www.sir93.org.