



Never Too Old For a Summer Job

MAY, 2011

It's usually teenagers and college students out looking for employment at this time of the year, but that doesn't mean we can't have a go at some of the juicy seasonal positions. The recession, the job market and our semi-retirement or in-between-jobs classifications are all good reasons for us to become more flexible in our job-hunting and considerably more willing to take on positions we might previously have dismissed.

Many summer seasonal positions occur in the hospitality and tourism industry. These may not be high paying jobs, but they are welcome diversions that provide contact with others, a purpose and a bit of cash to boot. In some instances, once all the students have returned to their studies, summer jobs extend into the shoulder-season positions and even full employment.

Mature employees are excellent candidates for work in hospitality and tourism because, as experienced candidates, we have honed our people-skills, we understand the importance of courteous service and we are unlikely to stay out all night partying only to show up for work late the next day a bit green around the gills. We may be competing with the youth for the same paltry wage, but any savvy employer will see they are usually getting more for their buck by hiring one of us.

Other areas where older jobseekers may be successful at this time of the year include tutoring, leading tours and gardening/yard work. There may also be opportunities to get involved in an arts, cultural or historic association—become a docent, a caretaker, or an ambassador. In communities where tourism is a significant industry, the retail sector often needs a pair of extra hands during the summer, or you could fill in for a weary shop owner who'd like to take some time off to be a tourist himself.

For the more sturdy and adventurous among us, there are opportunities to travel and perhaps work at a ranch, crew on a boat, teach abroad, work in ecotourism, teach a particular skill: sailing, golf, bird watching, art ... whatever you are good at.

Another idea might be to create or grow something sellable and become a regular fixture at summer markets and special events.

Although the possibilities are numerous, few of them will be, or are likely to become, highly paid but, if you are currently not working, what have you got to lose? Besides, as we all know, one thing usually leads to another and you will be much more marketable to a potential employer if you are visible than if you spend the summer sitting behind your computer filling out job applications all day.

Lemonade stand? Well, maybe we're a bit old for that one!