



Happy days of autumn to you all,

We are all faced with lots of decisions when contemplating retirement! Logically, and sensibly, your choices should be based primarily on your finances.

Do you want to do a lot of traveling? If you choose that lifestyle, then why would you start looking for a large home, with a lot of upkeep demanded?

You may decide to just stay put - perhaps near family - in the home you've been in for years.

Or, have they already scattered so you are free to move where you can really make the most of your retirement years, and just enjoy their visits ?

Some of our friends, retirees, have felt they must have a couple of extra bedrooms and baths for the relatives who come to visit (usually once a year).

Just contemplate... how much would it cost you to simply rent a motel room for them, compared to the upkeep and expense of having that extra space you're going to pay for??

You can pay for a lot of over-nighters in a motel for what you will pay for that extra room that isn't even used 95% of the time. And it's usually a wonderful break - for everyone - to part at the end of the day for some private time and recuperation time!

Do you plan to do a lot of entertaining - either family or friends? Again - why get a humongous home you'll be constantly cleaning and keeping up, when friends are just as comfortable in a more intimate setting.

Remember, you and your friends are getting older each year, and the wild parties of your 30's and 40's possibly are not the evenings you will be experiencing in retirement.

Keep your taxes low, keep your utility costs low, and enjoy a higher, more leisure lifestyle like you can do if you move to Mexico.

We've fallen into the nicest concept... It's called "pupu parties" ... I guess it's Hawaiian for hors d'oeuvres party. You just call a bunch of friends - they each bring nice snack, your supply the drinks, and it's a wonderful, easy and casual get together. Not too much work for anyone, and a great reason to get together with friends!

If you have a lot of equity in your home, (I always stress that hopefully by the time you are contemplating retirement, it is paid for) and you should decide to sell it, buy smaller, have less expenses *(con't on page 2)*



Goat Island (*Isla de Chivos*), Deer Island (*Isla de Venados*), and Bird Island (*Isla de Pájaros*) to the west of Mazatlan Stone Island, (*Isla de la Piedra*), actually a peninsula, is to the south/east of Mazatlan.

(con't from front page)

(insurance, utilities, upkeep) and then put the profit in the bank – voila! Interest to help with expenses, (just realize that air conditioners eventually will need replaced and the plumbing – possibly, etc., etc.) or just let the principle grow for a long desired item!

Don't overlook renting or buying a condo. That way, everything is secure when you take those trips, and you won't even need to own a lawnmower or snow-blower anymore!

Yes I'm a Senior Citizen

I'm the life of the party ...even if it lasts until 8 p.m.

I'm very good at opening childproof caps...with a hammer.

I'm interested in going home before I get to where I'm going.

I'm smiling all the time because I can't hear a thing you say.

I'm very good at telling stories...over and over and over.

Did I mention, I'm the life of the party?

LIKE A BOY SCOUT - BE PREPARED!

Please friends, it really is true, the only things we can absolutely count on is death and taxes. Now, why in the world do we find it easy to talk taxes all day long, but just can't voice the word death? Live your life to the fullest, prepare, then, face the fact – we're all going to pass away – nope – folks we're gonna die...eventually...so, prepare for it. Make that time as easy on your loved ones as possible. You made sure the car had gas before letting your teenager drive it, didn't you? Well, make sure you at least do that much preparation and thought to those who survive, when you die.

Living Will:

States the conditions under which you do, or do not want to receive life-sustaining medical treatments.

Health-Care Proxy:

Gives the designated person who you specify, the authorization to communicate your wishes regarding end-of-life medical treatments.

Medical Power of Attorney:

Gives an individual you specify the authorization to make medical decisions for you in the event you are unable to make decisions for yourself.

Usually "Trusts" contain these documents – just make sure you have them, and distribute them to the proper individuals.

Important – no – VERY important things to do:

Make a list for your executor - whomever you name to handle things after you die. You don't have to hand all this information to your executor, but make sure they know exactly where you have placed the envelope that contains all this info. (And, no, don't put it in a safe deposit box at your bank – whoever you designate to handle your affairs may not be allowed access to your box! I've got the password to my computer on the inside of Dick's underwear drawer!

Things to put on an information list for your executor:

The location of your will or Trust documents (which should have most of this info already listed within it).

Where the deed to your home is. Or, if it's mortgaged, who holds the deed and how much the payments are and when they should be paid. *(con't on page 3)*

(Con't from page 2)

Names and contact information of family and friends (Another reason Dick will need to access to my computer – my address book.)

Where you have filed all personal information, such as birth certificates, Social Security numbers, marriage licenses, etc.

Name of the institution where you bank and where they can find the list of all of your account numbers.

Location of all insurance papers and account numbers – Life, Home, Car and any others.

Location where they will find a complete list of your assets along with the account numbers – such as house, cars, vacation home, savings account, checking accounts, IRA's, investments, etc.

How to turn your computer on and where you have placed the password! And the passwords to any programs they may need access to such as Quicken.

Okay – so I've given you some homework to do. Oh – one more thing – make sure that all members of your immediate family know how to pay the everyday bills – the TV, the phone, etc.



Mazatlan's historic district park



Marina Mazatlan entrance

Make sure your partner actually knows how to write a check. Show them to write the dollar amount beginning clear to the left, leaving no space to the left, and to draw a line from that amount to the end, so that numbers can't be added onto at the beginning or the end. Never make out a check to "cash" - if you lose it and someone finds it, they can cash it.

I think it's just downright unforgivable to never include your partner in the important job of keeping track of the finances. Sharing the chore will make them feel capable and secure.

You can fly to Mazatlan from most major cities in the USA and Canada. There are non-stop flights to Mazatlan's International Airport, from Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Phoenix, San Diego, San Francisco, and Vancouver B.C. You will find connecting flights from most major cities.

FINANCIAL SUGGESTIONS

Your retirement may be just around the corner, or it may be along way off, but from this day forward it's up to you – and no one else – to save enough money to live on happily after retirement.

As far as Social Security, the nay-sayers and dooms-dayers say it won't be there – but, even if is, (and I can't imagine any politician who values their political life not working to keep it functioning) then it will be an added bonus!

Ways to do it:

If your employer offers retirement savings plans – take full advantage of them. Contributions are taken out of your pay before taxes – and the savings will earn interest, and you won't be taxed until you – usually in retirement – take the distributions. And, believe me, in retirement, most of us have a lower income – ergo – lower tax ratio. Win-win – you saved, let it gain interest, and the taxes will be less when you receive the money.

If your employer offers a matching plan – take full advantage of it! Contribute as much as is allowed. Same scenario as above paragraph, plus you double your savings!

Once you have a plan established, don't borrow on it! You'll find it's almost impossible to replace the money you already saved – and you'll be paying back interest too boot!

Keep your eyes open for penalties! If you take distributions before 59 ½, those withdrawals may have penalties! So, try to wait until at least age 62 to retire – you'll find health insurance can be a huge expense on your own – try to hang in there until 65. Medicare is wonderful!

Now, assuming you're a bit nearer that golden year of retirement, and have already put the above plans into action, here are a few thoughts to ruminate:

Your retirement does not involve only yourself. Your spouse or partner is going to take that ride with you. Sit down and have many discussions about your hopes, your expectations, your desires you have for the future years. Dick and I have always found a lot of easy conversation while driving and relaxing – find a comfortable setting and share.

Figure out just where your income is going to come from and how much you can plan on receiving – here, a financial advisor may come in handy. Most banks have that service offered for free, but we've found you can get a lot of information by just getting out pencil and paper and doing some figuring! There are charts, etc, on the internet that may help. There's one in [Retire In Luxury](#) that will get you started.

By now you should have a budget figured out – see where you can cut down, where you will be able to save. Use coupons and take full advantage of sales. You'll probably find that during retirement, you'll have more time than money, so make a game of coupons... and don't forget to always ask for the good old "senior discount"! Dick and I would feel really bad if we were to pay full price for almost anything anymore!

Just for the fun of it – go through last year's financial records. Find out just what you actually spent for the year, and see where you can cut down. And, even if you have unlimited funds, you should feel very proud not to just waste money. And what a wonderful lesson to pass on to your children.

Now, you should be in full retirement mode – but – woops – what happens a little later...when the car needs a major repair, the roof starts to leak or the plumbing gives up the ghost and needs a major rework – or maybe your washer just stops in the middle of the spin cycle, never to spin again? All those savings you've been able to put away will be a life saver. Expenses don't stop just because you retire, and hopefully, you'll outlive your roof and your car! Like the Boy Scouts – be prepared!

MORE SUGGESTIONS

If you happen to be lucky enough to be coming into a little money – a raise, a bonus, a gift – seriously consider paying off your debts instead of just buying things you don't truly need. What a fresh wind will blow when you find yourself debt free – a very important step towards a happy retirement. Oh – and if you have some cash left over – put it into your retirement fund or savings!

Always pay your bills on time – the extra charges for late fees are absolutely the most easily avoidable waste of money there is! ...I think that is the number one way – number two, in my opinion, is probably not buying extraordinarily- expensive flavored coffee with some whipped cream added...

If you have the button to push that sets your car's horn blaring...called a panic button...

Carry your car keys with you to bed if you have car controls on the chain with them! And carry them around the house with you in the daytime wouldn't hurt too - you can wear them around your neck maybe. Then, if you ever hear something at night, or if you think someone is breaking into your home, push the button! It just might scare the intruder away! And make sure you test the distance you have to be from your car to activate that panic alarm.

Want to “Read” the economy?

You can do that – and I'm betting your research is as close to what's actually happening and what is going to happen, as the professionals!

Try it:

When employment is rising (new jobs have been added or created) that's healthy.

When the manufacturing indicators (firms are getting orders for durable goods) are growing, that's healthy.

When Personal income and consumer spending is up (consumers have more money that they are spending) that's healthy.

Consumer confidence and consumer sentiment is going up, (consumers' feelings about their own finances and the economy in general) that's good.

Gross domestic product is going up (everything the U.S. produces and consumes) – that's good.

Of course, the reverse is also true – for those of you who have a glass that's half empty.

Mazatlan scene along a boulevard, showing a small market, polmonia, traffic, palm trees, and sign with 40 kph sign.



A GOOD, INEXPENSIVE FIX

Dick just replaced the insides of one of our toilets, so I carefully watched, took notes, and this is how I would do it - hope this helps you...

Commodes are made of china, and there really is no part of a commode that “wears-out”. Unless it has become cracked, a commode – toilet – will last forever.

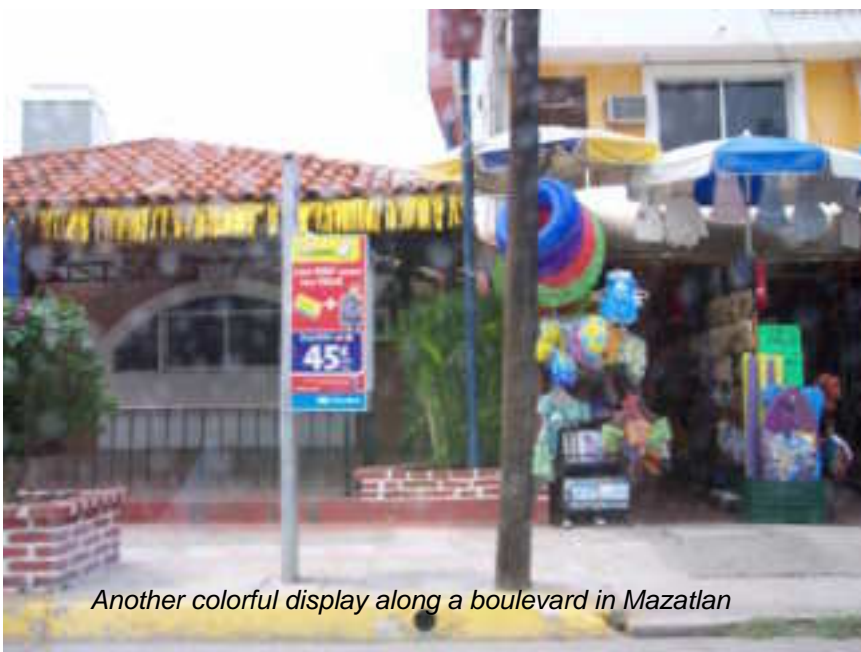
1. Turn off the water to the toilet. Usually a little handle that is to the left and under the water tank of your toilet...turn clockwise to shut off. If you don't have a turn off here, you may want to have a plumber come in and put one there for you. This will cost you – and while handy, isn't necessary, however, once the plumber is there, have him install the new “guts”. We haven't had a plumber in one of our houses – almost forever...because Dick and I try to do everything ourselves. A good way to find a reliable plumber is to ask a friend. Now – back to doing it your self...Another way to turn the water off is at the main supply source, outside. You may need a tool called a key – most hardware stores carry them, and they're cheap.
2. So, once you have turned the water off, you're ready to go. Flush the toilet. Lift the lid of the water tank. When it's emptied out, soak the rest of the water that is standing with a bath towel. Place a bowl under the water tank, where the water comes out of the wall and goes into the water tank. And now, you will reach under the tank and unscrew the plastic nut (clockwise) that is holding the water line to the tank. You'll probably get a few drips, that's why you need that bowl.
3. The water line, leading from the wall to the water tank, hopefully is flexible. If it's a solid pipe, again, unless you're familiar with cutting and gluing pipe, a plumber may be in order.
4. Now, look inside the water tank again. Lift the whole inside contraption – the thingy that holds the other thingy that raises and lowers with the water level – You're going to take the whole thing – the water control unit - out of the tank.
5. There's a little hose that's connected to a standing water pipe (overflow) so disconnect that - usually connected with a little metal clip.
6. Place the new water control unit into the hole at the bottom of the tank – it will be adjustable, so check for water level. You can usually tell how high that should be from some hard water line on your tank. There will be some way to adjust the “control unit” to match that water line - sometimes you just push and twist – it's easy. So, you've matched the water line that will be marked on the thingy to the water line that you can see in the tank. Place the thingy into the hole at the bottom again, and tighten the nut under the tank to secure the new unit.
7. Now, you need to connect the water supply line (underneath) that comes in from the wall to the tank. There will be a rubber washer on the line, and so you just push the supply up into the tank, slide the washer up to the tank opening and slide the washer up to that and tighten. Make sure you put it in straight, so you don't strip the threads.
8. Inside the tank again, connect the little flexible tube to the standing water pipe with the little metal (usually) clip. You may have to cut the tube a little shorter, but don't over do it. The little metal clip just slides over the standing water pipe.

9. Underneath, now turn the water back on from underneath and cross your fingers, and if you've done it well, you'll have no leaks. We always place a clean paper towel under the toilet, and if there are any drips, you'll see them. Then, you may have to tighten the nut. And – all of this should probably take you less than half an hour!

Between the tank and the seat portion, if it's leaking there, you have to take the bolts off, lift the water tank off, buy and install a new rubber gasket - this is a bit more of a job, but not at all undoable for a homeowner.

All the best to you and yours,

Barbie



Another colorful display along a boulevard in Mazatlan

My books...

[Retire In Luxury](http://www.retireinluxury.com)

and

[Money Saving Mexico](http://www.moneysavingmexico.com)

**Are each full of important information you'll be glad you have
before you go to Mexico.**

All you need to do is go to:

<http://www.retireinluxury.com>

or

<http://www.moneysavingmexico.com>

... and scroll down and place your order.

*In just minutes you will be downloading all my information
that will help you through the maze of questions
toward a happy and successful retirement.*

*Save the files on your computer in a special folder
so you can access them at your leisure.*

It's easy to print the books off too, and put them in your retirement file.

Enjoy! Wishing the best of the good life to you and yours!

Barbie