

David Foot's forecast What's in your future?

THE 65 TO 80-YEAR-OLDS

Those born during World War I and the Roaring Twenties have done pretty well for themselves. They are financially secure, in part, because they cashed in on the boomer-inspired real estate boom. They're healthier than people of their age have ever been. But they do have one problem: "They are beginning to become bored out of their minds," says David Foot, a demographics specialist at the University of Toronto. "You marry for better or for worse but not for lunch. When one of them was out working, he or she was bringing new experiences into the relationship. Now they are having exactly the same experiences, so they are increasingly frustrated." As a result, these older seniors are going to want part-time work during the 90s, and many will get it. "They're a tremendous resource," says Foot. Unfortunately, some will be handicapped by an inability to use computers. "They've got a mental block about computers."

THE OVER 80s

"There is going to be an absolute explosion in the 80-and-over population in the 1990s, and what those people need are nursing homes and we don't have enough of them," says Foot. That may be the single biggest problem caused by demographics in the 90s. The make-up of the seniors population in this decade is "unlike anything we've ever had," he says, because it's split between well-off young seniors and poor old ones. Since women live seven years longer than men, on average, the poor over-80s are mostly women. There are a lot of them because the birth rate was high in the 1900s. They are poor because they were homemakers and don't have pensions of their own.

We need an innovative approach that recognizes a 65-year-old is very different from an 85-year-old, Foot says. You don't need much in the way of special services when you're 65, but a 75-year-old widow may need *Meals On Wheels* and an 85-year-old may need constant care. He suggests retirement communities where people can have as much independence, or as much care, as they need.

"I fear very much that because it's predominantly women who are both poor and old, our society is going to neglect them."

Governments are going to be looking for new ways to look after these people because hospitalization is too expensive. But before governments implement new solutions, they will need a push from the public. Foot says that is an excellent project for rich, young seniors with time on their hands. A better deal for our oldest demographic group is a cause worth fighting for in the 90s.

Canadian Tire & Rick Lemon A winning combination!



Rick Lemon doesn't let much get in his way these days. He's young, he's capable and he has a good job.

Lemon has a mental handicap, but that doesn't interfere with his ability to succeed. He's 23 years-old, and has been working at Canadian Tire in Fredericton since July 1990. He was hired by the store's manager, Dave Vincent to stock shelves in the housewares department five mornings a week. It's his first job

and he wants to do well.

"Rick is a very dependable employee," Vincent says. "When he first came to us, we realized he had some limitations, but we also knew if we designed the job around his abilities, Rick would get a lot of satisfaction from his work and we would get a responsible employee."

Lemon likes what he does for a living. "I like the people I work with a lot and my job is great," he says. "If I didn't work at Canadian Tire, I would be very bored."

Jobs Unlimited helps...

In 1982, Brad Slauenwhite, executive director of Jobs Unlimited, approached businesses in Fredericton with an idea that would develop into one of the most successful projects of its kind in the country.

The idea was that people with mental handicaps could work in the community, free of the constraints and stigma of sheltered workshops, and be productive and valuable staff members.

The organization took up the challenge armed with nothing more than a novel idea and a community placement plan. Jobs Unlimited was riding a tidal wave of social change in which society started taking a closer look at the potential of people with mental handicaps. Integration was the buzz word and the idea of community placements became a reality.

"The client receives tremendous social gain from working in the community," Slauenwhite said. "There is financial gain as well, but it is secondary to the satisfaction that comes from meaningful employment."

About 80 Jobs Unlimited clients are now working in the community in the automotive trade, manufacturing, food preparation, banks, government offices, retail outlets, dentist offices, hospitals and nursing homes. About 50 to 60 are waiting for employment and 20 or so have found meaningful work on the premises of Jobs Unlimited. A five-member vocational placement team assists in the transitions.

Besides just placing people in the community, Jobs Unlimited has developed what Slauenwhite calls safety nets for people who are hard to place or are between jobs. These "safety nets" include a catering company, a photocopy and business card business, a courier service and a mail processing operation. An aggressive marketing plan, plus unwavering commitment from the staff of Jobs Unlimited, are major reasons for its success. That success is measured by the number of people placed and by the range of job opportunities enjoyed by the clients of Jobs Unlimited.

Vincent says Lemon is dependable and has a real sense of purpose connected with his job. "Rick takes pride in his work and always performs to the best of his abilities."

Lemon learned about the job through Jobs Unlimited, an employment agency for people with mental handicaps. Vincent and his staff have been working with people with mental or physical disabilities for several years.

"It's something our store has found beneficial," he says. "We recruit all kinds of people, but we always make sure the right employee gets the right job. That way, employees don't get frus-

trated trying to do a job their skills don't allow, and we don't have high staff turnover."

He says staff has been receptive to working with people with disabilities. "They've been very supportive and think it's a great idea to give everyone a chance to be productive members of the community. It's worked out well for Canadian Tire and I would recommend other employers look outside the traditional labor pool to staff their jobs. It gives you a sense of satisfaction know you're helping out the community and your company by hiring people with disabilities."

Fundy Cable helps turn hobby into a full-time job

Having a job has really made a difference in my life. I get to do something I enjoy and I'm good at it," says Glen McKenney.

McKenney, 35, believes his job at Fundy Cable in Saint John has turned his life around. Before he found work, his days revolved around watching television. There was even a time when he had 13 TVs and four VCRs in his home.

But thanks to the services of the Greater Saint John Community Employment Corporation, McKenney turned his fascination with television into a full-time job as videotape playback operator.

McKenney has been a video tape playback operator for two years. Fundy Cable's assistant program manager Lisa Gribbons couldn't be happier. "At the beginning, there was a period of adjustment for Glen and the rest of the staff, but since then, everything has worked out well.

"Until Glen came along, we had difficulty keeping his position filled. But his aptitude for television has made him a perfect fit for the job. We wish we could clone him," she says.

Because of a mental disability,

McKenney withdrew from the world after a brief stint as a maintenance worker at St. Joseph's Hospital in Saint John. Although willing to work, he felt he didn't have much of chance of finding employment.

"I knew I could contribute something to an employer, but I didn't know what," said McKenney.

With the help of the Greater Saint John Community Employment Corporation, his skills and interests were evaluated. He also worked with trained facilitators to explore his hopes and fears about joining the workforce.

Lisa Gribbons says the enthusiasm McKenney displays for his work is obvious. "He usually comes to work an hour early and doesn't stop until quitting time.

"We consider ourselves fortunate to have been able to find an employee like Glen. Although his disability may prevent him from doing other jobs, he's been able to perform this particular job exceptionally well." Gribbons says.

