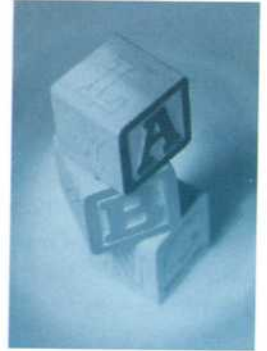
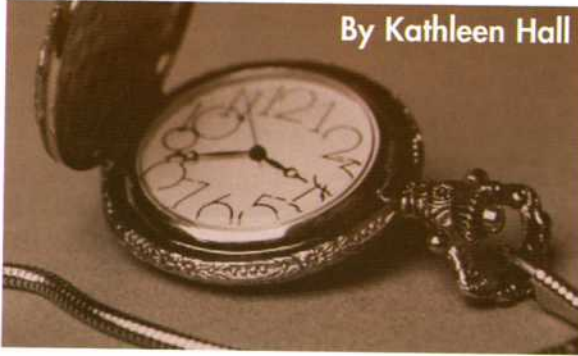


HAVE TIME, MONEY & WANT TO PLAY

By Kathleen Hall



"I don't want to retire and grow old," says Sam Elam, a resident of Sun City Grand and local realtor with RE/MAX Achievers. "Retirement without working is giving up one's identity and sense of value. Like many boomers, I work and intend to keep working after the normal retirement age."

Elam echoes the sentiments of many of his peers. Today's boomer adults, often unlike their parents and grandparent's generation, are living life to the fullest, taking advantage of longer life spans, better health, mobility and greater financial security.

One way in which this difference is especially notable is in the housing choices they are making. The old family homestead, where these folks raised their children, is giving way to a more carefree, lower maintenance home.

A change in housing style however, does not mean a change in home ownership. The Census Bureau reports that about 80 percent of Americans aged 55 and older own their homes. Furthermore, 97 million U.S. citizens are 45 or older, about 34 percent of the total population, and this segment is growing very rapidly, a good indication that the demand for these new housing styles will increase as well.

According to Rich Andrew, a realtor with Century 21, many adults in the Valley area own not one, but two homes. "They [residents] are about 65% snowbirds; they leave for the summer," says Andrew. "They like the luxury of a second home but want to be with family during the summer months."

The New Old

There is no shortage locally of communities designed with the active, engaged adult in mind. But, according to BuilderOnline, adults often are not always looking for homes and neighborhoods that are specifically

marketed to older adults. These labels can be a turnoff for people who don't think of themselves as getting old.

Retirement Living News magazine adds "developers avoid the word retirement to describe these properties, referring to them instead as 'active adult' or 'country club' properties, to attract boomers who aren't ready to quit working just yet."

Elam's sentiments echo another notable trend of the new old: retirement, or lack thereof. Many adults are opting to continue to work full or part time long after traditional retirement age. This means that they continue to have a steady paycheck, and likely have more disposable income. Since they continue to be busy, nearby amenities and timesaving conveniences are very important.

Furthermore, these mature workers are often consulting or telecommuting from home, a trend virtually unheard of in previous generations. Thus they require a house that has the space and layout to accommodate a home office, which is equipped, of course, with the latest and greatest technology.

According to the Seniors Housing Council of the National Association of Home Builders, choices of amenities influence a homebuyer's decision to move to a new community. These adults have financial comfort and the freedom from child rearing responsibilities that often accompanies this stage of life, as well as the desire to live in a resort-type of environment that makes it easy to have an active lifestyle.

