

Dealing with golden yawns
by David Bar-Tzur

If you are retired or thinking about it soon, you may want to consider what you will do with all that extra time you have on your hands. Many of us look forward to our "golden years" and when they arrive, we become bored after a while. Here are some ideas to help fill out your day. There are of course expensive ways to spend your time, such as travel and eating out more, but with a reduced income at retirement, not all of us can do that or at least fill up all the time with such pleasures.

Let your hobbies become projects you can work on. Make a schedule of regular times you will devote to your activities. If you have had a very structured work schedule and had to make appointments to do even pleasurable things, you may find that a schedule will help transition you to less imposed structure. There are social groups that center around hobbies and interests. LGBTI examples are: Gay Men's Cooking Group, Multicom-4 Coffee Talk, Community Business Forum, and Rainbow Amateur Radio Association. To get more information on any of the groups I mention, see the "Ongoing Calendar" or "Resources" elsewhere in this newspaper. For national organizations, call GAGV for help. I have left out the youth groups because this column is devoted to those contemplating retirement, but if you are a youth and reading this for ideas of how to keep busy, by all means research those. If you don't see a group that fits your focus, start your own through GAGV or place an ad in the Empty Closet.

Adult education offers classes in new languages, car repairs, dancing, or that Ph.D. in Physics that you've been putting off. You could also teach yourself any of these by finding a book, CD, or web site. Maybe it's time to affirm your heritage and study Gay and Lesbian culture and history. Many mainstream bookstores offer a Gay section, and of course you can research media on the web. Locally we have the Pride Connection and OUTlandish as specialty shops, and GAGV has a library and archives. Also ImageOUT has their film festival and occasional offerings that sometimes deal with our history and culture.

Experiment with the performing arts: join a choir or chorus, dance group, instrumental group, or theater ensemble. It's great for self-expression, meeting people, and making friends. You may have been too busy to pursue it, but now's the time. Our community has the Rochester Rainbow Gospel Choir, the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus, the Rochester Women's Community Chorus, and the Basically Treblemakers Band. Lifespan is celebrating the holidays with an Irish singer, Cahal Dunne, Monday, December 5 at the Syracuse Holiday Inn. Contact Sherlea at 585-544-2633. Don't forget to support our LGBTI restaurants and other businesses. With all of these categories, one need not pick an LGBTI group, but I think it makes it more fun.

The public library offers an inexpensive way to fill your time. Check out books or read them there. They also have CDs and videotapes as well as computers to while away the hours. Straight couples complain about the husband spending too much time at home and getting on the wife's nerves. This can happen to LGBTI couples, too. Give your partner a break and make it fun.

Get involved in politics, either with a focus on LGBTI rights or on other issues that are important to you. Of special interest are: the National Organization for Women, Empire State Pride Agenda, Human Rights Campaign, New York State Black Gay Network, Green Party, Lambda Legal Defense, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and Stonewall Democrats of the Genesee Valley.

Reconnect with your heritage, be it ethnic, religious, or linguistic: American Baptists Concerned, Something for da Sistaz, More Light Presbyterians, Open Arms Metropolitan Community Church, Sacred Spaces Meditation, Community Christian Fellowship, Men of Color Health Awareness Project, Lilac Rainbow Alliance for the Deaf, Evangelicals Concerned, and Dignity/Integrity.

I hear some people like physical activity. (I'm physically lazy myself, but intellectually adventurous.) For these people, Rainbow Seniors of Western New York offers yoga classes on Tuesdays from 6-7 pm at Metropolitan Community Church, 175 Norris Dr. Our community also offers: A.R.iders, Women's Hiking group, Rochester Historical Bowling Society, Come Out and Play, and Rochester Frontrunners/Frontwalkers.

Volunteer your time and give back to society. You can help out at hospitals, nursing homes, organizations, churches, synagogues, mosques, and so forth. To help ourselves, we can volunteer for such things as: AIDS Rochester, Pride Parade, Pride Picnic, Speaker's BUREAU, GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network), PFLAG, GAGV (the Library and Archives or the Anti-Violence Program), Empty Closet, and Finger Lakes LGBT Workplace Alliance.

Support groups are not only for the troubled; they help us connect with others in a situation that society may have made difficult for us. Rochester Pride & Joy Families, Rochester Rams, Gay and Lesbian Support Group, Gay Father's Support Group, GLBT AL-Anon, HIV Positive Gay Men Support Group, New Freedom New Happiness AA Gay meeting, Empire Bears, Transgender Group, Butch Femme Connection, Brothers Keeper, AQA (Support Group for transgenders of color), GAGV Anti-Violence Project Support Group for LGBT victims of domestic violence, Cross Dresser Support Group, Transgender Group, Saturday Night Special Gay AA, Gay Men's Alcoholic s Anonymous, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Friends Association, Rochester Gay Moms' Group, Lesbian and Gay Family Building Project, and Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.

A support group that is specifically geared to being a senior is Rainbow Seniors of Western New York, which offers potlucks the third Sunday of the month (4 p.m., 1st Universalist Church), a Euchre Club the first Sunday of the month, and Rainbow Traders book swap. There is also Atlantic Five O and Rainbow Elders of the Niagara Frontier in the Buffalo area. Whichever you choose, I hope it will fill your life with meaning and joy. Maybe I'll see you there!