

## Jobs For Senior Citizens

By Walker Mabe

If you are an older American looking for a job, there are a lot of factors working against you.

In studying some of these factors, a N. C. State University psychologist has devised a way for older Americans to become more successful job seekers.

Dr. Dennis O. Gray, an assistant professor of psychology at NCSU, initiated a special program for older job seekers while working at Michigan State University, and he now hopes to set up a similar program in North Carolina.

Gray is the force behind Job Club, a group that both teaches more effective job-seeking techniques and provides peer support for those who are looking for work.

According to Gray, older people face a set of fairly unique problems when they try to enter the work force.

"First, there are some myths about the older worker which need to be dispelled," he said. "Employers tend to believe that older people cannot work as hard, that they are less skilled, that they need more supervision and that they will have higher absentee rate."

Nothing could be further from the truth, Gray stated. Because they are more motivated and more wrapped up in their jobs, the elderly work better without supervision, are absent less often and are generally better workers than the average.

"It is rare that finances are the absolute, exclusive reason for returning to work for these people," he said. "They certainly can use the extra money, but also they want the challenge and social interaction a job provides. They like the sense of accomplishment and the chance to meet other people."

In addition to the myths, there are some concrete roadblocks working against this group.

"Older people tend to have less credentials because they often did not attend college," Gray said. "They are most often looking for unskilled jobs, where the competition is toughest. And because they work so long at a single job in their youth and often go so long without working, they are not experienced at job seeking."

That's where the Job Club comes into the picture. The club teaches members who to take an interview, where to look for a job and how to compile a resume.

Equally important, the club members give each other the emotional support that keeps them going in the long job search.

"The training makes them better job seekers, and the support prevents them from getting discouraged," Gray said.

The peer support is "the glue of the program," according to Gray. The group itself is attractive to the members and they enjoy helping others find a job.

"There is a lot of risk-taking in looking for a job," Gray explained. "The search seems to become less threatening when they can look for someone else."

One thing that Gray had to watch out for was the possibility that the club would become an end in itself. To keep the meetings on track, Gray devised rituals of goal setting and goal review - a chance for members to plan their job seeking activities and report on their success.

The gratifying thing about the club for Gray was that it worked. In an experimental comparison, the employment rate for members of the Job Club was roughly 75 per cent after 12 weeks, while nonmembers were employed at a rate of only 23 per cent.

"After my project was completed, the state of Michigan put a half million dollars into older worker projects, including the Job Club program and seven others," Gray said.

Other states are beginning to concentrate on the older worker as well, he added. "The area is really blossoming because there are more older people than ever before. We used to want them out of the work force to make room for the young, but now the baby boom generation is getting older."

Add to that the chance that social security benefits may be curtailed, and you have a very good reason to bring the older American back into the work force, Gray said.

In February the psychologist will travel to Washington, D.C., for a meeting of the National Council on Aging, where he will train others how to run a Job Club.

Closer to home, he is currently working with the Triangle J Council of Governments (COG) Task Force on Older Workers to plan a Job Club for the Triangle area.

### Business Down

A level of business activity in North Carolina declined in December, according to the Wachovia Business Index. The Index registered 153.3, down 0.4 per cent from the November level.

Employment losses in both manufacturing and non-manufacturing industries and a shorter manufacturing workweek contributed to the decrease in the Index. Price-adjusted average hourly earnings for manufacturing employees remained unchanged from November.

Manufacturing employment declined 1 percent with both durable goods and non-durable goods industries reporting lower employment levels. Employment decreases were spread through all industries in the durable goods sector. In the non-durable goods sector, gains in food, tobacco and chemicals employment were offset by a slight decrease in apparel employment and a 1.4 per cent drop in textiles.

Employment was down marginally in the non-manufacturing sector. Contract construction and government employment rose, while services employment declined. Trade employment was 1.5 per cent below the level for the previous month.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for North Carolina was 6.9 per cent in December, up 0.3 per cent from November. The national rate for December was 8.9 per cent, up 0.5 per cent from November. The unadjusted unemployment rate in North Carolina was 6.8 per cent in December.

Unit sales of cars and trucks in 1981 were down 3.7 per cent and 4.1 per cent respectively compared to 1980.

The Index at the end of 1981 registered 1.2 per cent below the level at the end of 1980. Business activity in North Carolina was stronger during the first six months, and the third quarter was the weakest period during the year. Comparing year-end data, manufacturing employment declined 1.7 per cent, reflecting 6,500 fewer employees in durable goods industries and 7,900 fewer employees in non-durable goods. The average manufacturing workweek was 3 per cent or 1.8 hours below a year ago, and pride-adjusted average hourly earnings declined 0.6 per cent. Non-manufacturing employment was down 0.5 per cent, primarily due to losses in contract construction.



Carrots, parsnips, sweet potatoes and winter squash can be simply candied with a tablespoon of honey or molasses and a tablespoon of melted butter, per cup of cooked vegetable. Gently heat until coated.



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- 1-Lb. Store Brand Margarine
- Gal. Clorox
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- 46-oz. V-8 Vegetable Juice
- 18-oz. Quaker Oats
- 5-Lb. Store Brand Sugar
- 1-Lb. Bag Maxwell House Coffee
- 16-oz. Store Brand Cut Green Beans
- 48-oz. Dawn Liquid Detergent
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- 3-Lb. Bag Yellow Onions
- 5-oz. Armour Vienna Sausage
- 17-oz. Store Brand Sweet Peas
- 1-Lb. Store Brand Saltines
- 2-Lb. Bag Carrots
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Meat	.89L
Perishbl	1.59L
1 at 3-1.00	.34L
Non-Food	
Grocery	.95D
Grocery	1.39L
Grocery	.79L
Grocery	.80L
Grocery	1.41L
Non-Food	2.25L
Produce	.33L
Produce	2.83D
Grocery	.89L
Grocery	.99L
Grocery	.41L
Produce	.37L
Non-Food	.69L
Perishbl	.89L
1 at 3-1.29	1.84D
Non-Food	.43L
Grocery	1.35D
Meat	.41L
Subtotal	1.79L
4 per cent tax	32.28
Total	1.23
	33.51

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