

What does Mel West's life look like in 2017?

I am sometimes asked what I now do, at age 93, after retiring as Executive Director of Mobility Worldwide MO-Columbia. Fortunately I have amazingly good health and vigor, and a theology that says that those who have received much are expected to pay much back... That is not only a responsibility but a joy and a great satisfaction.

The lack of the responsibility at MW has allowed me to be at home more with Barbara, my spouse of 72 years, sharing in the activities and processes of winding down for the final years. We are organizing our home office and various papers and belongings to simply the work left to our children when we are no longer here. Technology helps us keep in touch with our children and grandchildren.

We have a large hillside flower and shrub garden, plus a smaller vegetable garden. We were both farm kids and like to keep our hands in the soil. We were taught to leave the world a better place than we found it, and that includes our own lawns. Last evening we had a delicious salad made from fresh picked and home grown lettuce.

Each afternoon at 4:30 or so I take a mile and half walk around Lenoir and through the trails in our woods. The May apples came up this week. Visits are made to those in the nursing units and along the trail.

I am an avid reader, reading five or six periodicals a week, plus the local paper and other items. I read a book every week or so, and am now appreciating "The General VS. The President - Macarthur and Truman." A fascinating book.

Writing is one of my joys. My daily Facebook blog is winning me new friends far and wide. I seldom go to a meeting without someone coming up and thanking me for it. I try to include items that are informational and inspirational. This column keeps me in touch with a lot of friends. My memoires are always on the "back burner."

My mind is kept informed and challenged by attending Rotary each Friday morning and the "Forum" at the local UU Church every Sunday morning. Both have outstanding speakers.

My Intent to keep close to God's "least of these" is filled by my being a member at the Wilkes Blvd. UMC where the homeless come each day to shower, do their laundry, store their belongings in a secure place, get their mail, and find counseling. Each night some 100 to 120 are fed a bountiful meal. Each Sunday morning at 10:15, a healthy breakfast is served to the hungry. Some 40 or so come and many stay on for worship at 10:45...

I am at Mobility Worldwide (PET) part-time about three days a week. Each week I write a personalized thank you letter for each check received. Last week it was about 50. Packing the sewing machines for overseas shipment is my task, as well as packing fabric (part of The Container Project).

That's it. Our cat "Pumpkin" will be with me this afternoon as I do "cosmetic" work on our big garden. Come and see what Barbara and I have done to a neglected hillside.

"No indolence, no laziness, but employ every minute of your life in active pleasures or useful employment." - Lord Chesterfield, 1747

Mel West