

Holiday Option Vacation Tim Schnabel, Columnist

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I can't believe Christmas 2009 is recent history and we are just getting our feet wet into the double digit New Year! So, let me ad my wishes for a blessed and abundant 2010 to you and yours. We pass through time so quickly don 't we? That is, unless you are in the under 18 crowd, but for the over 50 crowd, and I qualify, seems like there are 6 months from one New Year's to the next! To affectionately annoy my wife right after fall begins I say something like, "Can you believe that three months from today is Christmas Eve!?" "I don't even want to think about that and I am pretending I didn't hear you," is often her firm reply. How can we slow all of this down? I think I have an answer.

I recommend the over 50 crowd have the option to participate in what I will call the HOV Plan. It would be similar to the High Occupancy Vehicle lane on some of our highways (passing most other vehicles in traffic), but here's the difference. This HOV would be called the Holiday Option Vacation. By buying into the plan, you are allowed to skip all the trappings of the holidays for one year. So, instead of not believing the season is already here, possibly dreading that it has once again arrived, the HOV Plan is like a get out of jail card! So, you get to take a pass on a whole season, free with no guilt! After skipping a holiday season, perhaps during the following July, you are actually missing Christmas carols, sending cards, buying presents, going to parties and may have re-captured that perhaps long lost excitement and spirit for the season.

By purchasing a one-season HOV pass, the system automatically notifies all your friends, relatives and fellow workers that you are on holiday vacation. So, when you don't show up for a party or folks don't get a card from you, no problem! Listen to this scene: "Honey, didn't we get a card from the Schnabel's this year" "No, sweetie; remember we got the email from that company notifying us they are on the HOV plan this year." "Oh, yeah, lucky dogs. I'll look forward to hearing from them next year and to tell you the truth, reaching 50-years-plus in age is actually becoming more attractive!"

The holding company for the HOV Plan would be a not-for-profit organization where the proceeds would be disbursed to charities. In terms of the real meaning of the season, you would not be exempt from worshiping in the customary manner. Anyway, something to think about. ☺

Back to reality, I encourage you to move into the New Year considering that resting may be required. After a busy season from Thanksgiving through the New Year most of us are tired and even worn out. Recuperating often takes longer than a weekend or two. Consider January a time for catching your breath and for looking at what you might want to change for yourself in 2010. Traditionally these are called resolutions. I prefer to frame them as "Personal Possibilities" as in... how I want to show up differently with my life.

Social psychology researchers inform us that when we attempt putting too much change on our plates, we can easily become dejected when we are not making the progress we want. I suggest asking and completing this simple question, “Before this year is completed, if I were to change one thing about myself with which I would be most pleased, it is...?” The key in that question is “I would be most pleased,” not parents, partners, bosses, etc. The more specific we are in completing that sentence the more helpful in both measuring and achieving the results. I wish you every success.