**You Have To Predict The Future**

Once upon a time, I thought the future would take care of itself. There was a job, then retirement, then a pension and/or social security. Slowly, I began to realize that there is a career, money to manage, life partner (permanent or temporary), children (or not), living longer, and retirement. Formal education seems to address none of these issues. Religion and other causes would like to address these issues for you, but their program is mostly for their own benefit and not yours.

I once heard a lecture about the principles of a sermon. There are three parts: WHAT (explain the problem), SO WHAT (why is this problem important), NOW WHAT (meaning for your life). That appears to be good advice for any expounded topic which takes a short page or a short talk.

Career: I went to Caltech because my math teacher told me I should. I went to grad school at Northwestern because Professor Harry Gray said they would treat me nicely. My first job was because my college roommate, Bob Greenwood, said they could use me. I continued in that field because I enjoyed it. At the Caltech 50th reunion, I found that those people that had a life plan like medical school, statistics, or research ideas had more profitable and satisfying careers. The best plan appears to be to found a profitable business or do important research to leave a legacy for future people.

Money: Parental example is quite powerful. Those parents who invested wisely seemed to have children that also knew how to invest. My depression era parents purchased life insurance, cemetery plots, and bonds. They would have been far better off in real estate and the stock market. They were continually afraid of borrowing money for the real estate or investing in stocks; however, in the long run, those actions led to a more profitable life. I was fortunate to recognize that early and made some reasonable investments. However, although I was in the computer field, I did not predict the explosion of computer related technology, so I did not invest in Microsoft, Apple, Amazon, Facebook(&&), Google, and the Internet. I did have the good fortune to work for SAIC and purchase that company stock.

Partner: This choice is frequently mismanaged without sufficient thought. The personal ships sometimes cross in the night and sail along together for a while, but eventually keep going on their prior directions and separate. Changing partners is expensive: one-third of the estate to me, one-third to you, one-third to the lawyers. The Catholic Archdiocese of Milwaukee drastically reduced the divorce rate there by requiring a one year course before marriage could be performed in the Catholic Church. The course allowed both sides to discuss their expectations on a variety of perhaps unconsidered topics.

Children: That is one of those topics. How many? Spacing? Parenting style? Responsibility? I did not really have a choice here. My parents only had one child (with much disappointment), and really wanted grandchildren. In fact, any female partner that could produce children was very welcome into the family. I loved having children, playing with the children, and doing things with the children. I had a great time for a while until they all seemed to go their own separate ways.

Living: People are living a lot longer than previously, especially if you have personally stayed away from dangerous behavior patterns and substances. My attitude was to take as much time off of work as possible, so I continually took four weeks of leave without pay each year in addition to the four weeks of vacation. Vacations are easier when you are more able and more interested; they are also better if the children are brought along to experience the world of wonder. I also decided to stay in my current house; after all, I am used to the surroundings, and it took a long time to get them to be to my liking.

Retirement: Retirement areas /homes are a collection of old people who have left their friends and are trying to do something useful. Even buying retirement or whole life insurance seems rather deadly. I was offended by the company retirement advice that said that most of your portfolio should be in bonds (currently at very low rates). Getting an annuity is a terrible financial move as the seller gets 10% immediately. Most of the people that I know that have done well have stayed where they are. I also expect that any prediction that I make for the future will be WRONG; I can only hope it is good enough.