

Millennials value leisure time, enjoy merging hobbies, work

By RACHEL SHUBIN
Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy — because without activities outside work, life would be boring.

Having a hobby to focus on is essential for relaxation. Millennials are known for their affinity for using their time off work to relax. Many millennials are guilty of kicking back and watching Netflix mindlessly, instead of being productive.

Millennials are said to value work-life balance above job advancement. Between the never offline workplace, no one truly leaves the office at closing time. Millennials want their personal and professional lives to have equal balance.

Outside of 9-5 life, hobbies are a way to find equilibrium in daily life. However, sometimes millennials are so in love with their hobbies that they make it their job.

Hali MacLaren, 25, did not grow up with plans to become a jeweler.

"I made hemp bracelets with seashells while I was

growing up and would sell them to my friends on the beach," MacLaren said. "I never wore jewelry until I got older, until I learned how to make it."

MacLaren is based in West Chester, Pa., but grew up spending her summers in Cape May. She has a bachelor's degree in jewelry making and crafts from University of the Arts in Philadelphia.

"Out of all the craft classes, like woodworking, fibers and ceramics, jewelry making was the only class that fit into my schedule," MacLaren said. "I absolutely fell in love with it and switched my major in my junior year. I've been making jewelry for six years."

The phenomenon of hobbies becoming full-time jobs has created a new wave of employment for millennials. It gives them a chance to create their own balance.

"Hobbies separate the everyday, mundane work environment from your interests," MacLaren said. "I want people to work and do what you love, which is why I joined my hobby with my work. I think for

creative types, it is easy for us to have that hobby and for non-creatives it's important to find some type of hobby because it balances you out."

Having hobbies is a great way to start a conversation with others and form friendships with those who have similar interests.

"It's good for your physical and emotional being, as well as your mental," MacLaren said. "It's important to have balance and be able to have different outlets where you can express yourself and find support."

MacLaren is part of the Haverford Guild of Craftsmen in Pennsylvania, where she is able to interact with those in her craft and other types of work.

"There are other jewelers in the field, so I can get good feedback from them as well as people who work in woodwork or ceramics," MacLaren said. "They meet once a month and have different discussions on topics in crafts. Whether it's how to set up a display to a craft show, how to market yourself or how to take good photos and edit them."

The wide age range of members gives MacLaren help on many topics. However, she is the only millennial in the guild.

"I wish there were more millennials in the group; it's a really great outlet of information and opportunities for artists," MacLaren said. "But with the \$70 membership fee, many millennials don't want to spend the money. The Digital Age can be time-consuming and let us sit back on our couches and scroll our newsfeeds. It's even better for people to be out and present in person."

A selection of MacLaren's jewelry is available for purchase at Splash, 513 Carpenter's Lane in Cape May. She is scheduled to have a trunk show there



JESSICA ORŁOWICZ



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Convincing millennials to join organizations is not always a difficult task, especially when groups focus on issues about which millennials are passionate.

"Millennials make up about 10 percent of our congregation," Cape May Lutheran Church Pastor Jeff Elliott said. "I don't find them unwilling to join at all, I see them willing to join and participate fully."

Cape May Lutheran Church works with the Cape May Green Team on service-oriented projects.

"The things millennials like and are glad to be active in include environmental work," Elliott said. "They are also interested in our whole-food, plant-based eating program."

Joining a military organization is another way millennials connect with each other. Cape May is home to the U.S. Coast Guard training center.

"I was active-duty Coast

Guard for four years," Jessica Orłowicz said. "My ex-husband is in the Coast Guard and we were transferred to Cape May for his job."

Orłowicz, 36, took a film class in college but taught herself photography through YouTube and other informational websites. Before she knew it, Orłowicz had become a working photographer, merging her hobby with her full-time job.

"It's important for anyone to have hobbies, especially if your job isn't something you're passionate about," Orłowicz said. "Very few people are lucky enough to pay the bills doing something creative, a job they would do even if they weren't being paid."

Like MacLaren, Orłowicz said she believes that connecting with people over social media has positive and negative aspects.

"We can connect from our couch, which is both good and bad," Orłowicz said. "Joining clubs and even going to church had a lot to do with socializing for previous generations."

Millennials can have difficulty stepping away from social media to join groups and interact with other people. Orłowicz has previously belonged to Click & CO, an organization that publishes Click Magazine.

"It is where I found my most significant mentors," Orłowicz said. "Specifically other female photographers."

Orłowicz works as a lifestyle photographer in Cape May for her own company,

Peach & Port. She also is a communications director at Princeton Strategic Communications.

"Stepping away from social media is very important and not something I'm good at," Orłowicz said. "Because I'm an independent contractor, it's hard for me to walk away from work. A large part of what I do is social media management, and social media is 24/7. Because I'm a single mother, if I do step away from work it's to spend time with my children."

Millennials enjoy the mindfulness movement and focusing on self-care. Mindfulness is the psychological process or practice of bringing oneself to the present and embracing the moment and experience. It can be done through meditation or other practices, such as self-care.

"Self-care with my work and life balance is something I plan to focus on this coming year," Orłowicz said.

It can seem like every day a new rumor surrounding millennials is circulating. Cape May could be the exception to the typical millennial, as the population finds niche work in town. Hobbies that double as full-time jobs are a millennial's dream.

To some, it might appear millennials are not motivated to join groups or organizations — but they are just trying to find the time to disconnect from social media and focus on relaxing activities and hobbies. And sometimes, joining them together.

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6	5:28	5:54	11:12	
7	6:29	6:51	12:11	12:13
8	7:24	7:45	1:05	1:10
9	8:15	8:35	1:55	2:05
10	9:05	9:24	2:43	2:57
11	9:53	10:11	3:30	3:49
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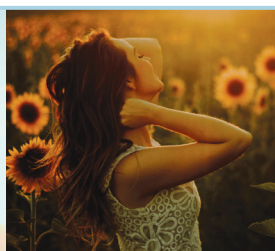
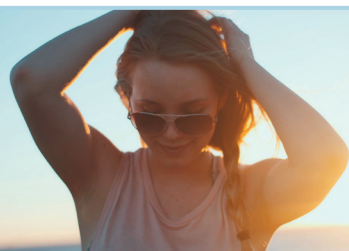
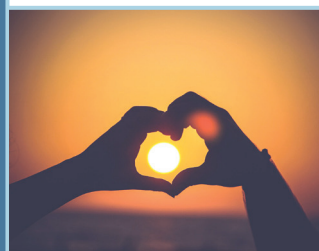
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