Fed up? Burned out? Take a new path in life, career center urges

By John Berghman
Staff Writer

SAN MARCOS — Jodi is a 22-year-old retail for a major department store. But she is unhappy in her work — and she plans to quit.

Bob was a manager at a major department store, earning $28,000 a year. But the 34-year-old became fed up with long hours and company policies — and quit.

Diane is 45 and her three children are about to set out on their own. She thinks it's about time to begin using a degree in psychology earned 20 years ago.

To the list, add Betty, a 54-year-old grandmother and data processor, and Jim, a former firefighter and real estate salesman.

Different people with a single goal: a new career.

And they have come to the right man: John Dic, director of the Palomar College Career Center.

"The purpose of this session is to find the best career for you," Dic told the eight women and two men who gathered recently at the career counseling center on campus.

"We are going to do is determine your interests, values and abilities. From that, we hope to give you some self-discovery, and assist you with a career assessment."

With that, Dic distributed an 11-question survey.

Among other things, Dic wants to know how the respondents spend their spare time, their most enjoyable and least enjoyable subject in school, and how they define success.

"We offer this service once a week," Dic said.

Women who are either returning to, or starting anew, in the work world, either because their children are grown, or, perhaps, they are recently divorced.

"We also see men and women who are frustrated in their careers or suffering from burnout.

"And, of course, we also get a lot of the younger students on campus who are trying to decide on a career."

Dic tries to limit the class to 10. If the group is any larger, he said, it is too difficult to complete the session in the allotted two hours.

"For about 60 to 70 percent of the people who take the session, it will lead to a new career. For perhaps 30 to 40 percent, it will be a matter of reaffirming a career on which they probably already have decided."

— John Dic, career counselor

Dic decided she might want to consider becoming a writer for a women's magazine. "See, we have taken three or four interests and put them together for some career possibilities," he said.

Bob told the group he was dissatisfied "and after 4½ years, I just walked off the job." A serious accident, also influenced his decision to re-evaluate his life and his work.

The man's non-working activities — baseball, tennis and cycling — promoted Dic to suggest Bob might be interested in pursuing a career in recreation, or as a recreational therapist.

Bob's comments about defining success — being happy and enjoying a good quality of life — resulted in some rather generalized advice.

"If you find a career you like, don't worry about the money, go for it," Dic said. "If you like the job, the money will come. Think about the quality of life your job will lead to."

"I know Realtors who are making more than $200,000 a year, but the quality of their lives is questionable. They tell me about working long hours, seven days a week, time away from home, but they admit the computer field has become too competitive for them."

"It's getting increasingly hard for older women to get back into the work force," she said.

But Betty was encouraged by Dic's assessment that she knew how to get computers and data processing, plus her like of people, might lead to a job as a teacher or activity leader for senior citizens.

Most of those who took the class left with a feeling the time had been well spent. Dic, too, was satisfied with the outcome of last Wednesday's two-hour session.

In addition to the career guidance survey session, Palomar offers a one unit course entitled Career Search Class (Counseling 104). The class offers in-depth testing and career planning, Dic said.

For information about both classes...