

S A N F R A N C I S C O  
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## Laid off and loving it ...

**BY ROBERT LUHN**  
**Special to The Examiner**

I HAVE BEEN laid off. RIF'd. Booted. Given my walking papers. Cashiered. Permanently outsourced.

I feel like Tom Hanks, talking to Wilson the volleyball. I woke up this morning and realized that I'd been marooned -- cast away and cast off -- from my last job for more than a year.

One day, my dot-com was bustling, buying foosball tables and cappuccino machines, and lavishing me with stock options and in-house masseuses. After years of working for penny-pinching Old Economy companies, I thought, allllright!

Then one day, our inexperienced CEO finally realized we needed to make a profit, and started deconstructing our workforce, layoff after layoff, putting employees through the modern equivalent of the Death by a Thousand Cuts. I survived one cut, then another, but finally, the last cut was the deepest.

I was finally free to discover my inner CFO, to be the master of my own fate, to learn to love Top Ramen all over again. In short, my sudden discharge wasn't an insult, but an opportunity. Slowly, but surely, I embraced my Singletonlike status. I was Laid Off and Loving It.

If you're one of the thousands adrift on your own tiny ice floe -- or expect to be cut loose from the corporate iceberg soon -- now's the time to leverage your attitude.

What's to love?

- Rediscover your pets, 24/7. If they weren't pathetically attached to you before (or, at least, your can-opening talents), they will be now.

- Get in touch with your inner hausfrau. Shuffle around in bunny slippers. Drink coffee from your son's Flintstones cup. Sneak in some Oprah Time. Go ahead -- have that Chardonnay with your corn flakes.

- Love that commute to your spiffy new home office! (your garage). Total commute time: 30 seconds, plus or minus traffic jams caused by stray Tonka trucks.

- Neighborhood face-saving tip: commute to your old job -- at least, the first few blocks. Rise and shine, slap on that suit, wave to the neighbors as you pull out of the driveway, and head on down the road. Once you're out of sight, take a quick detour to Dunkin' Donuts, kick back, read the want ads, then drive home an hour later. You'll be sugared-up for your job hunt and the neighbors won't be the wiser.

- Love that postman! Who cares about anthrax? Someone you don't even know (yet) is taking the time to bring you something special every day. Junk mail never seemed so glamorous!

- Love those coupons! Once you sneered at 30 cents off on Sara Lee butter toffee rum cake. No more. You'll get paper cuts as you rip through the Sunday paper, looking for bargains. Wait -- what's that? Turkey stuffing, two for a dollar! Start clipping, pal.

- Free reading. At 11 a.m., the local library is your living room. Put up your feet, grab a book, sneak a gaze at the luscious librarian. Can't afford the gas? Your neighbors' recycling bins are a ready source of (almost) current reading material. Dig in and

- Write something like this.

Comment: [letters@examiner.com](mailto:letters@examiner.com)

*Robert Luhn is an El Cerrito-based writer currently leveraging his unemployment insurance options.*

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