

Home Economists Make Time For Families With Free-Lance Career

BY CAROLYN GILLES
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ERIE — Many women agonize over the choice of career or family. But to Lynn Clint and Rhonda Sember of Erie, the choice wasn't as mutually exclusive as they originally thought it would be.

Both Lynn and Rhonda started out as home economists in the Cooperative Extension Service, but in different states — Rhonda in Pennsylvania and Lynn in Ohio. When she married, Lynn relocated to Pennsylvania and shared an office with Rhonda in the Erie County Extension building. That was the beginning of this "dynamic duo."

The two worked well together from the start and they talked about the things they would like to do someday. But little did they realize what the future had in store for them. They never dreamed they'd be in business together.

But they didn't actually get the ball rolling themselves. Lynn and Rhonda resigned from their jobs at the extension office, thinking only of spending more time at home raising their expanding families.

After the two left extension work, the local paper contacted Rhonda about writing a column and she, in turn, asked Lynn to co-

write it with her. Lynn knew she would need some part-time work to supplement their income, but she never dreamed it would be working for the paper.

After the opportunity for the newspaper column, a local college approached them about teaching classes, and other extension offices also offered teaching opportunities. Now they are busier than they ever imagined they would be.

Lynn said getting ready for a class these days is wild. "You have one (child) beating up on the other one in the room, and another one hanging on your leg, and a third one getting over into your stuff that you just packed and unpacking it."

The kids are the "limiting factor" on their activities now. Just to get together to have their photos taken for a newspaper article "means six kids under the age of three in another room while the photographer's trying to shoot something."

But Lynn and Rhonda feel comfortable with the careers they have right now. They "bump into things" rather than pursue them. Nonetheless, they end up busier without pursuing. They couldn't handle much more right now.

Probably the biggest project the two have tackled so far is a show

for homemakers sponsored by their newspaper. They gave microwave instructions on stage before 2,000 people.

They think that, for the next few years, they can keep as busy as they want by just being open to those things they "bump into." Beyond that, the potential avenues for more income would take more work and more time. These two feel comfortable just knowing the potential is on the back burner. They're just not ready to move it forward yet. Said Rhonda, "It just isn't important to have to do it right now."

Lynn added: "I guess I've gotten selfish. I really hate to give up more than one or two days a week to work. I enjoy having that extra time to be with the kids."

Responsibility for three weekly newspaper columns means that Lynn and Rhonda don't get vacations anymore, not even when they're in the hospital having babies. Lynn said, "It gets comic, you know...Rhonda comes in with her big tote bags and stuff and we did a couple columns while I was in there. And, after she had the twins, I was in there totin' in stuff for her and she was writing a column in bed."

What do they dream of? Rhonda's goals would be to get a little



Lynn Clint, left, and Rhonda Sember have joined their talents to form a free-lance home economists business. Their free-lance schedule permits them to spend more time with their families than a full-time job would.



Lynn looks through files strategically located in a closet — away from curious toddlers.



Joe, Jodi and Jaime "help" Rhonda with an equipment inventory.



Family life is a top priority for both Lynn and Rhonda. Here they spend time entertaining their kids on the swing set. From left are Jodi Sember, Rhonda Sember with her son, Joe, Jaime Sember, Kathy Clint, Jimmy Clint, Lynn Clint and Mary Clint.

bit of a vacation and spend some time on sewing and art, the things she had to put aside. But one of the advantages of being a home economist is that you can branch out in so many different directions. They would travel over a wider geographical radius to work. "But," Lynn said, "right now we don't want to do that because that would defeat the reason for us quitting our jobs...There are a lot of things that we've thought of from time to time, that we could do and ways we could publicize ourselves. But we've opted not to do that because we want to be at home here with the family until the kids get older."

Having families affects their work style. They have spouses and

children to consider and this largely controls what they choose to pursue. Lynn said, "Right now, we're not career minded, we're family minded and we're not willing to let go of our careers totally, so we're just kind of hanging on by a string."

They worked at their careers for 14 or 15 years and have only had a few years to leave the fast pace behind and take more time for family and parenting.

They believe their situation is somewhat unique. "Some women are just starting out and they need a career for fulfillment. Well, we've already had that. We're more or less working backwards. We've

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