

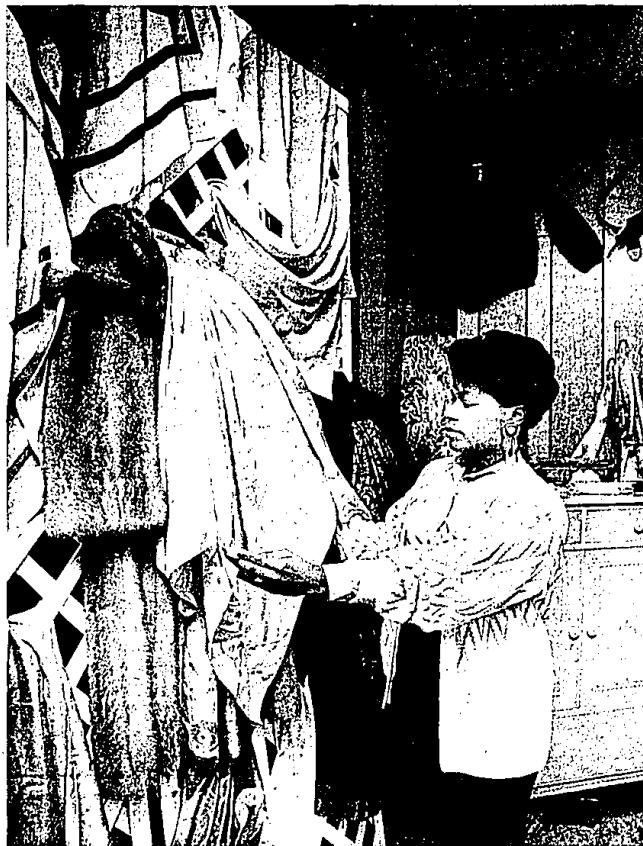
Suburban Life

Loraine McClish editor/477-5450



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RANDY DORST/staff photographer

Monica Melton talks about local designers and the odds they fight to make a name for themselves in the fashion world.

Parenting

On the children who are being 'quality cared for' to death

Editor's note: Wendy Blachford wrote out some of her thoughts on parenting — a role she calls a 'lofty calling,' and shares those thoughts with our readers. Her reflections stem from her studies in child development and elementary education at Madonna College. She is a Farmington Hills resident and mother of two daughters, 8 and 11 years old.

By Wendy Blachford
special writer

Parenting is truly a lofty calling. There is no simple recipe to follow in raising happy, healthy children. There are no particular rules, nor is there a job description involved with becoming a parent. There never has been.

The problem is that in today's society, everything has become oversimplified to a point where even parenting is seen as something we simply decide to do, or not to do, based on external factors such as income, space, or convenience. Perhaps a couple decides that, in fact, they do have enough money and enough space to have a child. It is even a convenient time in their lives to do so, according to our new American way of thinking. All this is terrific, and a beautiful child is born... then what?

It's time to find a day care center, an institution that will give this child "quality" care, one that is open from early in the morning until late in the evening, and staffed by love, fine people earning less wages than we pay employees to flip burgers in our fast food restaurants.

Oh yes, Mom and Dad will need all the newest toys and the finest baby stuff so baby can be surrounded by "quality" things. Let's not forget the fancy clothes and the



Wendy Blachford

"Cadillac" baby stroller so that when baby is seen with Mom and Dad, they can be proud.

Pride in what Mom and Dad are accomplishing, pride of ownership, pride in the same sense that a young child takes a favorite toy to school for show 'n' tell.

I FEEL VERY strongly that children are far more valuable, far more important to our world than simply a selfish accomplishment for the sake of show 'n' tell or pride of ownership. Many children in today's world spend more time at day care centers than with their own parents. In fact, some spend up to 11 hours per day in the day care setting. It is my opinion that most children would give up the "quality" care of an institutional setting, and all the newest toys, and the fancy clothes to simply be held, at home, by mom or dad.

These children are being "quality" cared for to death.

In reality, the true quality, the love of nurturing parents, is precisely what's missing.

I realize that in our American society today it has become necessary for many couples to have two incomes in order to make ends meet. But, at the same time, I also realize that many couples are choosing to reprioritize their lifestyles. The newest and the best are what is important.

People are choosing to have a double income for things like hot tubs, VCRs and health club memberships — one more hour a day away from baby.

Indeed, we are living in a faster paced, "me first" kind of society. But children still require the slow, quiet, peaceful moments shared with their parents. Children require the gentle touch of a parent when they are afraid or lonely. Children require the warm, reassuring smile of a parent when they're feeling insecure.

These things are not asked of parents by children. In fact, many children may go through life without these things. Isn't it the very least we can do to help our children grow and develop into happy, healthy individuals who can work toward improving the non-committal society we have created?

The gentle touch or the warm smile of a parent are not something to be measured by their "quality" but instead, by their consistency.

GIVING children "quality" care and "quality" time and "quality" things is simply not enough. Children need parents. And parents have, not only an obligation to their children, but indeed, a lofty calling.

One of my favorite poems is called, "What Shall We Give the

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Designer's Den

A showcase for the creations of Michigan's couturiers

By Loraine McClish
staff writer

MONICA MELTON believes that Michigan residents should support Michigan fashion designers.

She opened Designer's Den last spring with an inventory so heavy on the side of the work of local couturiers it caused one customer to comment that the shop "was like having a little Saks Fifth Avenue in downtown Farmington."

"The designers who want to make a big name for themselves are fighting unbearable odds," Melton said. "Many of the ones I first came in contact with belong to the American Sewing Guild, which helps with some manufacturing — but they all need an outlet."

She continued on to say that those who set out for a career in fashion designing generally fall into one of two categories.

"There are those who want their designs manufactured now — have the clothes sold retail and quick — keep pouring out the designs for a quick turnover."

"Then there are those who are in it just because they are in love with the art of it. These are the artists. They may have aspirations of being the next Calvin Klein, or not. But all of their creations are original works of

art — every seam and every detail complements every other aspect of the entire piece.

"Look at this," Melton said, pointing to an exquisite two piece afternoon dress designed and sewn by Martha Borchert in her Farmington Hills home.

"Where could you find something this beautifully made for this price. She brings me her things just because she is pleased to have a local outlet."

LINDA HILL of Farmington, Dolores Stevenson of Southfield and Sam Walker of Detroit were a few of the names of the nearby designers that Melton pointed to as bringing in "extraordinary one-of-a-kind" to the downstairs shop in Village Mall on the corner of Grand River and Farmington Road.

The two room shop offers what Melton calls "the new and the nearly new." In the "nearly new" department Melton sticks to her designers by only offering the best of the recycled designer labels whether on clothing, accessories or jewelry.

"There is nothing avant-garde here," she said. "It is all quality high fashion. Whatever I have here fits in with today's market — today's fashion — and most of what I carry is very practical."

She described her regular customers as "Over 35 and working. That's

the majority, but also quite a few retroes of late. And I think I'll get another mix now that I've started Fash Bash."

Melton heads up a Fash Bash exactly the same as a home party, but the party is in Designer's Den.

Melton supplies a fashion show, food and beverages. The hostess supplies the guests and receives 10 percent of the entire purchases in merchandise.

"Sometimes it's gotten a bit crowded in here and some of us were out in the halls. But we do eat, drink and be merry and the neighbors have never complained. Matter of fact a couple of times they've even joined us," she said.

MELTON PREFERS her little shop.

"It's too easy to get lost in a big store," she said.

She has a degree in business management and worked in Hudson's Sportswear Department before going into business for herself.

A resident of Rosedale Park, she said she sought out the space for her new enterprise "because of its intimacy, because of its personalness."

"It's everything I wanted, including the dependable, reliable, quality clothes with all of the small details that just spell out good finished product."

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