SUBURBAN LIFE

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Stay at home dad finds humor in baby's life

When our son, Brad, was born, my wife and I nade the decision that one of us would stay

When our son, Brnd, was born, my wite and made the decision that one of us would stay home to raise him. Now don't get me wrong. There's nothing wrong with both parents continuing their careers after a child is born (except in the case where the baby is left unattended, of course). In fact, there are babies rummaging around out there who would cause me to volunteer for a two-year shift on an Antartic oid drilling platform just to avoid raising them. I know these babies are out there. I've seen them in K-Mart. This isn't to say that all working parents are merely using their careers as an excuse to stay as far away from their children as possible, but in some cases I would highly recommend it. So the bottom line here is that I'm not trying to judgmental. It's just that in our situation, one of us staying home seemed to make sense. When it came to deciding which of us that would be, two important factors needed to be considered.

First, my wife, Margie, was doing very well in First, my wife, Margie, was doing very well in First, my wife, Margie, was doing very well in First, my wife, Margie, was doing very well in First, my wife, Margie, was doing very well in First, my wife, Margie, was doing very well in the second to exceed the conventors.

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First, my wife, Margie, was doing very well in a career she enjoyed and, secondly, co-workers often found me at my deak attempting to jub pointy objects into my eyes. (NOTE: This is not an endorsement of such activities.)

After carefully weighing the data, we concluded that I would stay home and raise our son, at least until he pooped in his pants or spit up or something disgusting like that.

The biggest challenge thus far has been adjusting to the dramatic changes in lifestyle since quitting my job. Things that I used to say or do on an almost daily basis ("Sorry I'm late, Mr. Schmelling.") are but distant memories.

I have found that when I'm out among other actual adults in the actual adult world, I often forget how to communicate properly. I tend to speak in that same high pitched melodic tone typically used on babies, house plants, dogs and other forms of unintelligent life. (I believe the psychiatric term for this is Melanie Griffith syndrome. And when I have Brad with me, entire conversations occur in which the parties involved speak only through him:

Me (to Bradt. "Can you tell the nice man that our vroom vroom car doesn't work right any more?"

Burly auto mechanic (also to Bradt. "Well! It sounds wike the probower wif da witto engine is

more?"
Burly auto mechanic (also to Brad): "Well! It sounds wike the pwobwem wif da witto engine is dat mean old mister sparkpwug. Yeecees it is!

Boo boo boo boo!"
Brad: "Pphhhhttttttt"
Yes, I've had to adapt to a number of changes
since my active days in the workforce, including:

since my active days in the workforce, including: Common phroace:
Before: "I'll get back to you Wednesday morning with exact cost and timing figures concerning this proposed change."
Now: "000000! Bradley make a BIG poo-pool" Clothing:
Before: suit and tie, of style and color to convey extreme confidence while also maintaining an air of approachability and openness.
Now: anything that looks good with creamed peas and spittle.
Daily agenda controlled by:

eas and spittle.

Daily agenda controlled by:
Before: short, stocky, crabby gentleman with
stremely thin hair who hadtrouble getting his

extremely thin hair who hadrouble getting his intended point across.

Now: OK, so there's no actual change here.
Rescive invaluable instruction on how to communicate and work effectively with others:

Before: through company sponsored classes and workshops teaching state of the art interactive techniques.

Now: Buy brightly colored puppets like (Elmo) who have metal rods pertruding from their writes.

who have metal rods pertruding from their wrists.
Please note that I are not complaining here.
Raising my son has been an extremely rewards ing endeavor so far.
Par more rewarding than my career to this point, to be sure. If there is one thing I hope to instill in Brad down the road (besides "ax murderrabach", it's that he should do something he truly enjoys with his life.
Based on his early behavioral patterns, I would say possible options would include, but not be limited to:
Bock removal sechnician
Pet formanter
Object tester-biter
Person who rolls off edge of cliff with absolutely no fact whatsoever.
As for now, however, I'm afraid he'll have to be content serving as an interpreter between my mechanic and me.

Scott Beegert is a stay at home dad, armington resident and ex-aerospace and auto-



Nothing routine: Virginia Dickerman and the Satin Dolls perform for a taping of Dance with Virginia on cable television.

Students floored

Dance teacher steps into happy lifestyle



Virginia Dickerman has been dancing for 70 years and teaching for 60 years. Her commitment to the art form and bright outlook on life is an inspiration to many.

BY DIANE GALE STAFF WRITER

pramic is one way to describe Virginia Dickerman of Permington Hills.

Agile and athletic also fit the 74-year-old dance instructor who swims one and a half hours daily during.

one and a half hours daily during the summer.

"Mothers who took lessons from me are bringing their children in for lessons," said Dickerman of her business, Dickerman Danes Studio. Orchard Lake Road between 10 Mile and Grand River roads. Her non-stop pace includes producing cable television shows, teaching dance and learning new steps from dancers across the country to keep fresh.

keep fresh.
Committed and consumed by everything that has to do with dance. Dickorman's feet haven't stopped tapping since she was 4 years old and took her first lessor. She's been dancing for 70 years,

teaching for 60 years and in the Farmington area for 35 of these years. I forget I'm not 18 years old." Dickerman said.

Energy and enthusiasm flow from the professional dancer, performer, choreographer, producer, cable master of coretmonies, mother to Marcia and grandmother to Heidi, 18, and Erik, 15.

ter of carrinonies, mother to Marcia and grandmother to Heidi, 18, and Erik, 16.

Dickerman looks, talks, walks and acts more than 20 years younger and most people don't believe her when she tells them her ags. She says positive thinking dominates her life. In fact, she believes her attitude and drive were key to bringing her beyond breast cancer last year.

"If I over retiro I will teach positive thinking," Dickerman said. Viewers can catch a glimpee of Dickerman on cable Channel 12 during showings of "Dance with Virginia," "Dickerman Showcase" and "Seniors on Parade," Her cable

II 'I'm able to transcribe any dance, so my stu-dents are getting things that come right off television. Ability is ageless. It's all in your attitude. It's not that you go through life, you grow through life.'

· Virginia Dickerman

work is volunteer.

While she teaches all types of dance, Dickerman says tap is her favorite. She drawsfrom greats like Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire. Her students range in age from 5 to 85 and from novice to teacher.

"I'm able to transcribe any dance, so my students are getting things that come right off tolevision," she said. "Ability is ageless, It's all in your attitude. It's not that you go through life, you grow through life," Watching a tape of herself and

her daughter. Dickerman keeps time with her fishlounble sandals and painted toes. Her Farmington Hills home is airy, fresh and the rooms seem to flow into one sancher like a well-planned dance routine. The back door leads to a brick walk that encompasses a lavish pool. Her three cats, all graceful of course, complete the picture.

Standing tall and thin, the red headed Dickerman said keeping trim isn't an accident. She ward her calories and exercises vigorously, which includes dancing at home sometimes until 2 a.m.

"Your body does not come with a lifetime guarantee," she said.

Her advice for getting through life changes with the choices that you make. Whether they're good or bad depends on you." Some of her choices were certainly life-changing.

As a young girl Dickerman's mother taked if she wanted plano or dance lessons. Dickerman, who was known to do cartwheels from school to their Detroit home, chose dance.

to their Detroit home, chose dance. In high school she joined the drama

Volunteers serve meals, heart-warming task

By Diane Hanson
SPECIAL WHITEE
When holp is needed, it is comforting to know holp is at hand. At Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills, volunteers are providing comfort by serving the acutaly ill, frail and elderly patients who cannot feed themselves.

"One of the great things is seeing the change in patients from the beginning and it's usually the elderly," according to Lois Smith, director of nursing services and Helping Hands co-director.

"Then coming back on a regular basis and seeing the improvement. It's very heart-warming."

The program was instituted at Botsford in October 1998 and patterned after the award-winning "The Serving Spoons" program from Greater Southeast Community Hospital in Washington, D. C. The first program was created in 1988 at Community Hospital in Washington, D. C. The first program was created in 1988 at Community Hospital in Washington, D. C. The first program was created in 1988 at Community Hospital in Washington, D. C. The first program was created in 1988 at Community Hospital in Washington, D. C. The first program was created in 1980 at a warded the American Hospital Academican Award for Volunteer Excellence.

According to Wandy Grazal, R.N., supervisor of the 11.4 Tam and Nutrition Support nurse and Initiated on one unit of the 398-bed hospital towork out any problems. It was opened hospital wide in May.

Seventy percent of the volunteers are hospital

wide in May.

Saventy percent of the volunteers are hospital
employees who generally share one lunch houeach week with a petient who cannot feed himsel
or herself. For those who volunteer from the unit See MANDS, SC



Resching out: Rick Perhogan, a mechanic in maintenance, inspects a meal delivered to patient, Eileen Kelly. Perhogan volunteers in the Helping Hands program on Wednesdays.