

Brotherly love: Matthew and Kevin Mercier are awaiting the arrival of two brothers and a sister.



SHARON LEMICKI/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Family from page 13A

1989 and married Oct. 27, 1990. In March of 1992, the twins were born.

Although Laurie feels like she's bordering on panic now, she says her husband Rob is a lot calmer. "He's from a family of seven kids. For him this is normalcy," she said.

She grew up with just two sisters. "I don't have any brothers, so this is a new avenue for me," she said.

Even with all the supportive friends and family, it's still hard to get help — because everybody works, she said. Some relief recently came with the arrival of an au pair from England. The au pair is living with them, and came on board early because of the high risk of premature birth with multiples. Laurie's due in July, but expects she'll give birth before that.

Babies born prematurely have to have monitors, so that will be an added complication.

They also need all the supplies that every baby needs — baby powder and wipes, pacifiers and car seats for each baby.

'It's constant chaos. It's never just quiet or tranquil.'

Laurie Mercier

People assume she can use the twins' cribs for the triplets, and just buy one more. But the twins are using the mattresses on their toddler beds, so mattresses are needed, too.

She envies mothers of single-birth children, as she says there's almost no quality time with multiples. "It's a constant satisfying of needs," she said.

She has learned some tricks from mothering twins, such as when one wakes up at night, you wake both. The Tri-County Mothers of Multiples group has given her a lot of resources, she said. The club has a program through which it donates clothes, which helps, she says, because clothes for preemies are triple the price of regular baby clothes.

Right now it's just a battle to keep from going into labor. After

getting the kids breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks and drinks, answering the phone and chasing after them, she's weary.

"By the end of the day my feet are swollen and I have contractions," she said.

Rob has been working 11-hour days, then coming home to work on the addition until midnight or 1 a.m.

But, having twins first has had some advantages. Her husband has had to pitch in from the beginning. "He had to help with diapers and baths. I feel that he's as competent as I am," she said.

Signs of the twins are all around. In the family room, two small desks, two trucks, two teddy bears; in the living room, two Mickey Mouse pillows.

She doesn't know if the twins have grasped the concept of their soon-to-be siblings. They say

they are going to help out, Laurie said.

She's anxious about the changes in her life. "I'm really a career woman," she said. The children mean they won't travel every year, as they had in the past. She doubts if they'll be able to find a babysitter willing to take on five small children.

The couple are not planning to have any more children. "I don't know if we could handle it really. It's very, very stressful," she said.

"It's constant chaos. It's never just quiet or tranquil," she said.

The Merciers will accept donations through their church, the St. Aidan Church, 17500 Farmington Road, Livonia. Call 313-425-5950.

Careers from page 13A

parts, they will have learned an approach to career transitions. There may even be a ripple effect in which they can help their children and spouses understand their own career choice.

Career counseling consists of the process of developing self-knowledge and knowledge of the job market and how these core elements are put together. Working on self-awareness, a variety of exercises such as prioritizing one's values can help.

Much of career choice is a series of decisions. I see writing a resume as an intrinsic part of the career development process.

People need to think about what they have done in terms of skills and to write these down to see what may be transferable. People find this to be one of the most difficult exercises.

There are numerous resources where people can get job market information. OCC Orchard Ridge has an extensive career resource center in the counseling office. I have encouraged people to make use of this center and see what courses are offered in the OCC system. The center also has some computerized career programs which people can use. A bachelor's or advanced degree isn't the only ticket in the job market.

Those who train at two-year community colleges where some of the best technical training is found, stand to prosper. The two-year

college offers a stepping stone into the four-year college system. Most local libraries also have a wealth of job market information. Other sources include newspapers to watch trends, reading career-related columns and magazines and contact with people.

Most of the women who have been to the workshops are between the ages of 30-55 years. There is always a reason or precipitating event that gets people into a career transition. Some are there because they have been in one field of work for several years, and they want to make a change. There are some who are going through a divorce and they are researching what they can do to be self-supporting. Some come to find out if they can get into a field after they are 50, since they are concerned about being too old while others have wanted to get medical benefits because of illness in their family.

Some people have lost their jobs because of restructuring, and they have needed reassurance and a chance to assess their options.

Elda M. Schwartz, a career development specialist, can be reached by leaving a message at the Womencenter at OCC Orchard Ridge in Farmington Hills, 810-471-2316. For more information about the support group and the workshop which begins May 17, call Arlene Frank, program director at the Womencenter.

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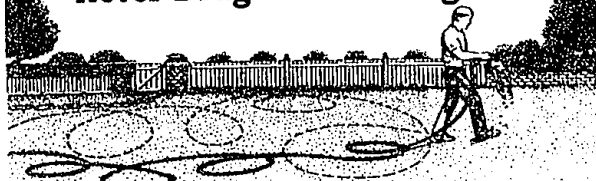
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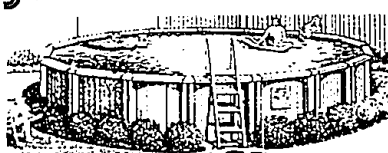
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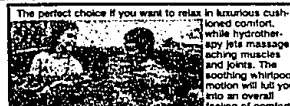
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