

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 1996

Motherly Day instinct: Leave town!

By MARY RODRIGUE
STAFF WRITER

On Mother's Day, Laurie Mercier of Farmington Hills plans to sleep in and enjoy breakfast in bed. While other moms will be treated to similar luxuries, it won't be nearly as sweet as it will be for Mercier, the mother of four-year-old twin boys and 10-month-old triplets.

Life in the Mercier's rambling colonial is anything but ordinary. There are three high chairs in the kitchen, three cribs upstairs, three infants on the verge of walking and talking, and two active, curious pre-school boys to keep her hopping. There's also Cedar, a five-year-old Golden Retriever, and a live-in helper.

"It's been extremely difficult but joyous at the same time," said Mercier, while her English au pair, Angela, tended to twins Kevin and Matthew and triplet Ryan as babies Nathan and Courtney snoozed.

Angela helps out during the day, but Laurie and her husband, Rob, are on their own each night.

The hours of 6 to 7:30 p.m. are sheer bedlam.

"We eat dinner at 6 p.m. It's outrageous. Every baby is crying. We can't talk to each other. We take one bite, care for a baby, take one bite. We can't answer the phone during that time — not even if the president of the United States called."

Bath time is easier now that the Merciers have built an addition onto their home — including a tub big enough for five children.

"We put the three babies in the middle and the twins on the outside," she said.

Sleep deprivation has been a problem, but it's getting better.

"Nathan has slept through the night since he was four months old," she said. "Courtney and Ryan still get up every night. I probably get five hours of sleep a night. That's an improvement from the first few months."



Fun with five: Laurie Mercier has her hands full with children (from left) Kevin, Ryan, Courtney, Nathan and Matthew. Kevin and Matthew are twins. Ryan, Courtney and Nathan are triplets.

She remembers one night early on, while in a typical semi-conscious state, watching as her husband fell over from exhaustion while standing next to a change table.

"The babies would wake up crying in the middle of the night, and that would wake up the twins. All five kids were crying at 3 or 4 in the morning," she said.

"Rob and I have a good sense of humor. When I'm exhausted, I just laugh. I don't take it too seriously. I'd rather laugh than cry. Sometimes I

can't believe this is my life. It seems dreamlike." The Merciers met at Western Michigan University, where both earned marketing degrees. Rob is a marketing manager for Enterprise Rent-A-Car. Laurie is a pharmaceutical representative for PDI and works outside the home three days a week. The twins are in nursery school those days and Angela watches the triplets.

Her financial contribution to supporting her family is especially important now, with all the extra ex-

pense. There are diapers, formula (though she still nurses baby Ryan), powder, wipes, clothing and car seats — times three. Every day brings five new loads of laundry. They had to sell their mini-van (not big enough) in favor of a full-sized van.

"Pre kids we went out a lot. We had a social life," she said. "Our lives have changed dramatically. Everything has to be planned and organized. But we have a strong marriage

See MOTHER, 14A



Ed Pienkosz

Running a base training program builds endurance

It's any Saturday in the early spring and you're preparing for your daily run. As you're putting on your running shoes, you think back to those cold winter training days. A big smile brightens up your face as you remember how all of your aerobic base and cross training days have built your endurance to the proper early season levels.

However, if you did not prepare over the winter months, all is not lost. By following these guidelines you can increase your running ability, and make running an enjoyable spring and summer activity.

As those die-hard runners did during the winter months, you need to build an aerobic base. This can be accomplished in two main forms: either by increasing your weekly running distance by no more than 10 percent per week or by increasing the minutes of your weekly totals by no more than 16 percent per week. This format allows for every runner to increase their base without exceeding their ability level. This base building period should last for eight to 12 weeks.

This period, also called Phase One, is the perfect time to use cross training in your program. Keep in mind, also that even though many runners use indoor running (treadmills, indoor

See PIENKOSZ, 15A

GOLF CAN BE A REAL CHALLENGE.



Michelle McGann

See some of the greatest players of the game from all three tours go head-to-head in an exciting Skins Game at the First of America Challenge at the Golden Fox at Fox Hills Country Club in Plymouth.

Michelle



Liselotte Neumann

McGann earned her first LPGA Tour victory in 1995 by winning the Sara Lee Classic and in the same year won the Youngstown-Warren LPGA Classic. 1995 was her most successful year, finishing seventh on the money list with \$449,256.



Lanny Wadkins

Liselotte Neumann has six LPGA Tour victories to her credit, including the 1996 Tournament of Champions and the 1996 Standard Register Ping. Neumann is currently number two on the money list.

Lanny Wadkins has 21 PGA Tour victories in 24 years on the Tour with over \$6 million in career earnings. Wadkins was the 1995 Ryder Cup Team



See the First of America Challenge, Memorial Day at the Golden Fox.

Captain and has been a member of the Ryder Cup team eight times.

Bob Murphy joined the senior tour in 1993 and has eight victories. Fourth on the money list in 1995, he won over \$1.2 million and had four victories in that year alone.

Jim Colbert was named player of the year in 1995 leading the

money list with over \$1.4 million in earnings, winning four major tournaments. Colbert has an early jump on 1996 with a win at the Toshiba Senior Classic.

If you're looking for something special to do on Memorial Day, load up the family and enjoy a great day of golf. Advance tickets are available at all Southeast Michigan First of America offices or at the Golden Fox at Fox Hills Country Club in Plymouth for just \$7. Children 12 and under are free. Tickets at the gate are \$10 and a portion of the proceeds from the event will support Michigan Special Olympics. For more information, call 810-901-2050 today.



Bob Murphy



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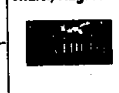
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