

Homemaking efficiency

Women find it's all a matter of timing



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By MARGARET MILLER

Two years as a Parent-Teacher Association president changed Judge Greener's life.

But it took a special course in efficient housekeeping to complete the Livonia woman's metamorphosis.

From the PTA she learned she really was interested in doing more than keeping a spotless house and getting meals on the table for her family of six.

From the course she learned how to do it.

Judie and Rosalie Wolicki, also of Livonia, were among the participants in an eight-week course at the Northwest branch YWCA in Redford Township. The course focus was on efficient use of time in the home, and the two women both felt they needed it, but for different reasons.

Judie's clan of four growing children were more and more drawing her into interests and projects outside her subdivision home, so the work seemed to pile up.

Rosalie wanted to be able to enjoy her younger children, aged 6 and 2, without constantly being bothered by the clutter of their toys.

Both kinds of problems, they were told by course leader John Criner, can be successfully attacked by the woman willing to work at managing her home in a businesslike way.

BY THE TIME the course was completed, Judie and Rosalie and their companions knew the idea of "supermom" was out and "household manager" was in.

Both learned to start their day off with lists of things they wanted to accomplish and to decide which of the tasks on the list were the most important.

"I had come to realize during the PTA time," said Judie, "that it was possible to do it if I did two things—had a meal on the table in the evening and made sure everyone had clean underwear."

"I found other things could be dumped with the idea of coming back to them later. But there was too much dumping and too little coming back."

"Now I'm learning to make a plan, and though I don't always complete everything, I can see progress."

She said she learned not to turn on the TV set in the morning. "I didn't realize how much I was stopping to watch it," she laughed. "Now I use a radio—with that I really just listen—and then when it's time to sit down and eat lunch the TV is a special treat."

Judie also found invaluable the time log Ms. Criner had her class keep.

"You write down everything you do in a day and how long it takes you to do it," she explained.

"This was an eye-opener for me. I realized some jobs just take longer than I had thought and also that I was wasting a lot of time by jumping from one thing to another."

FOR ROSALIE the problem was the one shared by most mothers of young children—simply a shortage of minutes.

"What I found out was that I was trying to do too much," she said. "Ms. Criner told us to do less when children are small. My list of jobs to do helps me realize what is really important to accomplish during any particular day."

"And I find a major priority is having time just to be with the children. I'm managing that now."

Another point emphasized to the

mothers of younger children was the use of short cuts to speed up the essential chores.

"Now, for instance, I use a tray to set the table," Rosalie pointed out. "It makes it a lot faster."

She made a mental note of Ms. Criner's contention that homemakers shouldn't try for standardization. "Each home is different," she said, "and what works best, after it's been thought through, is what should be used."

DELEGATING TASKS and expecting cooperation were other matters Ms. Criner stressed.

Rosalie found that 6-year-old Sandra and even Mark, 3, could be of real help picking up their toys, folding laundry and putting away clothes and setting the table.

"I used to feel guilty about asking them or my husband for help when I needed it, but I'm a changed person," she said.

Judie said she had expected household help from daughters Karen and Debbie, 15 and 14, but not from sons Mike, 11 and Pat, 9.

"I realized they all should be sharing the work," she said. "The first time Pat was asked to do dishes he complained about that being women's work and he did them alone that night."

She streamlined laundry procedure by lining up clothes baskets in the living room Monday mornings and having each kid sort his own clothes and drop them into the proper receptacles. Then each takes a basket to the basement, and Judie can throw in loads as she has spare moments.

She also has started a system of specifying extra jobs and hiring her offspring to do them at a fair pay rate.

BEING THE FAMILY chauffeur eats up a lot of Judie's time, especially since the closing of the neighborhood school that was the focus of her attention as PTA president.

She takes her turn getting the boys to the elementary school a mile away, but she found she then felt a bit guilty because she didn't pick up the girls when went to junior and senior high.

The rationale was that books were heavy and the weather was cold. But that began to fall apart one recent afternoon when she stopped for Karen, who was walking home with a young man who had her books under his arm.

"I wondered out loud why I was picking her up when she had someone to walk with and someone to carry her books," Judie said later. "and he said he'd been wondering that too."

"I took a teenager to make me realize I wasn't going to be a bad mother if I didn't pick those kids up every day."

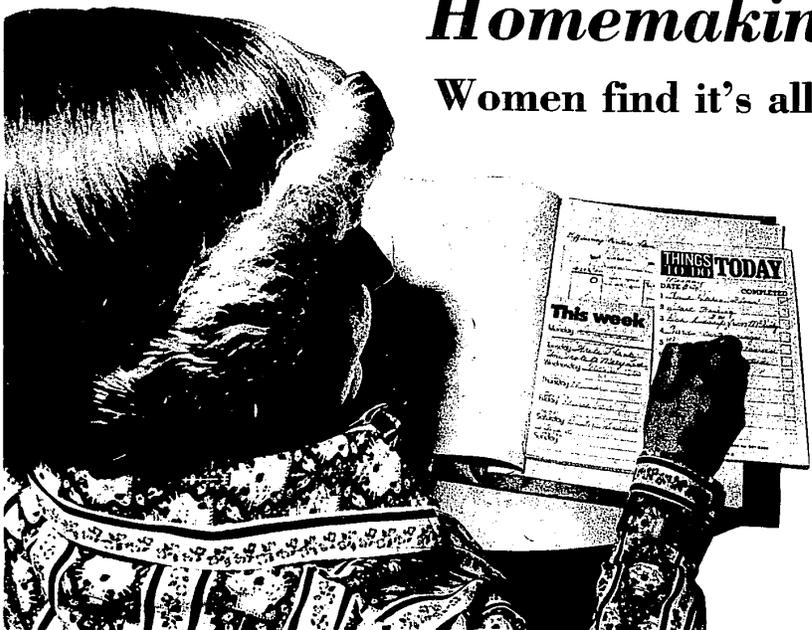
"There's enough driving anyway getting them to activities really too far away to walk."

Summing up her changed priorities and schedule, Judie Greener says she is glad she no longer considers herself Mrs. Clean.

"I used to clean all day and every day instead of working with a plan, and at the end of the day I was totally exhausted," she said.

"My house was always company clean, but I was always too tired for company. Now my house is clean enough to be healthy and dirty enough to be enjoyed."

"I accomplish my daily tasks with a goal and a daily plan. If I don't bite off more than I can chew, I find time in the day for me."



After learning about time management in running a home, Judie Greener of Livonia now makes out a list of jobs for the day. Pictured here, she got right to work washing the kitchen floor and working on her filing drawer. Before the day was over, she squeezed in some chauffering chores. (Staff photos by Art Emanuel)



Time: The resource you can't replace

By MARGARET MILLER

"Time is the only resource you can never replace," points out John Criner.

"Run out of goods and you go to the store; run out of money and you wait until the next payday."

"But when you run out of time you never get it back."

And that is why Ms. Criner is turning, careerwise, from emphasis on home economics to emphasis on time management, on both the home and business front.

Formerly on the staff of the Wayne County Extension Service, where she worked primarily with homemakers, Ms. Criner now is free-lancing her time, conducting more in-depth seminars on how people at home and in business use their minutes and hours to the best advantage.

Time management was the focus of her study as she earned a master's degree at Wayne State University in family and consumer resources, and it has remained a top priority in her work.

Full-day seminars for business groups—"you can't cover the subject at all in less than that"—and now her

eight-week program for homemakers at the Northwest branch YWCA are the means she is finding to pass on ideas about time management.

"HOW TO KEEP House Efficiently" is the title of the course that started in the winter term of the Northwest YW Ladies' Day Out program and is continuing in the spring term.

But Ms. Criner's discussion puts the emphasis on the efficient use of time in home management, as opposed to new ways to get a house cleaner.

"These are good mothers," she said of the women who signed up for the winter term class. "They want to do a lot for their families, and they feel frustrated that they can't do all they want. Then suddenly they discover they aren't doing so badly."

Setting priorities, identifying goals, clarifying values, spotting time wasters are some of the things Ms. Criner stressed as she led her first small class through a new look at efficient housekeeping.

"I never wanted to make them feel they should come out super-efficient machines," she said. "Rather, I'd like them to look care-

fully at the jobs they do in the home and why they do them. Is it because their mothers always did those particular jobs? And if that's the reason, are they still necessary, and is there any better way to do them?"

MS. CRINER said she designed the housekeeping efficiency course using the same principles she uses in helping businesspeople use their time to better advantage.

"I have them make lists of things they want to accomplish and then prioritize these things," she said. "Then the idea is to concentrate on the tasks that have been given top priority."

"Maybe it isn't possible to complete one of these tasks rated A in one day, but by getting a little done on it, there is a feeling of accomplishment."

She also recommends delegating tasks. And she has pointed out that homemakers can identify their time wasters—telephone calls, television, social interruptions—and learn to reserve a special place for them in the day's schedule.

"This is not just household hints," she added. "I'm trying to give a solid foundation in the precepts and tech-

nique of managing time, so that what these women learn now may be just as valuable three years from now when they have an office job."

OVER THE YEARS of being both homemaker and working mother, Ms. Criner has had to put a lot of the time savers she's learned into her own life, and she admits it's not always easy.

"I teach people, both at home and in the office, to handle a specific piece of paper only once, to decide what to do with it the first time, whether it's a business letter or a picture colored at school."

"But I'm one of these people who loves to save things, especially recipes and articles I might like to use later. I have to force myself to leave those recipes in the magazine, now that I have less time to cook them and my son and I both have to watch our calories."

John Criner's course is part of the new Ladies' Day Out, scheduled to begin the week of April 10 at the Northwest branch YW.

Those who take it may learn a lot about housekeeping, but they'll learn even more about time.



JOHNE CRINER