

# Dad turns house-husband as mother turns doctor

By Elinor Graham  
staff writer

"It's not the housework, it's the boredom," said Bob Rivers looking back on his two years as a house-husband. "It's trying to decide what to do between segments that wears you out."

"You can't dust all day long, and I'm not going to watch soap operas."

Rivers described his day — so far — on the home front. It was mid-afternoon.

He had fired breakfast for his wife, Lynn, and son Brandon, 6. He had seen Brandon off to kindergarten and Lynn off to work.

"Brandon is in kindergarten at Miller School. He has to be in school by 9 and comes home at 11:30 a.m.," he said.

"I dump mopped and waxed the kitchen and dining room floors, dusted the whole house, and cleaned cabinets. I do the family wash twice a week."

He does all the grocery shopping, but when shopping is a family affair, Rivers prefers talking about about

his wife's accomplishments, rather than his own on the home front.

"LYNN HAS completed her Ph.D. while holding down a full-time and a part-time teaching job," he said with pride. "Her dissertation was on cell physiology — chromosome motion. She public defended May 20 and was accepted."

He added that she will receive her doctorate in December at Wayne State University graduation ceremonies.

"She earned her bachelor's degree at WSU and was Phi Beta Kappa. She had a 4.0 point for her master's degree. She'd come home from work and work until 2 a.m. on her dissertation. She was really bogged down."

They had a big open house to celebrate the acceptance of Lynn's dissertation.

"Lynn prepared all the food. We had about 32 couples here. I did the cleanup, next day I cleaned the whole house."

He said Brandon refers to her as "Doctor Mommy" now.

"Now we are Dr. and Mr. Rivers," Rivers said with a smile.

BOB AND LYNN are graduates of Cooley High School in Detroit. They have been married 15 years and had known each other for seven years before they were married. He taught school for 13 years and for the last 11 years was pink-slipped every year.

"Livonia owned me," he said. He had to go back because they were dependent on the insurance and hospitalization. And there was always the worry that he would not be called back. When Lynn got a full-time teaching job with the medical benefits for the whole family, they decided to switch roles. She would work and continue her education, and he would stay at home.

"It took me a year, although it was not all that bad. Now I am proud to say I'm a house spouse. You have to forget about ego, man's rights and woman's rights. It's a couple's rights that count. It's not being afraid of what people think — that you're half a man."

"All men should do this for a while."

RIVERS SAID marriage encounter sessions helped them communicate and share. "Once you learn that the family is No. 1, and the job is No. 2, you become very close. You always can get another job, but you can't replace your family."

Rivers the house spouse does not do all the cooking. Lynn prepares dinner. "Oh, I've baked cookies and cupcakes for Brandon to take to school, but Lynn prepares the dinners."

As a room father, he went to Maybury State Park Farm as a chaperon.

"Brandon and I have a relationship so unique," he said. Sometimes, Brandon puts his father in the role of Mr. Bob. He can talk to Mr. Bob about things he would not discuss with his father.

And because they spend so much time together, it is his father he calls to for assistance. "The other night, he called 'Mommy' when he wanted help getting out of his bunk bed. Lynn and I both were surprised when he called for her instead of me."

He said he has found out what women go through.

"When you're home all day, you want something to show for it. You need your Red Badge of Courage. You want to say, 'Look what I did,' when your spouse comes home."

Next year, with Brandon in school all day, Rivers plans to start taking some classes.



## At the pig roast

Allison Davis was a bit apprehensive about carving the pig's head, but she persevered for the picnic and pig roast that is becoming a spring tradition for members of Hope Lutheran Church. Chef Rick Jaster, a member of the church, started

the preparations early Saturday night to have the pig ready for the meal Sunday. The guest list numbered more than 80, who dined picnic style on the church patio, 39200 12 Mile Road.

## Elderly are cautioned to prevent heat stress

Hot weather can be very dangerous for the elderly. It can lead to life-threatening heat exhaustion, heart failure, and stroke.

To help you learn how to protect yourself, symptoms to watch for, and what the remedies are, the U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs has published a special report. For your free copy of "Heat Stress," write to the Consumer Information Center, Dept. 652K, Pueblo, Colo. 81009.

The body needs time to adjust to hot weather. Therefore, a sudden increase in temperature is especially serious, because it can put a dangerous strain on the heart and blood vessels before the body has a chance to acclimate itself.

The reason the elderly are more vulnerable to heat stress than younger people is that they don't adjust as well to heat. They perspire less. They are also more likely to have health problems requiring medicines that work against the body's natural ability to adjust to heat.

IT'S IMPORTANT to know the warning signs of heat stress. Early symptoms feeling hot, uncomfortable, and listless are mild and usually pose no threat unless they persist. However, because the serious signs of heat stress are usually preceded by milder ones, it's important that you get medical attention if you experience any of the following: dizziness, rapid heartbeat, diarrhea, nausea, cramps, throbbing headache, dry skin but now sweating, chest

pain, great weakness, mental changes, breathing problems, or vomiting. These symptoms can also signal other major problems, such as heart failure. If you experience any of them, call a doctor immediately.

Here are some ways of keeping cool, so that heat stress can be avoided:

- Fans and air conditioning can provide lifesaving relief from heat stress, especially if you have any history of heart disease. If you don't have air conditioning go someplace that does, such as a library, shopping mall, senior center or movie.

- Cool baths or showers provided relief from the heat because water removes extra body heat 25 times faster than cool air. Placing ice bags or wet towels on the body is also helpful.

- Curtail physical activity during extremely hot weather. Activity adds to heart strain.

- Avoid hot foods and heavy meals. Digesting them adds heat to your body.

- Your body needs more water in hot weather.

- Avoid alcohol. It acts as a diuretic, resulting in fast water loss.

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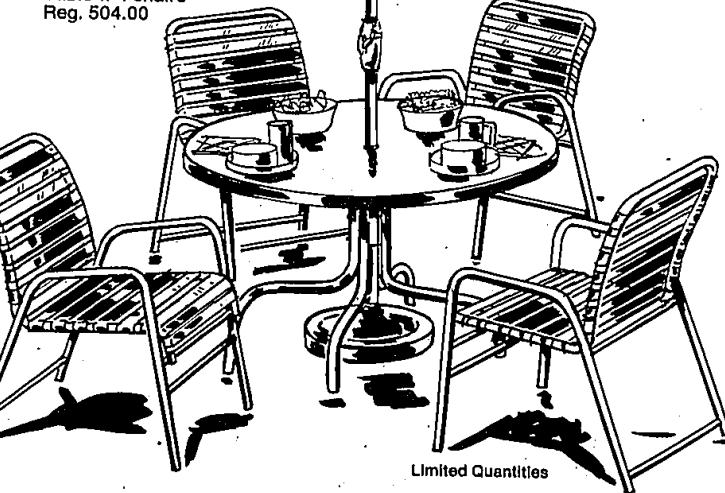
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