

More mothers staying home with children

By NANCY HOSKIN

To stay home or not to stay home? That is question facing most couples today when children come along.

And, many women are deciding to give up their careers to become full-time housewives.

Donna Halloran, mother to Katie, 3½ years old, Patrick, 20 months and newcomer Conor, five months, has her hands full. With the surprise news that Conor was on his way she decided to give up her career as a Public Health Nursing Supervisor and become a full-time mom when he was born. With the first two children Mrs. Halloran went back to work after maternity leave, having a babysitter during the days to watch the children.

Though her energy level was always high, the third pregnancy took its toll with added stress and strain in juggling the act of being full-time career woman and mother.

"The quantity of babies and the fact that I enjoy being with them was of prime importance when I decided to stay home," she said in a recent interview. "I heeded the advice I received from older parents who said I should stay home when the babies were young, explore my own hobbies in detail. I enjoy cooking and sewing and now have time for both hobbies. Your free time is what you make of it," she said.

By staying at home with her children Mrs. Halloran can now participate in extra-curricular activities — tot spot, swimming lessons and library outings, and with her husband working long hours, she explained that now the

children have one consistent parent at all times which adds to their emotional stability.

"I'm planning on staying home until the children are in school and then I'll investigate part-time work," Mrs. Halloran said.

There is a slight swing in the number of people staying home with their children, explained Mrs. Halloran. Many couples are hooked on two salaries, not always out of necessity, but their style of living is such that they become used to more. That makes the decision to stay at home tougher.

"We decided we were able to live on one salary comfortably during our pre-planning talks. My salary had been spent on furniture, appliances, etc. so that we were covered, as far as our needs went, when the children were on the scene," she said.

"There is a mix with our circle of friends, more work part-time than are home full-time, and we are definitely the only ones with three kids. Most have the statistical two!"

"I think that the children are proud that their mom stays home with them. But, when staying home it is easy to become a hermit. Strokes of praise for a job well done are now obtained from different sources. You have to have different interests and join in with friends more when you're at home, than when working. And you have to find time for yourself away from the children too, it makes for a healthier relationship for everyone. Treat yourself every so often," Mrs. Halloran suggested.



Donna Halloran has decided to forego a career until her children Katie, 3½ years old, Patrick, 20 months and Conor, five months, are all in school full time.

"I'm a true believer in babysitters. Kids have to learn to separate from you, and you from them, a hurdle that is hard, but has to be done. When you spend too much time with your children you begin to develop higher expectations of them and in turn too much stress is placed on that child. I want my children to be individuals, so I try to cultivate each of their needs," she said.

"Unfortunately, you can now plan your life around having children. The spontaneity isn't there. You can elect when you want children and the number, like an assembly line order. Many people are marrying late in life — after they spend time in a professional career — peer pressure and meeting their own personal needs becomes the cause for having children at a later age now, but by meeting their own needs, how fair is it to the child?"

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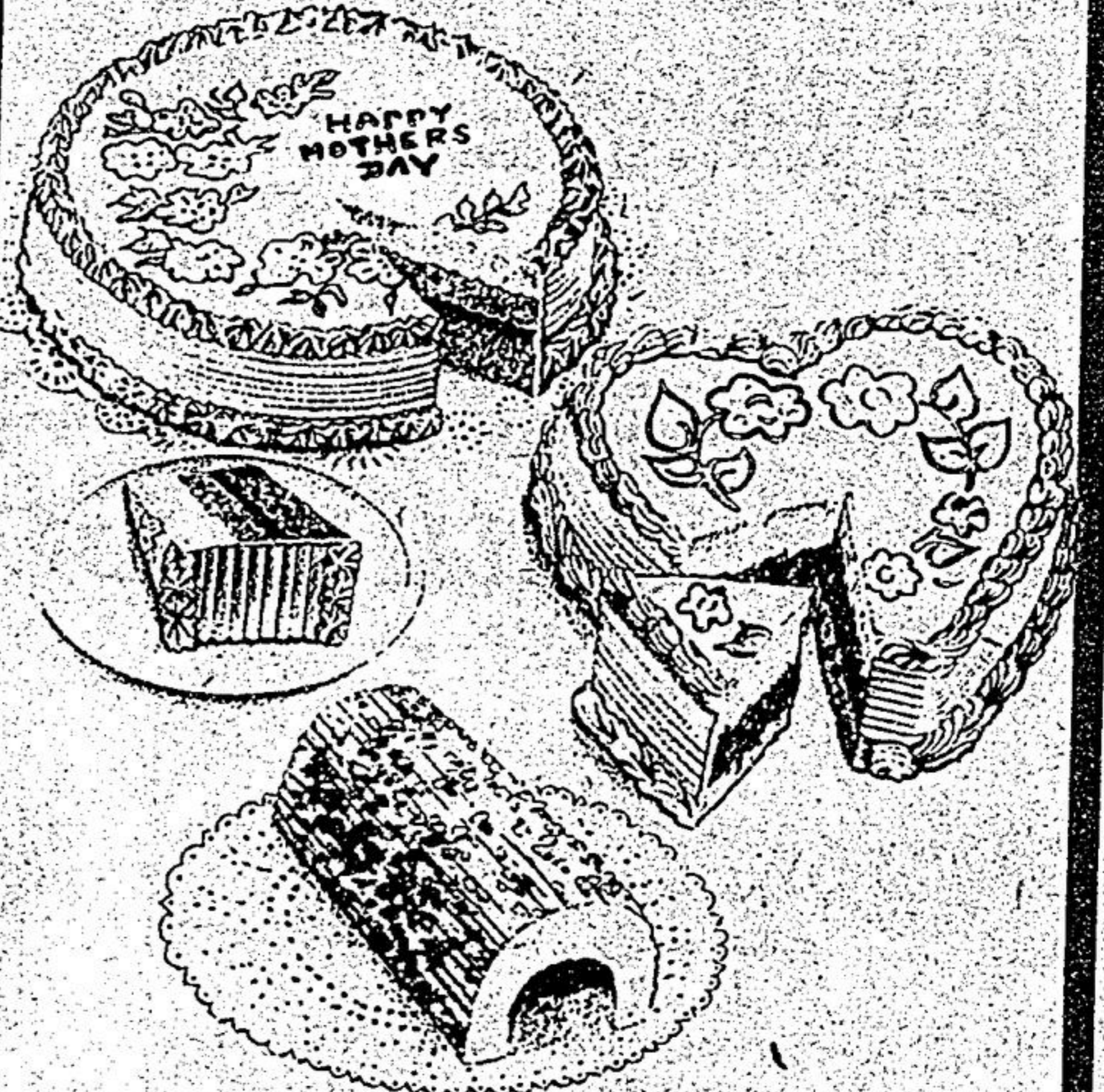
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