

STIPEND:



by *Nathan L. Nichols*

How can a man, with a wife and three children, and no GI benefits, work for a doctor's degree and live on the one thousand dollar salary earned by half-time teaching? It sounds impossible, but by canny control of the purse strings, and by keeping roomers, my wife and I are managing.

The decision to chance it was made two-and-a-half years ago. The war was over and my work at the University of Michigan was finished. I had behind me an MS degree, four years of high-school teaching, and two years of war-time college teaching, and had acquired a love for college work. Should we return to the high schools, seek a junior-college position, or, with two towheads, and soon a third, could we face the hardships and sacrifices necessary to earn the doctor's degree that would give me security in college teaching? It was a long, arduous debate, but we finally pulled up stakes and headed for Michigan State College and more education.

House hunting was impossible and it was pure luck that we ended up in a huge, old income-house near the campus, with nine college girls upstairs and a four-room apartment downstairs. Now, after two years, we both maintain that Providence led us to it, because this financial set-up alone has made a four- or five-year study program feasible.

The income from the house is about \$1,500, but the rent and the utilities—gas, electricity, water, coal, etc.—amount to about \$1,200. So we actually

have a small cash balance plus a comfortable home with its expenses paid. My wife, Donna, as controller of the exchequer, has the exacting task of making this \$300 plus my \$1,000 stretch over food and clothing bills for five. Our insurance policies must come from our small savings account.

Rationing Time

My day at school begins at 8:00 after a rather hectic send-off by Gordon, 6, Nancy, 4, and Barbara, 2. We rise at 7:00 and I wash Barbara, then shave while Donna supervises dressing. We all help with breakfast and I dash off at 8:00 on my bicycle, which keeps me in some semblance of physical condition and saves the price of gasoline. I share an office with three others, which is typical of the crowding created by an enrollment swollen to 15,000. My time on campus is allotted to studying, teaching, and attending classes in quantum mechanics, atomic and molecular spectra, theoretical mechanics, electricity, and magnetism. My duties as graduate assistant also entail proctoring examinations, correcting papers, attending staff meetings, and registration functions.

By 5:30 each day, I am glad to shut the books, pedal down to the milk depot for six quarts of milk, and then on home to my family. This extra errand saves us three cents per quart on milk, which adds up to a yearly saving of \$36. The next two hours are saved for the family—rides on the bike, toys



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Bransdorfer Bros.

One thousand dollars a year for half-time teaching—that is all many graduate students get while they work for their doctorates. How is it done, and at what cost to them?

to mend, basketball to toss, a story to read, 'horseback' rides for three squealing children, dinner.

A ten-minute nap conditions me for a three-and-a-half-hour evening of study in my den—a corner of the basement which I fashioned into an ideally secluded spot. In addition to preparing for my own courses, there are often extras to consume the evening's time. These extras have included talks before the physics seminar and colloquium groups, and lecture-demonstrations for 4-H boys and girls each summer. Occasionally there is some tutoring, which makes a welcome entry for the budget book.

This routine continues for six days, although it is often necessary to cut it to five-and-a-half by reserving Saturday afternoon for storm windows, screens, lawn mowing, or some of the odd jobs in the upkeep of a large house.

Sunday is a day of partial relaxation with church at 9:30, where Donna supplements our meager financial church contribution by handling a Sunday-School class. She taught science before our marriage and enjoys this short weekly return to teaching. I can usually sneak in a couple of hours of study before dinner. Then a quiet afternoon by the radio while the others nap, followed by a hike or romp with the kids, brings me to another evening with the books in my den.

Occasionally an evening's study is neglected in favor of a show, a concert, or some sports event. However, only about one of each can be woven into

the schedule of a school quarter, because of both the time involved and the cost. The girls upstairs make excellent baby-sitters and are handy when Donna has orchestra practice or a meeting on a night when I must be at school. We don't get fat on such a schedule but we keep well and happy.

Rationing Money

All five of us are comparatively easy on clothes and shoes. My latest suits were bargains at \$25 and \$20, but careful pressing, shined shoes, and a gay tie make me feel well dressed. Donna (in my estimation) is a talented seamstress. She makes most of the clothes for the children and for herself from old suits or coats, or from material bought at a saving by a watchful check on the sales.

The house and the nine college girls are mainly Donna's responsibility. Even though they furnish their own bedding and towels, she periodically has to check the rooms, clean the hall and upstairs bath, and repair or replace curtains, besides seeing that the girls observe the college-imposed rules of the house. Between terms we spend a good two days working together to strip and clean the upstairs thoroughly and scrub the basement kitchen where the girls cook their own meals. Donna's house duties are of course superimposed on her usual sewing, washing, ironing, cleaning, baking, meal-planning, and the jobs which three little people create.

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WHEREABOUTS

DR. BOWLING BARNES, for the past twelve years director of the physics division of the Stamford Research Laboratories of American Cyanamid Company, has been elected vice-president in charge of research and development of American Optical Company, Southbridge, Massachusetts.

DR. GEORGE L. HALLER has been named dean of the School of Chemistry and Physics at the Pennsylvania State College, succeeding Dean Frank C. Whitmore, who died in June, 1947.

EDGAR A. JETT, II, has been appointed assistant director of Armour Research Foundation of Illinois Institute of Technology.

DR. SIMON RAMO, director of research, Electronics Department, Hughes Aircraft Company, Culver City, California, has been appointed director of guided missile development. He has also recently been appointed a research associate at the California Institute of Technology.

DR. DUANE ROLLER, professor of physics and head of the department at Wabash College, will be at Harvard University next year on a visiting appointment. Acting head of the physics department at Wabash College will be W. W. MUTCH, on leave of absence from Knox College.

CHARLES R. SCHMIDT has joined the staff of the Airlatron Engineering Company of Caldwell, New Jersey, as assistant chief engineer. He will take charge of new product development in electronic instrumentation.

GEORGE G. SOMMARIPA has been named head of the national standardization work on consumer goods for the American Standards Association.

DR. HAROLD VAGTBORG resigned as president and director of the Midwest Research Institute, Kansas City, Missouri, to take up a similar position at the new Southwest Research Institute, Houston Texas, effective September 1, 1948.

DR. BERNARD B. WATSON, senior research fellow in physics at the California Institute of Technology, has been appointed associate professor of physics at Temple University, Texas.

PROFESSOR G. A. WOONTON, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, has been appointed professor of physics and director of the Eaton Electronics Laboratory, McGill University, Montreal.

CLAYTON M. ZIEMAN has been appointed assistant professor of physics at Wabash College and will join the staff there in September.

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The food bill, the highest item in our budget, is always kept under \$20 a week, including milk—which shows that Donna does real planning to feed five hungry mouths. This she accomplishes by buying in quantity and by watching the bargain-day sales. Friday mornings she bundles Nancy and Barbara into our '39 Ford while Gordon is in kindergarten, and she goes to the Super-Market for the week-end specials.

Last summer my garden—fifty feet by fifty—produced vegetables aplenty and string beans and tomatoes to can, even on poor soil and with a single, hasty, weekly weeding. We picked our own raspberries and cherries, thereby saving almost twenty-five cents a quart, to increase our fruit shelf larder. The cost of our home-canned food is averaged into our twenty-dollar-per-week estimate, and is a factor in keeping it that low.

Rationing Play

So, by many and devious means, a penny here and a penny there, the dollars dribble carefully out. Neither of us smokes or drinks, an annual saving of at least seventy-five dollars. Magazines are cut to two periodicals and the rest of our reading is done at the public library. Christmas brings renewals on stockings, underwear, shirts, and slippers. Most of the family dry cleaning is done, cautiously, at home, and the steam iron saves on pressing bills.

Donna gets her relaxation during part of the evening by reading, knitting, working at photography, or practising with the Lansing Symphony. We met in 1937 as 'cellists sitting together in the Western Michigan College Orchestra, and were married four years later, after we had both taught two years. It grieves us that we have no time to attend the excellent lecture-concert series presented here at the college—such entertainment as the Philadelphia Symphony, Marian Anderson, Fritz Kreisler, and Lowell Thomas. Even the Messiah at People's Church came during examination week and we missed it. We entertain much less frequently than we should like, and usually forgo the pleasure of faculty and student dances. But we feel that the sacrifices are for a good cause, and we have a good many years ahead of us in which to enjoy concerts, dances, and games.