

Enter Children; Exit Work

■ Two employees balance work and parenthood.

By Ron Karten

Three days before giving birth to son Matteo, Danis Bazy-Bucknell climbed Spirit Mountain. She laughed about the extra balance he gave her going up and the extra cushion had she needed it, but she also was talking about the camaraderie of having her first child with her on the adventure.

Now, she continues the adventure, but no matter how important time with a new baby is, she faces a complicated relationship between family and work. Another new parent, Jeff VanLaanen, a Sergeant assigned to the Tribe from the Polk County Sheriff's office, shares with Bazy-Bucknell experiences in balancing work and family.

Bazy-Bucknell has left her job working for the Tribe as a Foster Care Recruiter with the Social Services department to be a full-time mom.

"It was a really hard thing for me to do," she said, "but I knew it was important to do this for (her three-month old son) Matteo. I can't replace this time with Matteo. I can always go back to work."

Quitting her job will mean some financial hardship for the family, but maybe equally important for Bazy-Bucknell is leaving co-workers she also considers family.

On the other side of the gender line, Sergeant VanLaanen is also the proud parent of a newborn. He and wife, Lisa, had long planned not only on her taking time off, but also his taking time off from work to be with their new daughter, Andralyn Grace.

Not yet a common sacrifice for American fathers to make, VanLaanen is riding what un-

doubtedly will be a new crest for fatherhood in this country. With the passage of the 1993 federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), parents are guaranteed 12 workweeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period when the stork drops by with one of its famously precious bundles. (See Sidebar)

The FMLA was not in place when VanLaanen's son, Dayln, was born ten years ago, so he did not have the same opportunity. This time



Andralyn Grace

around, he has saved up vacation days to enable him to take off 12 weeks with pay.

"I think fathers need to be home as much as they can," he said.

The experience is career changing, too.

"When a child is the same age as (my child) in a case," he said, "I'm thinking of my son. If you think about your own being in that situation, it helps me do the job right."

Bazy-Bucknell had the reverse thought. "My co-workers kept telling me how important it was to be home with Matteo. He'll learn so much from you."

"At 12 weeks, I'm seeing so much

stuff is happening. He can focus, hold his head up, hear his own voice. I'll be here for his first step, his first word and when things happen, I can call (husband) Matt and tell him."

"The Tribe was so supportive when I came on to work," she said. "And after I made my decision (and emailed the news throughout the Tribe), all these people responded immediately. They were so supportive. It was really a cool thing."

VanLaanen had taken two weeks off at the time of this interview. He was going back on for 10 weeks while his wife took her 10 weeks off. Then, he was scheduled to go out for another 10 weeks. "I think they're going to miss me," he said of his co-workers. "At least I hope so."



Matt, Danis & Matteo Bucknell

"Taking a long leave of absence is how I look at it," said Bazy-Bucknell, "to keep a positive attitude." ■

The Federal Family and Medical Leave Act grants covered employees up to a total of 12 workweeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for one or more of the following reasons:

- For the birth and care of the newborn child of the employee;
- For placement with the employee of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care;
- To care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition; or
- To take medical leave when the employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition.

Though a sovereign nation, the Tribe follows the federal guidelines. Employees are eligible for Family Medical Leaves (FML) if they have met the following requirements on the date the leave begins.

- They have worked for the Tribe for a minimum of 12 months;
- They have worked at least 1,250 hours (156¼ days; 31¼ weeks) in the previous 12 months.

The federal act also dictates that "if two parents are employed by the same employer, they can only take a combined 12 weeks for the birth of a child," according to Sheila McDonald, the Tribe's Benefits Specialist.

Spirit Mountain Casino Hosts College Football's Civil War Party — OSU Vs U of O



Photos by Brent Merrill

State Rivalry — Fans of the Oregon State Beavers ruled the day (top, left) as the Beavers romped on the University of Oregon Ducks on Saturday, November 23. Fans of both schools gathered at Spirit Mountain Casino's Annual Civil War Party to watch Beavers' quarterback Derek Anderson throw four touchdown passes in route to a 45-24 victory. DJs from Portland sports radio station The Fan AM 910 (top, right) hosted the casino's party. OSU was well represented — including Educational Opportunities Advisor Delphine Jackson (lower left).