

# LAMORINDA WEEKLY



Wednesday, February 6, 2008 ■ Volume 01; Issue 26 ■ [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com)

## A Stranger in a Strange Land

By Doug Tarter

**H**ave you ever walked into a restaurant for the first time, one that you'd been eyeing for months, and in crossing the threshold past the point of polite return you immediately realize that you're way out of your element? It doesn't make any difference that prior to making your decision you had perused the menu that hangs in the window, or that you had surveyed your friends for an informed opinion, (though, unfortunately, none of them had tried the fare either). That you had even touched the door handle on two separate occasions then thought better at the last moment, opting for the familiar Chinese lunch special at China Moon, counts for very little, be-

cause eventually, in a fit of bravado, you take the leap and are stuck living with the consequences. I recently became a "stay at home" dad, and every day I wonder if I should have just gone to McDonald's instead.

Please don't get me wrong. I was miserable at my old job. I love my kids and value the opportunity to watch them grow up first hand. I enjoy the relative flexibility, the alone time, walking the reservoir on a crisp fall morning, and getting to watch all my favorite Disney flicks again and again and again and again...It's just that sometimes I think my operating system, Microsoft Male 1966, and the domestic spouse software I'm sup-

posed to be running, Sun Systems TaxiTeacherChefCleanerDoctor-AndSupermultitasker program are non-compatible. I mean I have trouble deciphering the menu at Chow for God's sake, how in the world am I supposed to implement something so infinitely complex?

In the coming weeks I'd like to share with you some of the experiences I've had since making the trade from desk jockey to darn socky. It's been two years now, and I've had a chance to observe the many and varied ways Lamorindans make it through the experience, from Cold Stone Creamery in good times to the Roundup in trying times. I realize that there are quite a few of the breed in our neck

of the woods, so please feel free to chip-in with your own experiences/observations. Or, if you happen to be a veteran Domestic Technical Commander, (at-home parent) of either gender please feel free to impart any nuggets of wisdom you wish to bestow. Until then, I'll see you at the Trader Joes' checkout counter.

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