

Labors of love

Three entrepreneurs take a holiday from unusual businesses

By Cheryl Walker | cheryl.walker@tnews.net

Saturday, August 30, 2008

On this three-day weekend, most workers get time off from their jobs to relax. It may mean doing nothing or taking a short trip, but whatever is planned, people sure enjoy time off — even those in the most unusual careers, including these three out-of-the-ordinary professions:



Photo by Cheryl Walker

“I could work less and make more money in the corporate world, but this is a lot more fun,” Sue Mezera said.

Professional quilter

Sue Mezera took her love for quilting and turned it into a growing business.

Although it can be tiring standing in front of a long-arm machine quilting two projects a day, she wouldn’t trade it for anything.

“I love the people and the new ideas,” she said.

Mezera owns Quilter’s Paradise, a 5,000-square-foot shop in Escondido where she not only sells fabric but also offers classes.

With a computer background, she is always looking for new technology to make sewing easier for quilters.

“I just spent \$20,000 on a new laser cutter,” said Mezera. “Anything you can draw on a computer, we’ll be able to cut with this machine. We’ll be able to cut a lot of fabric for kits.”

Mezera doesn’t quilt every day because she has other duties involved with running the store. But the long-arm machine is usually being used.

“We give quilting classes, and then they can come in and rent the machine if they want to do their own quilting,” Mezera said. “Some women like doing their own, others don’t. It takes a lot of practice.”

When Mezera’s husband, Mark Tiedeman, was laid off recently, he began helping his wife at the store. He builds cases for fabric, takes care of marketing and lends a hand wherever needed. Mezera now refers to him as a “man of the cloth.”

“I always wanted to go into a business with Sue, but I never thought it would be quilting,” Tiedeman said. “I’m enjoying it and I’m learning a lot. We’re really good together and complement each other.”

Running their own business, Mezera and Tiedeman put in many hours beyond the average work week.

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