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The Real *MoMs* of Beaufort County

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The Real

Moms

Of Beaufort County

June Cleaver would roll over in her immaculate kitchen if she caught an episode of Bravo TV's *Real Housewives* for a mere minute. In her fashionable pressed dresses and high heels, Mrs. Cleaver enjoyed needle point, her ladies social club, and having a well-balanced meal on the dinner table each night for her hubby, Wally and the Beav.

In 2011, if you believe everything you see on TV,

you wouldn't flinch to find that housewives throw punches and high-priced parties, linger over lunch and laser hair removal, and yes, they have jobs—boob, nose, etc.

Which is why we thought it would be fun to take a look at five local (and real) women, who somehow managed to find the time to talk about what the life of a "housewife" looks like today.





Anna Sharp

It's 7 a.m. and Anna has Wells and Taylor, ages six and four, out of bed and at the breakfast table. After breakfast, they head to the barn, check the chickens, gather the eggs, make sure the horses are happy, and walk the two dogs. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday, the kids head to school and Anna heads to Affordable Healthcare in Sheridan Park where she is a nurse practitioner. Tuesdays and Thursdays are "play days," and that includes Mom.

Growing up in Savannah and summering in Bluffton, Anna fondly recalls a childhood that included jumping off the dock into the May River, waterskiing, and wakeboarding in the blistering Lowcountry sun. She headed off to college in Charleston, where she met her husband, Cal, a cardiologist. Together they returned to Bluffton in 2000, and made their home on the land adjacent to where Anna grew up and where she learned many of life's lessons.

"Dad put the nursing bug in my ear," Anna said, with a grin. "My parents were

pro-education and my father told me 'you go figure out who you are, find your independence and your freedom.'" This is a lesson that Anna has already begun to instill in her boys; they have chores and responsibilities that help the house—and the farm—run.



Moms

When she's not nurturing animals, or children, or patients, Anna finds time for herself on horseback. "Riding is my sanctuary," she said.

C2: When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

AS: Anna Sharp: Wonder Woman. My dad would cut a toilet paper roll in half that I would slip onto my wrists as her amazing deflecting bands!

C2: What is the greatest gift you have received?

AS: The gift of my youngest son being able to hear my voice. (Taylor was born deaf. He has bilateral cochlear implants for him to hear.)

C2: What television show best depicts your life?

AS: A cross between *Green Acres* and *The Nanny*.

C2: If you wrote a newspaper column about your adventures as a working mom, what would you call it?

AS: "Bum after Reading."

C2: Your biggest splurge?

AS: Horses and shoes.

C2: What is your secret shame or silly indulgence?

AS: Right now, Cadbury solid milk chocolate eggs and "I" everything—phone, pod, pod—love it!

C2: Your leadership style?

AS: Trial and Error.

C2: What is your motto?

AS: It will all work out in the end.

C2: Most embarrassing moment?

AS: It was bad enough the first time; it would be worse in print!

C2: What does "housewife" mean in 2011?

AS: Jack of all trades, or should I say Jill?



Becca Edwards

As a fulltime graduate student at SCAD, with a fulltime job teaching world literature at Hilton Head Prep and three daughters under the age of four, you would think Becca Edwards would be running in circles to make things happen. Luckily, she has mastered the art of Zen (oh yes, she's also a yoga instructor) and has come to expect the unexpected.

Like last year, when she was teaching a class, and started feeling a little woozy, then a lot sweaty and finally nauseous and had to throw up in the wastebasket. One student called out, "Mrs. Edwards is hung over." Becca calmly replied (and simultaneously realized), "No, I think I'm pregnant."

But she rolled with it, and soon Camille (now four months) joined big sisters, Ransom, three, and Ruth Love, two. Her secret to staying organized is multitasking. "I might be making cereal, but I am also concurrently planning lunch and dinner and what outfit to wear," she said. Becca splits the home duties with hubby

Lee (the newly elected Hilton Head Town Councilman), saying she knew they could do anything after spending six months on a sailboat together where they weathered two major storms, literally.

Today, when the going gets a little rough, Becca simply channels her mom who taught her to "always be real."

C2: When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

BE: Becca Edwards: A photojournalist for *National Geographic*, so I could travel to remote, slightly exotic/primitive places.

C2: What television show best depicts your life?

BE: *60 Minutes*. My life is divided into several segments, and it's all got to happen within the hour.

C2: If you wrote a newspaper column about your adventures as a working mom, what would you call it?

BE: "Ready, Set, Mom!"



C2: Your biggest splurge?

BE: Travel. A close second, good antiques and rugs. Coming in third, bi-monthly massages and facials.

C2: What is your secret shame or silly indulgence?

BE: *True Blood*.

C2: Your leadership style?

BE: I believe you have to earn respect, be fair, and be direct.

C2: What is your motto?

BE: "Be the change you want to see." (Ghandi)

C2: Most embarrassing moment?

BE: Oh, there've been sooo many.

C2: What does "housewife" mean in 2011?

BE: The boss. She might work, she might run marathons; she might be an artist. But a housewife's primary focus is caring for her family and getting the familial job done.



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Moms

Mary Frances Lowrey

"Every day when the kids and I drive over the bridge from Bluffton to Hilton Head, I say, "Look at this view! It's beautiful!" Taking the time to enjoy the view, actually perfectly describes Mary Frances Lowrey. With a busy lifestyle that has her constantly on the go, she makes it a point to take time for herself saying, "If I'm off, I'm off!"

As a former corporate trainer, Mary Frances started her own business, IT ALL Media, two years ago. She started slowly, with just one client, and didn't charge that client for five months, until she was absolutely certain that it was what she wanted to do and that she did it well. Now, a self-taught graphic designer and marketing maven, Mary Frances provides marketing services for a number of Lowcountry clients and enjoys the freedom of working for herself. "I'm glad I can still be the one to drop-off and pick-up the kids [Maximilian, 10, and Jacqueline, 7] at school every day."

As one of 11 children, Mary Frances is well-versed in what a busy household looks like. Growing up, expectations were high, and Mary Frances and her seven sisters each were given this advice, by their father, "Go to college. Support yourself! Then get married, so you have a partner." And, she did.

Mary Frances' husband Lawson logs a lot of miles traveling, which makes it ever-more important that they are completely in sync. And, they are. In fact, it was Lawson's career that brought them back to the Lowcountry, something Mary Frances is grateful for. "I feel like the Lowcountry is who I really am," she said.

Q2: When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

MFL: Mary Frances Lowrey: A Newscaster

Q3: What is the greatest gift you have received?

MFL: From my parents, it would be my faith and my education. From my husband—well, he is a great gift giver and his gifts are always very sentimental. My worst gift ever would be a much more fun answer! (I did indeed ask the follow-up



question. The worst gift had to do with a dim-witted boyfriend, a scratchy scarf, and the dim-witted beau's mother.)

Q2: What television show best depicts your life?

MFL: *Designing Women*. Strong women with great friends love and support each other, lift each other up when they are down, and laugh a lot.

Q3: If you wrote a newspaper column about your adventures as a working mom, what would you call it?

MFL: "Buckle Up...It's a Bumpy Ride"



Q2: How do you find balance?

MFL: I stand firmly on both feet and hold my arms out to the sides.

Q3: Your biggest splurge?

MFL: The dress I wore in this photo shoot.

Q2: What is your secret shame or silly indulgence?

MFL: A Café Mocha with no whipped cream from Starbucks.

Q3: Your leadership style?

MFL: I would never ask anyone to do something I am not willing to do myself. I hope that I lead by example.

Q2: What is your motto?

MFL: Our family motto is: We may not have it all together, but together we have it all. (That is why my business is named IT ALL Media.)

Q3: Most embarrassing moment?

MFL: Not telling! (I'm sensing a theme here, and maybe a follow-up story—"The Lowcountry's Most Embarrassing Moments.")

Q2: What does "housewife" mean in 2011?

MFL: It means strength. Weak women should not apply for this job.



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 Kathleen Mayers

"Where there is great risk, there is great reward." It was those words that finally convinced Kathleen Mayers that starting her own business, KPM Flooring, was the right decision. First, she pondered every aspect of the undertaking: "I thought, 'I have three kids; I could lose my house.'" But as any good leader should, she overcame the fears and jumped in.

Originally from Tybee Island, Kathleen moved to Hilton Head in 1990 and worked as a taxi cab driver, waitress, and bartender to make ends meet. "You do what you have to do," she said. Today, business at KPM is booming and Kathleen is juggling six dynamic employees, a busy travel schedule and three daughters, Emma, Caroline and Honora, ages 10, 7 and 5. Together with her husband Michael, battalion chief for the Hilton Head Fire Department, they are always putting out fires.

Kathleen believes that her faith, her family and her friends help her find balance. And in return she "tries to be a better person every day and laugh as often as possible."



Q2: When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Kathleen Mayers: When I was really little I wanted to be a marine biologist and a doctor.

Q2: What television show best depicts your life?

KM: Is there one about a former taxi driver/scuba instructor/bartender, who is now married with three children, trying to start a business in the worst economy in decades?

Q2: If you wrote a newspaper column about your adventures as a (working) mom, what would you call it?

KM: "It's All Smoke and Mirrors."

Q2: Your biggest splurge?

KM: Springsteen concerts!

Q2: What is your secret shame or silly indulgence?

KM: I have no secrets, but I am often silly.

Q2: Your leadership style?

KM: Hopefully my employees think I lead by example.

Q2: What is your motto?

KM: Women who behave rarely make history.

Q2: Most embarrassing moment?

KM: I do silly things all the time, but I stopped getting embarrassed by them years ago. I'd probably have a whole lot less fun if I worried about getting embarrassed.

Q2: What does "housewife" mean in 2011?

KM: I think it should mean something different to each person. For me it means mother, wife, friend, business owner, and working every day to be better at each.



Kelly Caron

When Kelly was little, she used to sneak into her grandmother's closet and play with her furs, costume jewelry, tortoise shell cigarette holders, Chanel No. 5, and her "red red" lipstick. Kelly's early love for fashion fed into her interest in textile design, which eventually led to a career in interior design. With a little girl of her own now—Emma, 8 months—Kelly is reliving the memories and the magic of make-believe.

Born and raised in Boone, NC, Kelly and her husband, Nate, relocated to the Lowcountry (via Tahoe), just over a year ago. Today, Kelly is concentrating her time on raising Emma and plotting the return to her interior design career. "I want Emma to see me as a role model, a strong woman, who has a career and can be a great mom," she said.

As a new Mom, Kelly finds a lot of support from her friends, which she was surprised to discover through the Breast Feeding Support Group at Hilton Head Hospital. While she joined for practical reasons, it turns out that the "boob group" ladies quickly became her closest friends. (Sorry gentlemen, this is a woman's-only group.)

Q2: if you wrote a newspaper column about your adventures as a (working) mom, what would you call it?

Kelly Caron: The Motherload

Q2: How do you find balance?

KC: I create my "to do" list for every day. It helps me stay on track. The more things I have on my plate, the better I perform for some odd reason. My Blackberry is my best friend at moments.



The reality is these women are driving a lot more than the family Ford Fairlane. They play partner, mom, dog walker, dishwasher, diaper changer, caregiver, carpool driver, cookie baker, money maker, business owner, boo-boo kisser, and bedtime story conductor. And you don't have to turn on the TV to see it. ●

Q2: Your biggest splurge?

KC: Paris. the food, wine, desserts, boutiques and attractions have my heart and my wallet! It is always worth it, too—no regrets!

Q2: What is your secret shame or silly indulgence?

KC: Extra hot Venti Skinny Vanilla Latte from Starbucks!

Q2: if you could wish one thing for your child, what would it be?

KC: My wish is that Emma will grow up a secure, well-rounded, independent lady with a strong sense of self.

Q2: Your leadership style?

KC: I am a Taurus, so I know my own strength and I can handle situations with dignity and self-control. I enjoy taking the lead. I am very organized, and I like to make sure I have my eyes on everything.

Q2: Most embarrassing moment?

KC: I don't really get embarrassed—I just laugh at myself. Life is too short to dwell on silly things like that.

Q2: What does "housewife" mean in 2011?

KC: The family nurturer and the glue that holds it all together.