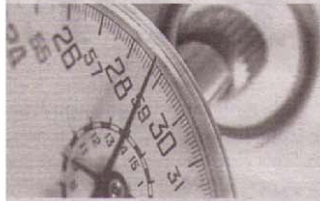


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Clarence resident Brette Sember, a former attorney, holds her recently published book, "Your Practical Pregnancy Planner: Everything You Need to Know About the Legal and Financial Aspects of Preparing Your New Baby." She has written more than 20 books and numerous magazine articles and newspaper columns on legal issues including marriage, divorce, adoption, parenting and gay and lesbian rights.

Ex-lawyer's book explains legal issues in pregnancy

BY JODI SOKOLOWSKI
jsokolowski@bizjournals.com

Pregnancy is a time of change with changes in schedules, sleep patterns and available funds. Along with those changes arise legal issues involving health-care rights, insurance coverage and even umbilical cord preservation.

As a mom, Brette Sember has experienced many of those changes and as a former lawyer, she understands those legal rights. To help new parents, she explains those rights and more in one of her recently published books "Your Practical Pregnancy Planner: Everything You Need to Know About the Legal and Financial Aspects of Planning for Your New Baby." The book, published by McGraw-Hill, is available in bookstores and online for \$14.95.

"It's a complete legal, financial and practical guide for expectant moms, to help not only deal with legal issues like wills and guardianships, but financial budgeting and insurance (coverage)," she said, adding she found nannies or babysitters must be included on the parents' car insurance to be covered. "How the employment is arranged affects the car insurance and whether the nanny is covered."

The book also addresses non-legal or financial aspects such as finding out about recalls, choosing day care and getting organized.

"It seemed to me there (are) lots of books about your changing body and how to buy a crib, but not a lot of information about

about finding an agent and branching out into non-legal books, such as "Fun Family Activities" and "How to Do Just About Everything."

With writing in her background — she was editor of her high school newspaper and an English major in college — along with being a former lawyer, Sember said she not only enjoys the writing aspect but the research as well.

"(A law degree) gave me a heavy emphasis on writing but also on research. Learning to do good research was important for me, and writing is something I've always been good at and enjoyed," she said.

Keeping up with new and revised laws is challenging for legal-related topics, Sember said.

"That's the hardest thing about it -- keeping books up to date when you cite cases and laws. It makes it exciting," she said.

Transitioning from being a lawyer to another career wasn't too difficult, but a risk, Sember said.

"The key is to follow your interests and do something you love," she said. "I think it's hard to leave the security of a job you know and pays well, but I'm able to be with my kids, (who are) 13 and 7. They love (that I'm working from home)."

Her experience as a law guardian in Family Court helped her in writing "How to Parent With Your Ex," a flip book which has a one side for the residential parent and the other side for the non-residential parent.

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The book also addresses non-legal or financial aspects such as finding out about recalls, choosing day care and getting organized.

"It seemed to me there (are) lots of books about your changing body and how to buy a crib, but not a lot of information about flex time at work, an elective C-section or blood preservation from the baby's umbilical cord for its stem cells," said the Clarence resident.

Sember took time off from practicing general and family law when her second child was born. A call from an editor to write a book about how to file for divorce shifted her career from lawyer to author. After several books with Sourcebooks, on legal-related topics including adoption, senior care and child custody, Sember was on a roll.

"It gave me an area of specialty as a writer, (but) then I had some ideas for some other things I wanted to do that didn't fit into their line of books," she said

about finding an agent and branching out into non-legal books, such as "Fun Family Activities" and "How to Do Just About Everything."

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Her experience as a law guardian in Family Court helped her in writing "How to Parent With Your Ex," a flip book which has a one side for the residential parent and the other side for the non-residential parent.

"I was an active law guardian who always went to both homes and even met with therapists and teachers. I got to see a lot of the problems firsthand and was able to draw on that to write the book," she said. "You're going through a huge emotional upheaval and want to do what's best for your child, but sometimes it's hard to see the forest for the trees. I put it in perspective to help find a way to work cooperatively with your ex."

Sember, whose book "Your Plus Size Pregnancy" was just released and she is working on "The Complete Gay Divorce" for November, said she doesn't think she'll practice law again.

"This is a good fit for me. I like writing; it's something new and exciting every day."