

The QuickBooks QUEEN

Woman helps with
financial software woes

By Margaret Rice, The Star

Sharon M. Vetsch, of Oak Lawn, is the self-styled QuickBooks Queen. She spends her time helping area businesses and consumers learn the QuickBooks accounting software from Intuit.

When her father, Bill Dunning, of Chicago's Bridgeport neighborhood, died in 1992, he left Vetsch a business handling billing and collections for martial arts studios.

"One thing I tell my students is, if you were going to pick a career, I would bet it wouldn't be doing collections for martial arts schools," she said.

When her husband, Don, lost his job and the collections business barely was making ends meet, Vetsch knew she had to look for a part-time job.

And shortly after that, she experienced a "God thing."

"I went in to the Oak Lawn post office, and a woman named Patty asked me if I knew anything about computers," Vetsch recalled.

"I said, 'Yes.' I had one and knew how to use it.

"She said her husband had just started a new business and he needed help."

Vetsch spoke with Joe Louis and Ed Pryzbylski, who owned Laser Direct in New Lenox.

She said she knew the job would be perfect for her after that conversation.

"It was a one-girl office," Vetsch said.

"I could pick my own days and hours. They gave me the money I wanted, and it was five minutes from my home.

"If I could have written a job description for the perfect job, this was it."

But there was a catch.

Louis and Pryzbylski just bought the QuickBooks software and expected her to use it.

"I didn't know what it was," she recalled.

"They said they bought QuickBooks.

"I said, 'Good for you. What is that?'"

Vetsch told Louis and Pryzbylski she would ask around about QuickBooks to see if anyone she knew knew anything about the software.

"My sister said that she knew someone who was using QuickBooks and that it was really easy," Vetsch said.

"It turned out to be a friend of a friend of a friend who we couldn't track down."

After that, she spent a year trying to learn the software on her own.

"It was horrible," Vetsch said.



Photo submitted to The Star

Sharon M. Vetsch, of Oak Lawn, is the self-proclaimed QuickBooks Queen.

"It is a double-entry system. If you have a checkbook and you enter a check and deduct it, that is considered a single-entry system.

"After I was entering transactions into this, it was doing other things behind the scenes, and I didn't know what they were."

After that year, QuickBooks caught on and became popular.

Vetsch said friends of hers were buying the software and not knowing how to use it.

"They kept saying to themselves, 'Sharon went through this. Let's call her.'"

Vetsch then spent many weekends and nights going over the program with friends and family, teaching them how to use the software.

"My husband, Don, said, 'You really need to start charging for this.'"

"I thought that was silly — no one was going to pay me to teach them QuickBooks.

"I started charging \$35 an hour. This was 10 or 11 years ago. That was a lot of money for this."

But people were willing to pay Vetsch what she wanted.

And out of that, the QuickBooks Queen was born.

Vetsch said the most rewarding thing about her job is helping small businesspeople who are struggling to be successful.

As for the most difficult thing about her work, she said it is teaching certified public accountants.

"CPAs love to do journal entries," Vetsch said. "With QuickBooks, you don't need journal entries if you use the forms in the system."

She also teaches one weekly QuickBooks class at Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hills.

That course is geared toward anyone who wants to learn the program.

"You can use QuickBooks for your personal finances,

but most of my students (have) small businesses and (are) trying to learn it," Vetsch said.

With new editions of QuickBooks coming out yearly, she said it takes her between five and 10 hours to learn all of the new enhancements in each edition.

Jan Buchler, of Palos Hills, works as an independent representative for Robert Allen Group.

She and her husband, Ray, who is a contractor, hired Vetsch two years ago to do their books.

Though Buchler — who previously used Quicken software — considers herself an intelligent person, she said it was initially difficult to manage QuickBooks.

"I tried using it on my own. And I was finding that, even though I thought I had entered something, I was finding I had to do things I didn't know how to do," she said.

Buchler said Vetsch — who handles accounting for her — would be the ideal person to teach anyone how to use QuickBooks.

"She said, 'Just come take my class at Moraine Valley if you want to learn to do it for yourself.' Buchler said.

"And that's when I said, 'We'd just like to hire you.'"

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FIND OUT MORE

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