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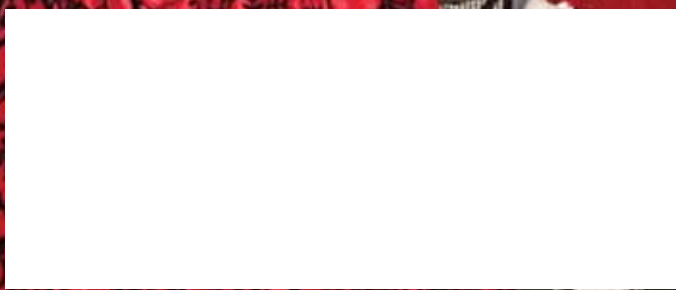
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COVER: Eliina and Evan Vaughn are 7-years-old and in the 2nd grade. Parents are Anna and Mark Vaughn of Loveland, Colorado!

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Life's Little Treasures...Our Children

Since we are beginning to embark on the hectic and busy holiday season, it's even more important for us to not only find a balance in our lives but to also maintain one. When things get stressful, parents need to find ways to feel more patient, grateful and gracious with their kids. Because time is fleeting, I believe that one of the most important gifts we can give to our children is to be present with them now. That's why I wanted to share some of my most favorite inspirational thoughts and sayings on parenting hoping that they, too, inspire you to be the best you can for your children during the holiday season and throughout the entire year.

- * *Treasure your children for what they are, not for what you want them to be.*
- * *The more a child feels valued, the better his values will be.*
- * *Judge your success as a parent to the degree that your children feel safe, wanted and loved.*
- * *Live so that when your children think of fairness, caring and integrity, they think of you.*
- * *Children in a family are like flowers in a bouquet; there's always one determined to face in an opposite direction from the way the arranger desires...*
- * *Consider this equation: the amount of time you spend with your children while they are growing up equals the amount of time they will spend with you while you are growing old.*
- * *You can never know how much your parents loved you until you become a parent yourself.*
- * *Nothing speaks more loudly to a child than a good parent's quiet example.*
- * *Take a holiday family photograph each year in the same spot, such as a favorite tree in your yard. In years to come, you'll have a wonderful record of the growth of your family, as well as the growth of the tree.*
- * *Your family is your treasure.*

In this issue we are focusing on the holiday season and giving you tips to save money and stick to your budget when buying for two (or more); ways to make your holidays even more special with your twins, ideas for parents on keeping twins busy over the break and an article on tips to relieve the stress in your marriage. Don't miss our annual Holiday Gift Guide for everyone on your holiday list and check out the delicious and festive holiday recipes, along with a fun holiday craft you will want to try in our Family Fare column. Be sure to read all of the interesting feature articles on various topics like Zygoty, Post Partum Depression, Cutting out Comparisons and more, plus our regular columns and sections that cover all the things you want to learn more about when raising multiples at every age and stage.

There is nothing like experiencing this magical holiday season through the eyes of our children. It's a feeling so pure and sweet that we often don't get the opportunity to experience. It's that feeling of overwhelming joy they feel and that is why we as parents need to capture that feeling and hang on! So please take the time to truly enjoy these moments you have and cherish these memories for a lifetime. Parenting is such a great gift and our children and family really are the greatest treasures we can ever have so keep that in mind when you're in the midst of all the holiday fun. I hope you all have a wonderful and joyous holiday celebration and wish you all the very best in the coming year! Happy Holidays from our entire TWINS™ Magazine family we thank you for sharing your time and lives with us.

Sincerely,

Christa D Reed

Christa D. Reed
Publisher/Editor-in-Chief



Twins in the News....



You Can Now Share Your Digital Videos of Your Twins at www.TwinsMagazine.com—

Have you seen our brand new website design yet? By partnering with YouTube, we are very excited to offer our website users the ability to now share your digital videos of your twins and multiples in action on

our wildly popular TWINS™ Magazine Message Boards. What a fun way to show your little ones eating with a spoon for the first time; taking their first steps or even all the fun at a twin's club holiday party--any digital video that you want to share with your friends on our Message Boards can now be uploaded in a fun and easy way. All you need to do is create a YouTube account at www.youtube.com and then follow instructions on uploading a video. Once that is done and the file is on YouTube you are now ready to upload your video to the TWINS™ Magazine Message Board site. Find the video on YouTube that you want to share. Copy the web address at the top of the screen and then select the portion that is after v= (or the video ID #). For example www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmgf60Cl_ks you would copy and paste only the ID#: rmgf60Cl_ks and paste just that ID# into your message board post. Highlight and select the video ID# and click the TV icon and you should be able to now share all of your digital videos with all of your friends at www.TwinsMagazine.com. Start sharing your videos today!

5th Annual TTTS Race for Hope Comes to Denver, Colorado on Sunday, November 9th—Did you know that TWINS™ Magazine is a national sponsor for the charity series the TTTS Races for Hope that take place all over the U.S. to benefit the Fetal Hope Foundation? We invite you to attend the Children's Hospital TTTS Race for Hope Denver in association with the Colorado High Risk Maternity & Newborn Program when they present the 5th Annual TTTS Race for Hope in Denver, Colorado, where this national charity event began on Sunday, November 9, 2008. Race registration begins at 9:00 am and awards are given immediately following 5K Run/Walk at 10:00 am. This fun, family event is the largest of its kind in the country. Also come out and enjoy the NOMOTC Family Festival and Sponsor Expo while you're there and visit the TWINS™ Magazine booth at the expo. For more information please contact Lonnie Somers, Founder/CEO of the Fetal Hope Foundation at 303.522.4387 or e-mail lonnie@TTTSRaceforHope.org or visit the www.fetalhope.org website to learn more about how you can get involved!



National Organization Announces Partnership to Increase Awareness of Multiple Births—

The National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs Inc. (NOMOTC) has announced it is partnering with the Fetal Hope Foundation and Twins™ Magazine to increase awareness of increasing multiple birth rates in the United States. To kick off this awareness campaign the partners are designating April 2009 as the first annual National Multiple Birth Awareness Month. Because multiple birth rates have doubled since the 1980s, more families are faced with issues and challenges that only pertain to raising two, three or more children at the same time. During the National Multiple Birth Awareness Month, the three organizations will use this opportunity to spread awareness about the issues that these families face including what to

know when expecting multiples; TTTS or Twin-to-Twin-Transfusion Syndrome and other fetal issues directly affecting multiple birth pregnancies; premature births and low birth weights; twins with special needs; the exceptional physical and bonding demands placed on parents and the separation of twins in classrooms. For more information about the first annual National Multiple Birth Awareness Month visit the NOMOTC Web site at www.nomotc.org, e-mail nomotc@aol.com or call 248-231-4480.

New Documentary Film Features a Family Dynamic Through the Eyes of Identical Mirror Twins—

The film entitled, *Our Side of Joy*, is about family dynamics through the eyes of Michelle and Marlene Tamayo. Being two among eight children, Michelle and Marlene experienced a unique life of twin-ship. Their story offers an in depth look into the unique bond between sisters, siblings, parents, kids, and significant others. What kind of relationship do these sisters have? Where do they see their relationship in the future? In what ways do the twins touch the lives of their siblings and vice versa? What role did their close relationship to their siblings and parents play in their emotional health? Using photographs, interviews and family footage, this film offers a cohesive portrait of the familial relationships of Michelle and Marlene Tamayo. To learn more about this new documentary visit the film's official website at www.oursideofjoy.com.

Identical Twins in Australia Seeking Help for Nonprofit Project—

Paula and Bridget Powers, affectionately known as "The Twinnies", has created double the effort and double the results, as these women have dedicated their lives to saving marine birds. With a special love for all animals – they have among others a pet rat, wood duck and pelican – the 34-year-olds have dedicated the past eight years to rescuing marine birds left injured by careless fishermen. "We just love birds and always have since the age of three," they say. These former zoo workers and boat operators have a natural affinity with the sea and the animals that call it home. "Trying to nurse a very sick bird back to good health can



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**ASKING IF THEY'RE
'NATURAL' DOESN'T
BOTHER THIS READER**

Thank you for making such a fun and informative publication—I really enjoy it. I wanted to comment on the “natural” question issue, though. I have absolutely no problem or negative feelings toward anyone that asks if my twins are “natural”. In fact, I actually like telling the story about how I almost fell off the table in shock after discovering that there were two heartbeats at six weeks. I’m not sure if I feel that way because the boys were conceived without the incredible medical advances we are afforded today, or if I am just someone that is comfortable putting everything on the table and wearing my heart on my sleeve. Perhaps because I am also curious about the experiences of others, I am just as guilty of being nosy and voyeuristic. To me, it’s interesting to see how others got to this point—obviously I don’t want to judge, but the stories are unique and enthralling, no matter what the “method” used to create beautiful multiple babies.

I just wanted to let you know that I am out here and am okay with complete strangers asking me such personal questions. But I was also okay with people rubbing my belly so maybe I’m just weird (LOL). Anyway, I thought it was important to speak out on this. I completely understand those that feel their privacy is violated by such personal questions, but I am one mother of twins that is not offended at all when approached in this manner. Thanks again for publishing such a great magazine; I really love being a mom of twins!
~ Lauren Emoto-Barnhill via email



Editor's Note: Thanks for taking time to send me your thoughts and feedback on this issue and for reading TWINS™ Magazine. You're like me... I was pregnant with our first 'baby' (so I thought) and I was only seven weeks along when I saw those two little 'egg yolks' on the ultrasound screen and sat there in shock, just like you! For others, though, it is so much more of a difficult journey. They have to endure numer-

ous medical treatments that don't always work and go through so much just to get pregnant that when they are finally blessed with twins or more they don't want to be answering such personal questions. This is exactly why I brought up this topic and to hopefully inspire us all to support each other no matter how we became a mother of multiples.

**READER PRAISED TWINS™
MAGAZINE FOR INCLUDING
STORIES ON ADOPTING TWINS**

I wanted to praise you for your September Issue. As a family that was formed through adoption and with twins we are often in the spot light. Your article on being a “real” parent and the thoughts of others not necessarily accepting that really hit home for us. We have faced these issues almost on a weekly basis since our children came home. We were at our twins’ birth and have had them in our arms since they were minutes old and it’s fascinating to hear various people’s responses. I appreciated a mainstream magazine addressing this issue. I read articles in my adoptive families’ magazine but to have it go out to the twins’ world was a pleasant surprise. Again...Thank You! ~ Darene Fisher via email



Editor's Note: Darene, thanks for sharing your experience with us and for reading TWINS™ Magazine. I know how hard it is raising twins (& more) and that is why we all need to support each other on this exciting and amazing journey!

TWINS ARE FINALLY “PACI-FREE”

My husband and I had finally gotten tired of our nightly ritual of looking for pacifiers under sofas, beds, stuffed animals etc. before bedtime. Our boys somehow got in the habit of having to have not one, but two, one in their hand and one in the mouth. They only used them at night, but we knew they were at the age where it had to stop. I had heard various stories about the “Paci-Fairy” and tried to come up with something similar for my boys. I had decided to take them to see *Sesame Street Live* and knew this was the perfect opportunity to become “paci-free”!

We had already been telling them that paci’s were not for big boys, only babies, and sometimes it worked, but usually they always asked for them back. Before the show, I explained to them that Elmo needed



paci’s for little babies and they needed to bring theirs to the show to give to Elmo!

My fingers were crossed as about 30 minutes before it was time to go, they willingly put their paci’s in a baggie for Elmo. I still had not decided who at the show was actually going to help us out with this task, but did bring enough money to buy them a gift that was going to be from Elmo if they actually did give them up. Once in the arena, we actually arrived early enough to attend the “character Meet and Greet”. I knew that was going to be the perfect opportunity. After I explained to them why Elmo wasn’t there. I was holding my breath as it was our turn to go up and get our photos. I guess I wasn’t thinking practically as I realized the characters themselves were not able to take the bags from the boys anyways. I was so proud as they passed their little bags with their beloved paci’s to “Elmo’s helper”. I was then able to manage to purchase “under the radar” two of the souvenir “Elmo light up toys” that I then gave them, and told them they were presents from Elmo. Later that night, we went through our nightly ritual and there was not the excited request for paci’s that I will now probably miss. It was mentioned closer to bedtime, and I just simply reminded them that they had given their paci’s to Elmo to give to the babies. Now on to our next toddler transition “big boy beds.” ☺ ~ Janeen DenHaese via e-mail

**STAY-AT-HOME-DAD OF TWINS
SENDS FEEDBACK ON LAST
ISSUE'S TWIN TALK COLUMN
BY JEREMY GREENBERG**

I just read the article written by Jeremy Greenberg for Twins magazine in last issue and I loved it. Here’s a quick overview of my story...at 20 weeks into the pregnancy, my wife and I went for our first ultrasound. That is when we found out we were having twins. Then, in week 21 of the pregnancy, I found out that I was being laid-off from my job (talk about having to re-work plans.) Because the job market is slow where we live, I could not find another job that would allow for my wife to stay home with our twin boys. So this is why I became a stay at home dad. Jeremy’s story rang so true for me. In the hospital, since it was a c-section delivery, I had to change the meconium diapers. I was thinking hey, this isn’t so bad it doesn’t smell (disgusting yes, but no smell...I can handle

this!) However, this feeling was short lived because apparently my boys can not only fill a diaper with the best of them, but unfortunately picked up my ample supply of loud gas! One day, I had completely lost track of what day of the week it was and even what time of day it was. My wife was feeding the boys a bottle but they hadn't been acting quite right (little did we know a "bug" was in the making!) Our dog, a beagle-sheltie mix, loves the boys and is rarely far from them. He was in front of the chair under my wife's feet when she leaned up to get up. I had just walked into the room when it happened.... not projectile, just think lava flow, a really big lava flow. Out of one of the boy's mouths, all over my wife, our new recliner, the boy, the dog and the floor. My wife had been getting ready for work, and was upset because this meant her process to get ready had to start all over again. I just looked at her and said, "I just don't even know where to start. You are all a mess, what gets cleaned first?" Thinking, the dog was going to carry this mess all over the house, I began there. And in case you don't know, you need some sort of scraping implement to get formula out of dog fur. After a couple of minutes, my wife was able to laugh at the situation when she thought about the look on my face and how I was stumbling around not really moving anywhere and trying to figure out where to even start. I just had to write in and say thanks so much for the laugh. It was a hard day, and I will have a long night of driving ahead going to the in-law so reading this article was a great release. Sincerely, Brandon Davis via e-mail



Editor's Note: We love to hear from our dads of multiples, too so thanks for taking time to write to us! Brandon, we're glad the Twin Talk column brought a smile to your face, made you laugh a little and brightened your day. Just wanted to let you know that if you like reading humorous, slice of life points of view from other parents, our LOL and Twin Talk columns are the perfect pick-me-up and just what we all need to get through those tough days...

MOM RENEWS SUBSCRIPTION BASED ON CHANGES TO THE MAGAZINE

Just wanted to let you know I renewed my subscription based on the changes in the magazine. I used to read a Twins™ Magazine in one session, and now it takes me a few days to get through the whole thing! That is a good thing because there are now so many great articles pertaining to older twins as well as the babies (my twins are now six). Overall quality (including paper stock) has improved 100 percent! Great Job! ~Lt Brenda Abrams, S. Editor, the Erie Wanderer, Syracuse Sail and Power Squadron (NY). The United States Power Squadrons-www.usps.org.



Editor's Note: Thanks, Brenda for sending us your feedback. We are glad you are enjoying all the changes we have been making and that you have noticed that we have been broadening our scope to offer articles for twins at every age and stage since our issues do not end at age 3, they just morph into other issues as they get older. Glad to hear it is taking more time for you to get through all of our articles and information—and welcome back to TWINS™ Magazine.

GRANDMOTHER OF TWIN BOYS ASKS FOR HELP WITH KEEPING HER TWINS TOGETHER IN CLASS

I am a proud grandmother of twins. We are into the third week of school and my daughter is so upset. She is hearing impaired and has to rely on email to communicate with her twin's school. The twins who are 5-years-old, were made to go to separate kindergarten classes due to "school policy". We agreed in a meeting with the counselor at enrollment to give it a try and they PROMISED us the boys would be together during lunch, PE, music and art. That has not happened. They have been completely separated for everything. It is causing such stress and anxiety in the boys. One comes home crying everyday and so unhappy. The other is so concerned for his brother he begs his mom nightly to "please let his brother come to his class". The one that is more traumatized has a teacher that "doesn't see a problem, he seems perfectly happy to me." The other teacher

Cont'd on Pg. 6

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MOM SHARES SPECIAL GERMAN HOLIDAY TRADITION

I wanted to submit a holiday tradition that I would like to share with the readers. Every year in our home, we celebrate St. Nicholas Day on December 6th. My husband and I are both German and wanted to pass down this tradition to our three girls. We feel dedicating a day to hearing stories, doing crafts, celebrating with our family and friends, and setting out our shoes or boots for St. Nicholas to come adds a little something special to the beginning of the holiday season. For those of you that may not know, the true story of Santa Claus begins with Nicholas.

Nicholas was born during the third century in the village of Patara. At the time the area was Greek and is now on the southern coast of Turkey. His wealthy parents, who raised him to be

a devout Christian, died in an epidemic while Nicholas was still young. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, his love for children, and his concern for sailors and ships. There are many stories of Bishop Nicholas but the one I tell every year to our three daughters, Holley, 6 years, and our twins Courtney and Heidi the following story:

"There once was a poor man with three daughters. In those days a young woman's father had to offer prospective

husbands something of value—a dowry. The opportunity for a young woman to find a good husband would be much higher the larger the dowry offering. Without a dowry, a woman was unlikely to marry. This poor man's daughters, without dowries, were therefore destined to be sold into slavery. Mysteriously, on three different occasions, a bag of gold appeared in their home-providing the needed dowries. The bags of gold, tossed through an open window, are said to have landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. This led to the

custom of children hanging stockings or putting out shoes, eagerly awaiting gifts from Saint Nicholas. Sometimes the story is told with gold balls instead of bags of gold. That is why three gold balls, sometimes represented as oranges, are one

of the symbols for St. Nicholas. And so St. Nicholas is a gift-giver."

Last year, we celebrated with our German friends at their home. Their parents brought an original St. Nicholas costume from Germany and so we had a visit with a "real" St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas talked to each of the children about their good behaviors and those they could improve upon. My oldest daughter was so shocked he knew so much information about her and was speechless (which is very unusual for her). My younger twin girls were initially scared of him until they realized if they listened to his speech about being good and what they could improve upon, they would get a candy bags, they loved him. ~ *Christine Dennis, Highlands Ranch, CO via email*



Editor's Note: This is a heated debate going on all over the country. Have you ever visited www.twinslaw.com? Kathy Dolan started this website specifically to help families of multiples take this issue all the way to their state legislators and have passed laws in many states already that allows parents/guardians the choice to keep twins together or to separate them in class. You may discover that there are already measures being taken in your state so be sure to check there first and see what's going on and take this information with you to your school.

be difficult sometimes.” At present, the twins spend their days canvassing the local beaches and other waterways searching for injured wildlife. Any injured birds are loaded into the back of their rescue vehicle, a converted old ambulance, and taken to the Australian Wildlife Hospital in Beerwah, Queensland, for treatment. They often care for the birds during their rehabilitation at their own home and



hope to one day set up their own clinic. “Our goal is to get our own place and set up a small rehab for birds and we are seeking the support from other twins from around the world,” they say. The twins cite finding enough fish to feed the birds as one of the trickiest aspects of their job. “We just want to get the message out there that animals are being hurt and need caring people to help them. We have to learn to share this world with every living creature.” You can contact Paula & Bridgette via email at info@twinniesseabirdrescue.com or visit their new website at www.myspace.com/twinniesseabirdrescue.

Mother of Twins Launches New Online Boutique—After deciding to “retire” from being an executive with the Disney Company and Marketing for Walt Disney World for almost 10 years, Kandis King wanted to find the most unique products that reflect the styles and trends of today so she has recently launched a brand new website at www.socialsouthernbelle.com. “I feel as if I am living my dream—taking the best of what I learned from Disney and applying it to my own business while having the flexibility of staying at home with my adorable twins,” says King. She hopes to be an inspiration to other twin mothers who want to have it all!

Twins™ Magazine 25th Anniversary Double Takes 2009 Calendars Now Available—TWINS™ Magazine is celebrating our 25th year in 2009 and to recognize this great milestone, we have created a colorful calendar featuring many readers’ photos. This calendar will make a great gift for everyone on your list! Read more about the details on the order form to the right. Thank you to all our wonderful subscribers for submitting so many wonderful Double Takes photos for our 2009 25th Anniversary Double Takes Calendar. The response was overwhelming. Those readers with pictures that have been selected for the calendar will be notified by our staff. Every effort was made to select as many photos as we could, however, we were not able to use every photo sent to us. Photos submitted that were not used in our calendar will be given first consideration for our Double Takes pages throughout 2009. ♥

TWINS Magazine’s 25th Anniversary Double Takes Calendar 2009 Order Form



Our 2009 Double Takes Calendars are now available. We’ve made it easy for you to order yours today with these 3 easy options:

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The Facts About Fevers...



Q: I have heard that a fever is very dangerous and could cause brain damage. Is this true?

A: Misconceptions about the dangers of fevers are commonplace. Many parents lose sleep over fears about fevers in their children. With flu season upon us, you will most likely be seeing some fever in one of your multiples, if not all of them. A fever is not a bad thing – it is the body's protective mechanism that turns on the immune system. A temperature from 100° to 102° F is considered a “low grade fever” and is not harmful. A temperature of 104° F is considered a high fever but is otherwise not harmful. Many parents believe that this level can cause brain damage, but this is a myth. Only body temperatures over 108° F can cause brain damage. The body temperature goes to this level only with high environmental temperatures (for example, if a child is confined in a closed car in hot weather). Make sure you are taking the temperature correctly. The hand on the forehead is not

a good predictor of the baby's temperature. Although it looks uncomfortable, it is best to check an infant or toddler's temperature rectally. Oral temperatures can be taken in older children. Use a good quality thermometer. Digital thermometers are widely available and accurate, as well as being easy to use. Glass thermometers are acceptable, but they take longer to register a temperature and can easily break. Ear thermometers (tympanic thermometers) are more inaccurate when used in a home setting.

Q: Should I treat my babies' fevers?

A: Fevers need to be treated only if they cause discomfort. Usually that means fevers over 102°F or 103°F (39°C or 39.4°C). Fevers will not keep going higher without treatment. Because of the brain's thermostat, fevers from infection top out at 105° F or 106° F or lower. With treatment, fevers usually come down 2° or 3° F (1.1° or 1.7° C). Treating a fever can make your children more comfortable. Dehydration is one of the dangers of a fever. Fluid is lost more quickly during a fever. Make sure your children are getting extra liquids and have light colored urine at least every four hours. Liquids should be clear and have some electrolytes in them, such as in Pedialyte and other rehydrating drinks. Juices and soups are also fine, as well as popsicles. Avoid soda or caffeinated drinks. Dress your children lightly in one layer of clothes and do not put extra blankets on the children, as this may cause the temperature to elevate. If chills occur, use a light blanket. For fevers up to 102°, this is the only treatment you need.

Q: What medicines should I use to treat fever? What is the difference between acetaminophen, ibuprofen and aspirin? Can I mix them—for example, give acetaminophen at 6 a.m. and ibuprofen at 10 a.m.?

A: Use drugs only if the fever is over 102° or if the child is very uncomfortable. Remember, the fever is helping the child to fight the infection. Drugs are not necessarily needed if the child is not uncomfortable. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be given to children over two months. Give the correct dosage based on your child's weight and repeat every 4-6 hours. Ibuprofen (Advil, or Motrin) is similar to acetaminophen in its ability to lower fever and its safety record is also similar. One advantage to ibuprofen is that its effects last longer (6-8 hours instead of 4-6 hours). Do avoid aspirin. It is not recommended in children up to age 21 if they have symptoms of fever or a viral infection. It is linked to a severe infection, called Reye's Syndrome, if given during viral infections, especially chicken pox.

Q: My grandmother told me I should use cold baths or wet towels to break a fever? Is this true? What about alcohol rubs?

A: Medicines work as well as bathing so is all you really need to bring down a fever. However, if you feel like you need something that will work faster; you can use a warm bath. Water evaporating from the skin will cool it so the temperature may come down a little more quickly. If more than one has a fever at the same time, it can be very impractical. Use only warm water – chilling a baby in cold water is not only unnecessary but is very uncomfortable and can cause shaking chills. Only use a small amount of water and wet the skin with a washcloth to aid evaporation. Keeping wet towels on the skin impedes evaporation so does not help to cool the body. Never use rubbing alcohol on a child's skin or in the bath to cool them! This can be dangerous to the child.

Q: Should I bring my child to the doctor right away for an antibiotic if he is running a fever?

A: Not necessarily. Call your health care provider if your child is under 3 months of age with a fever, the fever is over 105° F, or if your child looks or acts very sick. Also call if your child has had a fever over 3 days. Most fevers are caused by viral infections and are not helped by antibiotics.

I hope this will help you manage your multiples' fevers over the long winter months. They are bound to come down with one or two fevers in a year, so be prepared and know the facts.

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REBECCA MOSKWINSKI, M.D., FAAFP



Dr. Moskwiniski is a staff physician at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana and is the proud mother of six including twin daughters. She is also the past president of the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc.(NOMOTC) and is currently serving on the NOMOTC Board of Directors as Board Advisor. Dr. Moskwiniski was the editor of the popular book compiled by NOMOTC entitled *Twins to Quints*, which can be found at www.twinstoquints.com.



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I love the Holidays. It's a time when we gather together at parties, dinners, and open houses. It's when we make time in our busy schedules to reconnect with the people in our lives. It's also a time to build family traditions, which in turn creates memories that our children will have their whole lives. Kids are filled with excitement, trying their best to be good because someone is watching. We get to go to Holiday pageants and concerts watching in awe at our young ones' talents. Through cards and letters we get to see our friends and family grow and catch up on what is happening in their worlds. It is a very magical time of year.

Every year, my family sits down to make a list of everyone to whom we want to give gifts. These include bosses, clients, teachers, neighbors, friends, and family. I enjoy creating gifts from my kitchen. Consumable gifts are perfect - they can be shared with others, won't be the wrong size, and most importantly, won't need dusting later.

This issue, I included: a couple of inexpensive gift ideas, a school party project, and a lo-cal appetizer you can take to parties that everyone will love. From my home to yours, I wish for you a blessed Holiday Season and wonderful 2009.

Homemade Instant Hot Chocolate

I have given this as teacher gifts for years. It is so easy and makes a nice little thank you for the role they played in my children's lives. This recipe is easily multiplied, so you can have some throughout the winter months to keep your family warm and toasty too.

SHOPPING LIST

1-cup non-dairy creamer
1-cup non-fat dry milk
 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1-cup sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsweetened cocoa

HOW TO PREPARE

In a medium bowl, combine all ingredients. Mix well. Store the mix in an airtight container.

TO SERVE

Spoon 3 heaping tablespoons of the mix into a mug, add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup boiling water, and stir

GIFTING PRESENTATION IDEAS

Teachers: Dip the end of a plastic spoon and/or candy cane in melted chocolate, let cool, then wrap in cellophane and tie with ribbon. Fill a zip top bag with 1 cup of the hot chocolate mix and seal. Place the plastic spoon and/or candy cane and hot chocolate mix in a festive holiday mug. Wrap it in cellophane. Attach the recipe on the bow.

Bosses, Clients, Neighbors, Family and Friends: Dip the end of plastic spoons and candy canes in melted chocolate, let cool, then wrap in cellophane and tie with ribbon. Fill a mason jar with hot chocolate mix. Fill a small mason jar with miniature marshmallows. Arrange the spoons, candy canes, hot chocolate mix, marshmallows, two festive holiday mugs, and a small bottle of peppermint liqueur (optional) in a basket. Wrap it in cellophane. Attach the recipe on the bow.



Melt in Your Mouth Caramel Corn

I can hardly keep this around during the Holidays and usually end up having to make several batches during the season. It's a delicious munchie and is great to have around.



SHOPPING LIST

1-cup butter
2 cups brown sugar (packed)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup light corn syrup
1-teaspoon vanilla
6 quarts of popped popcorn
1-cup nuts (peanuts, almonds, walnuts, or a combination of the three)

HOW TO PREPARE

Preheat oven to 250°. In medium sized saucepan, bring the butter, brown sugar, corn syrup and vanilla to a boil, stirring often. When sugar is melted, remove from heat and, in an extra-large bowl; mix with the popcorn, nuts until the popcorn is fully coated. Place the popcorn mixture onto an ungreased jellyroll pan. Bake for one hour, stirring every 15 minutes. Cool on waxed paper. Store in airtight container.

Gifting Presentation Ideas

This one is easy. Anyone can do it. Get a festive holiday tin. Fill it with the caramel corn. Tie a bow. Done.



Artichoke Spinach Dip

This is a hit every time I make it. It's the best of both worlds – lo-cal and tasty. Who can't go for that combination this time of year?

SHOPPING LIST

- 2 cups (8 ounces) shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese, divided
- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese, divided
- ½ cup fat-free sour cream
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 - 14oz can artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
- 1 package (8 ounces) fat free cream cheese
- 1 package (8 ounces) less fat cream cheese
- 5 ounces frozen chopped spinach, thawed, drained, and squeezed dry
- Tortilla chips

HOW TO PREPARE

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, combine 1-½ cups of mozzarella cheese, 2 tablespoons parmesan cheese and the next seven ingredients. Stir until well blended then spoon into a 9 inch baking dish. Sprinkle with ½ cup mozzarella and 2 tbsp parmesan. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes.

TO SERVE

Serve warm with tortilla chips. Serving Size: ¼ cup, Calories: 148, Fat: 5 grams



School Party Craft

Snowman ornament for a class size of 24.

SHOPPING LIST

- 4 white 11x17 sheets foam paper
- 1 brown 11x17 sheet foam paper
- 1 black 11x17 sheet foam paper
- 1 red 8x10 sheet foam paper
- 12 red pipe cleaners
- 24 zip top sandwich bags
- Hole punch
- Scissors
- Black permanent fine point marker
- White school glue

HOW TO PREPARE

Using the templates, trace the snowman body onto the white foam sheets (you should be able to fit nine on each page), the hat onto the black foam sheet, and the arms onto the brown foam sheet. Cut the red pipe cleaners in half. Using a hole punch, punch out 24 dots from the red foam paper and 72 from the black.

Separate the snowman pieces into 24 zip top bags, making sure the outlines are visible. Each bag should contain one snowman body, one arm one top hat, one red dot, three black dots, and half a red pipe cleaner.



HOW TO ASSEMBLE

1. Have the students cut out the snowman body, hat, and arms using scissors from their desks.
2. With school glue, have the students attach the arms to the back of the body.
3. Using the red dot for the nose and the three black dots for the buttons, attach them to the front of the body with glue.
4. Wrap the pipe cleaner around the neck and twist it to secure.
5. Finish the snowman by drawing the eyes and mouth with the permanent black marker, punch a hole in the top hat and tie attach a ribbon for hanging.



Debra Baggett is a mother of two and an aunt to two sets of twins and more. She provides helpful and easy recipe tips and fun activities you can do with your kids in every issue of TWINS™.

Download this pattern on our website at www.twinsmagazine.com!

Taking a Break:

A Parents' of Multiples Guide to the Holiday Season



If you're the parents of school aged multiples, you've probably just begun to recover from the transition back to school, when you realize that the holiday season is knocking on your door. For parents of school aged multiples, the holiday season can be extra stressful. As you think about and plan for the holiday festivities, you're also forced to give careful consideration to keeping two kids, who are finally accustomed to a new routine and structured day, engaged and entertained throughout their extended holiday break. This is a tall order that most parents of just one child find hard to fill. Sure, family gatherings, holiday dinners and for most,

Christmas morning may be the highlight of school vacation (and keep your twins busy here and there), but how can a parent of multiples keep their twins busy for the other 11 days, 18 hours and 38 minutes of school break?

ENCOURAGE YOUR TWINS TO GET INVOLVED WITH FAMILY TRADITIONS. Taking part in family traditions will help your twins identify with their family unit and grow in their sense of belonging as individuals. Making ornaments to add to the Christmas tree each year is a wonderful tradition that most kids cherish, especially once they're grown and have a tree of their own. Providing arts and crafts materials for younger twins to make placemats and letting older twins help out in the kitchen are most always a hit. Best bet: Ask your twins if they'd like to put on a holiday show for family and friends. What set of multiples isn't used to enjoying a room full of attention?

REFOCUS YOUR HOLIDAY THINKING. Take a break from the commercialism of America's favorite holidays and get back to your roots. Sharing what the holidays mean to you as a

family can provide interesting opportunities for unusual activities. If your family is of the Christian faith, for example, have a Birthday party for Jesus, complete with a cake and games. Consider sponsoring a needy family and giving them gifts, in honor of the birth of Christ.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF COMMUNITY OFFERINGS. Many cities and towns host events throughout school vacation, ranging from theatre performances to complete school vacation camps. Your twins may enjoy connecting with school friends for a fun activity to two over the break.

BE A TOURIST IN YOUR OWN TOWN. Museums and other attractions often have special school vacation hours and rates to encourage families to spend quality time together while the kids are away from school. It's a great time to score a two-for-one admission at your local children's or science museum.

GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY. Volunteer at a soup kitchen, purchase presents for Toys for Tots, or go caroling at a nursing home. The winter break provides the perfect opportunity to reinforce the value of caring for others and to model community service to your twins.

HAVE PLAYDATES. Coordinate play dates with a few of each of your twins' friends. Many parents are looking for ways to keep their kids busy during the school break, but don't bother to ask for get-togethers because they're afraid they'll be interrupting valuable family time. Make the first move. You're likely to be embraced for your forwardness.

ENJOY THE OUTDOORS. Going for nature walks, having snow ball fights, going ice skating and making s' mores over an open fire are wonderful ways to entertain your twins during the school break. Many local ice rinks have extended open skate hours during school vacations. Outside play is fun and free and roasting marshmallows together is a low cost activity that will leave lasting memories in the minds of your twins.

HAVE A GAME DAY. Just hanging out and playing board games can be a great warm, winter family activity. Introduce your twins to your favorite games and be willing to let them introduce you to a few of theirs. Yes, this could mean brushing off and brushing up on those old Atari hand skills.

TEACH YOUR TWINS A NEW SKILL OR HOBBY. Have your twins ever asked you to teach them to paint, knit or bake? Now is the time to teach your twins something new and to work on a project together.

MAKE FAMILY RESOLUTIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR. Ask your twins what goals they have for the family. Although you may not be able to accommodate their every request, you can often offer an acceptable compromise. Monthly trips to Disney may be out, but a season's pass to a local amusement park next summer may be in.

However you choose to entertain and engage your twins during this holiday break, the most important thing to do is to spend time doing something together. ❤️

Five Things NOT to do Over the Holiday Break

1. Deviate from sleep schedules. If there's one thing that your twins don't need a vacation from, is sleep. Keeping your twins on their sleep schedule will ensure they are well rested and able to handle and enjoy the holiday fun.

2. Skip meals. Although you may be dining away from home a lot over the holidays, try to keep your twins on their regular eating schedule. When out and about, hungry twins are a recipe for disaster.

3. Go overboard on the gifts. Remember the golden rule. Gifts aren't a substitute for love, they are a symbol of love. You don't want your twins to ever measure your love for them by how much you give them. Receiving one gift that they really want is more meaningful than receiving many that they don't really care about. Teach your twins that it IS the thought that counts.

4. Force your twins to hug and kiss everyone. While children should always be encouraged to properly greet family and friends, a handshake can be an acceptable alternative for your twin who doesn't like a constant invasion of his/her personal space.

5. Stress out. Easier said than done, I know. But for parents of multiples, when they stress, their stress comes back to them in stereo. Your twins will pick up their emotional cues from you, so if you're calm, they're more likely to be calm too.

Michelle is the 2004 International Nanny Association Nanny of the Year. A career nanny specializing in caring for twins, Michelle has over a decade of nanny experience. Although she holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry and a certificate in Pastoral Studies, she enjoys her work as a professional nanny and as a parenting consultant. Michelle is an active member of the nanny community and was the Founder and Past President of Boston Area Nannies. In addition, Michelle has served on the Board of Directors and as past Vice President of the International Nanny Association.

*Michelle is called on by the media as a "nanny expert" and has appeared on television and has been featured in print. She is the author of the new parenting series *Nanny to the Rescue!* and the soon to be released *Working Moms 411*. Michelle and her husband Jeff reside on Cape Cod and had their first child, a baby girl in July 2008.*



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By Mike Poff

Potty Reflections and the Deep Meaning of Diapers

We have reached a milestone in our great big Blue Ridge Mountain home. We have potty trained our youngest child. There is a certain satisfaction and poignant pause to this accomplishment. Alexandra, for her part, did great! Two and one half days and our 25-month-old had won the battle of the bladder with no programs or formulas other than experience, encouragement and consistency. This is a family record for mess management proficiency at the Poffarosa. Good for her! Still, we are left asking ourselves who is next? Now that we have finally gotten good at this we have ran out of children. Some of you might think we are a bit insane to feel so conflicted. This should be a relief, a victory you might suppose. After seven potty trainings, four of them copiously overlapping, one might think one has had ones fill of floating Cheerios and sticker handouts. Well I guess we are silly because really this is a bittersweet feat at best.

Statistics say the average American family is having only 1.9 children. I am more of a writer than a mathematician but that number seems just under the treading water point to me. I suppose we are doing our part with seven children spread between toddlerhood and teen-dom but no more diapers in the house! It feels as if the path is heading downhill and the GPS has lost the satellite signal. This is a place to stop and ponder that next step. Who would have thought diapers meant so much?

BROOKE & BRIELLE



Interestingly at the same point in time, several moms on the TWINS™ Magazine Message Board and other areas of our extended circle were calling out for “Help”! With questions like, “Just one week before pre-school...” or “Four years old and un-yielding...” Potty training expertise suddenly seemed a commodity in short supply and as this column attests, I am most willing to share. Therefore, pulling myself up from my conflicted period, I surged to meet the cries for mess management assistance.

What I discovered is that even potty training has a crass and commercial if not slightly sexist skew in this modern age. Seems many for profit programs and workbooks are already in place. I guess Pam and I are missing the train here. Perhaps it is time to pen the “The Quadparent’s Guide to Restroom Mastery” or “Mike’s Mess Management Makeover” (I need to remember to run these by my agent!)

Still, all kidding aside, I know how personal this area can be and that mainly moms are out there making it happen. Perhaps this is why some dismiss my assistance. Many men might even laugh at what goes on in our house. Most would have also required talk therapy if not medication following the path we have created for ourselves. Indeed writing is my talk therapy and I thank all you moms for indulging me, especially one Christa Reed.

So having set the stage and motivations let me share with you my insights to winning the war on unwanted wetness. You might call this ‘The Quadfather Guide to Timely Potty Proficiency’ though I have chosen not to.

First, chill! This is not about you, your worth as a woman, mother or person. Way too much attention goes to who does it the quickest and the best. Nor is it about your friends or anyone else’s opinions or approval. This is about the two (or more) wee wonders at your feet and not finding more wee wonders all around the house. So relax.

Secondly, embrace this truth. Personal hygiene is a required social skill and not every-one will gain its mastery the same way or at the same time. Consider yourself as simply sharing a sheer certainty with your little cherubs. Indeed this is a refreshingly straightforward spot with little grey areas.

Thirdly make this a motivation. Out of love, you are helping your little lovely kiddos take their steps toward independence and responsibility. Indeed, you are loosen-

ing the reins here. Investing and nurturing trust, forming a foundation for growth. Setting a stage where they rely on you to point out areas for growth now and in the future. Really, you are building a bridge sorely needed in terms of trust and communication. You and your teenaged angel will need this one-day. Trust me on that!

Fourthly, seek the advice of those who have done this multiple times and well. Twins, trips and such are a unique challenge. Seek the unique practitioner. We have even been accountability gurus for some, giving advice and encouragement and support. Now we cannot do this for everyone but be open to those around you who have the experience and heart to help and serve you in this adventure.

And finally, allow room for each individual to get this individually. Pointing out that a sibling is better in an area is not a good idea or desired motivation in the formative years. If you want comparisons and performance to be at the root of your family relationships this is a time and place to set it in stone. You might say you have to learn to feel the flow—yes, the pun was intended. This is a wonderful teaching opportunity for twins and such to embrace some uniqueness of

self. To learn it is ok to be me, maybe even find some things about their siblings to appreciate or even learn encouragement and empathy from.

Now in this wee little list you will notice no particular techniques are mentioned. Well you see I am saving them for the definitive tome on this topic. “The Quadfather’s Two and a Half Day Wonder Potty Plan”. Until its triumphant release, please remember that in all the disorder, aggravation and odor encountered with mess mastery, the day will come when you climb that final hill. With the last sticker given, potty dance danced and happy holler hanging joyfully in the air, please take time to enjoy the view.

Here you will find a new satisfaction and confidence. Yep, you have gotten good at this. It will suddenly dawn on you that you are now done with the diapers. You will not be going this way again. You have reached a milestone. If you felt a wee bit conflicted at this high watermark, please do not hate me for helping. Pam and I have left a tissue or two for all of you in our passing through. Who would have thought diapers meant so much? ♡

Mike Poff is a 40-something at-home father who lives in the Appalachian Mountain Town of Big Island, Va. Mike’s wife, Pam, owns a case-management firm that operates in four states in the Mid Atlantic region. Before defining his role as domestic dad, Mike was a news reporter, disc jockey, copywriter & production manager. He is perpetually working on his Master of Theology in his abundant spare time. He and Pam have seven children ranging from 15 down to 19 months. Their quads are now six.

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The Brentz Twins ... a Story

Jared & Bryce Brentz



Nineteen years ago on December 30, 1988, Charlie and Cyndi Brentz looked forward to the births of their twin boys. No problems were expected, even though the inability to see the legs of one of the fetuses had caused some concerned the doctors. When Jared and Bryce were delivered, the problems were apparent. Jared had been a breach baby. More important, he hadn't been able to move his legs during the pregnancy due to a lack of room. His legs had remained stationary across his abdomen during the entire time. The results were that Jared was born with two clubbed feet and arthrogyriposis. Decreased fetal movements in the womb usually cause the condition. The fetus needs to move his/her limbs to develop muscles and joints. If the joints don't move, extra connective tissue develops around the joint and fixes it in place.

For the next fourteen years, Jared Brentz underwent four operations at the Shriner's Hospital and endured endless therapy. He wore durable braces or some other device on his legs from the day he was three days old. Jared's life changed dramatically on August 15, 2002. Faced with a lifetime in a wheelchair due to his legs' worsening condition, he underwent another surgery—this time to amputate both of his feet above the ankles. What some people might think was a horrible event became an act of freedom to the Brentz family. Today, Jared Brentz is a muscular teen. He stands over six feet tall and enjoys most of his days pain-free. He's able to participate in a variety of activities.

Times haven't always been pleasant for Jared's parents, Charlie and Cyndi. They've experienced a roller coaster of emotions with their sons. Both boys have always loved sports, especially football and baseball. Charlie and Cyndi made the decision to allow Jared to participate in as many activities as possible. Charlie coached the boys' football team when they were younger. "Jared would have to rest in a wheelchair for a couple of days prior to games to have enough strength to play, and he'd be back in the chair for a couple of days afterward as he recuperated," Charlie said.

In baseball, Jared hit the ball better than the other players on his team. Coaches would put him into games when men were on bases in scoring positions. "One time Jared was put into a game with bases loaded. He hit a grand slam, but didn't know it," twin brother Bryce said. Jared said what he remembers most about the game is the long trip around the bases. By the time he reached third, he was walking to home plate with the fans and players giving him a standing ovation.

Charlie and Cyndi have always treated their twin sons as individuals. Their names purposely don't rhyme and they've never dressed the boys in identical outfits. That made life easier as Jared grew up. He didn't feel in competition with Bryce. Neither was Jared ever treated as if he were handicapped.

"We never used a handicapped parking space. Jared was allowed to try anything, just like his brother, and he paid some heavy prices for those activities. Still, he has never considered himself to be a person with limitations," Cyndi said. The ultimate decision for the surgery was Jared's. His parents allowed him to make that choice after doctors had told him all the information. "I made the choice to have the surgery. After all, it was my life that was being affected, and I just couldn't see spending the rest of it confined to a wheelchair," Jared said.

The feelings Charlie and Cyndi experienced were at times overwhelming. Even ten months before the

of Loss and Inspiration

surgery, they were torn. Charlie says that their minds told them the decision to amputate Jared's feet was the correct one, but their hearts were broken over the situation. Their minds constantly played the game of "what-if" about the surgery and about their actions before Jared's birth. On the day of the surgery, the grief over what was actually being done to their son was similar to that felt for the death of a loved one. After the surgery, the family continued to experience stress. Jared was in and out of the hospital from August until February. His parents took turns being with him at the Shriner's Hospital in Greenville, South Carolina and then returning home to Knoxville, Tennessee.

As important as it was for us to be with Jared, it was equally important to maintain our relationship with Bryce so that he felt reassured about his brother and his family," Charlie said. Today, Jared Brentz is a healthy, happy person. Bryce says his brother is gregarious individual who has a quick wit and tremendous sense of humor. He's replaced baseball with golf, and all who have watched him play say that he can outdrive most players.

Jared is finishing up classes at Pellissippi State Community College in Knoxville, Tennessee and holds a part-time job at a car parts store. He hopes next to attend St. Petersburg College in Florida. There he wants to pursue a degree in orthotics and prosthetics.

Jared can enjoy baseball now by watching his twin brother play for Middle Tennessee State University. Bryce was named 'Freshman of the Year' in the Sunbelt Conference and was a second team All-Conference selection. He also was named to the Louisville Slugger Freshman All-American team. Bryce is proud of his accomplishments, but says he'd be second string if Jared were able to play. Charlie and Cyndi Brentz have endured the pain that comes in watching a child suffer.

By Joe Rector



Charlie, Jared, Bryce, and Cyndi Brentz

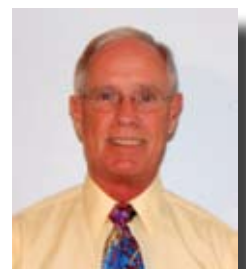
“We never used a handicapped parking space. Jared was allowed to try anything, just like his brother, and he paid some heavy prices for those activities. Still, he has never considered himself to be a person with limitations.”

They are thankful that their twins Jared and Bryce have grown into healthy and happy young men. To the Brentz parents, nothing is better than having twins. They offer some advice to future parents of twins. First, treat twins as individuals and allow

them to develop their own identities. Next, ask for help with chores from family and friends so that parents and the twins can form a bond. Last, they suggest that moms and dads enjoy the children when they are young. As they grow, life becomes more expensive and complicated. Jared

Brentz and his brother Bryce are still best friends. They enjoy spending time together and take every opportunity to have fun. On the other side of a traumatic situation, the Brentz family spends its time laughing and loving and making memories that will last through the years. ♥

Joe Rector, a twin himself, is a freelance writer and newspaper columnist in Knoxville, Tennessee. He has also published several items in the *Chicken Soup* books. He can be reached at joerector@comcast.net.



The Gift of Imagination

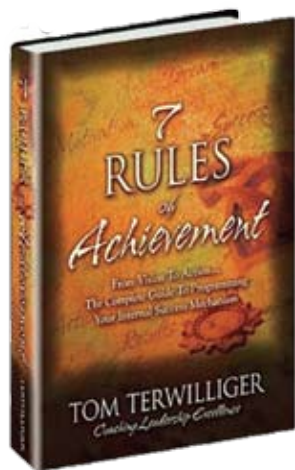


By Tom Terwilliger

I can see it happening already. Several of my dear friends are already slipping into the pre-holiday, post-holiday blues which if not nipped in the bud can lead to full blown depression. Let's face it, thinking about the holidays in the same lighthearted and jolly way we did when we were kids can be a little challenging these days. In the wake of the elections, several natural calamities, the war, and what the media would have us believing is the worst economic meltdown of our generation, it's tough to imagine 2009 with anything other than doubt and skepticism.

Fear is an extremely infectious emotion and we've been so pumped full of it along with doubt and uncertainty that it's almost impossible not to have been infected by it. As soon as we hear someone talking about "how bad things are" we tend to tighten up, withdraw, and start pumping adrenalin into our fight or flight response system. When it seems to be the topic of the day we feel compelled to contribute to the conversation. Commiserating with our neighbors, coworkers, and fellow community members seems to be one of our favorite pastimes, especially around the holidays.

With what appears to be bad news all around us it's easy to imagine the worst. But what if you were to really stretch your imagination like our little ones do every day, like we all did when we were their age.



Your imagination is like a muscle in that the more it is exercised the stronger and more capable it becomes. Your imagination is also a very powerful component in the creation and direction of your emotions and is triggered by your dominant thoughts, be they empowering or disempowering.

I remember as a kid growing up in the small town of Massapequa Park New York with my twin brother Mike

and my four older brothers and sisters and how every holiday we would get together with all our aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents for what seemed at the time to be a festival of food, fun, and gifts.

My imagination would run wild with childish optimism about the presents I would be getting and how much candy I would be allowed to stuff into my chocolate covered cheeks before being scolded for eating too much.

“ You have a choice this holiday season; you can allow all the negativity around you to infect your imagination or you can choose to imagine the future you want for yourself and for your family. ”

To this day I still eat too much chocolate and I still have that childish optimism and imagination and so do you. It just hasn't been exercised enough lately. You have a choice this holiday season; you can allow all the negativity around you

to infect your imagination or you can choose to imagine the future you want for yourself and for your family. A future filled with love, joy, happiness, abundance, and hope. The first step in creating that future is to vividly imagine it today. And when you do something miraculous things will happen. You will begin affecting everyone around you in a way that may very well be the most wonderful gift they receive this holiday... happiness. ♡

God bless and happy holidays!

Tom is a former National Bodybuilding Champion, founder and co-owner of Terwilliger Fitness. He has spent his life learning, preaching, and practicing the benefits of exercise and sound nutrition. An American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) certified trainer and fitness industry celebrity; Tom has worked with such individuals as Regis Philbin, Gregory Hines, Cindy Crawford, and a host of Colorado notables. Tom may be best known as the host of the long-running "Fox Sports Network" TV show "Muscle Sport USA." Although Tom primary focus these days is in on his Life Strategies Success Coaching, he still enjoys working personally with his clients.



Have a question for The Life Coach, Tom Terwilliger?
Submit it at: <http://tinyurl.com/282b75>

The House of Transformation

By Trudi A. Buck

All parents come to realize things about their world they hadn't fully comprehended before becoming a parent. Like how deafening the silence of the house is when a newborn cries out into its darkness at 3:00 a.m. Or, how delectable frozen peas taste after eating a spoonful of baby's pureed ones. It's these things that we discover along the way. The discoveries I've made with my twins, though, surpassed anything I'd ever imagined. How I learned to deal with these revelations was just as unexpected. Naomi had always been a bit leery of the vacuum cleaner, and usually stayed clear of it. One day, however, she set aside her blocks, and cautiously walked toward Ethan as he pulled the vacuum cord out, pushed the retractor button to watch it mysteriously disappear, and then pulled it out again. With great caution she reached down and picked up the cord just as Ethan hit the button. I expected her to run for safety as the cord flew through her tiny fingers. Instead, she nervously laughed, and waited for Ethan to pull it out again. They were content with this until Ethan realized his sister had moved in on his territory so without warning, my vacuum cord transformed into an instant tug-of-war game. Back and forth they went about the room, pulling each other with all their might, each shrieking protests at the other. The days of transformation had begun.

In the ensuing months, never-before-seen qualities possessed by numerous items in my house as well as me came to light. I'll share but a few of them. At bedtime my stairwell leading to the second floor would mutate into Mount Everest. My two little adventurers would race each other to the bottom step, giggling as they vied for the best starting position. Halfway up, the innocent giggles were replaced with silent determination as each concentrated on their efforts to be crowned champion. Ethan, slightly larger and more agile, always reached the summit first. Naomi, displeased with the outcome, would promptly halt her climb and refuse to budge. This nightly ritual marked the end of a long day of living in my transforming house. Some days my dining room morphed into a high school cafeteria. One of the twins would innocently drop a piece of food on the floor. The other, finding some sort of comical delight in it, intentionally followed suit. Without warning the food fight was on. I'd frantically grab for their plates before the remaining contents ended up on the floor, and try to remember not to bang my head on the highchair trays as I cleaned up the mess. When the twins had conquered the height of my sofa, it brought with it yet another transformation.

It miraculously grew to the size of a football field. I'd run yards from one end to the other in a desperate attempt to prevent them from falling off while they blindly and gleefully ran patterns all over it. Then there were the alterations that swept over me. I became this sort of rock-climbing, horse riding, jungle-gym piece of playground apparatus as they clambered all over my defenseless 41-year-old body. I'd also been overheard belting out a combination of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" and "Old McDonald" at the same time. (It's not easy pleasing the masses!) With some brainstorming, effort and patience, I've been able to restore some semblance of order to my home. Instead of the free run up

Mount Everest, I directed their attention to the railing they'd apparently overlooked in their rush to victory. I showed them how Mommy used it, and encouraged them to do the same. It worked. Ethan has mastered the technique quicker than Naomi, but only goes so far, then waits for his sister to catch up. Naomi is quite pleased with this. I suspect it gives her a sense of control.



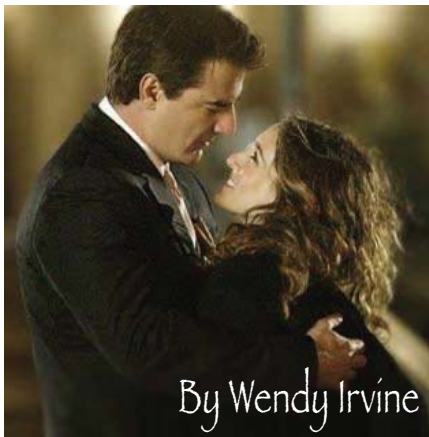
Naomi and Ethan

I've laid the law down, and my dining room is once again a place of food consumption rather than food painting. The twins quickly learned if they played with their meal, I would feed it to them instead of letting them feed themselves. Not the least bit pleased with this arrangement, they conceded. I purchased a used vacuum cleaner, and removed the troublesome cord. We now host our tug-of-war games outdoors using a jump rope instead. And I place the sofa cushions on the floor during football season. I'm not nearly as exhausted by the fourth quarter. As for me, all I can say is there's something intrinsic about being your children's personal playground. So, until they lose interest or grow so big they cause me bodily injury, we'll all still go to recess together.

As for the songs, I've figured out which ones they both like and stick to them. The neighbors don't stare nearly as much anymore. I've no idea what my house or I will become as the years roll along. I can only hope my ceilings and floors remain intact, my walls don't turn some putrid shade of purple, and my carpets don't begin flying around the room when my back is turned. Only time will tell. ♡

Trudi Buck lives in New England and is a stay-at-home mother of 3-year-old twins and an 8-year-old daughter. She also has 2 grown sons. She is a freelance writer who has been published in her hometown newspaper as well as authored over 100 non-fiction informational and general instructional articles for a variety of on-line publications including Helium.com and Mommy.com. She is a 2007 graduate of the Long Ridge Writers Group of Redding Connecticut.





Would Sex and the City's Carrie & Big Make it Through a Typical Holiday Season? (We Doubt It)

So kinky Carrie finally marries Mr. Big and they ride off into marital bliss? Not to throw chilled champagne on the party, but we married types know what's coming next—and in duplicate when the holiday season swings around!

Big: (after a long day at work) Honey, I'm home!

Carrie: (Teeth grit. Smoke curling from nostrils) Where. Have. You. Been?

Big: (he thinks: uh oh.) I'm here now!

Carrie: (speaking slowly so he'll understand) "Just once in five years, I ask you to be home on time for kid duty so I can have dinner with friends and you can't pull it off? It's. One. Lousy. Dinner!"

Big: "I fell asleep."

Carrie: "You what?"

Big: "I fell asleep on the train coming home and missed the stop."

Carrie: "I thought Mr. Big Shot had a car and driver?!"

Big: "No, remember honey? We had to down size after you bankrupted us with your shoe addiction? But it was that last Lacroix gown that really put us firmly in the red. Now it's just you, me and your flip-flops from Target, Baby. We don't need money. Love is all we need."

Carrie: "Quit quoting the Beatles. It makes you sound ancient. Which is semi-true. If you hadn't had (she mimes air quotes) "commitment issues" we'd be empty nesters by now and vacationing in Spain this winter. Instead my minivan radio is tuned to the Disney channel and you're napping like the elderly."

Big: (storms out. . . again.)

Carrie: (shouting) "And take the little ones with you!"

Everyone has major meltdowns spinning around old, unresolved issues that mean nothing to anyone but the two of you. It's normal. And throw twins into the mix, a long December with friends and family visiting with

white-glove attitudes, presents that need wrapping and—well, let's just say, unlike the gifts you are wrapped a little too tightly and apparently everyone notices but you.

What makes couples argue even more during the holidays? Stress and guilt. Panicking because you can't do most of what your mom accomplished seemingly effortlessly. And we all know, when the going gets tough, the tough take it out on their partner.

Listen in on what real life wives and husbands will never reveal at a polite holiday party:

Cool, smart mom: "He comes home from work at 5:00 p.m., plants his butt in front of the TV, looks up an hour later at me like I'm a loser for not having a cleaner home. I have four kids. I also work from home and, since I am physically here, he expects me to be both the 50's housewife and make money too."

Fun-loving mom: "Sex is a four letter word in our house. The mere mention of it and tension fills the room. My husband and I usually go round and round, 'I can't just get in the mood at the drop of the hat', I say, 'I need affection for more than three minutes prior to take off'. My husband says, 'I need sex to feel affectionate.' He cannot understand why I am not hot for him when he rolls over and says 'Wanna do it?' or wakes me from a sound sleep by pawing at me. I am tired, I am underappreciated, I am overworked, I feel neglected, I do not feel sexy, but mostly, I am angry."

And now a word from the hubbies:

Husband #1: "When she heard I got a raise, her face fell and she said, 'that's all you got?' And then started complaining about our house. We live in a

4-bedroom, 3-bath home with a pool and a hot tub. Yeah, it's definitely tent camping!"

And behind door #2: "She doles out sex like she's doing me a favor. She's not into it at all. The rejection is pretty tough. She's always too tired, too busy or too kid-oriented to get into it. I end up thinking: forget it, I don't want it now either."

Ladies, this December just say 'no' to fighting with him by saying 'no' to everyone else. No, I can't pick little Mikey up before I do fifty other errands. No, I won't bake 48 dozen cookies for the school fundraiser. No, we don't need an electric train under our tree like Tyler has. No, no, no. And then narrow the festivities down to what matters most to you, him and the kids. (Who knows? Maybe you'll start saying yes, yes, yes to him more often—just a thought.)

And later kick back with a glass of bubbly and treat yourself to a frothy episode of Carrie in her heyday—a short trip to a fantasyland where holidays were over in sixty minutes and nobody was normal. ♥

Wendy Irvine lives with her husband, five-year-old twin boys and two dogs in Fair Oaks, California and asks, "how do you describe the most difficult, sleep-deprived, crazy yet spectacular years of your life to someone who hasn't had multiples? Only a twin mom knows. You had to be there. Today when I see a twin mom pushing a side-by-side, I smile broadly. In my book, we're all sisters in this exhausted, but ecstatic sorority." Wendy is a freelance writer and can be reached at: wirvinemft@calweb.com.



Reduce Stress in Your Marriage by Laughing Together

Laughter is a marvelous gift, especially around the holidays when we are already feeling a bit stressed out! It releases chemicals in your brain, which can enhance your day and reduce your stress. One of the great joys of marriage is the time that you, as a couple, spend laughing together and enjoying your sense of humor.

Check out the benefits of laughter and humor, and ways to increase laughter in your marriage. Don't forget that laughter and humor are vital to good health. Laughter is healthy for a marriage, both emotionally and physically.

Benefits of Laughter

- Lifts your spirits

- Stimulation of your immune system
- A decrease in systemic inflammation
- An increase of natural painkillers in your blood
- Reduction of stress and tension
- Reduction of your blood pressure

Laughter and humor relieve tension, lift spirits, and bring couples closer together. Having a sense of humor as a couple can help keep your relationship fresh.

How to Increase Laughter and Humor in Your Marriage

- Be aware of the humorous moments in each day
- Make it a habit for everyone in your

family to share at dinner something funny that happened to them

- Enjoy watching comedies on television and at the movies including the classic funny movies and television shows we remember as kids
- Share funny jokes and emails with each other
- Reflect on funny times in your past together

Laughter can sometimes release negative tension both physically and psychologically. Couples who can laugh at themselves or at their situation usually feel stronger when problems arise. Together, work on building your sense of humor. ♥

Gift Giving Tips for Your Spouse this Holiday Season...

Give What Your Spouse Wants—Not What You Want to Give

Even when they do remember the occasion, the type of gift you receive can still cause disappointment and strife. So, don't buy your wife power tools or a vacuum and don't buy your husband the latest trendy sweater he will never wear or the latest chick flick he will never watch (unless forced by you).

Gifts that are remembered—Gifts mean more when they come from the heart. Throughout the year, pay attention to comments your spouse makes about items and notice when shopping together what items your spouse looks at.

Here are some gift giving tips and ideas:

The gift of your time and energy—This can include making time for a walk in the rain together, or a back rub or a sensual massage.

The gift of a promise—Are there things that you know your spouse has wanted you to do, but they haven't been high on your priority list?

The gift of your talents—You can make something, grow something, design something, draw something, etc.

Gifts do not have to be elaborate or expensive. It is often the simple, spontaneous gifts that are the most memorable. ♥

Twice the Love: Stories of Inspiration for Families ... with Twins, Multiples, and Singletons

Compiled and edited by Susan M. Heim. Cartoon artistry by John M. Byrne

\$13.95



Twice the Love: Stories of Inspiration for Families ... with Twins, Multiples, and Singletons, published in conjunction with TWINS Magazine, is a compilation of 82 inspiring stories written by parents and other family members about the joys and challenges of raising multiples. These true tales reflect a variety of topics, such as the special bond between multiples, typical crazy days in the life of a family with twins, challenges encountered in pregnancy or childhood, humorous situations created by multiples, adopting twins, and much more.

If you're the parent of twins or triplets, you'll love these heart-warming and encouraging stories. This book also makes a great gift for those who are expecting or raising multiples! Paperback, 222 pages.



Visit www.TwinsMagazine.com to see more books and detailed descriptions. Order Toll Free at 888-55-TWINS



Tips to Prepare You for Holiday Shopping on the Cheap

By Cynthia Zalewsky

The holidays are just around the corner, which for most means some serious shopping needs to be done! Holiday shopping can break the budget even if you are frugally inclined. Now add twins or more and the rising cost of basic goods to the mix and your holiday budget might have already had a mean haircut. Having a fabulous holiday season AND relishing in the joy of giving can all be done on the cheap, it just takes a little planning. Read on and I promise that not only will you stay within your budget this year; you may even have some left over to bank!

Making the List—Assuming you already set a budget, now is the time to sit down and divvy up those dollars. Make a list of all the people you wish to gift and jot down hobbies and gift ideas under their name. Now split up your budget based on how much you wish to spend on each person. If your budget includes monies for festivities out or entertaining at home, now is the time to segregate those funds from your total. Take a look at your list and the funds appropriated and decide if everything is as you want it. If you find yourself a bit short, you may want to employ a strategy we use in our house to keep spending in check. My husband and I choose not to buy gifts for each other and last year we discussed with our siblings and parents that we did not want to exchange gifts in an effort to save money. We instead just purchased gifts for all of the kids in the family. This saved us (and them) hundreds of dollars!

What to Give—The next challenge is deciding what to give. When buying for your twins or more, I always suggest buying an item that has things in multiple. This not only saves you money, but keeps the squabbles down to a minimum! This could mean the Fisher Price Little People ark for toddlers who have two of every animal, a kitchen or grill for preschoolers with two sides of fun or a double-sided easel for your budding artists. I am also not a fan of buying multiples of the same toys. It is a big budget buster! Instead purchase different items that are part of a growing set along with a shared larger item. Last year for us, it was a large Geotrax2e set to share and each had their own RC trains or accessories to add to it. This strategy will allow you to purchase more complete sets and have a greater variety of toys for

less. Some items of course you must buy in multiples such as etch-a-sketches, magna doodles, iPods or the like. The remaining gifts are always unique items for each child.

Shop the Internet Mall—How convenient is this? Rather than wasting gas, dragging the kids to the mall or worse having to shell out money for a babysitter, make a cup of tea, relax and shop from your home. There are so many deals to be had online from web only sales and coupons to special discounts for billing methods. Worried about shipping costs? Don't be. You will find the majority of your purchases will ship for free and may even come gift-wrapped!

To save big, Google the store you want to shop at and the words, "coupon code" or "printable coupon" to bring up the plethora of sites that offer coupons in a click! New methods of billing are offering promotions as well. Bill Me Later has partnered with popular online vendors to offer an alternative to entering your credit card data. To bring people on board, most vendors are offering significant instant savings at checkout. If you do choose to use your credit card online, be sure to visit your card's website to create a dummy card number for fraud protection. Oh and never, ever use your debit card online!

More and More Savings—If shopping online is not your thing, print up the coupons you Googled and bring them in-store. You can also rack up more coupon savings by subscribing to your favorite store's email list. Yes, your inbox may become a bit cluttered but it will be absolutely worth it. Some of the best money saving coupons arrives via email. While you are online subscribing to the lists, pop over to coupon sites such as www.coupons.com or living naturally to print up valuable savings for your home entertainment or regular grocery shopping. Don't forget to visit the manufacturer sites of your favorite foods (particularly organic lines) to print up additional savings. Is your printer out of ink again? No problem. Many sites allow you to load the savings to your registered grocery and drugstore savings cards for shopping without clipping a single coupon!

Finally if you are talented in crafts, nothing beats the thrift and beauty of homemade gifts. The same can be said for gifts from the kitchen. Concocting a set of spice rubs stunningly contained in silver canisters makes a beautiful, not to mention delicious and thrifty gift, for the grillers in your life.

Hopefully you are now armed with new tools in your budget toolbox and are ready for this holiday season. Regardless of how much money you have to spend or save, the most valuable thing you can do this holiday season is just be with your family and give thanks for all you are blessed with-and it won't cost you a penny. ♥

Cynthia Zalewsky is the owner of Saratoga Investment Solutions Inc., a fee-only comprehensive financial planning and Registered Investment Advisory firm in Saratoga Springs, NY. She has been in the industry for over 10 years and a business owner for 8 of those years and caters to the needs of senior clients and their families. Cindy is a seeker of knowledge and enjoys sharing knowledge with not only clients, but fellow practitioners. She is often quoted in various industry publications including Financial Planning, the Journal for Financial Planning, Investment News and Dow-Jones and is a contributor to TWINS magazine. In addition, she does Estate, Medicare and Medicaid editing work for several companies including Forefield, Inc and has presented at several FPA conferences. Over the last several years, she has partnered with the Saratoga Springs Soroptomist chapter and local Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center to help women who are victims of domestic violence achieve financial independence through financial education and advocacy. She is the mom to vivacious three-and-a-half-year-old twin boys who keep her on her toes at ALL times!



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Celebrating the Holiday Season with Your Twins



By Christina Baglivi Tingloff

It happens every year around this time—colorful toy catalogs begin to fill your mailbox daily and as your children pour over them with such concentration you’d swear that they’ve memorized every page and price. Yes, Christmas and Hanukkah are just around the corner. And while it may seem like just yesterday that the kids were splashing around in the backyard pool, it won’t be long before you hear them utter those five little words, “I want that for Christmas.”

To a child, gifts are such a big part of the holiday season but as adults we know that Christmas and Hanukkah are also about family, spirituality, and altruism. Fortunately, savvy parents of multiples

have found all sorts of unique ways of getting into the spirit of the season by embracing traditions, both old and new. Keeping holiday rituals alive not only spreads a little cheer this time of year but also builds strong family ties and deepens sibling relationships, and helps to create memories that will last throughout your children’s lives.

WELCOMING IN THE SEASON

From winter festivals complete with a visit from Santa to holiday parades, the beginning of December is a busy time for many local parents of twins clubs. Many clubs adopt a family in need or help out at a local food bank—both of which are a perfect way of introducing your young twins to the spirit of giving. “We love walking in our town’s Holiday Parade with our Moms of

Multiples Club, The Gemini Crickets,” says Linda de los Reyes, a Los Gatos, Calif. mother of four-year-old fraternal twin girls, Anna and Mia. “All the kids wear the club’s T-shirt. Kids are either riding in a wagon, stroller, or bike that’s decorated in holiday colors.” Yet even if you’re not an active member of your local club, you can find ways of helping out in your own community or just create traditions unique to your own family. “We started having a twin-themed Christmas,” explains Sue Kanenberg. “We would take Derek and Sarah’s picture together wearing the same outfit sitting next to the tree.” The Poughkeepsie, NY, mom would also write down the sweet things that her four-year-old twins would do for one another throughout the year and then wrap up the slips of paper in little boxes. On Christmas morning, after Derek and Sarah would open them, Sue and her husband would read them to their children. With the arrival of their third child, however, they changed course so

they wouldn't exclude their youngest, and now instead cast handprints each year to hang on the Christmas tree.

But some family traditions are rooted in pure practicality. "Each year Santa comes to our house a few weeks before Christmas for the boys to sit on his lap and take pictures in front of our tree," explains Jenn Duke of High Point, NC. "We started this when Camron and Caden were a little less than three months and we really wanted their picture with Santa but didn't want to take them out during RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) season being that they were premature."

DECKING THE HALLS

In our house, we set up the Christmas tree early in the season (it's artificial) so we can slowly savor our holiday activities throughout the busy month. We ceremoniously hang each and every ornament, reminiscing about where we were when we bought them—the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics, the summer in Yosemite. Chris Parente's children all have their own collection of ornaments given to them over the years. "Ornaments from mom and dad represent the growth we've seen in the kids," says the Morris Plains, NJ, mom. Eight-year-old fraternal twin Joseph prizes his "karate boy" ornament while his co-twin, Elizabeth, cherishes a pillow that has the embroidered word "dream" on it to inspire her to reach for her goals. Not only is ornament collecting a tangible way to preserve family memories but it also reinforces each twin's own individuality, highlighting their unique characteristics and interests.

For some, however, decorating the Christmas tree is also a time to pause and reflect, especially for those families who've lost a multiple. "Together, as a family, we hang the special ornaments such as the silver bell and the baby bassinet with the name of our angel baby," says Kristen Felty of Charlotte, NC. Her five-year-old sons, Mac and Cooper, are surviving triplets. Cooper had an identical twin, Bennett, who was a stillborn due to complications from TTTS (twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome). "It's always a bittersweet moment," says Felty of their yearly rite.

GIFT GIVING GALORE

Even with all these endearing traditions, Christmas and Hanukkah's biggest draw is still gift giving. Yet how

do you instill the idea that "it's better to give than receive" when it comes to your young twins? Simple. Make it fun. Every holiday season since my fraternal twin boys were in kindergarten, I've taken each of them out separately for an afternoon of Christmas shopping and then to a special lunch. What started out as a unique way to spend some alone time with each child (something I felt they sorely lacked) has grown into a cherished family tradition that now includes their younger brother, too. The added bonus? My children are learning firsthand the joy of giving.

Jackie Leeds' eight-year-old identical twin boys also enjoy buying gifts for one another but the Ocean City, NJ, mom also encourages her sons, Joshua and Hunter, to remember those less fortunate this time of year by encouraging them to also purchase a toy for another child in need.

CAN YOU SAY THANK YOU TO GRANDMA?

Teaching your twins to be thoughtful gift givers is only half the story, however. Being a gracious gift receiver, on the other hand, is whole different chapter. And no one knows this better than parents of twins who are often the mediators between relatives who insist on giving one gift to both and the twins who don't understand why.

"My mother-in-law buys my boys one gift to share all the time," says Karen Johnson of Carson, Calif., who asked me to change her name for fear of being recognized by relatives! "One year when they weren't even two, she bought them one tricycle. Imagine how that went over?" Frustrated, Johnson asked her husband to call his mother to let her know the chaos that the one trike caused but it proved to be too uncomfortable to do.

Melisa Tulotta experienced a similar situation when a close family friend gave her then three-year-old boy-girl twins, Aidan and Emma, one present. "While the gift had two of the same items—nesting building block sets—the kids still felt it was one gift and were very blunt about their feelings," remembers the Hamilton, NJ, mom. "When only one child was handed a gift, the other immediately said, 'What about me?'" Embarrassed, Tulotta quickly tried to diffuse the situation by encouraging them both to open it together but it was still a very uncomfortable moment for all.

And if you think two kids sharing one gift is difficult, what about three? Christina Ganiel-Ballard, mother to four-year-old fraternal triplets, Aidan, Bryce, and Ballard, has often had to referee when her brood has received one present to share. "First, all three fight over who will open the gift and then they fight who will play with it first!" laughs the Galloway, NJ, mom.

When Gretchen O'Shea's mom gave her then eighteen-month-old boy-girl twins, Molly and Patrick, one toy-shopping cart for Christmas, the ensuing arguments caused the Cranford, NJ, mom to take action. "I made sure to be specific later on with everyone," she says. From then on, she told friends and family about what each child would like for Christmas and even their birthday. "I tried to make it more about their individual tastes."

Creating a "wish list" for each child every holiday season is a great idea says Cindy Post Senning, great-granddaughter to etiquette guru, Emily Post, co-director of The Emily Post Institute in Vermont, and author of *Emily's Christmas Gifts* (Collins; 2008). "There's no problem with giving a relative or close family friend a wish list before the holidays. In fact, it can be very helpful."

The trick, according to Post Senning is to keep it simple. Give individual lists with each child's name printed across the top, and make sure each list is different thereby stressing their individuality. "You may want to say something like, 'These are a few things that the boys were hoping for but if you had something else in mind, please feel free to give it.' The point is to be clear but not do it in a demanding way," she says.

And what about after the fact? What do you say—if anything—to someone who continues to give one gift to both your twins? "Obviously you don't want to say anything while the children are opening the gift," Post Senning stresses. Instead, wait a week or two after the holidays and try to gently bring it up to Grandma in a conversation. You don't want to offend her, Post Senning says, but rather just make her aware that constantly giving one gift always causes a bit of grief. Another option says Post Senning, is to let Grandma see the aftermath first hand. Instead of stepping in quickly when your twins begin to squabble over one gift, allow

~Continued on page 42

TOP 10 WAYS FOR PARENTS OF MULTIPLES TO SAVE MONEY



1. Eat more affordably. Breast milk is free! Powdered formula, bought in bulk is your next best option. Pureeing 'big people food' is also a great alternative to pre-packaged baby and toddler food items.



2. Avoid buying everything and buying it new. Accepting hand-me-downs from neighbors, friends, and relatives is all the rage! Old, can be new again, cold washcloths are the old-fashioned, tried and true method for unhappy teething babies. Also, frozen foods can often curb pain and provide a safe and affordable option, as well.



3. Avoid buying everything in twos! Bouncy seats, swings, high chairs, portable cribs....who can afford two of each? Figure out just what you can do with only one of... you'll be surprised!



4. Join your local multiples club. Locate your town/city/regional club and become a member. Whether you can participate in none or many of their events, becoming connected with other parents of multiples in the same age as yours provide support, and product reviews, and great trades beyond your imagination. Local clubs



offer opportunities to shop their 'gently-used clothes and equipment sales' as well as be a seller when the time comes to graduate out of equipment, empty closets, draws, and playrooms!



5. Avoid 'all things baby bath related'. Get creative when it comes to safely bathing your babies and use soft, gentle shampoos and soaps without the words infant, baby or toddler on them. They work just as well!



6. Shop warehouses. Purchase the big consumables like diapers, wipes, baby food, etc. in bulk quantities at discount warehouse stores like Sam's Club and Costco.



7. Become a coupon expert. Create a system to effectively file and use coupons. Look for double coupon programs. Register on-line and add your name to mailing lists.



8. Use your medical community. It always pays to ask. Check with your OB/Gyn, hospital and pediatrician staffs about programs and promotions for new parents of multiples.



9. Stretch out the life of clothing! Take advantage of 'false bottoms' that attach to items and provide a few extra inches of length. Taking down hems, add-

ing cuffs, turning long-sleeved shirts into short sleeves can all increase wearing time and the life of your little ones' clothing.



10. Subscribe to TWINS™ Magazine! Allow our staff to share their insight and advice on products and equipment. Become a member of the largest online support community for parents of multiples on the Internet on the TWINS™ Magazine Message Board and take advantage of the knowledgeable moms who are more than willing to share their advice and shortcuts with you. ♥





The best-ever freebies, gifts, discounts and deals for parents of multiples...

- 1.** Twins Magazine, free copy of our most current issue of our Guide to the First Year of Raising Twins. Download a free PDF copy online immediately at www.TwinsMagazine.com or call Customer Service at 1-888-55-TWINS or 558-9467.
- 2.** Procter & Gamble, makers of LUVS & Pampers disposable diapers. Multiple Birth Offer. P.O. Box 599, Cincinnati, OH 45201. www.luvs.com/en_US/app.cnt/pageid/pgmc-cfaq.
- 3.** Kimberly-Clark, makers of Huggies disposable diapers offers a generous gift of coupons for diapers and wipes with proof of birth and a mail in request. Multiple Birth Program, Dept. QMB, P. O. Box 2020, Neehah, WI 54957. 1-800-544-1847.
- 4.** Baby Planet Boutique offers 10 percent off at with free shipping on orders over \$100. Learn more at: www.babyplanetboutique.com/page.html?chapter=0&id=15.
- 5.** Great Baby Products discount for innovative items designed for twins and triplets. Learn more at: www.greatbabyproducts.com/Twins_s/26.htm.
- 6.** Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus. Get free tickets that never expire available to children under age 12 months. Send child's name, address and birth date, to P.O. box 3845, Edina, MN 55439.
- 7.** Toys 'R' Us and Babies 'R' Us offers a 10 percent discount when purchasing two of the same item, including furniture, bedding, car seats, gates and more. 1-800-TOYS-R-US. Seasonal catalogs with coupons. Learn more at: www.greatbabyproducts.com/Twins_s/26.htm.
- 8.** The First Years. A free gift with proof of birth (newspaper or certificate). One Kiddie Dr., Avon, MA 02322, Attn: Multiple Births Program. 1-800-533-6708. Learn more at: www.learningcurve.com/wps/portal.
- 9.** Tiny Love, makers of soft textured toys promoting developmental skills, offers a Buy One Get One Free with proof of birth. Available by calling Tiny Love directly. Learn more about this special offer at: <http://multiples.about.com/b/2004/11/30/two-for-one-toys-for-baby-twins.htm>.
- 10.** Beech-Nut, makers of baby food offers money saving coupons, 2-5 times the coupons for multiples. Beechnut Food Corp., Checker Board Square, St. Louis, MO 63164, 1-800-523-6633. www.beech-nut.com.
- 11.** J.C. Penny Portrait Studio offers a multiple birth program with discounts to parents who provide proof of birth. More info: J.C. Penney Portrait Studio. 1-800-597-6453.
- 12.** Playtex Products, makers of baby bottles offers sample bottle kits for twins, triplets and quads including bottles, liners and pacifiers. Consumer Affairs, 215 College Rd. Paramus, NJ 07652. 1-800-222-0450.
- 13.** Evenflo Products. Multiple Birth Program. Multiple starter-kits with disposable liners and coupons. 1000 Evenflo Dr., Canton, GA 30114, 800-356-2229.
- 14.** Gerber Multiple Birth Program, 445 State Street, Fremont, MI 49413. www.gerber.com or call 1-800-4-GERBER. Write "twins, triplets, quads" on envelope.
- 15.** Johnson & Johnson, Multiple Birth gift packs. 199 Grandview Road, Skillman, NJ 08558. Phone: 1-800-526-3967.
- 16.** Mead & Johnson, makers of Enfamil baby formula. Family Beginnings program for free baby products, formula and coupons. 1-time shipment of complimentary formula, 1 case/baby plus coupons. Public Affairs, 2404 Pennsylvania St., Evansville, IN 47721, 1-800-222-9123. www.enfamil.com.
- 17.** Bristol-Myers Enfamil formula multiple birth program. 2400 W. Lloy Expressway, Evansville, IN 47721, 1-800-422-2902.
- 18.** H.J. Heinz, baby product coupons. Consumer Services, P.O. Box 57, Pittsburgh, PA 15230. Phone 1-800-872-2229. Booklet, coupons; label saving program for childrens' hospitals.
- 19.** Summer Infant Products, receive free items. 33 Meeting St., Cumberland, RI 02864.
- 20.** Carnation Special Delivery Club and coupons offers, plus samples. 800 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale, CA 91203. 1-800-242-5200 or 1-800-547-9400.
- 21.** Midas car seat discounts. 1-800-621-0144 Midas dealers offer discounts on car sets. You can return the seats to Midas and get credit for services at any Midas shop.
- 22.** Ross Laboratories, makers of Similac. 1-800-222-9546 or 1-800-232-7677. Welcome Addition Club; teddy bears, formula samples, newsletters, coupons. Local rep through pediatrician can provide a case of formula per baby. 625 Cleveland Ave., Columbus, OH 43216.
- 23.** Nestle Infant Nutrition, P.O. Box AW, Wilkes Barre, PA 18703, 1-800-222-0453. www.verybestbaby.com. They send coupons for five cans of carnation good start formula.
- 24.** Scott Paper Co., Baby Fresh, and Wash-a-bye-Baby free samples. Attn: Consumer Relations, Front and Ave. of States, Chester, PA 19013. 1-800-TEL-SCOT.
- 25.** Drypers Corporation, free package of diaper coupon and several \$1 off coupons. P.O. Box 8830, Vancouver, WA 98666-8830, 1-360-693-6688. www.drypers.com.



Holiday Gift Guide:



For Infants & Toddlers



Circus Train Picture Frame by Melissa & Doug—Popular children's toys and accessories manufacturer Melissa & Doug has created a colorful hand-painted solid-wood table-top frame that is perfect for holding three 2-1/8" x 2-1/8" photographs of your darling multiples. This Circus Train picture frame features solid-wood figures set on springs, creating a three-dimensional effect. You and your children

will love this train containing an elephant, a giraffe, a camel, a monkey and your children. **Cost: \$19.95 and is available in the TWINS™ online Shoppe.**

Thing 1 & Thing 2 Infant Gift Sets—Includes a plush Thing 1 & Thing 2 with matching 6-month Onesies (or 24-month T-Shirt) in a fun and decorative gift set. Now available in our TWINS™ online Shoppe. **Cost: \$39.95 + S&H.**

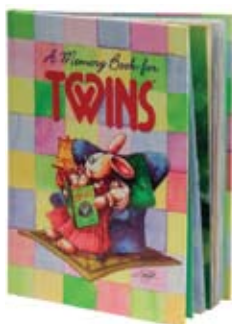


Dr. Seuss Themed Bibs are now available in our TWINS™ online Shoppe. **Cost: \$7.95 + S&H**



Exclusively from One Step Ahead Baby is the Deluxe Teething Blanket.

Other teething blankets offer four chewable corners, but they're usually all the same texture—that's no fair! This super-soothing blanket features four uniquely-textured teethers, to better soothe those tender gums. It has soft, drool-absorbent terry, with a nice satin border. And to make baby smile: a smiling, plush lion with ribbon mane! Poly cotton. Machine wash. **Cost: \$9.95**. **Optional: You can personalize with your child's name for an additional \$14.95. Visit: www.onestepahead.com.**



TWINS™ Shoppe Exclusive: Lifetime Memory Books—Record all the special moments in your life and the lives of your young twins! Every one of the 56 full-color pages is filled with the beautiful watercolor illustrations and includes special pages for information from when Mom and Dad were growing up, babies' wonderful "firsts," and family trees. These beautifully illustrated, colorful hardbound books give you the

opportunity to record your twins' first year and all their important milestones in one great book. **Holiday Sale: \$14.95 + S&H**

Busy Zoo Activity Cube by Parents®—Busy critters...busy kids! This activity cube features bright inviting colors with five sides of animal-themed fun. Topside, your toddler will enjoy spinning the wooden beads around the looping path or moving the animal shapes through their tracks. On each side, they will find activities like rotating picture blocks; open/close doors (open the door to find an animal surprise); moving the animals through a zig-zag track and ABC blocks that spin A-Z from Aardvark to Zebra (each block shows picture of animal and the letter with animal name). Busy Zoo is a fun-filled learning experience guaranteed to keep little hands busy. **Cost: \$89.95 and is available through Sensational Beginnings at: www.sensationalbeginnings.com.**



Our Top Picks for Everyone on Your List!

For Age 3 to 5



Floating Tub Cook Set by Young Explorers—All it takes is a little water and a lot of imagination! Floating Cook Set helps kids learn to pour and mix without a mess as they prepare “gourmet meals” on the stovetop/serving tray while in the bathtub. Comes with lidded pot and frying pan, cup, spoon, and hand mixer with working gears. **Cost: \$24.95.** www.youngexplorers.com.



Highlights Exclusive: the Rainbow Clock Carpet—This rainbow rug helps young children learn to recognize numbers and colors, and introduces them to the concept of telling time. The clock’s hands attach with Velcro®, so they can be repositioned easily. Its vivid colors make it perfect for the floor or wall. **Cost: \$39.98.** www.highlights.com.



Felt Story Boards by Construction Playthings—Your twins will have hours of hands-on storytelling with these five Felt Boards. They’ll enjoy maneuvering the easy-cling felt pieces to create original scenarios for the picnic, campout, bike, zoo and beach stories. Felt Boards are 15”x12 1/2” with approximately 25 to 30 pieces each. All five Boards store in vinyl carrying tote. **Cost: \$26.99.** www.constplay.com.



NEW—*I’m Having Twins!* and *My Twins are Coming Home* by 10-year-old, Paris Morris. Both of these books are a wonderful way to introduce older siblings to new twins!

I’m Having Twins is an inspirational children’s book about a 4-year-old girl named Paris who comes to terms with her parents adding twin siblings to their family mix. The story begins as Paris learns that she will soon have twin siblings and ends as the family leaves for the hospital to have “her twins”. The book takes Paris through the trials and tribulations of a twin pregnancy from the big sister’s perspective and shows her how they are really hers, too, easing her transition to Big Sisterhood. It is based upon the real-life experiences of a little girl named Paris living in the San Francisco Bay Area. **Cost: \$12.95 and is now available online in our TWINS™ Shoppe at www.TwinsMagazine.com.**

My Twins Are Coming Home—In the second book in the series, Paris describes her experiences once her twin siblings are born, including their time in the hospital and their coming home. She shares her thoughts on visiting her twin sisters in the hospital and waiting several weeks for them to come home, why they came home at different times, and her thoughts about now sharing the attention of her family and friends with the new arrivals. **Cost: \$12.95 and is now available online in our TWINS™ Shoppe at www.TwinsMagazine.com.**

WonderFoam® Lacing Shoe— 1, 2, lace my shoe!

This is a great way for kids to start learning to tie their shoes. Kids can’t resist this oversized lacing toy, made of fascinating, feather-weight WonderFoam.

The cord features thick foam guides that promote lacing success. It’s great for eye-hand coordination; sets the stage for future shoe-tying skills. **Cost: \$14.95 available at www.onestepahead.com.**





Holiday Gift Guide Continued

For Ages 6 & Up

Always telling your kids to turn down their headphones—it's too loud? Here is just the solution for you: Loud Enough Volume Reducing Earphones is an in-ear, diaphragm-based, sound isolating headset that is intended for use by children and by parents who wish to limit the volumes their kids are exposed to when listening to their iPod or other MP3 device. This low-profile design comes in three fruit-themed colors and a case is included. **Cost: \$39.99** www.loudenough.com



Dance Maker Double Wave—One for each twin! Take a hip-hop dance class right in your own room. This dance maker turns every slumber party into a show! Wave your hands through the magical light sensor and follow the flashing lights with your hands and feet. It'll teach your kids to dance like a pro with 12 dance sequences and three skill levels. Great for either one or two people. **Cost: \$24.99.** www.etoys.com/Dance-Maker-Double-Wave



Skip the Mall, Visit Santa Online — **Waiting in a long line to visit Santa at the mall with young, excited twins can really be a challenge and add even more stress to your holidays. Have you ever waited for an hour in line only to hear both your twins scream at the top of their lungs and refuse to go up and get a picture with Santa? There may be a solution for us... it's called Santa Chat™ an easier, affordable alternative to capture that experience from the comfort of your home computer at www.VisitSantaOnline.com. The personal chat with Santa is a two-way, real-time web chat. For those without a webcam, text can be sent to Santa and he will respond in real-time from the computer screen. A video can be downloaded to treasure the memory and to send to family and friends to share the moment. **Cost: \$9.99.** Your child can talk to Santa Claus live from the North Pole.**

General Gift Items

The Bath Tub Assistant—Takes Back-Breaking Aches & Pains Out of Bathing

Children. We think the BathTub Assistant is the perfect gift for: First time twin-moms (helping to reduce the pain after a c-section), grandparents and caregivers or even as a shower gift for the mom having her second or more children. The BathTub Assistant allows it's user to lean over the bathtub without having to use their hands or elbows to support them; this gives the bather freedom of movement of their arms. Because this product is free standing it fits most bathtubs, and the adjustable pole means people from different heights can use it. **Cost: \$119.95 plus S&H. To learn more or to purchase visit: www.bathtubassistant.com.**



TWINS™ Magazine 25th Anniversary Double Takes Calendar—Buy a gift that everyone can use in 2009. We are proud to be celebrating our 25th Anniversary and to mark this amazing milestone, we have produced a colorful, beautifully designed commemorative 2009 calendar featuring numerous sets of twins in each month for every season. You will fall in love with all of these adorable photos of twins submitted by our readers. **Calendars cost \$14.95 plus s&h or get a discount when you purchase three or more and buy them for only \$12.95 each plus s&h. #SSCALENDAR25**

Twin Hearts Card—Brush away your tears after reading this heartfelt poem by Teri Harrison, a mother of four. Twin Hearts tells of the gift of twinship and the promises and encouragement a mother gives to her children in return. Available with blue, pink or yellow border with matching ribbon. Printed on 5"x7" acid-free paper. Available in three colors: blue, pink and yellow. **Price: \$3.25 each and is available in the TWINS™ online Shoppe.**



TWINS™ Shoppe electronic holiday gift cards available in \$25, \$50, \$75 and \$100

Holiday Book Packets

Holiday Book Packets Make Great Gifts for Your Multiples!

NEW—TWINS™ Magazine Children's Book Packets are now available and just in time for the holidays. These themed storybook packets make great gifts and are the perfect package for your favorite multiples set. Plus, when you purchase these books in our special themed packet, you save money—a great way to encourage the love of reading! We now even have a special packet for triplets, too! For a complete list of all of our book packets and other great products visit us online at www.TwinsMagazine.com.

NEW! Toddler Twin Gift Packet—Raising Twins After the First Year; Ready or Not There We Go; Married with Twins; Special Reports: Discipline Without Raising Your Voice; Preschool & Kindergarten; Health & Safety; Discover Wildlife Plaque; Growth Chart; One-year subscription. **\$94.95**

NEW! Super Mom's Gift Packet—The Multiples Manual; The Parent's Guide to Raising Twins; Nighttime Parenting; Lifetime Memory Book; Special Reports: Tips and Tools; Health and Safety; Feeding Multiple Babies; Growth Chart; One-year subscription. **\$94.95**

NEW! Twin Story Packet— My Twin, My Friend; Twin to Twin; Twice as Funny Twins; Twins Go Bed; Twins Go to the Park; Twins Take a Bath; (2) A Very Special Twin Story. **Holiday Sale Price: 59.95**

NEW! Making Memories Gift Packet— Lifetime Memory Book; New! Our Twins' Journal; Tiny Toes white-framed photo/imprint (art kit); Growth Chart; (2) A Very Special Twin Story; (2) My Personal Twin Story. **\$94.95**

NEW & Improved Sleepy Time Gift Pack—Nighttime Parenting; No Cry Sleep Solution (Baby); No Cry Sleep Solution (Toddlers); Tiny Tired Twins; The Twin Team; The Lullaby CD. **\$59.95**

~ See More book packets on page 33

Zygoty in Twins...

DNA Testing & Why it Should Matter to You

BY DAN ENGLAND



“Are They Identical?”

We hear that probably at least every couple of days. I suppose that’s partly my fault. I write for the local newspaper in Greeley, Colorado and occasionally our two twin girls, Andie and Allie, make it into my weekly column. But that’s also the nature of having multiples. Everyone is just SO darn curious about them.

“Are they identical?” That’s probably the most common question. At least it’s the most common question that I’ll acknowledge (questions about fertility treatments, for instance, wash over me like a warm shower and are not answered). And the answer? Well, kinda. Maybe. We think so.

We think so because, well, they are both girls (and being the same sex is, of course, the first step to being identical, a fact that apparently escapes those asking that very question to parents of boy and girl twins). They look alike (a lot, we’ve mistaken them for each other quite a bit) and doctors said the chances were high that there was only one placenta.

But we don’t know for sure. After all, only 33 percent of all twin births are identical. We don’t know until we get a DNA test. And that’s where companies such as Proactive Genetics come in.

Robert Jackson, president of Proactive, serves several thousand clients a year, and though there are compelling reasons for having your twins’ DNA tested (and we’ll talk about those later), the number one reason most get their multiples tested is just simple curiosity.

That’s what compelled Vicky Phipps of Pineville, Kentucky, to get her eight-

month-old girls, Lyndsey and McKinsey, tested. Her babies were special regardless. After a series of fertility treatments and miscarriages, she got pregnant on her own one day. She did have her girls, but at 30 weeks, so they were only three pounds and two pounds. But that’s also what compelled her to have them tested. “I was really curious to know because of their size,” Phipps said. “It made me wonder even when they really began to look alike.”

Well, that and THE question.

“People are constantly pestered by strangers,” Jackson said, “and they just really don’t know, so they have to stop and explain and have a conversation with everyone.”

Maybe you think you know, but you may not. The most common ways to tell if your twins are identical or fraternal are just plain wrong, Jackson said. For instance, if there are two placentas, your twins can still be identical. In fact, a third of the time they are identical.

“All during the pregnancy, there are two sacks, and the parents are told they have fraternal twins,” Jackson said. “They end up looking a lot alike at birth and they start to question, and that’s when they call us. That’s the core customer we serve here.”

Proactive’s customers are all parents of multiples from all over the world. Jackson was involved in a twin study and was charged with writing the Zygoty test, and he was struck by how interested the parents were in the results of the tests. So he launched his genetics testing company in 1999. “I didn’t see too many organizations serving that community,” he said.

“There are plenty of paternity tests that offer that test as well, but we thought we could be a provider and just focus on that.”

Most of the parents test their twins when they are under the age of 3, although there are a few adults who also get tested. Just recently Jackson’s company tested a pair of 58-year-old twins.

“The adults are a little embarrassed,” he said. “They say things like, ‘We should know this,’ but they’ve been given bad information their whole lives.”

Kim Heath of Delaware, Ohio, was one of those adults. She and her sister, Karla, both 54, ordered a test but put off doing it, namely because they wanted to be together when they did it. It never worked out, and the test was in the closet for four years. Finally, Karla moved in with Kim for a bit this summer so they brought out the test out and called Proactive to see if the test would still even work? It passed a few tests, and the test confirmed they were identical twins.

“We have always believed we are, but my mother insisted we were fraternal,” Heath said. “But we had nine sets of twins in our class, and we looked more alike than the ‘identical’ twins did.”

Now when someone remarks to one of them that that’s what her sister just did, they can say, ‘That’s because we’re identical.’ Some of the bad information comes from the way twins are described, Jackson said.

“Identical is really not a great way to describe them,” he said. “The term itself is pretty misleading.” Jackson, like many twin biologists, prefers the term “Monozygoty” to describe identical twins. Identical twins, of course, are formed by the split of one egg. That’s a mouthful, which is probably the reason it will never really take hold. But the problem with the word “identical” is Monozygoty twins (see, that wasn’t that hard) rarely look exactly alike and can have completely different personalities. The key characteristics, Jackson said, are hair color, eye color and height and weight. But other things about them can look different.

“There are lots of things in development that don’t depend on DNA,” he said. “The shapes of the head, for instance, because the uterus isn’t really designed for twins (no kidding, my wife would agree with that one) and there’s some space issues there that cause the bones of the head and face to compress a bit,” adds Jackson. Proactive prefers to test twins mostly for fun - even if the tests are more than 99 percent accurate - and

if there are medical reasons for testing, Jackson may want to send you away. There are medical reasons for knowing. There are genetic diseases, for instance, and if one has one, the other most likely will too. Certain cancers, such as breast or testicular, have a much higher risk of occurring in the other twin if they twins are identical. And given that it's best to catch diseases early, if one does start to develop problems, it's better to monitor the other right away.

That was a big reason for Kimberly Vann, 31, who lives on the Scott Air Force Base, Ill., with her husband, Lance. She tested her twin boys, Connor and Palmer, at four months old. "Three doctors were looking at the placenta, and two said identical, and the third said I can't tell for sure, so I said, 'That's it, I'm getting them tested,'" she said. "I pray to God I never have to worry about anything a disease, but if I do, I'll know for sure."

But that wasn't the only reason, she admits, for getting them tested. "I'm type A," she said and laughed, "and I wanted to know." But mostly Jackson is just there to answer the question that parents of multiples answer every day. "It's a great service to offer," he said, "Some parents

are just so overjoyed, it's like telling them they're going to have twins again." Jackson seems to think mine are identical - err, Monozygotic - because we do have trouble telling them apart at times. So in order for us to know for sure, we ordered a test. Curiosity got the best of us! Curiosity, however, isn't the only reason parents get their twins tested. "Many times it's a disagreement, or more often, a bet, between the spouses," Jackson said.

How it Works

Proactive Genetics offers relatively inexpensive DNA testing to determine whether twins are identical or fraternal. Identical twins, of course, have identical DNA. A home test is \$160. You swab your kids' cheeks and then send it in. If something goes wrong, the company will replace the kit free of charge.

Proactive offers cheaper testing because that's all the company does and the results are there to satisfy parents' curiosity, not to hold up in court or supply medical results. The results, however, are considered more than 99 percent accurate.

Many other companies that offer paternity testing will test DNA for twins as

well. Shop around for the best deal. Some also order the test as a gift for parents. If you're interested in ordering a test, go to www.proactivegenetics.com ♥

Want to Get Your Twins Tested?

Twins Magazine recommends these two reputable DNA testing companies:

Proactive Genetics:
www.proactive.com

Affiliated Genetics:
www.affiliatedgenetics.com

Freelance writer Dan England has worked as a reporter, columnist and editor at the Greeley Tribune in Greeley, Colorado since 1999. He graduated from the University of Kansas in 1994 and worked at the Salina Journal before moving to the Tribune. He is married to Kate and has a toddler, Jayden, and identical twin baby girls, Allie and Andie. He is an avid mountain climber who works part-time as a guide and has climbed all 54 of Colorado's 14ers. He also enjoys running, music, movies, reading, blogging and playing poker, although he rarely has time for any of that.



Boy/Boy Twin Story Packet—I Love You the Purliest; One Was Not Enough; The Twin Team; Twinship is in Your Heart; Wishing on a Star; Kevin & Ben; Always Zany ABC's. **\$43.95**

Girl/Girl Twin Story Packet—Look A-likes; Don't Act A-like; Just Like Me; It Takes Two; Jan and Ann are Twins; Jan and Ann & the Pet Rabbit; My You Have Your Hands Full; The Little Green House. **\$43.95**

Boy/Girl Twin Story Packet—Hello Twins; Two Times the Fun; Twenty Wiggly Toes; The Twins and the Birthday Party; His Sister, Her Brother; The Chairs Where Pam and Sam Sit. **\$43.95**

Our entire selection of books and products can be viewed online at:

www.TwinsMagazine.com

Researching Twins and the Role They Play in Cultures Around the World:

An interview with twin anthropologist, Alison Cool

By Felix Holmgren



Alison Cool is a grad student at New York University planning to do her doctoral thesis on twin research. As a medical anthropologist with an interest in science studies, she wants to research the researchers, to see how their ideas about nature and nurture color the way they conduct studies on twins. Alison herself is an identical twin, and when she started studying anthropology, she was struck by the big role twins play in cultures throughout the world.

“I realized that there is a long history of research on twinning,” she says. “Twin myths are very common throughout the world, and in societies twins are often regarded as a sign of good luck, but other times as a sinister presence.”

She had already been thinking a lot about what it meant to be a twin. When she and her sister said the same thing at the exact same moment, was that because they were twins or because they had grown up in the same house with the same parents? Why did her sister like Ethiopian food and she didn't?

“My identity has been formed in relation to her identity, and vice versa. I've tried to make myself a unique person more self-consciously than most people, because during my whole childhood, no-one could tell us apart.”

This thinking about similarities and differences made Alison curious about the way scientists approach twins. She went to Sweden to do research on a recent law that limits in vitro fertilization to one embryo, in order to decrease the rate of twinning. While there, she learned about the Swedish Twin Registry, the biggest of its kind in the world, which she intends to make the focus of her dissertation.

“In Sweden, people are given a unique identification number at birth,” Alison explains. “This makes it easy to compile information from different databases in one place. The registries that exist here in the US are smaller and have been painstakingly created by individual researchers. There is one based on veterans, but that is obviously limited to adult males.”

In Sweden, parish priests started recording twin births in the late 19th century. When the twin registry was started in the early 1960s, all twins that could be tracked down were contacted and asked to fill in questionnaires. As a result, the Swedish Twin Registry includes virtually all twins born in Sweden since 1886—some 170,000 to date—making it a much-used resource. For Alison, this was intriguing because of the kind of research that is done based on the registry.

“There has been a lot of research recently about how the world-view of people in Western countries is increasingly shaped by genetic narratives. People think about themselves in genetic terms: ‘I'm like this because of my genes.’ And one of the most important tools for determining whether a trait is genetic or environmental is through twin studies.”

The whole point of twin studies is to try to figure out whether a particular behavior or characteristic is due to heredity or environmental factors. For example, a recent study involving the Swedish Twin Registry examined how people react when offered an unfairly small share of a sum of money, in a clinical setting. Some accepted the money, no matter how little, while others refused the offer if their share was too low, even though it meant they had to leave empty-handed.

The study found that identical twins tended to react in the same way, while there was no correlation in the behavior of fraternal twins. Thus, according to the researchers, as much as 40 percent of the sense of fairness may be put down to genes. One researcher remarked that the results “invite speculation that...economic behaviors and strategies are under considerable genetic influence.”

According to Alison, economic risk taking is an area where studies on twins are increasingly being used. As a social scientist, she finds that such research sometimes too easily makes a distinction between nature and nurture. In reality, she says, it is very difficult to delineate how biological and social factors play in and interact with each other.



“This research is a high-stakes kind of thing,” she says. “The implications are often of huge importance, and I think it’s dangerous to let that power stay exclusively in the sphere of the traditional hard sciences. I think scientists are aware of that. They want to develop a more nuanced view and anthropology has a lot to offer there.”

Alison is planning to study in detail how scientists put together twin research projects. She wants to see which questions they ask and which they don’t, and what assumptions they are making. At the same time, she wants to study how the twins who participate in the research feel about being research subjects. How do they think about themselves and their own identity, and how does that contrast with the way researchers frame twin identity?

According to Alison, as biologists are extending their research into the social realm, they stand to benefit from cooperating with anthropologists and others who have a long experience in that area. But that does not mean that she thinks anthropologists have all the answers.

“I don’t think it’s very valuable to come in and say, I don’t think you are doing a good job. That’s just boring. It is much more interesting to say, How can we work together to create a science that is more reflective of reality? I’m not saying we shouldn’t be doing this kind of research. I’m saying we could be doing it a lot better if we took into account factors that are both biological and social at the same time.”



Felix Holmgren’s writing has appeared in Times Literary Supplement, Film International, Buddhadharma, and other papers and magazines. He currently lives in Sweden and Nepal, and holds a BA Hon. in Buddhist Studies from Kathmandu University.



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Quads, Triplets & Twins... Oh My!

A Multiples Reunion 20 Years in the Making

By Christa D. Reed, Editor in Chief

Two years ago when my high school class began planning our 20th High School reunion, we had a wonderful group of dedicated classmates that did an awesome job of planning this special event and even created a reunion website that gave us all the opportunity to log on, post a message on what we've been up to the past 20 years and upload images to the website to share with old classmates. I can't tell you how much fun it was to read and discover all the amazing life experiences we have all had over the years. As I began to comb through all the entries, I started noticing that there were quite a few of my former classmates that like me, also had multiples. I then wanted to contact all of them and find out if it was something in the high-school cafeteria food they gave us or just the fact that many more people are having twins and higher-order multiples these days.

Did you know that the birth rate for twins has 'doubled' since the 1980's and this group is rapidly growing in huge segments? According to the National Vital Statistics Report issued by the Center for Disease Control, the twin birth rate (twins per 1,000 total births) has been rising steadily, climbing an average of three percent a year between 1990 and 2004, for a total increase of 42 percent since 1990, and 70 percent since 1980!

So, I'm thinking the reasons we all had multiples was probably not so much the cafeteria food that they served us at Wayne High School but more because it has become increasingly more common to have multiple-birth children and since we are all spread out across the U.S. and had completely different life experiences, I guess it was just a fun coincidence for all of us to share this special title of proud parents of multiples. Here's what I found out about my former class of 1987 graduates:

Name: Todd Hale, married to Donna. Occupation: US Navy Electrician's Mate (Nuclear) Master Chief onboard the USS Abraham Lincoln. Currently Resides: Allyn, Washington. Father of 6-year-old quadruplets. When he's not supervising 400 Sailors in the maintenance and operation of a dual reactor nuclear propulsion plant, he is busy with his wife Donna and his six-year-old Quadruplets, Cooper,

Kirby, Morgan and Wyatt.

They were born on December 27, 2001 at the Balboa Naval Medical Center in San Diego, California. The quads were born at 39 weeks gestation via c-section and took less than three minutes to all come out. Kirby was 2 lbs 12 oz, Cooper was 3 lbs 10 oz, Wyatt was 3 lbs 11 oz, and Morgan was 3 lbs 12 oz. Morgan and Wyatt are identical to each other and fraternal to Cooper and Kirby. When asked how he found out he and his wife would have quads Todd replied, "Donna and I found out it was going to be four babies through a couple of stages. The first ultrasound showed more than one, but the attending nurse thought she saw a third. This was confirmed a few weeks later with another ultrasound," says Hale. "While I was at sea on *USS John C. Stennis*, I received an e-mail message from Donna that stated that we were actually going to be having not three but four. I was shocked at first and almost fell out of my chair, but once I thought about it, I didn't think four would be much different than having triplets."



Name: Heather (Williams) Koss, married to Brian. Occupation: Pediatric Nurse. Currently Resides: Huber Heights, Ohio. Mother of 7-year-old triplets; plus two older siblings.

Along with two older children, she and her husband Brian have seven-year-old triplets, her son Braeden, and daughters Bailey and Reilly. Since she is only 4'10" tall, as soon as she found out she was expecting triplets she was immediately placed on home bed rest and after being at home for only one month on medication, she spent the next six weeks at the hospital on complete bed rest.

On May 17, 2001 the triplets were born at only 28 weeks gestation at Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton, Ohio and were immediately transferred to the N.I.C.U. at Dayton Chil-

dren's Hospital the next day. Each baby weighed 2 pounds and 5 ounces and all three were 14 inches long. After they were born, the next three months were very stressful for her entire family. Heather is a pediatric nurse and her husband is a firefighter and says that their lives have greatly changed since bringing home the triplets and they went from being a family of four to a family of seven. "Our house is very noisy and there is never a dull moment but I enjoy having a large close knit family and feel that having our triplets keeps us closer because we do everything together," says Koss. "At age seven, they all three play sports and have a very close relationship with each other and all three of them still sleep in the same room by their own choice."



Name: Jenni Evans. Occupation: Senior Transcriptionist/QA Coordinator, Good Samaritan Hospital. Currently Resides: Fairborn, Ohio. Mother of 14-year-old boy/girl twins and an older daughter.

For classmate Jenni Evans, she is the most experienced parent of multiples since her twins are already 14-years-old! Having twins was definitely a surprise for her and her then-husband because they had just gotten married and they were stationed at Edwards AFB in California and decided the time was right to have a baby! She was surprised to learn she was having two.

Her boy/girl twins, Alysa Gabrielle Kaulig and James "Jimmy" Robert Kaulig were born healthy, full-term and did not have any problems at 37 ½ weeks gestation on May 20, 1994 at the Antelope Valley Medical Center in Lancaster, California. Evans' twins have an older half-sister they are very close with as well. "Both of them have turned into great teenagers and I'm so very, very proud of them. I never thought I'd make it to their 14th birthday," says Evans. "But all of the thousands of diaper changes, sleepless nights, teething episodes, toddler bed transitions,

etc. are over and time really does fly by so fast. They are young for such a short time so enjoy them while you can.” Jenni has been raising her twins as a single parent for the past eight years and she has shared many great memories and traditions with her twins. “Having a boy and a girl makes party and gift planning a challenge. Each one of them gets their own party/celebration now, and we try to do something fun and unique for each of them,” adds Evans.



Name: Sean Cooney, married to Colleen. Occupation: Naval Officer. Currently Resides: Okinawa, Japan. Father of one-year-old fraternal twin girls.

My former classmate Sean Cooney and his wife Colleen say so far in the first year, having fraternal twin girls has been so much fun. “We had IVF through Walter Reed Army Medical Facility prior to my deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan,” says Officer Cooney. They had two embryos implanted and eight weeks later, at Colleen’s first ultrasound, it showed two little beans. “I was already deployed by then so Colleen had to call me and tell me it was indeed twins and it was really such a unique and cool experience I must say,” adds Cooney. His girls were born via c-section at John Hopkins Medical Center in Baltimore, Maryland on November 3, 2007, at 36 weeks gestation. Makenna Rose was 6 lbs 5 oz, 19.5” long and Kayla Marie was 5 lbs 15 oz, 20” long.

For the Cooney’s, life is most challenging with twins. “Our girls have already traveled to Japan and Australia and traveling with them is a most humbling experience. While at home though, they definitely rule the house since we are on their schedule, but their smiles and daily developments make it ALL worth it.”



Name: Simone Brown-Harris, married to Darrell. Occupation: Special Projects Coordinator. Currently Resides: Temecula, California. Mother of three-year-old twin girls; plus three older daughters and one son.

For former classmate and Special Projects Coordinator, Simone Brown-Harris having 5-year-old fraternal twin girls has been such a blessing. Simone and her husband live in Temecula, California with their six children; five daughters and one son. Her twins Jasmine and Brianna were born in San Diego, California on January 14, 2003 at only 26 weeks gestation and weighed only 11b 11.5 oz & 14” long and 11b 12 oz & 14” long.

“Since they were preemies, they both spent a really long time in the hospital after their birth. Jasmine was in the hospital for three months and Brianna even longer at four months,” says Brown-Harris. “Jasmine had to have two surgeries within her first year of life but Brianna was fortunate not to have any surgeries at all. They are both doing very well and adjusting to Kindergarten now.”



Name: Anjie (Deal) Ward, married to Scott. Occupation: Former Outside Sales Representative and now stay-at-home-mom. Currently Resides: Littleton, Colorado. Mother of three-year-old boy/girl twins; and an older son.

After a recent move from California, Anjie (Deal) Ward and her husband currently live in Littleton, Colorado with their three children, Charlie and a set of boy/girl twins, Katie and Matthew, age 3 ½. She was a former Outside Sales Representative but now is a stay-at-home-mom. Her twins were born on March 28, 2005 at exactly 38 weeks gestation in Newport Beach, California. Katie was a prolapsed cord baby, so they were born by emergency c-section five hours before their scheduled c-section and Katie weighed 6 lbs 1 oz and was 20” long and Matthew weighed 6 lbs 10 oz and was 19 1/4” long.

When asked how they celebrate birthdays, Anjie replies “We started certain traditions with our son Charlie and he has always chosen his birthday cake and party location. The

twins are still on the young side, so they still have one party, but they have separate cakes,” says Ward. “Last year, Katie chose a Barbie cake and Matthew chose Star Wars and I can see that the day will come when it will make sense for them to have two smaller, separate parties, though since they are different sexes and have different interests.” She does notice how terrific the twins play together. “The twins really are terrific playmates. They can occupy each other for hours without fighting. So they can be twice the work at bath times, or to get out the door in the morning, but it’s just so cool the way they play together so well.”

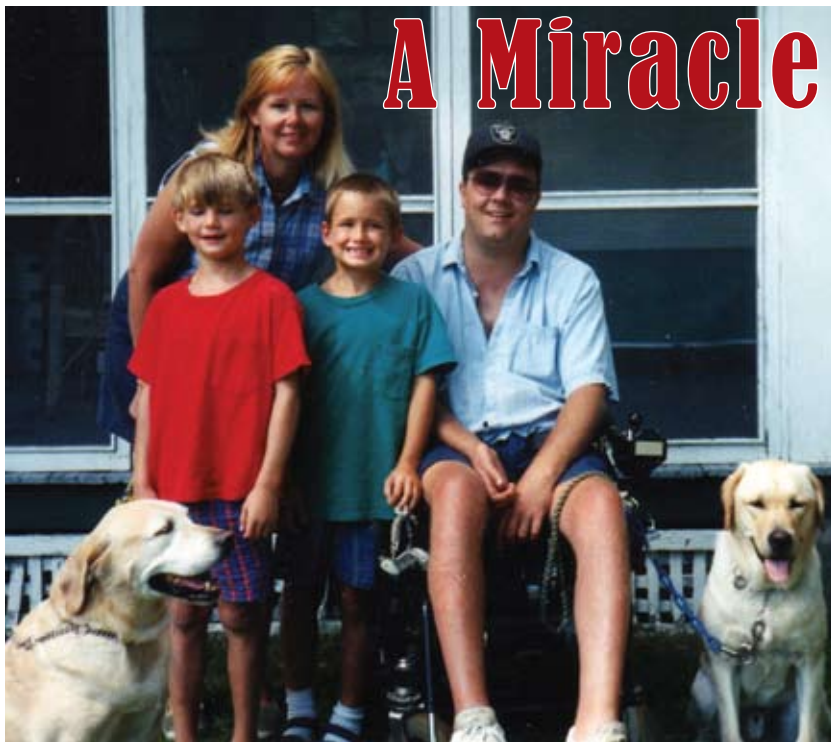


Name: Lara (Helterbrand) Tanner Occupation: Stay-at-home-mom. Currently resides: Dayton, Ohio. Mother of 15-month-old identical twin girls; plus two singletons a daughter and son.

When our classmate, Lara (Helterbrand) Tanner had a feeling something was ‘wrong’ with her pregnancy in 2006, she found out at a nine week ultrasound that ‘wrong’ actually meant ‘different’ when she was told she would be having twins. Having two older children and her twins, this single, stay-at-home-mom still lives in the Dayton area. Her identical twin boys, Hunter Michael and Jake Michael were born via a scheduled c-section on May 28, 2007 at Southview Hospital in Kettering, Ohio. They were 38 weeks gestation and Hunter was 7 lbs and 8 ounces, and Jake was 6 lbs and 11 ounces for a combined weight of over 14 lbs. “They were huge when they were born and were able to come home with me right away. I really love being a mom and having fun with my kids—it’s a blast,” says Tanner.



~Continued on page 45



A Miracle in the Making...

BY ZACK LLOYD

Prior to finding out that he was going to be a father, Dan was having a tough time coping emotionally with his injury. With the help of doctors, he was able to recover most of the use of his arms. However, because his fingers were so badly injured that he was unable to use them, he was and still is medically classified as quadriplegic. As a result, he faced many of the same challenges and feelings of helplessness as those who are paralyzed from the neck down.

"All I could think about was how screwed up I was that I did this to myself," Dan said. "I can't hold a knife and kill myself. I can't pull a trigger on a gun because I can't move my fingers. That's all you think about, is that I'd rather be dead than live like this for the rest of my life."

A week after telling Dan he was going to be a dad, his wife came to visit him in the

Daniel Judy always wanted to have two kids. At age 26, children were naturally the next step in his life. He had graduated from The Ohio State University, was newly married to his college sweetheart and held a job as a middle school teacher in downtown Columbus, Ohio. But one dreadful summer night he nearly lost his life. Discovering that he was going to be a father of twins brought it back.

On a scorching summer day, August 2, 1986, Dan attended a friend's wedding in Dayton, Ohio. Following the wedding, family and friends attended an afternoon reception at a hotel. Dan and a few of his friends were shooting the breeze outside the hotel when the heat really started to get to them. "It was like 95 degrees out and a bunch of my friends said, 'That pool across the street looks really inviting, why don't you go for it?'" Dan recalled. "Like an idiot I ran across the street, waving to my friends, and thought I had dived into the deep end." He quickly realized the severity of his mistake as his head struck the bottom of the pool's shallow end.

The blood was everywhere. Luckily for him, there were lifeguards on duty and they pulled him from the red-stained pool water. Moments later, a fully conscious Dan heard the sirens of the ambulance. Immediately he assumed he would be paralyzed from the waist down. He could live with that. When the doctors told him with a little luck he might get some of the use of his arms back, the gravity of the situation finally set in that he may be paralyzed from the neck down.

After the accident, Dan remained in the intensive care unit at Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton. Every single evening his wife Mary would leave her middle school teaching job in Columbus and made the hour plus drive to Dayton to feed and take care of her husband. Then she would return home to try to get some sleep before getting up the next day and doing it all over again. When Dan was finally transferred to Ohio State University Hospital in Columbus for rehab, he was able to return home for the first time in over a month. When he arrived, his wife had a piece of shocking news that changed his life forever. She was pregnant.

hospital. She showed him the pictures from her first ultrasound, and shocked him again. They were having twins. At that moment, Dan's thoughts of hopelessness transformed into ones of hope and excitement. He began taking rehab more seriously in hopes of returning to work in order to provide for his suddenly expanding family.

"When you get told you have twins coming, it changes your whole outlook and you say hey, maybe I do have something to live for," Dan said.

On March 24, 1987, Dan traveled from his Ohio State University Hospital room down the hall to the delivery room to be with Mary as she gave birth to two healthy, fraternal baby boys, Nicholas and Michael. Based on where he had been over the past nine months, it was an experience Dan could explain only as 'incredible' and was 'hands down' one of the best days of his life.

After doctors determined the boys were stable enough to leave the hospital, they returned with their mother to their one-story Columbus home. One month later Dan completed his rehabilitation program and followed in his twins' tiny footsteps. For the very first time, Dan, Mary and their newborn twins were under the same roof.

Learning how to be a father and adjust to life in a wheelchair was challenging to say the least. Even the littlest tasks that most parents take for granted became complex problems for the new family, especially when Mary was busy working during the summer, leaving only Dan to care for Nick and Mike.

A simple task such as making lunch for the boys posed many challenges. When noon rolled around, two-year-old Nick would climb onto his father's lap and continue upward onto the counter. Dan would then instruct him what to get out of the cupboard. Nick would then hand a can of Spaghettios or soup from the counter, down to his brother Mike on the ground. Dan would then watch Mike as he ran next door to ask their retired neighbor Mrs. Keller to open the can. After the can was opened, he would run the can back to the house

and hand it up to Nick, who put it in a bowl and into the microwave. Three minutes later, with the help of two toddlers, an elderly neighbor and a quadriplegic, lunch was served.

During those long summer days Dan and his boys formed a tight bond. Nick and Mike were inseparable, doing everything together under the watchful eye of their father. When the twins had gotten into mischief, to avoid discipline, they would run down to the basement, taunting their father because his wheelchair couldn't traverse the stairs. In response, Dan would lock them in the basement until they began crying to be let out, at which time he would let them out and lock the basement door for the rest of the day. Such was discipline in the Judy household.

Some days, Dan would even take his twins around the neighborhood. Nick would stand on the pedals of the wheelchair while Mike stood on the back, and they would go zooming to the park or zoo.

"These parents would be pushing strollers or pulling wagons and I'd go flying by at nine miles per hour. We could do the entire zoo in 15 minutes," Dan said, adding that his wheelchair was cause for envy among many parents.

Dan, Nick and Mike learned a great deal together during those first few years of the twins' lives. The twins learned to walk and talk while their father learned how to give them everything he could despite his physical handicap.

"I was as dependent on them as much as they were dependent on me," Dan said of those summer days when his boys were still in diapers. "We just improvised. We learned how to do things on our own."

Some lessons were learned a bit easier than others. Growing up the family had a rule that if Mary was not home, Mike and Nick were not allowed in the basement, because their father could not go down the stairs if the boys were fighting, or if one of them got hurt.

One day, just after Mary had left to make a quick trip to the store, the ground floor television malfunctioned and 5-year-olds Nick and Mike asked their dad if they could watch the last few minutes of a "Batman" cartoon in the basement. Since the cartoon was nearly over and their mother would only be gone a few minutes, Dan allowed it.

Five minutes later Mike climbed back up the basement stairs by himself. Dan asked his son where his brother Nick was, to which Mike replied 'he's asleep.' An alarmed father sensed that something was wrong.

"I said what do you mean he's asleep, he just went down in the basement?" Dan said. "Mike said, 'he's all tied up.'"

After the "Batman" cartoon, Nick had decided to impersonate the Dark Knight, tying a rope to the stair railing to try to grapple up the side of the wall. Somehow he became tangled in the rope and he was left hanging by the neck from the rope.

After calling Nick's name several times and getting no response, a panicked Dan called 911. Meanwhile, Mike hurried back to the basement with a pair of scissors and managed to untie the knot, freeing his brother. He then dragged Nick's unconscious body to the bottom of the steps. Dan vividly remembers the horrific scene. His son's eyes were rolled to the back of his head, foam

was coming from his mouth and there was a rope burn across his neck. Shortly thereafter, the paramedics arrived, put Nick on a stretcher and rushed him to the hospital.

When he got to the hospital, doctors determined that he was blind. For eighteen hours, Nick had no sense of sight until finally his vision returned and he left the hospital relatively unscathed.

"My wife was ready to kill me thinking she's going to take care of a quadriplegic and a blind son the rest of her life," Dan said.

From that day forward, the 'no playing in the basement while Mom's not home' rule was more strictly enforced. Dan counted the family lucky that Nick was left with no long-term repercussions as a result of the "Batman" incident.

Through the good times and the bad, Dan, Nick and Mike agree that the twins had a pretty normal childhood. Of course there were occasions when Dan had to sit out activities or events because of his injury, however, as he explains it, there were always plenty of aunts and uncles within walking distance who could pick up the slack if need be.

"I don't think having a disabled parent really hindered them in any way," Dan said matter-of-factly.

Twenty-two years ago Dan Judy was living in a hospital room thinking he had nothing to live for. But when he found out he was having children, his perspective changed and he set a couple goals. One, return to work so he would be in a position to support his family and two, be the best father he could be.

One year after his accident, with the help of his trained dog Trouvador, Dan was able to return to work as a seventh grade teacher. As a result, when the twins were growing up, he and his wife were able to set aside money to buy tuition credits for their twin boys. Today, their investment has paid off. Nick and Mike are both currently juniors attending Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, excelling both socially and academically.

While the twins were growing up, Dan acknowledges that he was forced to rely more heavily on his children than most parents do. But, he doesn't necessarily see that as a bad thing because it only brought them closer. His son Mike agrees.

"I think he's the coolest person I know," his younger son Mike said. "I want to be just like him." ❤️



Mike (left) & Nick

Struggling in Silence:

Parenting & Post-Partum Depression



I come out of a scratchy, shallow sleep—the only sort of sleep I can manage between the midnight and three o'clock feedings. Samantha is crying. Shrieking. I have to do something about it before she can wake her twin brother, John. Not even three months old, they still share a crib, just as they did for a month in the neo-natal intensive care unit.

I'm still dressed in my jeans and t-shirt, so rolling out of bed and onto my feet takes no time at all. I lift Sam's swaddled body and gently cradle her against my shoulder. Her inconsolable sobbing tears a hole in my heart as her tiny fists flail away at my face. We walk in long, aimless circles through the dark house, but she continues to wail. We rock in the wooden chair by the window, watching occasional cars flash past, running the stop sign at our corner. We rock in the plush recliner by the fireplace, now grown shadowy and cold.

Sam cries across both of these activities, walking and rocking, so I give up. I gently lay Sam, still shrieking, in the portable crib that sits in our family room, and I return to the recliner. After another ten minutes of continual crying, I leave her alone—out of the recliner, up the stairs to the living room, out the front door and onto the cold concrete of the front porch. The door slams behind me, sounding very loud against this quiet neighborhood night. Even through two inches of solid-core door, I can hear Sam. If I still smoked cigarettes, then this would be the time to light up. If I still drank, then this would be the ideal time to pop a cold beer. Instead of smoking and drinking, I wrap my arms around my folded knees, listen to my daughter cry, and burst into tears.

In a brief but poignant moment of clarity between my own sobs, I realize that I am a mess. I even say this aloud in the dark night: "I am a mess."

And I've been a mess ever since my twins were born. The IVF process was freakishly painless, physically, emotionally, and economically. After meeting with the doctor, my spouse and I met with the in-house financial planner. We talked about \$12,000 as if it were nothing abnormal, even though the Ford I'd just purchased actually cost less, and my Ford was under warranty and thus guaranteed to work. We talked about donor eggs, the possibility of low sperm counts and ways to remedy this. The talk seemed endless, a long and detailed description of various hopeful scenarios, all seasoned with generous pinches of "however" and "if-this-then-that" rhetoric.

And all this talk ultimately seemed pointless: We did the IVF procedure, and nearly three dozen donor eggs were successfully fertilized. Only two were implanted, and both immediately attached themselves and began to do all the right things that viable embryos do. As the pregnancy progressed, gestational diabetes landed out-of-the-blue, but a few tweaks to our diet seemed to handle the problem nicely. Six weeks of full bed rest culminated in early labor, but the kids were healthy and fully developed—no lung issues, eye issues, or any of the other terrifying preemie problems that can occur when babies aren't carried to full term. John and Sam spent four weeks in the hospital, mostly learning the rhythm of suck-swallow-breathe.

All of these problems and potential problems came and went, and we were no worse for the wear. After John and Sam were born and before they even came home, however, parenthood hit me like a punch in the dark. I cried quite often and felt hopeless and helpless even more often. I rarely slept, barely ate, and snapped irritably at every adult around me. I had headaches and spent hours on the couch—not reading or watching TV but just laying down and feeling bad and bullied by life and dumb for bringing this all on myself. It was post-partum depression in every conceivable form, and it should have been simple enough even for the people around me to diagnose, but neither they nor my doctor saw the problem for what it was.

Of course, no one was looking for post-partum depression in me, since I'm a father and not a mother. I was irritated and angry, but no one thought it odd for a man to be this way. I was leaving a bad job and moving to a good one, which meant that while my wife was on full bed rest, I was packing boxes and renting a truck and working with our realtor to sell one house and buy another. The house we were leaving was only three years old; the house we were buying was thirteen years old, small, and almost twice as expensive. The textbook I was finishing was limping through a major revision, and all of my other writing projects had stalled entirely.

Of course I was depressed. What man wouldn't be upset—and maybe drink too much—with any one of these things going on? Add a high-risk pregnancy to the mix and the birth of twins, and depression is even more likely. It's expected. People would have been surprised if I wasn't depressed, irritable, angry, drinking too much and not sleeping enough. This casual cultural ignorance almost killed me. I was never suicidal, but that was just a fluke of my generally loving and upbeat temperament coupled with an overwhelming sense of love for my family. Things could have been

different. Things very easily could have been different.

Almost four years after that night when Samantha and I both broke down and cried, Sam and I are watching television together. I'm stretched out on my bed watching *Meet the Press*, and Sam's enacting a dramatic solo version of *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*. Tom Brokaw appears on screen, and she stops: "What's his name?"

This is a sort of game we play. She asks me the names of everyone who appears on television, and I do my best to answer her, even if it means lying in a way that'll lead to giggles: "Who's that," I might say, "Why, that's Fumple Rumpdumpkin." Say this with enough shock in your voice and it gets a laugh out of any toddler. This time when she asks, however, I don't have to lie for a laugh. I know the name: "That's Tom. He's nice." Sam always likes to be reassured that the people on TV are nice. She considers this for a minute, maybe waiting to see if I'm going to mention Fumple Rumpdumpkin. When I don't add more to my answer, she blurts out "Hey, he looks just like you!"

This gives me pause. Tom Brokaw is white and wears a suit to work, but that's about the end of what we have in common. He's older than my parents. Stupidly, I ask how I'm like Tom. With the total and unflattering honesty that only a toddler can manage, Sam patiently explains to me that, like Tom Brokaw, I have gray hair.

I'm 38 years old and still wear the mullet that I perfected in high school. I emphatically deny having any gray hair, so Sam begins to point. "Gray here," she says touching my left temple, "and here" at the front, directly above my right eye. "And here." She wiggles a finger through the beard on my chin.

We both laugh, and she goes back to jumping, but I can't pay attention to *Meet the Press*. Instead, I'm struck by how much fatherhood has changed me. I still wear the hair that'd be appropriate for a man much younger, but I've left behind all of the other habits from that time in my life. Smoking. Drinking. Fun with my friends at all hours of the night, mostly involving smoking and drinking.

Becoming a parent cut me off from that life, a life where friends and I could watch football in a crowded bar virtually non-stop from Sunday morning through Monday night. A life where my wife and I could just walk into a bookstore and browse for two hours, or sit on the floor and eat crab legs while watching *Goodfellas*, or any number of things that stop being possible when a couple becomes a family. Thank God.

All of this self-centered and selfish living went away in the instant John and Sam were born, but it didn't go without a fight. As a new father, I couldn't be the man I'd been for all of my adult life, and I wasn't yet ready to be a father, wasn't ready to step into those big shoes. For centuries women have known about the Baby Blues, and for decades medical science has understood post-partum depression (in women). With centuries of "toughen up ya baby" sentiment pushing down on me, I had nowhere to turn but in, and there wasn't any help inside me.

I would spare other fathers this experience, but studies suggest that at least ten percent won't be spared at all, while only slightly more women will suffer.

I can laugh now when Sam points out my gray hair. And she's right: There is gray hair on my temple, above my eye, and in my beard. It's funny now. Three years back, nothing was funny about being a father. ♡

Shane Borrowman teaches writing and rhetoric at the University of Nevada, Reno.



MEN AND DEPRESSION

No one wants to hear how hard it is to be a man. Men make more money than women and have fewer doors closed—and far more opened—because of their gender. White men really have nothing to complain about, argues American culture at-large, especially when they are educated and employed.

No one wants to hear how hard it is to be a man, so men generally don't talk about it, even with other men. Instead, fatherhood hits—or mid-life is reached—and we disconnect from the life we've built, a life in which we suddenly feel simultaneously less important as ourselves and more like a walking source of income for those who depend on us. We drink. We cheat. We make excuses for drinking and cheating. We sometimes stop caring about anything, including ourselves. We become figures of ridicule as we buy new cars and clothes and the music of a generation half our age.

We commit suicide—or die of stress-related illnesses—at an alarming rate.

The names psychologists apply to us and to our problems hurt more than they help: IMS (Irritable Male Syndrome) sounds like something to describe the old guy on the corner who screams at kids to get off his lawn. Menopause just sounds like selfishness and self-centeredness masquerading as a pseudo-medical condition, although some evidence does suggest that the bodies of men go through a process similar in purpose but different in kind to the changes women experience in menopause.

Disease cuts across gender lines, and a condition such as breast cancer spares neither men nor women. But post-partum depression behaves in the same gender-neutral way. Watch new fathers, especially the fathers of multiples (who are even more likely to be sufferers). Don't trust to luck to pull them out of their downward spiral. Not all of us are lucky. ♡

~Continued from page 25

it to play out a bit. Let the noise level rise and then calmly stress the concept of sharing and taking turns. "Have her see that it requires some special diplomacy on your part with your kids," Post Senning says.

ONE KID'S NIGHTMARE IS ANOTHER KIDS' DREAM

For every family that dreads the one-for-two gift exchange, other families welcome it. "I actually love gifts they can share," says Ann Wieczkowki. When her identical twin girls, Chloe and Sydney, were little, the family lived in a very small house where two of everything was out of the question. "I encouraged family to buy toys they could share like a doll house or kitchen center." But the Hamilton, NJ, mom also included smaller gifts for each girl such as two dolls to go with the playhouse helping to counter any negative effects and intra-twin fighting.

On the other hand, Cheryl Lage, author of *Twinspiration: Real-Life Advice from Pregnancy through the First Year* (Taylor Trade Publication; 2006) and mother of seven-year-old boy-girl twins uses the one-gift dilemma as a teaching opportunity. Before any holiday where gifts are expected, Lage does a bit of coaching by reminding her children that they need to show appreciation for any gift regardless of what it is. "With two same-age children the glut of incoming holiday gifts is overwhelming. Yes, the kids are individuals but no one can have everything they want all the time," she

says. Lage fears that giving twins two of everything simply to avoid fighting is counterproductive and often has negative consequences. "In an effort to foster individualism in twins, we may occasionally swing too far into overindulgence," she says.

HERE'S HOPING FOR HAPPY HOLIDAYS

As you gear up for yet another holiday season, remember that your kids take their cues from you. By concentrating more on altruism and building a sense of community and family, and focusing more on what traditions mean the most to your family, the gift giving (and fighting) may take a back seat. Well, we can hope, can't we? ♡

Christina Baglivi Tinglof lives in Southern California and is the mother of three sons, including 12-year-old fraternal twins and a 9-year-old singleton. She's also the author of Parenting School-Age Twins and Multiples and Double Duty: The Parents' Guide to Raising Twins, available from the TWINS Parenting Bookshelf. Christina's website is www.talk-about-twins.com.



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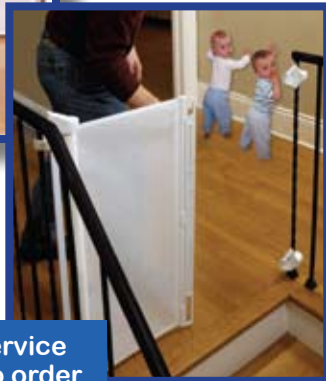
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Parents ... Cut Out Those Comparisons!

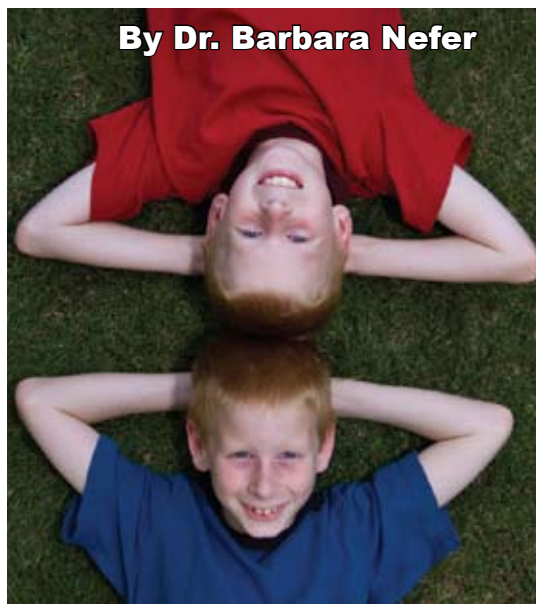
When you're the parent of twins, it might seem natural to toss out casual comparisons: "Hanna is such a tomboy, but Heather is a little lady," or "Sean is my future athlete and Shane is my budding scientist." Beware! Those harmless-sounding words can have a lasting impact. Kids are like little sponges, soaking in everything we say. They internalize our expectations and often strive to fulfill them whether or not they're a good fit.

You might think your observations are accurate, but children are constantly exploring and developing. Today's interests can change tomorrow as they make new discoveries and form new opinions. If you assign a premature label, your child could take that to heart and your misguided expectation can get in the way of their normal development. With multiples this can be magnified because having same-age siblings can make a child even more competitive and hungry for parental approval.

You also run the risk of slipping into good twin/bad twin comparisons: "Emma always listens to what I say, but Ava is so wild!" This might seem like a light-hearted comment, but children often take such words personally, especially when they're heard repetitively. Over time a family joke can damage a child's ego, and she might come to believe it and live up (or down) to the expectation.

This was the case with Tony and Tom, twin brothers who faced expectations literally from the moment they were named. Tony, the firstborn, was named after his father. As a junior, he was held to high standards and expected to make the family proud. "There was always so much pressure," he says. "For example, I had to do well in school. That was non-negotiable. Math and science were easy, but I was hopeless in English. Between studying and being grounded for bad grades, I didn't have time for friends and I wasn't allowed to join the sports teams."

His brother Tom resented what he saw as favoritism, and the family characterized him as the rebel and the "bad twin." Just as Tony lived up to his label, Tom lived down to his. He experimented with drugs and dropped out of school. Tony



went to college and landed a good career, while Tom continues to bounce between dead-end jobs. Tony says, "Sometimes I wonder, if Tom was born first, would our lives be reversed? I know we all have personality traits, but when I was a kid I gave in to my parents' pressure. If I could have made my own choices, I would have gone out for football and spent more time hanging out."

"I missed out on a lot, but I was the 'good one' so I had to do what they said. If I didn't, I always got punished. Tom could do whatever he wanted because they just expected him to get in trouble." If Tony and Tom's parents had allowed their personalities to blossom on their own, their lives might have taken different paths. It's impossible to know just how different, but in Tony's mind there is no question that their pressure pushed him in directions that he wouldn't have gone naturally.

Another common pitfall is comparing your twins' development. When you have multiples, it seems almost natural to compare their developmental milestones as well as their budding personalities. Family members search for similarities and differences and are often vocal in pointing them out.

Being part of a set puts special pressure on multiples. In any family with more than one child, there is a sense of competition and the need to live up to or surpass an older sibling. With twins, this sense is more keenly felt. An older brother or sister is a known quantity;

other siblings know exactly what they are being compared to. With multiples growing up together, the competition is fluid and the benchmark is unknown and possibly ever-changing. One child can be the good or obedient example one day and slip to the role of "Why can't you be more like your sister/brother?" the next.

How can you avoid comparisons and nurture each child's individual development? At its most basic, it's a matter of developing an inner censor. Its fine to compare your multiples in your mind, but don't let the comments make it to your mouth. Instead, use affirming, open-ended statements. For example, rather than saying, "Ken, you're so much more athletic than your brother," rephrase it to, "Ken, you're so good at soccer. Do you enjoy it?" This gives an individualized compliment and also gives the child an opportunity to express his own viewpoint. By phrasing it as a question, you give him the freedom to say, "Yes, I love soccer!" or "its okay, but I like my piano lessons more." You've gained insight into his preference by allowing him the freedom to express it instead of nudging him in another direction.

When you need to correct a twin, resist the urge to hold up their sibling as a positive example. Even if one child seems to misbehave more often than other, stick to objective facts. Don't say, "Vikki, you're late again! Your sister always makes it on time, so why can't you?" "Vikki, this is the second time you've come in late this week" keeps the focus where it belongs. Next time you're ready to make a comparison, catch yourself and redirect your comment to something that nurtures individual development. By cutting out comparisons, you'll free up your twins to grow into the adults they're meant to be. ♥

Barb Nefer is a counselor/life coach in Celebration, Florida. She offers services online and in person to couples and families. She is married to a twin and is an active freelance writer who enjoys writing about self-help and parenting topics.



Name: Christa (Beach) Reed, married to Aaron. **Occupation:** Publisher/Editor-in-Chief of TWINS™ Magazine. **Currently Resides:** in Fort Collins, Colorado. **Mother of 10-year-old fraternal twin boys, plus two singleton boys.**

As for me... my fraternal twin boys, Nicholas and James will soon be turning 11 and are in the 5th grade. They were born on the first day of their 34th week

of gestation at Cottage Hospital in Santa Barbara, California on

March 2, 1998. Nick was 4 lbs. 11 oz and James was 4 lbs 5 oz. They were in the N.I.C.U. for exactly 15 days and came home together on St. Patrick's Day! We loved having twins so much that we went on to have two more boys (one at a time) Robbie and Ben, that complete our bunch. We live in Colorado and really enjoy the Rocky Mountains. ♥



Some Facts About My Classmates:

- One set of quads (four boys; two identical and two are fraternal)
- One set of triplets (two girls and one boy)
- Two sets of boy/girl twins
- Two sets of fraternal twin girls
- One set of fraternal twin boys
- One set of identical twin girls
- Even though we are all the same age... our multiples range in age. The youngest set in our class is age 15-months and the oldest set is age 14!
- Out of the eight sets of multiples, five of these sets were born in California, One set was born in Maryland and only two of these sets were actually born in our hometown of Dayton, Ohio.

Celebration of HOPE

Be sure to check out Fetal Hope's Celebration of Hope 2009 calendar. With more than 800,000 pregnancies affected by a fetal syndrome each year, we show the rays of HOPE that bless our lives each day. We also include a special section honoring angels who lost the fight.

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Books for Parents...and Children



NEW! Emotionally Healthy Twins—Most parents try to treat their twins as individuals, but most unwittingly undermine their best intentions because they lack a practical set of guidelines for raising

emotionally healthy multiples. *Emotionally Healthy Twins*, by Dr. Joan A. Friedman, draws on her unique experience as a twin, as a mother of twins, and as a psychotherapist and outlines the seven key concepts for helping twins develop into self-realized, unique individuals while offering parents specific strategies for each stage in their children's growth. From how to set up the nursery to handling play dates and extracurricular activities, deciding on same or separate classroom education to encouraging grandparents and other family members to think beyond the pair to see individuals, *Emotionally Healthy Twins* will become the standard reference for parenting twins. Paperback, 221 pages. **\$15.95**



Ready or Not... Here We Come. The mother of twins Jack and Henry, author Elizabeth Lyons recognized that raising multiple children would not be easy. In her multiples birthing class, she met a group of women who not only survived their pregnancies, but grew to be close friends as well. In her first book, Lyons and her "multiples sorority" will survive the hardships of their first year with twins. They also learn and appreciate the fun and humor associated with raising multiple children. *Ready or Not... Here We Come* welcomes the reader into that supportive circle of friends. 165 pgs., softbound. **\$16.00**



Ready or Not... There We Go. Phoenix mother of twins Elizabeth Lyons and her "multiples sorority" tackle the challenges of parenting toddler twins in this highly entertaining and witty sequel to her first book, *Ready or Not... Here We Come!* Providing caring support to even experienced parents, Lyons shares her personal experiences raising her twins Henry and Jack, and details confident solutions to common parenting situations. Having survived her first year with twins, Lyons dives headfirst into the toddler years. From managing twin temper tantrums in aisle 9 to handling impulsive behavior of her twins to maintaining her marriage, Lyons is a smart and funny friend who offers sanity in times of crisis and confusion. 260 pgs., softbound. **\$16.00.**



NEW! Sweet Dreams Lullaby CD—*Sweet Dreams Lullaby CD* has sparked overwhelmingly positive attention from parents, celebrities, and media. The nearly hour-long CD has quickly become a favorite among little ones and parents across the country. Actress Brooke Shields chose the O'Neill's rendition of "Itsy Bitsy Spider" as the theme song on the audio CD version of her best-selling book, "Down Came the Rain." Other celebrities — including famous dads Matt LeBlanc (Joey on "Friends") and rocker Dave Matthews — have received copies of the CD as baby gifts. *Parenting Magazine* called the CD "reflective" and "resonant." *The Los Angeles Times* called it "gentle, graceful magic." 31 nursery rhyme songs on one CD. **\$13.95**



Twice the Love, Winner of the 2007 Best Parenting/Family Book in Reader Views Annual Literary Awards—Stories of Inspiration for Families ... with Twins, Multiples, and Singletons, published in collaboration with TWINS™ Magazine. This is a compilation of 82 inspiring stories written by parents and other family members about their joys and challenges of raising multiples. These true tales reflect a variety of topics, such as the

special bond between multiples, typical crazy days in the life of a family with twins, challenges encountered in pregnancy or childhood, humorous situations created by multiples, adopting twins, and much more. You'll read of days at parks, adventures with big-girl beds, grandma's life lessons, the last fist fight and hope in a hurricane. Learn of an amazing adoption, an unplanned life, mastering mini-vacations and the "hectic morning hall of fame" through this inspiring book. If you're the parent of twins or triplets, you'll love these heart-warming and encouraging stories. *Twice the Love* is also an inspiring gift for those parents who are expecting or raising multiples! 214 pgs. softbound. **\$13.95**



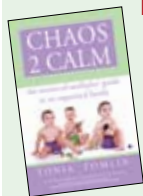
NEW! Our Twins Journal—Jennifer M. Nevadomski, M.S. has just published this brand new baby journal just for your twins, with everything you need to keep track as your babies are growing and changing! This Journal includes fillable charts/schedules to keep track of each baby's feeding/diapering/napping; a section that you can personalize to record information about each of your twin's birth story and other information about their birth day and immunization schedules and doctor records for each baby. Journal also includes growth charts for comparison, facts about twins, poems and sayings about twins, and a funny section about how to answer all of those "twin" questions people ask—and more! Created by a family counselor and mom of twin baby boys! **\$18.50**

Twice As Funny—The late David Lochner's hilarious cartoon compilation "Twice as Funny...TWINS" appeared in *Twins™ Magazine* and in several daily newspapers throughout the United States from 1995 through 2003. The first volume of Lochner's cartoons is now out of print, but his second volume featuring the adorable but mischievous boy/girl twins Henry and Heidi and their twice-as-stressed parents is certain to have you smiling from the first page. In the great tradition of family cartoon strips, Lochner's cartoons are sure to brighten your day. It's a great gift, too. 104 pgs., spiral bound. **\$14.95**



NEW! Twin Set—Cathleen Stahl and Christina Boyle have written a new book called *Twin Set: for moms of twins, by moms of twins.* This book provides a unique parent-to-parent support network—based on an exclusive and comprehensive national survey of more than 300 moms of multiples. *Twin Set* is also packed with expert advice from pediatricians, a high-risk pregnancy doc, a nutritionist, a financial planner, and a personal stylist—most of whom are parents of twins, too. Paperback, 272 pages. **\$13.95**

of twins, by moms of twins. This book provides a unique parent-to-parent support network—based on an exclusive and comprehensive national survey of more than 300 moms of multiples. *Twin Set* is also packed with expert advice from pediatricians, a high-risk pregnancy doc, a nutritionist, a financial planner, and a personal stylist—most of whom are parents of twins, too. Paperback, 272 pages. **\$13.95**



NEW! Chaos 2 Calm: The Moms'-of-Multiples Guide to an Organized Family—The definitive guide to creating an organized family. Written by professional organizer and mother of twins Tonia Tomlin, she offers tips for parents of twins, triplets, and higher-order multiples as well as singleton babies, *Chaos 2 Calm* is an indispensable resource no parent should be without. *Chaos 2 Calm* includes tips on how — and where — to put the nursery, how to organize the closet, bathroom, kitchen, and other areas of your home and much more. Paperback, 145 pages with sample forms. **\$17.95**

family. Written by professional organizer and mother of twins Tonia Tomlin, she offers tips for parents of twins, triplets, and higher-order multiples as well as singleton babies, *Chaos 2 Calm* is an indispensable resource no parent should be without. *Chaos 2 Calm* includes tips on how — and where — to put the nursery, how to organize the closet, bathroom, kitchen, and other areas of your home and much more. Paperback, 145 pages with sample forms. **\$17.95**

The Early Birds—At 31 weeks into her pregnancy, Connecticut book editor Jenny Minton delivered her twin boys Sam and Gus. Immediately, the premature boys weighing just 3-1/2 pounds each were placed on life support in the neonatal intensive care unit at a New York City hospital.



The tiny children would remain in the NICU for 64 days, before Minton was finally permitted to bring them home. Sam and Gus are healthy children now, and Minton's passionate published account was not intended at first. Originally, Minton wanted to forget her boys' struggles, but as their first birthday approached, she found she was drawn to reporting on her remarkable experience, both the good and the bad. She tells of her own fears and concerns, and of her guilty feelings that were never far from the surface. This intimate story provides a moving and powerful narrative about the triumph of life that all parents will appreciate and understand. 272 pgs., hardbound **\$23.00.**



NEW! Twin Connections Do twins really know what each other is thinking? Can they feel each other's pain? Can they sense when their twin is in trouble? As a twin, author Debbie LaChusa always wondered if other twins had the same 'weird' experiences as she and her twin sister did. Did other twins know when their twin was thinking about them?

Did they share coincidences they just couldn't explain? If you've ever wondered whether twins are telepathic, or connected in an almost psychic way, you have come to the right place! Debbie began collecting twin stories from around the world and began to compile them in this wonderful new book, *Twin Connection* that includes over 100 amazing, entertaining and baffling twin stories. This book will absolutely erase any doubts you may have about whether the twin connection is real! Paperback, 110 pages. **\$13.95**



The Art of Parenting Twins—Patricia Malmstrom, founder of Twin Services Inc., provides insightful, practical advice compiled from her more than two decades of working with thousands of mothers of multiples. A mother of twin girls who holds masters' degrees in early childhood and

special education, Malmstrom and journalist Janet Poland provide expecting and new mothers of multiples detailed, practical information about breastfeeding, trips with twins, developmental delays, sibling rivalry, identity issues, and much more. *The Art of Parenting Twins* is an accessible book with a minimum of medical jargon that focuses on multiple children from conception through their childhood. It provides answers to the many questions caring parents of twins have about their role and duties as parents. 335 pgs., softbound. **\$14.00**

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NEW! Babies are Boring by father of twins, Jon Ritchie. This tongue-in-cheek look at babyhood is the perfect relief for moms and dads who want a fresh new book to read

with their newborns and young toddler age twins. Bright bold illustrations and fun-to-read rhymes will charm both parent and child. Written by a father who knows what it's like to raise two at a time this is an adorable book you will love. 40 pages, hardbound. **\$11.95.**



Toddler Twins, Sourcebook 2—Toddler-aged twins are a true joy for parents and a real challenge at times. This wonderful collection of insightful articles from the pages of *Twins Magazine* has been carefully

selected by the editors to provide parents of growing, busy children a detailed resource covering a variety of topics that are of great concern. Although no two sets of twins are alike, this best-selling guidebook by parenting experts provides helpful information from real experiences that can be applied to raising any toddler-aged twins. Topics covered include discipline, biting and fighting, physical development, toilet training, fears, sleeping, language development, eating, identity, play and creativity and much more. *Toddler Twins* provides parents with practical solutions and critical background information that will help in problem-solving and determining the proper course of action with their own twins. It's a great resource and a fantastic gift, too. 198 pgs., softbound. **\$14.95.**



Just Like Me (G/G)—This simple learn-to-read book, written by a mother of twin daughters, describes how twins Jennifer and Julie are alike and how they are different. Each girl likes

roller skating and bubble gum. Each goes to the first grade and dance class. Julie has a kitten and pancakes, while Jennifer likes sleeping late and eating cereal. Though sometimes they are the same and sometimes they are different, they are always twin sisters. A vocabulary list at the back of the book helps children learn new words. **Holiday Sale: \$2.95**



His Sister, Her Brother (B/G)—These boy/girl twins are different. They like different foods, they have different personalities, and they enjoy different activities. But they share one thing in common - how much they love one

another. This delightful rhyme is perfect for introducing separateness and reinforcing the special bond between twins of all types. To read to children ages 1 to 4. **Holiday Sale: \$2.95**

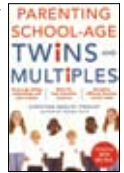


Raising Multiple Birth Children—Writing from their own experience as a couple whose lives changed overnight when triplets arrived, William and Sheila Laut provide new parents of multiples with a helpful guide to raising twins, triplets and higher order multiples. Often filled with humor, *Raising Multiple Birth Children* is a survival guide to a new life with demanding, lovable multiples. It includes information on many critical topics, ranging from announcing a pregnancy at work, managing unwanted advice, considering minivans, accepting and organizing volunteer help, surrendering a house to babies, handling personal questions from complete strangers, finding inexpensive toys and handling strange odors and visits from grandparents. With assistance from their nurse, Kristin Benit, who helped with managing the triplets during their first 16 months, the Lauts have developed an encouraging and fully entertaining guide to the basics of raising babies born in batches. Includes information and support guide. 240 pgs., hardbound. **\$19.95**

Parenting School-Age Twins & Multiples—Mother of twins Christina Baglivi Tinglof, the author of the popular twins book, *Double Duty*, offers proven advice and parent-tested tips for parents of twins and higher order multiples who are entering their school-age years. From kindergarten to high school, twin children face unique challenges and opportunities. As parents encourage individuality of their twins, they must consider how to handle speech and reading difficulties, encourage positive relationships between the twins and other siblings, and manage effective discipline. Tinglof also offers advice on how to respond and encourage when one child develops faster than the other, and manage competition between the children. A major issue for many parents of multiples is the question of whether twins should be placed in the same classroom as the other. Tinglof offers helpful suggestions and strategies on this important topic, and provides assistance in making the best education decisions. Changing family relationships are also discussed by Tinglof, for as the twins grow and mature, their relationships between each other and their siblings, and parents, will change. Fairness and favoritism is a key topic that Tinglof explores, offering insightful observations and advice on parenting behavior that does have consequences. Parents of twins growing beyond their toddler years will find this book to be a useful tool in their decision making process. 232 pgs., softbound. **\$16.95.**



Raising Twins from Birth through Adolescence—Applying a developmental approach to understanding parenting of twins and higher order multiples, identical twin Dr. Eileen Pearlman and Los Angeles writer Jill Alison Ganon provide insightful advice and thoughtful discussion of twins-specific issues. Offering tips, personal stories and innovative "twin talk" sections with conversations with eight sets of twins ranging in age from 5 to 21 years, *Raising Twins* is a friendly reference book for parents and their children. The authors note their book is topic-driven, carefully considering the influence multiple children have upon a family. Chapters cover the development of twins from before birth through their teenage years, detailing physical, emotional and cognitive development issues. Many parents may want to keep this book handy for many years of reference value. Includes resource guide. 267 pgs., softbound. **\$18.95**



Fun Books for Multiples

Jan and Ann are Twins (G/G)—Identical twins Jan and Ann are so tired of everyone asking who is who that they decide to switch places. But then Mom takes Jan to Ann's favorite place, the zoo, and Dad takes Ann to Jan's favorite place, the circus. Later, the twins decide it's better to just be themselves. Dad gives Jan and Ann sprinkling cans so they can help water the garden, but the twins decide to give Fluffy, the family's pet rabbit, a shower instead. It seems like fun, but they're not sure the rabbit likes the watering. Their older sister, Bette, stops them, and they apologize to Fluffy. For parents to read to children ages 1 to 4 and for early readers. **Holiday Sale: \$2.95**



Jan and Ann and the Pet Rabbit (G/G)—Dad gives Jan and Ann sprinkling cans so they can help water the garden, but the twins decide to give Fluffy, the family's pet rabbit, a shower instead. It seems like fun, but they're not sure the rabbit likes the watering. Their older sister, Bette, stops them, and they apologize to Fluffy. For parents to read to children ages 1 to 4 and for early readers. **Holiday Sale: \$2.95**



Imagination Collaboration (B/G)—A wonderfully imaginative story about boy/girl twins, Max and Aliza, who turn the couch into an airplane for a trip to France, who imagine forks and spoons having a party, and who fantasize about being elephants. What they can't imagine is not having a twin! For parents to read to children ages 2 to 5 and for early readers. **Holiday Sale: \$2.95**



Grandpa's Twins (B/B)—Grandpa shows his twin grandsons the family farm. To their delight, the farm is full of animals that come in pairs! They find twin calves, twin sheep, twin goats, twin puppies and twin geese. "But of them all," Grandpa tells the young boys, "I like you two the best!" Ages 2-5. **Holiday Sale: \$2.95**



Family Reunion (B/B)—This entertaining children's book, Mike reports what it's like to go to family reunions with his twin brother, Eddie. The boys dread having their heads patted by relatives who can't tell them apart and who always ask questions such as: who is older, who is smarter, and who is a better athlete. This is a splendid story for teaching twins how to handle silly comments and odd questions. For parents to read to children ages 2 to 5 and for early readers. **Holiday Sale: \$2.95**



Buddies (B/G)—Brother and sister twins Katie and Tate like different things. Katie likes to sleep with a yellow cat. Tate likes to sleep with a black teddy bear. Katie likes to eat applesauce. Tate likes carrots. What they both like most, though, is their twin.

Discover how differences can create a special bond for twins through this fun book by Michelle Donaldson with splendid illustrations by Robert Peltz. **Holiday Sale: \$2.95**

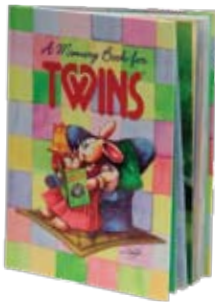
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Always Zany ABC's for Twins (B/B)—Rom through the alphabet with playful rhymes from "A is for Always, there's always us two" - "Z is for Zany, the zany things we do; it can only happen if you've been blessed with two." This is a terrific book for teaching twin children their ABCs. Read to children ages 2 to 5 and for early readers. **Holiday Sale: \$2.95**

TWIN'S™ Lifetime Memory Book

TWIN'S™ Exclusive! This remarkable book captures the special moments in your life and the lives of your twins! Every one of the 56 full-color pages is filled with the gorgeous watercolor illustrations of renowned California artist Jerianne Van Dijk. They await your thoughts, family facts, and photos. Special pages for info from when Mom and Dad were growing up, your babies' wonderful "firsts", and your family trees. You'll love the luscious sherbet colors in this volume. Hard cover, 8.5" x 11" on heavy, durable paper stock. **SS03003. Holiday Sale—receive a specialized TWIN'S™ Memory book for only \$14.95 and cherish both your twins' milestones in one colorful and beautifully illustrated hardbound book.**



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A sentiment every parent of twins can relate to! This handcrafted ceramic plaque will tickle your funny bone and keep your sense of humor charged when you most need it. Leather hanger. 5 3/4"H x 7 1/4"W. **SF90092 \$17.99**



Weego Twin Baby Carrier

When traveling with infant twins this product can be a fantastic idea for those families on the go. If you're planning on doing a lot of sight-seeing or walking and want a product specifically made for twins, then the Weego Twin Baby Carrier is a must for you. Especially designed for carrying preemies, it easily adjusts for growing babies and fits both mom and dad. This soft, lightweight design enhances development, allows each baby to feel comfortable and secure while stimulating their senses. It's machine washable, lightweight and comes in an attractive navy cotton twill design with blue & green plaid lining. You can order this product directly from TWIN'S™ Magazine by visiting www.TwinsMagazine.com. **SF05001. \$19.95.**



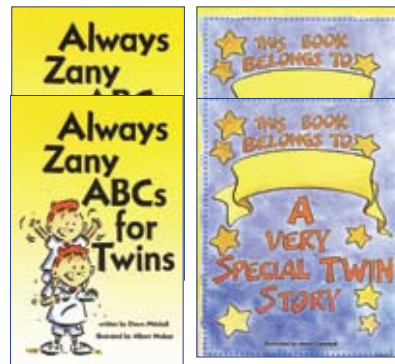
Featured Product...

Circus Train Picture Frame by Melissa & Doug—Popular children's toys and accessories manufacturer Melissa & Doug has created a colorful hand-painted solid-wood table-top frame that is perfect for holding three 2-1/8" x 2-1/8" photographs of your darling multiples. This Circus Train picture frame features solid-wood figures set on springs, creating a three-dimensional effect. You and your children will love this train containing an elephant, a giraffe, a camel, a monkey and your children. **SF05002. \$19.95**

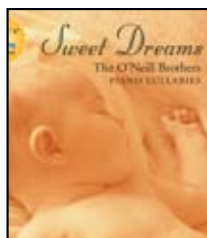


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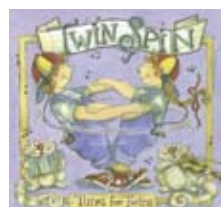
Sweet Dreams Lullaby CD—Sweet Dreams Lullaby CD has sparked overwhelmingly positive attention from parents, celebrities, and media. The nearly hour-long CD has quickly become a favorite among little ones and parents across the country. Actress Brooke Shields chose the O'Neill's rendition of "Itsy Bitsy Spider" as the theme song on the audio CD version of her best-selling book, "Down Came the Rain." Other celebrities – including famous dads Matt LeBlanc (Joey on "Friends") and rocker Dave Matthews – have received copies of the CD as baby gifts. *Parenting Magazine* called the CD "reflective" and "resonant." *The Los Angeles Times* called it "gentle, graceful magic." 31 nursery rhyme songs on 1 CD. **SSSWEET-DREAMS. \$13.95**

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Growing Up Twins Growth Chart—TWINS[™]

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Twin Spin: Tunes for Twins Music CD—A TWINS SHOPPE FAVORITE!

Judy Krause, a songwriter and mother of twins Danielle and Jason, brought together ten talented musicians and singers to create an enchanting collection of happy, fun songs specifically for twin children. Your twins will love to sing along and dance to these 16 joyful songs performed in a variety of musical styles. With nearly an hour of recorded music, you'll find the CD is perfect for short or long drives or having fun at home. Musicians included in this special collection include Eric Troyer, a member of the rock group ELO; Tom Barney, a member of television's Saturday Night Live Band; John Van Eps, who played with jazz greats Miles Davis and Dizzy Gillespie; Ross Traut, who has played with folk singer James Taylor; Clint de Ganon, who played with Billy Preston and Dionne Warwick; and Jeff Mironov, who has played with singers ranging from Michael Bolton, Whitney Houston and Michael Jackson. Please note that product is not returnable if opened; defective CDs may only be exchanged for the same item. **SF05001. \$19.95.**

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Twin Hearts

Card—Brush away your tears after reading this heartfelt poem by Teri Harrison, a mother of four. Twin Hearts tells of the gift of twinship and the promises and encouragement a mother gives to her

children in return. Available with blue, pink or yellow border with matching ribbon. Printed on 5"x7" acid-free paper. Available in three colors: blue, pink and yellow. **SS05003. \$3.25 each.**



Noah's Ark Frame by Melissa & Doug

Popular children's toys and accessories manufacturer Melissa & Doug has created a colorful hand-painted solid-wood table-top frame that is perfect for holding three 2-1/8" x 2-1/8" photographs of your darling multiples. This Noah's Ark picture frame features solid-wood figures set on springs, creating a three-dimensional effect. You and your children will love this ark containing elephants, giraffes, birds and your children. 11" x 9-1/2" overall size. **SF05001. \$19.95.**

Popular children's toys and accessories manufacturer Melissa & Doug has created a colorful hand-painted solid-wood table-top frame that is perfect for holding three 2-1/8" x 2-1/8" photographs of your darling multiples. This Noah's Ark picture frame features solid-wood figures set on springs, creating a three-dimensional effect. You and your children will love this ark containing elephants, giraffes, birds and your children. 11" x 9-1/2" overall size. **SF05001. \$19.95.**



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Christa D. Reed, Publisher/Editor-in-Chief
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1

Aaron & Zachary
4 Years
Bothell, WA



4

Brianna & Blake
28 Months
Abbotsford, WI



5

Colson & Corgan
3 Years
Houston, TX



6

Emma & Megan
3.5 Years
Boyce, LA



10

Kayla & Kamryn
21 Months
Salt Lake City, UT



11

Madeline & Benjamin
4 Months
Lenoir City, TN



12

Madison & McKayla
5 Months
Annadale, NJ



16

Olivia & Charlie
6 Months
El Dorado Hills, CA



17

Philippe & Sophie
20 Months
Montreal, QU



18

Ryan & Sean
2 Years
Clifton, NJ

Double Takes



2

Alfred & Alysia
2 Years
Summit, NJ



3

Audrey & Ivy
8 Months
Warren, MI



7

Henry & Sam
4 Months
New York, NY



8

Julian & Emma
2 Years
Tampa, FL



9

Kara & Kamryn
6 Months
Willits, CA



13

Makayla & Keeley
11 Months
Bonita Springs, FL



14

Michelle & Megan
2 Years
Reno, NV



15

Nina & Eileen
4 Years
Matunuck, RI



19

Shane & Kyle
3.5 Years
Simi Valley, CA



20

Thomas & Jack
5.5 Months
Smithtown, NY

Based on parental reports:

1 - ID	5 - FR	9 - ID	13 - ID	17 - FR
2 - FR	6 - ID	10 - ID	14 - FR	18 - ID
3 - ID	7 - FR	11 - FR	15 - ID	19 - ID
4 - FR	8 - FR	12 - ID	16 - FR	20 - FR

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Assume **Nothing** When it Comes to Toy Assembly and on Christmas Eve, Even Less

It has been said that you can tell a lot about a person simply by looking at how they handle three things in life: a rainy day, lost luggage and tangled Christmas lights. No doubt, “toy assembly” could easily be added to that list. Even more telling—toy assembly **WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS** on **CHRISTMAS EVE**. Yep, **WAY** telling.

Needless to say, my husband and I learned plenty about one another last year on December 24th as we struggled to remain calm despite the plight that befell us. (Let’s make that “volumes” we learned). Heck, it was an **EDUCATIONAL FEAST**.

At precisely 3:00 p.m. that day we made what could only be described as a horrifying discovery: One of the toys we had purchased—a multi-level, 56-inch, 197-piece Swiss Family Robinson style doll/tree house—had **NO** instructions. That’s right—**NONE**. Zip. Zilch. Nada. We know this to be true since we nearly destroyed the box in our frantic search for said directional material, to no avail. And no matter how many times we shoved our heads inside the box, tipped it on end and meticulously examined each little packet that poured out, we were faced with the same grim reality: **THEY JUST WEREN’T IN THERE!** And no amount of wishing would have made them appear; although at one point I seriously considered calling the North Pole to make a special request. I may as well have.

First, we tried contacting the store where we bought the blasted thing. No luck. It just so happened to be the last one on the shelf; so we couldn’t drive there to make an exchange, nor could we tear into another box to peek at its instructions. (Hey, we were desperate!) We then called the manufacturer, whose kind, caring and oh-so-compassionate answering machine wished us a politically correct “Happy Holidays!” “Lovely—just lovely,” we thought. Perhaps it’s best that we didn’t leave a message. It would have been ugly.

We even got online in hopes that those elusive assembly guidelines would be available for downloading. Perish the thought. Too sensible. In lieu of that, we were able to view photos of the wretched thing—**FULLY ASSEMBLED**, I might add. All 197 pieces. Together. As one. Totally indivisible. Earnestly I studied that picture; somehow it just didn’t

seem plausible that it had once been a jumbled mass of wooden thingies. Duct tape and/or Super Glue **HAD** to have entered the picture at some point. Although I was hoping they wouldn’t be a part of our solution that night. Stranger things have happened.



Meanwhile the clock kept ticking. We were due in church soon and after that we had tentatively planned to **WRAP EVERYTHING** (Procrastination Central here...)—so using that precious time to assemble what had become a monstrosity of a toy was out of the question. It was now or never. Do or die.

So the two of us (Tweedledee and Tweedledum) pooled our meager resources—common sense, manual dexterity, mechanical ability and patience—and met the challenge head on. After two full hours of heated debate, we emerged from the basement victorious. The “monstrosity” had been assembled—totally without the aid of duct tape, glue or a single marriage counselor. Unquestionably, the picture on the box had saved us. Had it not appeared there in such fine detail, I am certain that we would have been the proud owners of 197 distinct wooden thingies.

I suppose then we could have presented the silly thing (unassembled) as one of those colossal “gift projects.” You know, “the gifts that keep on frustrating...” Granted, it might not have been completed till now, but it would have certainly lived up to its claim: **PROVIDES HOURS OF ENTERTAINMENT**. Yep, that would have been entertaining alright; but I wouldn’t know as much about my spouse now, would I?

But then again, I’ve seen him handle tangled Christmas lights. ♡

Melinda L. Wentzel, aka Planet Mom, is a freelance writer and slice-of-life newspaper columnist whose primary aim is to unearth the vat of hilarity contained within everyday life experiences—especially those related to parenting. She offers those poor souls (who subsist at various stages of lunacy) a sanity cocktail in the form of humorous blurbs about life with kids and families in general. She and her husband reside in Williamsport, PA with their three daughters (age 20 and twins age 7). Log on to www.notesfromplanetmom.com.





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