

THE MAGAZINE FOR MULTIPLES SINCE 1984

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Twins &
Tantrums

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COVER:
Laney and Ava Perkins, 3-years-old, were adopted from China and moved to the United States when they were 13-months old. Parents are Angi and Jeff of Northern Colorado.



Cover photography: *Betsy of Portraits by Betsy, Fort Collins, Colorado, www.portraitsbybetsy.com.*

Sept/Oct 2008

TWINS™

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It Doesn't Matter How You Got Here... You Are Here Now!

Parenting multiples is a wonderful, exciting, challenging and joyful experience! So, when you are going about your day to day life, it's important for us all to remember that it doesn't really matter how you became a parent of twins, triplets or more but what is important is that you are a parent of multiples now and it's a very special place to be. Although our

paths may have been very different along the way to parenthood, we are all here together now and we should all support each other and celebrate this amazing experience!

My twins are now 10-years-old so you can bet that over the years I have heard on several different occasions some extremely personal questions directed to me by complete strangers wanting to learn more about my twin boys. I'm sure many of you have also been asked some rather bizarre questions at some point along the way. Maybe you weren't sure how you should respond to such personal questions like, "Are they natural?" Why is it when people see two or more babies they feel the strong urge to ask questions that certainly aren't their business and make you really wonder what they are thinking? After we had our twins and when I was pregnant the two other times with my singleton babies, nobody ever had a significant thought to ask me that same question "is my baby natural?"

So, let's look again at this particular question, "Are they natural?" Well, I can safely say that my twins are natural human beings and do not have any supernatural, heroic abilities that I am aware of beyond their prior ability to work together as a team to hoist one another out of their playard or crib. "Are they natural?" Yes, they indeed are quite natural; they even smell naturally like boys smell and have natural reactions just like other children, as I'm sure your multiples do as well. So, to actually have someone ask us if our children are 'natural' seems very unnatural to me. Of course I understand what they are really asking... were they conceived 'naturally?'

As I thought about this more... does it really matter how our children were conceived? Does it really matter one way or the other if you suddenly found out you were expecting twins on your very first try or if you chose to seek medical help and conceive through medical advancements and science? Maybe you chose to adopt your twins or at this very moment you find yourself in another unique situation that doesn't match any given 'category' or stereotype but are raising twins, triplets or more just the same. You are the one caring for your multiples day in and day out and you are the ones they depend on. You are the one that is there to wipe their tears, care for them when they are sick and teach them all those life lessons along the way. We are all parents of multiples and need to support each other on this amazing journey. It doesn't matter how you got here... you are here now... so celebrate!

We are so excited to bring you this issue... It is filled with some wonderful articles and information focusing on not just your ordinary families with multiples but extraordinary ones! Each have very different situations and circumstances and we would like to share some of these heartfelt stories with you. You will undoubtedly be touched by our cover story entitled 'Expect the Unexpected' about a family with four kids under the age of three and how they adopted two children and then found out they were having twins. You can also read more about our cover twins and their adoption from China. This issue we are including an interesting article written by Patti Beemer, past president of the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs and how she and her husband adopted their twin boys in the early 1980s when adopting twins were not so common. We are also featuring a heartfelt, touching story about one woman's emotional journey to become a mom of twins in "A Dream of Having Two."

Do your twins have problems with Colic? We have a great article for you entitled 'Curbing the Colic' and Dr. Barb Nefer explores the topic of 'Stopping Sibling Jealousy With Your Singletons'. Read our 'Ask the Doc' column this issue when our resident doc discusses strategies when it's bath time with twins and our Ask the Twins Nanny talks about managing multiples childcare when both parents work. You can read more about how to handle 'Twins and Tantrums' and identify what triggers these twin tantrums in this issue, too. Do your twins play or will soon play sports? Be sure to read the article, 'Be a Good Sport & Let Me Win...When Twins Play Sports Together.'

Just in time for fall, you can read what others had to say about last issue's reader question: The great Halloween Costume debate: store bought versus hand-made and enjoy all of our other regular columns and sections we include that give you, the reader, the opportunity to send in your comments, feedback, questions and photos, and we will try to include them in our upcoming issues.

TWINS™ Magazine is about to celebrate its 25th anniversary in January and we are planning a very exciting year-long celebration including our special commemorative 25th Anniversary Double Takes calendar and we will be accepting your seasonal twins photos (all ages) by October 1, 2008. You can contact us via email or give us a call for more information. We hope you have a wonderful fall with your family and enjoy everything this fun and colorful season brings.

Sincerely,

Christa D. Reed

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

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~ Founded in 1984 ~

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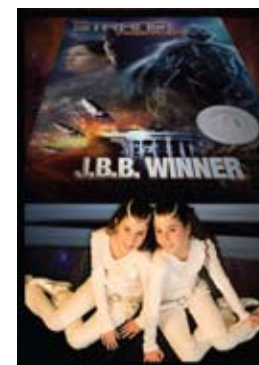
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Twins in the News....



13-Year-Old Twins Write Award-Winning Novel in Face of Adversity

Missile Rider publishing announces the release of the award-winning novel, *The Strand Prophecy*, written by twins Brittany and Brianna Winner, age 13. The novel can be found in Barnes and Nobles stores, nationwide. *The Strand Prophecy*, written by twins, Brittany and Brianna Winner, 13, and their father Jeff Winner. Appropriately dubbing themselves JBB Winner (Jeff, Brittany and Brianna), the twins collaborated with their father to pen this exciting science-fiction adventure even though, at first glance, the task seemed impossible. Brittany and Brianna were born premature and, at three pounds, were not breathing and were forced to remain in intensive care. As they grew they continued to struggle with illness and bouts of pneumonia. Brittany was diagnosed with diagraphia and both girls were diagnosed with dyslexia.



Though the girls' illnesses are often incapacitating for writers, their amazing gift for storytelling inspired them to move forward. "They had developed hundreds of characters by the age of three," Jeff Winner, father of the identical twins, explained. "Their vocabulary was way above that of most children their age. Brittany tested college level at age six." Today the girls are passionately pursuing storytelling creating a five-book series and releasing the first book this month. Book two is in edit and scheduled to release at the end of 2008. "This started off as a family project," explained Brianna, "but half way through it our dad said that we should consider publishing it. When it was done we won several prestigious awards...we still can't believe it!" The list of awards includes the Benjamin Franklin Best Young Adult Fiction, Best First Book Fiction and Best First Book Young Adult Fiction along with the Independent Publisher Book Awards Gold Medal and countless online awards such as Linx and TopSpot. "Our dad made us focus on our strengths, not our weaknesses," Brittany commented, "and it changed our lives forever." *The Strand Prophecy* is on the accelerated readers list in 65,000 schools. The girls are touring schools with their assembly, "If You Can Dream It, You Can Write It." They also wrote an album to accompany the book which launched on iTunes and Amazon.com in May.

First Ever Triplets Successfully Treated for TTTS Via Laser Surgery

A medical first—identical TRIPLETS afflicted with Twin-to-Twin-Transfusion-Syndrome or TTTS. The medical breakthrough is that these babies were successfully treated with laser surgery (to separate A from B, B from C, and C from A), and were born healthy in Rockford, Illinois. This is the first reported case of triplets being afflicted with TTTS and surviving this groundbreaking surgery that takes place in utero.

TTTS or Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome is a disease of the placenta. It affects pregnancies with monochorionic (shared placenta) multiples when blood passes disproportionately from one baby to the other through connecting blood vessels within their shared placenta. One baby, the recipient twin, gets too much blood overloading his or her cardiovascular system, and may die from heart failure. The other baby, the donor twin or stuck twin, does not get enough blood and may die from severe anemia. If left untreated, mortality rates near 100%. The cause of TTTS is attributed to unbalanced flow of blood through vascular channels that connect the circulatory systems of each twin via the common placenta. The shunting of blood through the vascular communications leads to a net flow of blood from one twin (the donor) to the other twin (the recipient). The donor twin develops oligohydramnios (low amniotic fluid) and poor fetal growth, while the recipient twin develops polyhydramnios (excess amniotic fluid), heart failure, and hydrops. If left untreated, the pregnancy may be lost due to lack of blood getting to the smaller twin, fluid overload and heart failure in the larger twin, and/or preterm (early) labor leading to miscarriage of the entire pregnancy. Some general treatment approaches consist of using laser energy to seal off the blood vessels that shunt blood between the fetuses. Because the surgical approach is via an operative fetoscope,

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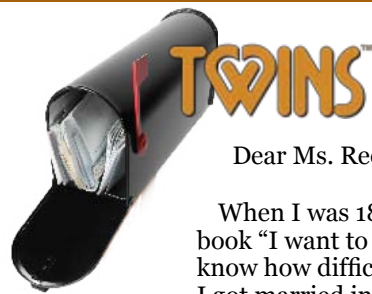


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Dear Ms. Reed,

When I was 18 I wrote in my memory book "I want to have twins" Little did I know how difficult that journey would be. I got married in 1999. My husband Kevin and I decided to wait to have kids. When we wanted to get pregnant it didn't happen. After meeting with the doctor I was told my body was not ovulating. Imagine my surprise. My periods were regular and 28 days apart. My husband was also diagnosed with low sperm count. Getting pregnant without assisted technology would not be easy. In the summer of 2004 we tried IVF for the first time. We were successful and wound up getting pregnant with boy/girl twins. I felt like I had won the lottery. My job as a teacher kept me up on my feet but I was ecstatic. In December 2004 I met with my doctor before taking a family vacation.



Getting the green light I went on the cruise. While on board I went into labor and delivered at 24 weeks. My precious children were born too early and did not survive.

Getting back to Miami Christmas Day was so hard. Everyone was saying Merry Christmas but my heart was breaking. I took two weeks off before returning to work. My students were understanding and didn't ask a lot of questions. My principal announced her pregnancy with a sonogram attachment e-mail. Getting through the rest of the school year proved I could survive anything. On the one year anniversary my husband and I tried IVF again. I was blessed again with boy/girl twins. I went on bed rest at 20 weeks and delivered six weeks early. My children Skye and Kevin Jr. were born on July 28, 2006. I will never forget Paris and Nicholas. They are angels watching over Skye and KJ. I tell my story to inspire others. Never give up on your dreams.

~ Heather Wood- Via email

EARLY ARRIVALS GROW UP BIG & STRONG

At sixteen weeks, I had the greatest thrill and scare of my life. We learned that we were having twin boys and we learned my wife was having problems. Albert and his twin brother Don were born two months early at just a bit over 3 pounds each. If that was not enough to overcome, Albert had asthma so bad that his first three birthdays were spent in the critical care ward with his blood oxygen level dangerously low. Today, the boys are 13, wearing size 10 1/2 shoes, well on their way to being six feet tall, honor roll students and athletes. Don loves hunting and playing center on the football team at his school. He snaps the ball

to his brother Albert who has found a love for all sports starting on the basketball, baseball, and football team. Don is #51 and is the center, and Albert is a quarterback and middle linebacker wearing #12. Who knows what the future will bring for him regarding sports but he and his brother have truly been blessed. Most of all, he and his brother love God and honor their parents. I so well remember the fear, sadness and frustration of those days leading up to the boys' birth but parents need to know to hang in there. Feel free to share this with new parents of a premature baby or babies in our case. Today, I always give expecting parents one word advice for the next 18 to 22 years...SAVOR (Every day, every moment). Because your child is a precious gift and the years will fly by as a parent. Enjoy & God Bless! ~Clif Mitchell, Nashville, TN. www.ClifMitchell.com



Editor's note: Clif, it's nice to hear how fellow 'seasoned' parents of twins have made it through the ups and downs, challenges and joys of parenting two at one time. Thank you for sharing your positive and encouraging words with our readers and I agree with you wholeheartedly that these moments are fleeting and we need to stay in the moment by cherishing what we have now, as time does fly by so fast!

POTTY TRAINING INSPIRATION

I am a stay at home mom of twenty-eight month old twin girls, Aubrey and Amber. I've been really good about hitting the important milestones as directed by our physician. So, being the gung-ho mom that I am, I was really excited to begin potty training at the two-year mark. I excitedly researched (and researched and researched some more!) potty chairs and found the perfect one for us - a Baby Bjorn model. It is a solid white plain Jane potty chair with no bells or whistles. I figured that if I'd be looking at these things inevitably I wanted them to be attractive. The ease and function of the chair was also very important - the fewer bells and whistles - the less items that the kids had to play with and be distracted by when trying to 'get the job done'! Plus, with two potty training children who has time to clean every nook and cranny of some of those chairs!? We excitedly bought two potty chairs and a potty book for the girls. At first they would sit on them,



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there is minimal risk to the mother. Laser therapy for TTTS has been shown to provide improved pregnancy outcomes compared to alternative therapies.

This proves the importance to women who are pregnant with multiples to find out if they only have one placenta because if they do only have one there is a decent chance that their babies will be afflicted with TTTS. Any multiple pregnancy in which there is only one placenta should be carefully monitored via regular ultrasounds, and more OBs and more Perinatologists need to believe in the life-saving surgery that can treat and resolve this life threatening condition that kills more babies each year than SIDS.

Big Babies: Healthy Twins with Combined Weight of 23 Pounds 1 Ounce Delivered June 17, 2008 at Forsyth Medical Center, NC

Boy and girl believed to have the heaviest combined birth weight ever recorded in North Carolina and second highest in the United States during the last century. Winston-Salem, NC: Twins Sean William Maynard, 10 pounds, 14 ounces, and Abigail Rose Maynard, 12 pounds, 3 ounces, delivered at Forsyth Medical Center's Sara Lee Center for Women's Health, may claim the distinction as the heaviest set of twins ever born in North Carolina and possibly the second heaviest set born in the United States during the last century. The twins, born to Joey and Erin Maynard of Winston-Salem, were delivered via Cesarean section two minutes apart and were in excellent condition. "The babies measured about nine pounds each when we did an ultrasound two weeks ago, so we knew they were going to be big babies at delivery," says Dr. Jacquelyn Mims of Lyndhurst OB-GYN, the attending obstetrician. "Because over the course of her pregnancy the mother took excellent care of herself, staying on a healthy diet and closely following our instructions we were fairly confident she could deliver without complications." Based on an Internet search, the heaviest combined twin weights were born to an Arkansas woman, on Feb. 20, 1924, totaling 27 pounds, 12 ounces. A set born in 1997 to a Wilson, N.C., couple weighed a combined total of 18 pounds, 10 ounces. The Maynards also have a two-and-a-half-year-old son who was 10 pounds, 7 ounces at birth. The Maynard twins are the most recent births at the Sara Lee Center to establish a state record. At two days of age, the baby girl was already wearing a size 2 diaper.

Florida Twins Law - It's Official and Signed Into Law!

Effective July 1, 2008. Governor Charlie Crist has signed SB 642 enacting the Florida Twins Law. This law will allow the parents of multiple birth children the choice of placing their twins, triplets, and higher order multiples, together or separate in the classroom. The law becomes effective July 2008. Parents need to let the school know their decision no later than five days before the first day of school

Cont'd on Pg. 18

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Cont'd from Pg. 4

look at them, and ask lots of questions about them. I was very adamant about the potty chairs staying in the bathroom; avoiding advice about putting them in a common place, or in the living room. The girls were going to go potty in the bathroom because that's where you do it - period. Off we went with our potty training ritual. I left them in diapers but we talked about going potty, sat on the potty, and even used it. We introduced M&M's as rewards, and then we were cruising. Aubrey and Amber would both tell us when they had to go and we'd happily run to the potty. But that's where we got stuck - in diapers and using the potty. I wasn't thrilled about Pull-Ups because I felt that it would be another crutch, like the diaper, only much more expensive. So we just kept up wearing diapers, but using the potty regularly. One day while I was away, the girls were spending time with their grandma. She had purchased them big girl panties, and excitedly introduced the girls to the concept. Their grandma put them in their new panties, and reminded them to use the potty if they had to go to the bathroom. I returned home to my babies in big girl panties—they looked so cute and grown up! It's now been a week of big girl panties during all waking hours, and diapers only at naptime and overnight. It has been amazing! They are doing so good! We have the occasional accident, just because we're too busy to walk away from our toy box, but they are truly doing great! Thank goodness someone had the bravery to put them in panties and let them be the big girls that they are. I wanted to share this little bit of excitement in our lives, with the hopes another mom of twins is sitting at home needing a little 'potty training inspiration'. My advice... is to go for it and don't give up! If all else fails, call grandma! I've attached a picture of Aubrey (left) and Amber (right) proudly using their new potty chairs! **Sincerely, Katrina Cook, Okeechobee, Florida**

Editor's note: Congratulations on your huge accomplishment! I know that wasn't easy and thanks for sharing your potty training method with our readers - I am sure it will be very inspiring to those just getting ready to take on this task!

HAPPY WITH CHANGES TO THE MAGAZINE...

I wanted to write to say that I am very happy with the changes that have been made to the magazine since you have become the editor. The quality and accuracy of the articles is better and I no longer notice spelling or grammatical errors. I was thinking of ending my subscription before, but now I will continue it. I have identical twin girls, age 3. I am interested in reading more about identical twins. I want to know about personality differences, and how other sets of identical twins get along with each other from childhood through adulthood. My girls also had twin-to-twin transfusion, but we were very blessed and they were born healthy at 32 weeks. I would like to read more about this. Are there any known long-term effects of the condition that are not present or known at



birth? Thank you for your time. **Niki Chandler -Via email**

Editor's note: Thank you for your feedback, we're glad you like the new changes we have made. I suggest you check out the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to helping families afflicted by TTTS and other fetal syndromes, The Fetal Hope Foundation to learn more about TTTS and the long term affects. There is a ton of information at www.FetalHope.org.

WHAT ABOUT IDENTICAL TWINS WITH AUTISM/AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS?

I was wondering if you have ever had a story about identical twins with Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders. I have identical twins that were recently diagnosed with ASD-PDD and were referred to a genetics specialist. The specialist recommended chromosome testing. I was wondering if anyone else has mentioned it or what were the chances of twins or higher multiples having Autism. **Thanks, Christine Clark, North Olmsted, OH -Via email**

Editor's note: Thanks for your email and for this topic idea. We are going to be running an article in an upcoming issue about genetics and the role they play, and will see if we can get some more information for you on this particular disorder.



KNOWING & BEING AWARE OF YOUR RIGHTS

I am a mother of fraternal boys who will be starting Pre- K this September. At their registration I was told my boys would be separated because it was school policy. I have heard through TWINS™ Magazine about our parental rights. I told them that in the state of New York,

it is mandatory to separate in Kindergarten but it is not in Pre-K. Then the conversation changed and it was my decision to separate them this year. Now I have 2 1/2 months to question my decision hoping it was the correct one. My boys are very close and do everything together (my fault), but they do also have different interests...one likes sports and the other is more of a thinker and enjoys doing puzzles, drawing, etc. I have had the summer to explain to them that they will be in different classrooms and will soon have different friends. I do have a question: When a school system separates twins, what happens when there is only one excelled learning class and they both do very well in school, is it fair to separate them? Is it fair to parents when all the classes are doing events at the same time? How does a parent share her time?? I guess there will always be a discussions on this matter. ~ **Denise Donatone, Bronx, N.Y. - Via email**

Editor's note: I have had my twins apart and together in class and can see both sides of this issue. My advice to you is to feel confident about your decision to separate your twins and don't second guess yourself. You may find it was the absolute best thing you could do. You may

also find that you might want them back together in the future, too. Keep an open mind and observe how they act and do in school first before feeling any regret about your decision. Parenting is hard enough, having twins is even more of a challenge and that is why you should know that you are doing the right thing by following your instincts and doing what you feel is right. I wish you luck and keep me posted on how things are going with you.

COLORADO NEXT STATE TO LAUNCH PETITION TO GET TWINS BILL PASSED

I wanted to let you know that Colorado is up and running with our online petition to get a Twins Law passed. You can visit www.twinslaw.com/Colorados_Twins%21.html to learn more. I have been in contact with Kathy Dolan from Twins Law since January 2008, and finally after a hard year for our family, I decided I must do something for the future.

I am a mom of 11-year-old twins here in Colorado. We are at a great school, which previously had a flexible principal that transferred two years ago. The new principal was not happy that our girls continued to be together, but did not press the issue since it was previously approved before she came to our school.

When my twins were going into the 4th grade, our principal stated that it was best for them to separate so they could form their own identities and she allowed me no say in this decision. When they were preparing to enter the 5th grade, I reached out to a 4th grade teacher that had worked with my twin girls both together and while separated to plead our case of keeping them together in the same classroom. The principal told him it was not open for discussion and this normally happy guy told me quite sternly that I should go get legislation passed since she was not going to change her mind. Therefore, after a year of challenges that were related from forced separation for my girls, I feel Coloradans need a voice on this issue.

I have enlisted the support and help of a physician and the school board, and really believe I should not have had to take it this far regarding an issue that seems so simple to our family. My guidelines have been (1) What do my children want? (2) Do they distract each other? and (3) Do they distract others? If none of those are a problem, which they weren't according to the school, it doesn't need to be fixed. I do hope to talk with you more in the future. Thank you so much for the work that you and the magazine continue to do for parents of multiples. **Regards, Leslie M. (via email)**

PENNSYLVANIA NEXT STATE TO PASS TWINS IN THE CLASSROOM LEGISLATION

On July 4th, 2008, Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell signed into Law HB1067. Section 4 of this bill contains the "Twins in the Classroom" legislation. Pennsylvania's "Twins in the Classroom" legislation is now the LAW! The law will be in effect beginning with the 2008-2009 school year. Thank you to TWINS™ Magazine for all of your help in spreading the word about our campaign for this legislation, and thank you to all of you who worked to make the campaign a success. We all did it together! **Victoria Zimmerman-Via email**

Editor's note: This topic is heating up and just in time for fall. If you want to learn more about whether your state is currently in the process of passing legislation for parental rights for placement of twins in the classroom visit www.twinslaw.com. ♥



Our fraternal twin daughters Lindsey and Chelsea had finally received their first round of immunizations and were cleared by our pediatrician to begin visiting the outside world. So, this past 4th of July weekend, we took our baby girls out for our first family outing.

After strapping on our matching baby carriers (having left our eighteen-wheeler of a stroller at home), we, along with the babies' Godparents visited the Air Zoo in Kalamazoo, Michigan. While at first, the carriers seemed to be a bit less conspicuous than the double-length stroller, we soon noticed that one of us would walk past people and receive the "aw, what a cute baby" glance, but then when the second parent came strolling by, it was like watching a light bulb go off, and then we would see their faces transform into the "oh my goodness, are those twins?" response.

The girls behaved beautifully at the Air Zoo, and even took their first virtual trip to Mars with us. Though they were still a little too small for the moonwalk; even if they could meet the height requirements, there was still the whole "walking" thing, ya know?

Several breast feedings later, we began our trek home. It was the go-karts that initially caught our eyes, but the mini-golf course seemed a whole lot safer for the babies, so off to the putting greens we went.

Strapping the girls back to our chests, mom and dad teed off against the Godparents and their daughters, proclaiming the need for a "baby handicap." Our request was, of course, voted down, and our girls did remarkably well, all the way up until the 16th hole when they had apparently decided that eating was far more important than the heated contest going on between rival dads on the golf course. The final two holes were a blur, as was the mad dash to the air-conditioned video arcade where mom, dad, and the babies could cool down, enjoy a slushie, or some breast milk as the case may be, and tally the scores.

Our girls did amazingly well on their first outing. And so did Daddy: finishing just eight over par, beating the girls' Godfather by just one stroke (even without a baby handicap), and earning bragging rights for years to come. ~ **Brian & Cherish Walsh, Streamwood, Illinois**

BATH TIME WITH TWINS



Q: I find it very difficult to bathe two babies by myself. How often do I need to bathe my 8-month-old twins? (L.P.)

A: Bath time should be fun and relaxing for all involved, but many parents find it can be a stressful experience when it involves more than one baby at a time. Until the babies are crawling, they really do not become very dirty, and bathing them 2-3 times a week is sufficient. Most parents try to make the bath time part of the babies' routine – the most common time being right before bedtime. It can help relax the babies and make them ready for sleep. Some parents, however, like

to make it a part of their morning routine. The timing of baths is completely up to you.

Initially when the babies are born, they really don't need to be bathed very often; wiping up BM's with diaper wipes and wipe-ups after feeding is all that is needed. Sponge bathing is recommended until the umbilical cord stumps fall off and/or the circumcision, if performed, is healed. This can help to prevent infections. Use a damp cloth or sponge, mild "tearless" baby wash, and warm water. Save the diaper area for last. Towel dry and you are ready to go.

Once the umbilical cord comes off, you can start some tub baths. I found that before my twins were able to sit by themselves, bathing them in a sink or a baby bath tub separately was the safest option. Have the infant seats set up nearby and leave the other multiples in their seats close by you while you bathe one at a time. Make sure you have all the supplies you will need right on hand before you start the bathing. Never leave an infant or young child in a tub by themselves for any amount of time!

Some babies love the bath time experience, but others become stressed by it. Most newborns become startled by the experience of water on their skin and can cry rather lustily. Try to make the experience as stress free as possible for yourself and don't worry about the initial crying – from your babies or you! Most babies will learn to love bath time by the time they are able to sit up in the tub.

At eight months old, your twins should be sitting up by themselves and ready for the big tub. You can then use some commercial products to help you bathe them together. There are bath rings and seats available that have suction cups on the bottom and help to restrict slipping and sliding in a tub. Some mothers use a laundry basket in the tub for the same purpose. I found a soft faucet cover to be helpful in preventing head injuries. Others forgo filling up the tub at all and use a hand-held shower attachment with an on/off switch to bathe their babies, finding it quicker and safer. One mother suggests using swim goggles to prevent water from getting in the eyes. There are also soft head "halos" that keep water out of eyes when washing hair.



Here are some tips for bathing infants:

- Make sure the room is warm, as babies can lose heat quickly.
- Check the water temperature before putting the baby in the bath.
- Lower the thermostat on your water heater to 120 degrees F or less to avoid scald burns, which account for 25 percent of hospital admissions for burns in children under four.
- Have equipment and supplies ready:
 - ✓ 2-3 clean wash cloths

- ✓ Baby shampoo to use on head once or twice a week in small babies. Wash the head last to avoid heat loss.
- ✓ Gentle bath soap that is tearless. If your babies are prone to dry skin, use soap only on the hands and diaper area, or use every other day.
- ✓ Cotton balls for cleaning around the eyes
- ✓ Hooded towels

- ✓ Baby lotion, if your babies are prone to dry skin. Warm in your hands before using and give your babies a nice relaxing massage.
- ✓ Diapering equipment and clean clothes
- ✓ Ointment for diaper rash if needed



- Avoid interruptions – ignore the door bell and put your phone answering machine on. If you have to leave, bring the babies with you.
- **NEVER** leave a baby alone in a tub, even for a minute. A baby can drown in two inches of water.

By all means, enjoy bath time! Once it is a part of your routine you will enjoy it as much as your babies will.

Q: Are bubble baths safe for my 20-month-old twin girls? (E.R.)

A: I know my children all enjoyed bubble baths when they were little – and I still enjoy them as an adult! Most parents and children enjoy the relaxation, and the feeling and fragrance of the bubbles. However, for generations, pediatricians have advised against bubble baths in an effort to prevent urinary tract infections.

Research done by G. Modgil and A. Baverstock in 2006 had revealed little evidence to support the practice of avoiding bubble baths to prevent urinary tract infections. Since surfactants in soaps have been shown to cause irritation to mucus membranes in some people, bubble baths can cause some lower urinary tract irritation and vulvar irritation. These are not the same thing as a bacterial infection. Modgil and Baverstock concluded that the enjoyment of bubble baths outweighs the limited evidence of their proposed harm.

So, my common sense advice to you is that if your children enjoy bubble baths, it is safe for them to do so. If your girls develop irritation in the genital region, then you should avoid them. ♥



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REBECCA MOSKOWSKI, M.D., FAAFP
Dr. Moskewski 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. Moskewski 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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Falling for the Crock Pot

How can an appliance be so useful on days that time is in short demand? How can an appliance be so simple yet gives families such a helping hand? I got it as a wedding gift so many years ago and don't remember who gave it as a gift. They obviously knew something I didn't know. It has given my life as a mother a great big lift. My days are made easier by this domestic device. I use it from January to December. It slowly cooks with aromas so nice with results my family does remember. I use this machine – I use it a lot. This is why I am falling for my Crock Pot.

Chicken Cacciatore

This is a hit with kids and adults. It takes a little planning, but it is well worth it. You begin the process in the morning – I put the chicken in the crock pot before I leave for work. When you return home, the aroma of a roasted chicken hits you as soon as you enter the house. The best part of this is that you are almost done with dinner!

SHOPPING LIST

- 1 whole roasting chicken
- 1/2 cup of water
- 1 large jar of spaghetti sauce
- 1 pound spaghetti
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup sesame oil
- 1/2 cup rice vinegar
- 1/4 cup honey
- Salt & pepper

HOW TO PREPARE

Rinse the whole chicken with cold water. Place it in a crock pot breast side down. Add the water, salt and pepper. Turn the crock pot to low and cook for 6-8 hours. When the chicken falls off the bone take it out of the crock pot and place it on to a platter. Drain the chicken broth. (You can strain the chicken broth, freeze it, and use it for soups, etc.) Turn the crock pot to high. Add the spaghetti sauce to the crock pot. De-bone the chicken and place the meat back into the crock pot, stirring occasionally. Prepare the spaghetti according to the package directions.



TIME SAVING TIPS

Take advantage of the grocery stores' conveniences. You can substitute rotisserie chicken. Just make sure it is not seasoned with anything. ♥

School Party Treats

School Halloween parties hold fond memories for my boys. I was blessed to be there to experience them with both of them. Treats don't have to be complicated or expensive. With just a little time and effort, you can make cute, and most importantly, easy treats. Over the years, I have accumulated many school party items and thought I would share some with you.

DISAPPEARING GHOST COOKIES

SHOPPING LIST

- 1 package of cream filled sandwich cookies
- 12 oz. of white candy coating, melted
- 1 package of mini semi-sweet chocolate chips
- Wax paper

HOW TO PREPARE

In a medium bowl, melt the white candy coating according to the package directions. Lay out a piece of wax paper on the counter that is large enough to hold all the cookies. Dip the cookie half way into the melted candy coating and place on the wax paper. Before the candy coating is set, place chocolate chips as the eyes and mouth of the ghost. Let set for 30 minutes, remove from the wax paper, and place in an air tight container until ready to serve.

HALLOWEEN CHEESE AND CRACKERS

SHOPPING LIST

- 1 pound of yellow American cheese, not individually wrapped
- 1 pound of white American cheese, not individually wrapped
- 1 package club crackers
- Medium sized pumpkin and ghost cookie cutters

HOW TO PREPARE

Get the cheese from your grocer's deli that is not individually wrapped. Using your pumpkin cookie cutter for the yellow cheese and the ghost cookie cutter for the white cheese cut out the shapes and place them on a platter. Serve with crackers. ♥



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



BY TOM TERWILLIGER
Tom is a former Mr. America, certified NLP Master Practitioner, life strategies and Personal Fitness coach, Motivational Speaker, Author and an identical twin. He owns and operates *Coaching Leadership Excellence* in Denver Colorado where he works one-on-one with his clients to help them obtain their strategic fitness and life goals. Tom is available for seminars and one-on-one and group coaching at 303-404-9241 or Tom@terwilligerfitness.com. Check out Tom's website at www.InnerGameofConfidence.com.

“Aerobic activity and some moderate upper and lower body exercises in most cases have been shown to do far more good than harm.”

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

Q:

I have a pressing question - what do us mothers with diastasis recti do to regain our abdominal wall? Not many of us can afford (or want to go through with) a tummy tuck, so how do we repair those core muscles through exercise? Also, being a mother of twins plus one, I can't get to a gym (or even leave the house!) so what exercises can be done for this muscle problem at home? Your answers would be much appreciated by me, and every lady in my twins club, the Pea Pods (or, Pinellas Parents of Duplicates, Florida).
~ Kimberly Sullivan

A:

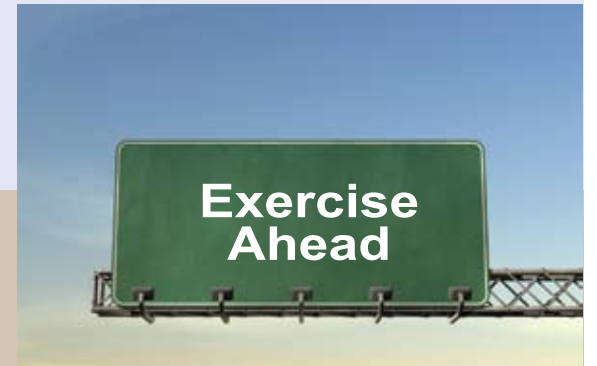
Great question Kimberly! For thousands of mothers of multiples Diastasis recti is a fairly common concern. The actual medical definition of Diastasis recti is a separation between the left and right side

of the rectus abdominis or abdominal muscle, which covers the front surface of the belly area. In pregnant women, increased tension on the abdominal wall may lead the right and left side separating or diastasis recti. It looks like an elongated bulge running down the center of the abdominal wall from the bottom of the breastbone to the umbilicus or belly button. Multiple births or repeated pregnancies increase the risk. For that reason I'm guessing the problem started with the birth of your twins. Believe it or not exercise during the last trimester can actually exasperate the problem. Even exercises that are moderate in nature can cause increased internal pressure on the abdominal wall. That along with any additional straining to the abdominal muscle while it is already under so much pressure can facilitate or in some cases actually cause the problem. For that reason many women who are 12 or more weeks pregnant should avoid aggressive abdominal exercises. That is not to say they shouldn't be exercise at all. Aerobic activity and some moderate upper and lower body exercises in most cases have been shown to do far more good than harm. Check with your doctor first. For someone who is currently pregnant with multiples and you suspect that Diastasis recti could be a problem from a previous pregnancy it is even more important that you keep you core and abdominal areas that much stronger during the early months of your pregnancy.

In many cases the Diastasis recti will heal on its own within a year or so of giving birth assuming that the mom returns to a health body weight. I need to emphasize that point just for a moment. It is very unlikely that a case of mild to severe Diastasis rectis will heal and repair itself properly if the abdominal wall continues to be placed under pleasure. Being 20 pounds or more overweight places continued undue stress on the already overworked, overstretched and week, abdominal muscles and reduces their ability heal. I hope that makes as much sense to you as it does me. I have absolutely no scientific evidence or research to back that up...only my own 30 plus years experience as a fitness expert. I'm not suggesting that you are overweight Kimberly but what I am suggesting is that for many moms with Diastasis rectis it might be a good place to evaluate first. Also starting as soon a physically possible back on a moderate exercise program including some modified abdominal exercise following birth is highly recommended and will facilitate the healing process.

One very simple and effective exercise is the tummy vacuum contraction. While kneeling on your hands and knees and keeping your back nice and flat begin to slowly pull your abdominal wall and belly button up into your diaphragm as if your trying to touch the inside of your spine. Hold that position for 3-5 long deep breaths without allowing your tummy to drop. Repeat the process 3-4 times.

Another great exercise is the modified abdominal crunch. Lying flat on your back, start by performing and holding the kegel or upward pelvic tilt. Than with your hands gently pressing against the abdominal wall holding back the Diastasis rectis bulge simply lift your head and shoulders no more than 2 inches of the ground and hold for 2-3 seconds. Try holding for 10 -15 repetitions of 3-4 sets. Like the vacuum contraction the modified crunch can be done every day. Along with an accumulated 20-30 minutes of walking...5 minutes here, 5 minutes there. You can do that. You will find your midsection starting to take on its previous form. Good luck and please tell the ladies I said hi! ♥





My Penguin Pilgrimage

Shortly after learning that my female parts were damaged, defective, and old, I rented March of the Penguins. I assumed it would be a safe mood-lifter; little did I know. Emperor Penguins annually face near starvation and death during a 100 mile pilgrimage in subzero Antarctic cold, blizzards, and gale force winds—all in order to give birth to one gleaming white egg vulnerable to freezing, breakage and hungry Giant Petrels.

After over a year of trying for a baby the old-fashioned way (and nearing the precipice of 40) I had used up enough pregnancy test strips to create my own landfill; worse, I had gained so much weight I began resembling a Penguin—eating for two each month just in case. Ultimately, I was diagnosed with Endometriosis and Ovarian cysts. I knew that I was being punished for my past life of sin: I'd slept with too many men, I cursed too much, I was too pessimistic, and too damaged to be mother material. My husband Stephen's sperm, on the other hand, proved to be perfectly vital, despite college drug experiments and years of failing to floss. The penguins and I howled over our broken eggs, while my Stephen offered up Kleenex and asked when the movie would be over so he could change the channel to CSI.

The fertility doctor's analysis had gone something like this. "In order to perform any kind of ART we must test your FSH, so you can proceed to try CCCT in case you have low LH levels, but the dangers of this can lead to OHSS, in which case you could proceed to the HSG, and if results are good we could try IUI, but ultimately the most successful treatments are ZIFT or IVF. Of course the decision is up to you."

Longing for a baby and urged on by the penguins' determination I signed up for In Vitro Fertilization (IVF), the most invasive (and expensive) fertility treatment, which still only gave me a 35 percent chance due to my inclement age. Quaking at the thought of the imminent pain and possible failure, I braced for the Arctic journey that lay ahead. I was to be poked, prodded and probed, while my mate was led to a room filled with porn and told to have a good time.

In no time, our kitchen was transformed into a makeshift laboratory with an actor (my husband) posing as lab technician: for the next 98 days he turned my rear end into his personal dartboard. I, who am afraid of flying, camping, and not-being-in-control allowed him to inject me with mood-altering hormones a total of 87 times.

We retreated into the surreal world of lab rat and reluctant tormentor. When people asked: "How are you?" it was not clear what the appropriate answer should have been. How is my bottom? Sore, itchy and bruised actually. How is my husband faring in his needling technique? Improving, but not quite ready to move onto heroine. How are my eggs growing? The ultrasound looks good, but nothing is guaranteed until the harvesting takes place. No, I'm not taking up farming, I am the farm.

Three interminable weeks later, my nine eggs were "harvested" and mixed with Stephen's "pre-washed" sperm. I wondered if in future years Safeway might not offer up organic bags of pre-washed sperm alongside the triple washed Hearts of Romaine. Our resulting three embryos, a low turnout, were judged by the doctor like miniature Olympic hopefuls. Only one scored a 1 out of 3 making it viable for implantation. The

other two were considered below average but inserted into my uterus, alongside our little Nadia Komaneci, just in case.

For the next 12 days I remained prone; I tried not to use the toilet (for fear they might fall out); I saw omens everywhere: in fireworks, flocks of pelicans, in road signs: Beware falling rocks ahead. And tossing my avowed atheism to the wind, I emailed a prayer to the "Laser Monks" who offer printer cartridges and prayers online, just in case.

On the afternoon following our blood test, I was pulled out of a conference for a phone call. I moved like a sleep-walker along a stone path past a clump of writing teachers buzzing about some catastrophe somewhere else.

"Are you sitting down?" asked Stephen. "No," I said, not daring to hope or breathe or think. "The nurse said we are very pregnant."

In that moment, the world seemed to soften again, the way it does when winter snow melts, and everything that was once hidden emerges from beneath the white. "Are you ready?" he asked, his voice the most animated it had been in months.

In that moment, I said yes. But two weeks later, in the throes of morning sickness (which should be called morning-night-and-noon sickness) I was not so sure. On the eve of our first ultrasound, I dreamt that my penguin egg had cracked another omen I feared. The next day the doctor waved his ultra-sound probe around inside me once more, and once more we waited.

"There's the fetus," he said, "And...there's another. Congratulations--you're having twins!"

"You're kidding," I gasped, clutching Stephen's hand. Two grey beans floated on the soupy grey screen. And suddenly new fears crept in—fear of motherhood. You see, I had been prepared for heartache, not for success. I ripped my feet from the stirrups and ran to the bathroom to plunge my head into the toilet—now preparing for a new round of struggles—my fear of losing these babies, fear of delivery, and fear of my capacity to mother, not one, but two babies.

As with the penguin's journey, with every obstacle overcome in your infertility journey, there is always another looming ahead. Seven months later, upon exiting a bathroom stall on Christmas Eve I found myself stuck—a line of flat-stomached women waiting impatiently outside. My belly had grown too large to wedge itself between the swinging door and the toilet seat—there I was trapped, as the gay men's chorus launched into "a child is born..." I laughed as I climbed over the toilet seat as gracefully as an over-fed penguin trying to extricate itself from an ice hole. In the end, what I learned from the penguins was to just keep waddling, because somehow, somehow, you will waddle your way through. ♥

Pamela Bass has twins and teaches humor writing at Berkeley Extension. She has recently won two Solas Awards from Traveler's Tales for her non-fiction writing.



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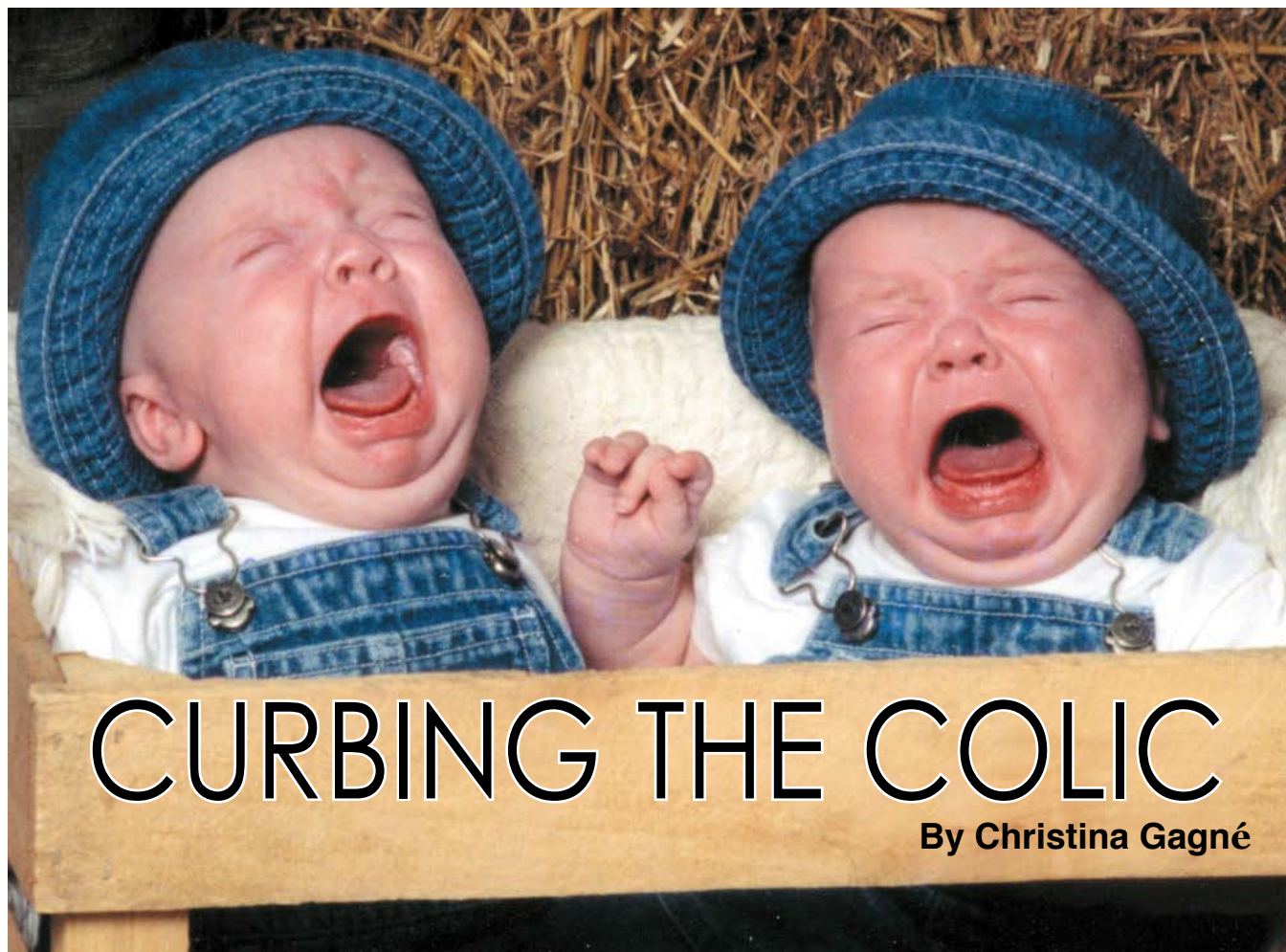


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CURBING THE COLIC

By Christina Gagné

P rison camps use recordings of wailing infants as a method of torture, I read in Dr. Harvey Karp's book, *The Happiest Baby on the Block*¹. Given this information, how would my husband, Mathieu, and I endure our twins' colic, I wondered? Could we survive months of endless agonizing days with our wits intact?

These questions overtook me during the early months of my babies' lives. My answers? Focus on short blocks of time, set simple goals, repeat whatever works for the babies, fit in diversions whenever possible, and keep chanting, "This too shall pass," because it will. Surviving colic wasn't easy, and I can't say I did it graciously, losing weight and much of my ability to concentrate and converse along the way, but I found the following daily regimen helped me regain my sanity and enthusiasm for parenthood.

The morning, my least favorite block of time, found me concentrating on making it to the twins' first feeding at 9:00 a.m. Marc and Charles fed a couple of times overnight and were usually awake every hour, so, when they arose for the day at 7:00 a.m., I cuddled them in our king-size bed, shushing them and rubbing their backs until 9:00 a.m. This practice selfishly gave me a couple of restful hours to appreciate my quiet twins, but I knew it also gave the boys what they needed - more sleep.

The twins began our next block of time at 9:00 a.m. with a chorus of yelps, and I began thinking about my subsequent goal - making it to their 1:00 p.m. feeding. Taking a deep breath and turning on some classical music as a diversion, I changed and dressed the little guys, fed them, and tried to utilize their vibrating bouncy seats, swings, and slings, usually only getting a few minutes out of each device. On a good day, we managed until about 11:00 a.m. with these methods before the twins became inconsolable. We then needed to get moving, so I packed the little men up in the car or the stroller. The motion seemed to bring the twins some comfort, so we walked and drove for hours. I sometimes endured stretches of screaming and concerned looks from passers-by, so I walked on roads less traveled and drove on the highway to avoid red lights. To battle my fatigue while driving, I tuned into the National Public Radio station, which kept my brain alert and offered soothing voices for the babies.

I congratulated myself each time I reached 1:00 p.m., the twins' next feeding time. Though the feedings were not easy, I was relieved to have an activity that provided some relative calm. Once finished, we set off on our travels again in the car or the stroller. The late afternoon feeding wasn't until 5:00 p.m., and the intervening hours often crawled by. I knew we were at least benefiting from the walking - me from the physical exercise, and the twins from the fresh air - and I found

this a good time to keep up my positive mental exercises, repeating my slogan, "This too shall pass." I also eagerly anticipated my upcoming evening diversions, as I kept concentrating on my next goal, the twins' 5:00 p.m. feeding.

Hooray, I had made it through the 5:00 p.m. feeding, and soon Mathieu would be home from work or a kind loved one would agree to come over and provide some relief. Together, we practiced the "Cuddle Cure" on the twins, a technique I learned from Dr. Karp's book, *The Happiest Baby on the Block*, which proved helpful in calming the babies, at least temporarily. Night after night, we employed this procedure, holding Marc and Charles on their sides with pacifiers in mouths, shushing them, swaying them, and patting their bottoms. Once a twin relaxed, we might try him in a swing or bouncy seat long enough to eat or do some chores, but we'd typically have to return to the shushing and patting before long.

While performing the Cuddle Cure, Mathieu, with his unshakable optimism, diverted me with tales of the fun we'd have with the twins in the future. My friends and relatives retold their life stories and distracted me with gossip. Having these individuals visit in the evening was an enormous lift. I beamed when I saw Mathieu arrive home, and my spirits soared when I heard a friend's car pull up in front of our house, knowing I'd receive a burst of energy from their enthusiasm and conversation.

Several evenings I was on my own and had to muster up vast amounts of energy to pacify the babies myself. I'd pick Charles up, perform the Cuddle Cure, put Charles in a swing, then pick Marc up, use the Cuddle Cure, place him in a swing, return to Charles, and so on. Over time, I figured out a way to practice the Cuddle Cure on both babies simultaneously. I sat in front of the television with my feet up on our reclining chair and held each baby perpendicularly in front of me, one behind the other. I'd turn on a news program to keep my mind from turning to mush, as I shushed and patted for hours.

The next task, setting up for the long overnight, was always a foreboding one, as I thought of the sleep interruptions to follow. But at least Mathieu or a friend usually assisted with the 9:00 p.m. bedtime feeding to try and ensure a calm start to the night and allow me to collapse into bed, hoping to cobble together a few hours of disjointed sleep.

Over time, longer periods of tranquility began to emerge during the days so that we even started socializing in playgroups and baby classes. By 6 months of age, Marc and Charles had conquered colic, and they are now little cherubs. People remark on how happy they appear, making Mathieu and I chuckle and remember how vastly different things were only months before. ♥

Christina Gagné has written extensively in the legal field over the last 16 years, most recently in her role as a Guardian ad Litem for several Juvenile Courts in Massachusetts. Ms. Gagné is temporarily living in London with her husband and 1-year-old twins and is connected to an active twins group in the Northwest London area.

¹Karp, Harvey. *The Happiest Baby on the Block*. New York: Bantam, 2003.

Colic is probably caused by an immature digestive and/or central nervous system. As many as one in four infants younger than 3 months develop colic at some point in their first 6 months. Crying jags may continue for three hours or more, and may occur three or four times a week. Don't lose hope. Colic is a passing phase. It won't affect your babies' long-term health, either.

Babies who cry because of colic don't experience any more pain than those without colic, so don't worry your babies are not suffering if colicky. Colicky crying is fairly normal. Babies are hardwired to cry, and some babies are hardwired to do colicky crying. Colicky crying usually tapers off after 8 weeks, disappearing by about 6 months. In the meantime, try these steps:

CHANGE YOUR DIET. If breastfeeding, avoid foods that can create gassiness (dairy, beans, onion, caffeine, cabbage, chocolate) or switch to hypoallergenic formula if your infant twins are bottle-fed.

WAITING PERIODS. Try waiting at least 2½ hours between feedings, and limit each feeding to 30 minutes. This might help calm the system. Feed your babies in a calm, quiet spot. This often helps your twins sleep longer and cry less.

SWADDLE. Flailing arms and legs can start a crying jag. Swaddling works. Wrap a fussy twin in a swaddling blanket to replicate the sensation of being in the womb—prevents a "startle response" that triggers more crying.

TRY THE COLIC HOLD. Hold your baby face down, supporting him with your forearm between his legs. Clasp your hands under his tummy. The pressure of the babies' own weight puts gentle pressure on the abdominal area.

BACK RUBS. Lie on your back with your infant on your chest (known as kangarooing); rub your baby's back.

PACING. Try the old standard: Hold your baby, and pace the floor, bouncing.

MUSIC / NOISE. Play music or sing. Create "white noise" using a background noise machine, vacuum cleaner, radio static (this simulates the sound your babies heard while in the uterus).

CHANGE OF SCENE. Go to another part of the house or outdoors to break the cycle of crying.

DRIVING. The car's motion and hum of the engine soothe some babies.

SWING. Battery-operated swings (and/or vibrating bouncers) are great for unhappy babies.

TWINS AND TANTRUMS

What's louder, wilder and harder to stop than one toddler throwing a tantrum?

Ask Christy Pierce, whose 23-month-old twins, Malena and Marley, throw double-team tantrums. "Malena will become excessively clingy, then Marley will fight for my attention," says Pierce. "If I'm holding them, they'll try to shove each other off my lap."

Whether the scream fest is synchronized or serial, tantruming twins are far more challenging than singletons. To cope with the double whammy of twin tantrums, it helps to understand the twin dynamic and use strategies specifically tailored for two.

TARGET THE TRIGGERS

Twins have distinct temperaments, so parents must adjust their responses to tantrums accordingly, advises Carrie Kartman. When her twins, Caleb and Christopher (now 10), threw tantrums as toddlers, cuddling always soothed one. But for the other, hugging and holding was unwelcome interference.

Parents may have to "split the difference," says Noelle Cochran, PsyD and co-founder of Symbio, which offers behavioral and psychological services for families with young children. "It's a total balancing act. Calm down one and he'll be less likely to set off the other."

Between the ages of 18 and 36 months, twins, like singletons, are trying to figure out how much power

By Marinell James

and control they have and how to get more, says LeLe Diamond, MFT and Symbio co-founder. The stress of dealing with an ever-present "competitor" for parental attention, toys and other resources can be a tantrum trigger.

When Kartman's twins were toddlers, they struggled over toys: "Even if I got two of the same thing, they'd want the same one. It was totally about one having what his brother had." This is common among twins, says Cochran. "For a toddler to feel like they possess something, they actually have to be in contact with it. That's why it doesn't matter if you have two of the same thing. We see this with twins even when they're quite young. It's not about sharing, it's about possession."

To help her three-year-old identical twins, Ava and Olivia, be less "territorial," Terri DeCort writes their names on everything. Sometimes, even this strategy fails – once her husband filled two "Ava" cups by mistake. The twins made sure he paid for his error. Cups and what they contained were also a bone of



Marley (left) and Malena Pierce

contention for Kartman's twins. "They always checked to see who had more. I had to use cups that weren't transparent, so they couldn't measure."

When Pierce reads to Malena and Marley, the girls fight over who gets to hold the book and turn the pages, and a tantrum sometimes results.

To resolve control issues between twins, Cochran suggests teaching behaviors such as counting, using timers and taking turns. Such cooperation is a critical part of helping twins manage their twinship, she notes. If these strategies fail, you can do what Kartman did – put the disputed object in "time-out" for 24 hours.

Transitions are another time when twins may feel they lack control and therefore throw a tantrum. "Try making it more gradual, by saying, 'Is there anything else you want to do before we leave in five minutes?'" rather than, 'We're leaving in five minutes,'" suggests Heather Dittillo, MSW, Manager of Program Development and Training for the OneKindWord Program, which provides support to families with young children.

DEFUSE THE BOMB

Despite your best efforts, at times it's impossible to prevent tantrums. Here are some dos and don'ts for ef-

DO Stay calm. "Children need to borrow our control when they're out of control," says Hedda Sharapan, director of early childhood initiatives for Family Communications Inc., producers of Mister Rogers' Neighborhood.

Try distraction. Pierce finds that taking Malena and Marley outside or giving them a bath soothes them. Give the child space. DeCort has Ava sit on her Dora the Explorer couch until she calms down. Reconnect. As the tantrum subsides, "hug them and let them know you love them, no matter what," says Dittillo. "We all make mistakes. They need to learn that you come back afterward and make things right."

Talk it over. When everyone is calm, talk about the tantrum and how things could be different next time. "Do it with the twins together," advises Cochran. "Twins experience themselves as a unit. The one who didn't have a tantrum is still part of the reconnection, and needs to see that mom isn't mad at their sibling." Get support. Join a group specifically for mothers of twins. "If you're around families with singletons, you feel like you're underperforming," says Kartman. "Any mom can pick up one screaming kid and get out of the park, but what do you do with two?"

DON'T Ask questions during a tantrum. "You're asking them to think when they can't," says Cochran. "It will only make them fall apart more."

Lecture. "Kids are not teachable when they're having a tantrum or heading toward it," says Diamond. Save the speeches for when they simmer down.

Ask for the impossible. Avoid saying things like, 'I need you to calm down, can you do that for me?' It puts too much pressure on the child to pull herself together for the parent's sake, Diamond says.

Lose perspective. "We tend to get angry at children for being angry or having tantrums," says Sharapan. "But their anger is a reaction to feeling powerless, frustrated, helpless or scared." ♥

THE 411 ON TANTRUMS & TEMPERAMENT

These resources provide useful advice about dealing with anger, as well as insights into children's temperament and stage-by-stage emotional and social development.

What Do You Do With the Mad that You Feel? (DVD) – geared to both parents and children, it's part of the Mister Rogers' Neighborhood series of "Life Lessons."

Family Communications Inc. (www.fci.org/parenting.asp) - the "Resources for Parenting" section has articles about "angry feelings" and tips for helping children channel anger into constructive behavior.

One Kind Word (www.onekindword.org) - offers steps and strategies for managing anger and regaining calm and control.

Temperament Tools: Working with Your Child's Inborn Traits by Helen Neville and Diane Clark Johnson – parenting strategies that work with different temperaments.

The Emotional Life of a Toddler by Alicia Lieberman – helps parents better understand their one- to three-year-olds' emotions.

The Magic Years by Selma Fraiberg – looks at how young children cope with the world and developmental challenges.

The Gesell Institute of Human Development's Series Your One-Year-Old to Your Ten- to Fourteen-Year-Old by Louis Bates Ames – covers the main emotional, intellectual and social issues at each stage of a child's development.

Kids, Parents and Power Struggles by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka – strategies for turning power struggles into opportunities to teach problem solving and cooperation.

The Good Enough Parent: A Book on Childrearing by Bruno Bettelheim - shows parents how to help a child become "the person he or she would like to be."

Marinell James is a freelance writer and mother of two daughters, ages 11 and 5. Her writing has also appeared in *Pregnancy and Family Circle* magazines.



or five days after the first day of attendance of students during the school year if the students are enrolled in the school after the school year commences. The school may make recommendations to parents but will honor the placement request of the parents unless factual evidence supports the multiple birth children should be separated. At the end of the first grading period, if the principal determines that the requested classroom placement is disruptive to the school, the principal may determine the appropriate classroom placement for the siblings. A parent may appeal such placement in the manner provided by the school district policy. During an appeal, the siblings shall remain in the classroom chosen by the parent. To understand your rights and responsibilities and for complete wording of the bill please contact Carla Kordek at the Florida Twins Law Campaign (ckordek@gmail.com or call 813-752-0056). Families, please thank Senator Gary Siplin (D-Orlando) and Representative Bill Heller (D-St. Petersburg) for sponsoring this legislation in the house and senate. Without the diligent efforts of our sponsors getting our senate bill out of messages in the house on the last day of our legislative session, this bill would have had to wait another year to become realized. Congratulations families of multiple birth children, you now have a real choice in the classroom placement of your children. Together or separate, one size does not fit all multiple birth children. For more information on the research behind Florida Twins Law go to www.twinslaw.com and click the research tab.

www.TwinsMagazine.com Launches NEW Website Design!

We are pleased to announce that TWINS™ Magazine online has a brand new look and design! You can still access the most up-to-date information and resources for parents of multiples on the internet at www.TwinsMagazine.com but can now enjoy many more features on our site. One thing you will notice immediately is the powerful new search engine we have developed to allow you to easily find the information you need right away. The new design will be much easier to use and we are also pleased to unveil some fantastic, new twin-specific products to our Shoppe and Bookshelf you will certainly want to check out and we even have some great stuff for the grandparents. Other changes to our newly designed site will soon include an update to our message boards that will add enhanced features and some exciting new technology to the world's largest online support community for multiples, too! We will soon be seeking YOUR help and input on ways to make our online support community even better than it already is and to offer even more support and services for our readers. This is an exciting time to log on and see all the exciting new changes at www.TwinsMagazine.com. ♥



Management of Strokes in Children

The Anthony Twins



When one of Letitia Anthony's newborn twins had problems breathing, neither she — nor medical staff — ever imagined stroke. "Todd was inconsolable at times, crying and twitching, but the doctors and nurses were telling us those things were normal for a premature baby," said Anthony, who gave birth one month early in 2004. "On the day we were to be discharged, there was a lot more twitching. I cried, because I knew something was wrong. My husband, Scott, insisted that Todd be given more tests before he was released." A magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) test revealed Todd suffered a stroke at birth that affected both sides of his brain. The couple also learned the twitching was due to frequent seizures, a result of the stroke. The stroke left Todd, now 4 years old, with deficits on his right side. "My husband and I are both physical therapists, but never learned anything in school about pediatric stroke," said Anthony, a resident of Edmond, Oklahoma. "We didn't realize that children could have strokes." But children do have strokes, according to a new American Heart Association/American Stroke statement—Management of Stroke in Children—published this past July in the Stroke Journal of the American Heart Association.

Among the statement's findings:

- While the risk of stroke increases with advancing age in adults, the risk in children is greatest in the first year of life, particularly in the first two months.
- Stroke in the first month of life occurs in about one in every 4,000 births.
- Stroke can occur before birth.
- More than half of children who have a stroke have

a known risk factor, and one or more risk factors are often discovered in others after a thorough evaluation.

• In newborns, the first symptoms of stroke are often seizures that involve only one extremity, such as one arm or leg. That symptom is so common that stroke is thought to account for about 10 percent of seizures in full-term newborns.

"Stroke in children, while still uncommon, is not as rare as we used to think," said E. Steve Roach, M.D., chair of the American Heart Association statement writing group and professor of pediatric neurology at The Ohio State University College of Medicine in Columbus, Ohio. The association's first scientific statement on managing stroke in infants and children also provides healthcare professionals with evidence-based guidelines for stroke prevention, evaluation and treatment. "Even as recently as 20 years ago, most people in the medical profession would have considered stroke to be an unlikely diagnosis in a child because it was so strongly associated with adults with atherosclerosis," Roach said. "Improvements in diagnostic techniques have made it possible to confirm that a stroke has occurred when they were only suspected before, and research has helped us better define treatment protocols."

Mary Kay Ballasiotes, currently a resident of Evans, Ga., was aware of her daughter's in-utero stroke before her birth in November 1997. "Michelle suffered a stroke between 20 and 29 weeks gestation, but we have no idea why," Ballasiotes said. "It just didn't seem possible that this little baby, who looked so perfect to us, could have experienced such trauma." As a result of the stroke, Michelle is missing a small part of the left side of her brain. Her deficits are on her right side.

Despite the debilitating setbacks, Todd and Michelle are progressing in their recovery. Both mothers credit early diagnosis and immediate therapy. "I want as many people as possible to know that kids can have strokes, too," said Michelle, 10, an active American Heart Association volunteer who is spreading the word about infants/children and stroke. "People think stroke can only happen to adults."

The most common underlying risk factors for childhood stroke are sickle cell disease and congenital or acquired heart disease. Associated conditions include: head and neck infections; systemic conditions such as inflammatory bowel disease and autoimmune disorders; head trauma; and dehydration.

Suspected maternal risk factors for infant stroke include a history of infertility, chorioamnionitis (infection in the fluid surrounding an unborn baby), premature rupture of membranes and preeclampsia (pregnancy-related high blood pressure). ♥

Information derived from a Scientific Statement from a Special Writing Group of the American Heart Association Stroke Council and the Council on Cardiovascular Disease in the Young. Published July 17, 2008, doi:10.1161/STROKEAHA.108.189696



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21st Century Parenting: Ode to George and Jane

By Mike Poff



At first glance, modern parenting seems to be a collection of confusions, configurations and oddities. The 21st century family as seen through the hungry lens of our lightning quick contemporary media leaves one longing for the good ole days of George and Jane Jetson. Two kids, one dog, working dad, stay at home mom and flying cars that use no petroleum and exhaust... only bubbles.

No matter what you contribute the relational ambiguities to; the effects are now fertile fodder for entertainment programming. It seems that if you have higher-order multiples, we are the preferred subjects in the recent explosion of reality TV shows. I cannot tell you how many folks ask Pam or me weekly, "Do you watch Jon & Kate?" My kind answer is usually, "No, you will have to excuse us if we are not all caught up in the hype over mega-families and multi-birth fascination As Seen on TV." I applaud those holding it together in real life and prime-time. Indeed my hat is off to Jon & Kate but I find plenty of fulfilling entertainment in the real thing right here at home.

We are not your average demographic no matter what measure you use. We have a successful entrepreneur mom and a stay-at-home dad of quadruplets, plus three more, not your average neighbors. Our unique arrangement has not been lost on the media either. We had TV stations coming after us before Pam had even been able to regroup and visit our new fab-four in the NICU!

We stayed out of the spotlight for several years because we understood the real deal. It is not about us. It, our parenting, is about raising the kids, sanely, Godly and lovingly. Still, Wife Swap got wind of us a few years back. They had caught some of my writing it seemed. Ironically, no matter how much they looked, they could not find a couple to match us to. Not enough dysfunction I like to think.

Then, I began writing this column for TWINS™ Magazine, freelance spots for other magazines, e-zine interviews, front-page newspaper articles and who knows what else is in the wings. Why, you might ask,

have we now stepped out fully onto the hoopla highway? Fame & fortune perhaps? No, nothing quite that crass I assure you. It is just that as the drum beat and interest quickens around our little mountain family, I feel the need to be reflective about my own motives and purposes.

We have entertained small groups in our home over the years and those small groups quickly grew to over 50 folks for fellowship, encouragement and Bible study, Quadfather-style. Single-moms and the relationally, financially and emotionally strained made up the core of our little assemblages. In the midst of this mix of sweet people and sour circumstance, I became determined to make a difference.

Dysfunction I knew well, it is how I was raised. My family of origin was ahead of its time in this regard. How to help others not recreate it in the staunch challenges of 21st century parenting fast became my passion. One of the first things

Pam and I figured out pretty quickly down this road is that you cannot let your time and priorities get out of order. People are often needy. From these needs, real or imagined, they can slowly suck you dry if you are not careful. This is not an option for anyone especially parents of multiples plus.

It is easy to point out hosts of those who have sought to help others and have crashed and burned in their efforts. Many have been or still are very high profile Ministers, TV show Hosts, Authors and Experts of every stripe have advocated for strong lives, strong faith, strong marriages

and strong families only to explode in thick clouds of shortcomings, dysfunction, divorce and hypocrisy.

Sadly, it has been excessively easy to point out the guides and seekers that became lost. People, who got their priorities jumbled and then stumbled, too busy reading the map for someone else to watch the path that they were treading. Possibly well intentioned, some even sincere, but all still deserving of compassion in the midst of "their" personal struggles.

Pam and I have learned two important things about having an open heart for people. "What you say can start an argument but what you have actually done is

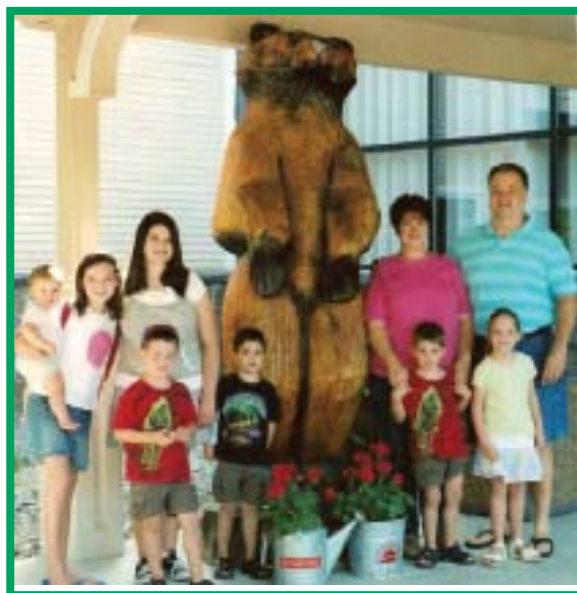
not debatable". As well as, "Encouragement can be given without trying while advice is best when asked for." If you add these to a set of straight priorities grounded in personal faith and relational commitment, your life and family can flourish and your heart might not be crushed as you share it with others.

George and Jane were spin offs of the Flintstones. The Jetson's were carefully researched and fashioned to draw and hold a highly desirable audience. They succeeded and are entertaining their fourth generation of viewers to this very day. Still, there is a difference between cartoons vs. real life; long runs in syndication vs. impacting a generation; and entertainment vs. parenting.

We as parents of twins, trips and beyond add multiplication to the challenge of 21st century parenting. Beyond all the experts and authors, TV shows and support groups there is a truth we should all hold on to in the midst of our "multiple challenges". Those people out there that are making it work, maintaining their relationships and raising solid families are the real stars of 21st century parenting. These are impacting future generations, changing the culture and the world one diaper, dinner and hug at a time.

Yes, George and Jane, Elroy and Judy were spin offs. Fred, Wilma and Pebbles were their template. As seen on TV, they have all been huge successes. Successful families, especially multiple varieties, require love, focus, purpose and grace. This mixture is more rewarding and entertaining than anything reality television has to offer. When we implement these strategies in real life, regardless of our platforms or timeslots, each family member becomes the real star. ♡

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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By Michelle LaRowe Conover

Managing Multiples:

Childcare Options When Both Parents Work

For over a decade, I've had the privilege of working with dual income families of multiples as a professional nanny. I've also helped several other families with twins navigate their childcare dilemmas and choose the best option for their families.

When both parents work outside of the home, finding the perfect childcare option for their twins can be especially challenging. Parents of multiples are often limited in their options because of pricing, program availability and the increased need for flexibility. So if you and your spouse are both employed outside of the home and are weighing out your childcare choices, here are some things for you to consider.

There are four main full-time childcare options for your twins. Center based daycare, family (or home based) daycare, preschool, and nanny or au pair care.

When both parents work outside of the home, getting twins out of the house on time and meeting strict pick up timeframes can be challenging. For this reason alone, many families of multiples find that center-based day care isn't their best choice. Not to mention that when you sign up for a daycare program you pay per child, not per family. This can mean that the cost of your childcare literally doubles for your dynamic duo. And as any parent who is familiar with daycare knows, finding two slots in the same quality program brings a whole other set of challenges. And since most center based daycare programs will not allow even mildly ill children to attend, parents of multiples are often forced to take twice as many sick days off from work than the average parents to care for their pair.

But this childcare setting does come with some pros. Since center based daycare is highly regulated, you can be sure that the staff is qualified and that your center is inspected for safety issues regularly. Although the cost for center based childcare varies from state to state, specific hours and program descriptions, you can expect to pay \$10,000 to \$30,000 per year for center based childcare for your twins.

And although home based daycare may offer slightly more flexibility with regards to pick up and drop off times and caring for the mildly ill child, with home based daycare, you're still paying for your childcare per slot, not per family. And since home based daycares can be less regulated than their center-based counterparts (and in some cases aren't regulated at all), it's often up to you to determine the quality of care and cleanliness of the daycare you've chosen. You can expect to pay on average, \$8,400 to \$19,000 per year for your twins care.

For parents who are looking for an academic program for their preschoolers, they often find that nursery

or preschool is a great option. But for this option to pan out for working parents, the program is also going to have to offer an extended day program that will provide care during all of their working hours. Preschool programs are regulated with the same intensity as center based

daycares,

so again

you can

be sure

that the

staff is

trained

and

that the

center is

regularly

monitored.

You can

expect to

pay anywhere

from

\$7,500 to

\$22,000

per year

plus any

fees associated

with an

extended

day program

for your twins.

When the pros and cons of the childcare choices are weighed out, many dual income families with multiple children are often surprised that nanny care or hiring an au pair turns out to be the best and often most cost effective choice for their family. Now obviously I may be a bit biased, but hear me out. While nanny care will require the most effort and energy with regards to finding, hiring and managing a childcare provider, many parents of multiples find that the flexibility, the individualized care and that being the employer means that they're the boss (and can designate the rules, routines and responsibilities) makes the effort and energy well worth it.

Now it's important to distinguish here between a professional nanny and a babysitter. A professional nanny is a caregiver that comes into your home and provides complete care for your twins. This alone is often all it takes for parents to decide that nanny care is



their best option. Not having to wake their twins to get them to daycare, worry about napping locations, or what they'll do if their twins get sick become added bonuses. When employed by two income families, nannies are often responsible for everything when it comes to the twins. From doing the twin's laundry, to the weekly grocery shopping, to preparing meals and bathing the kids, the role of your nanny can encompass as much or as little as the you and her agree.

Not to mention that professional nannies usually come with an educational background in early childhood education and extensive in home care giving experience, a nanny provides opportunities for the educational, social and emotional growth of your twins. And when it comes to socialization, it's a myth that kids cared for by nannies aren't social. Most professional nannies have an extended network of colleagues with whom they arrange outings and play dates with. And since it's likely a nanny will be eager to take your twins out and about to the library, enrichment classes or to the park, you can count on your twins having fun and exciting days. And with a nanny, you pay per family, not per child. Better said, the more kids you have the more cost effective it is to employ a nanny. On average, nanny care will cost \$26,000 per year and up for your family. If you choose to use a nanny placement agency you will also incur a finder's fee and since you'd be an employer, you'd also be responsible for employment taxes. Now while the sticker price may be a bit higher, it's important to remember that the average nanny workweek is based on 50 hours.

Buy many families have even found creative ways to cut their nanny costs. A family I worked for recently did a split shift so that they could keep my hours down. I would be greeted by the dad when I came in and the mom relieved me at night. Other families opt to hire a live-in nanny or au pair where they pay room and board in lieu of a percentage of salary. Still others offer other perks like health insurance, gym memberships, and educational benefits as attractive additions to a smaller salary.

So if you are looking for flexibility, customized care and to take complete charge of your childcare situation, choosing a nanny may be the best option for your family.

Whatever childcare option you choose for your twins, it's important that you know the pros and cons of your choice, to screen the provider and to check in regularly (an unexpectedly) with your caregiver to assure that your expectations for quality care are being met. ♥

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 just had their first child, a baby girl in July 2008.



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A Dream of Having Two

By Wendy Irvine

The couple had always dreamed of having two children. And life progressed right on schedule. Their fairytale began sweetly, and simply, enough. Dana and Chris met in college, fell in love and, with complete confidence in their future, married in 1991 at the young ages of 22 and 23. But as any card-carrying adult knows too well, life has a tsunami way of wreaking devastation on our most lovingly built dreams... Almost.

While many are cautioned to avoid young marriages, Dana and Chris McNulty knew they had made the right choice.



"Every anniversary we would say to each other, 'could our marriage get any better?' says Dana. "And every year it did! We were one of the lucky couples. We were so happy together." Not only was the couple delighted to have found each other, they also planned for

the children they would one day have.

"We always talked about having two kids," says Dana. "We even set up college funds for these two imaginary children of ours. We knew we were going to have two kids and because I come from a family with a lot of twins, I always told Chris that I was going to have twins." In 1998, the Midwest couple moved from Chicago to a small freckle of a rural town in Northern California called Cool, about an hour out of Sacramento. Soon after moving, Chris noticed back pain. With the chaos of the move and being a runner who endured the usual runners' aches, Chris dismissed the pain and got on with the bustle of his life.

"Finally that winter Chris went to the doctor who called his back pain and headaches: migraines," says Dana. "We went through four GP's and two neurosurgeons before Chris was finally diagnosed accurately with a brain tumor in July of 1999. He started chemo on our wedding anniversary in August. In October, Chris went from walking with a walker to a wheelchair in a matter of two weeks." Because the cancer spread to his spine, paralysis aggressively surged from

Chris' toes up his body not stopping until it induced a ringing sound in his ears and rendered him blind. During that turbulent summer of chemo and radiation, a doctor suggested that the couple bank Chris' sperm with the hopes that once he beat the brain tumor, the couple could use the sperm to create a family, so the couple followed his suggestion.

"By New Year's, Chris lost his cognitive abilities and was mentally like a child," says Dana. "Earlier I had wanted to take care of him at home, on my own. But on New Year's I knew it was time to call hospice in. February 2000, he passed away." Later the family learned that a stage one brain tumor Chris had had removed at the age of three, considered long in remission, reared it's stage four head and took his life.

"Those first two years, I was lucky if I could get out of bed and function," says Dana. "Later I began to date, but I gave myself a mental time clock that when I turned thirty-six and was still single I would make the decision about whether I would use Chris' sperm." The right man didn't present himself, but her birthday did. Flying back to the Midwest that year Dana consulted both Chris' parents and her own about their thoughts on using Chris' sperm for conception. Both couples were ecstatic at the prospect of a baby in their future and when Chris' dad heard the exciting news jokingly said to Dana, "It's about time."

"I did three rounds of IUI and when I was thirty-seven started IVF. At that point I found out that I had a fertility problem on top of it. My eggs were that of a forty-five year old. My eggs may have always been that way or it's possible that the severe trauma of watching Chris die affected my ability to have kids. Cancer took my fertility too." As Dana dealt with IVF and infertility another challenge reared its head: the critics. "I had two sets of friends who were very against my decision," says Dana. "One I expected the other not so much. One couple came to my house for dinner and said, 'we're really busy and don't have time to help.' I thought, I never asked for any help. The guy kept saying that I was choosing a no-father situation and no matter what I said there was no winning the argument. They haven't been over for dinner since."

Finally the incredible news arrived that the third IVF was successful and Dana, at age thirty-eight, was going to be a mommy times two (just as Dana had always told Chris). She would have twins. Pregnant and far from Chris' and her own family, Dana's ability to get through the most difficult of times on her own would serve her well. "I think being pregnant alone was one of the harder things," says Dana. "Going through infertili-

ty alone means there's no shoulder to cry on and nobody to give me the shots. Occasionally I had to go to the neighbor's for a shot. Or when you find out you're pregnant: I couldn't run home and make a dinner and serve baby carrots and try to get him to figure out what's going on. Who brings you crackers and ginger ale when you're sick? Who do I share the first ultra sound with? First kicks? I did all of that by myself. Yes, it was hard."

On June 7, 2006 Cole Christopher McNulty and Kyle Christopher McNulty made their highly anticipated debut. "Kyle looks a lot like Chris which is almost kind of freaky," says Dana. "I have old video from when Chris



was two years old and he and Kyle could be dead ringers for each other. So Kyle has his looks and his lack of patience and Cole has Chris' charm and that twinkle in his eye that says, 'you can't be mad at me because I'm too cute.'"

And Chris is a part of the twins' lives. "The boys know that Chris is their daddy. We talk about him," says Dana. "Chris' picture hangs in their room and we say goodnight to him every night." And the cutest moment in having twins? "When they kiss and hug each other," says Dana. "It is so nice to know they are friends and love each other." Interestingly, they are a perfect mirror of their mommy and daddy's relationship. We adults know the score. Fairytales can crash in smithereens leaving fractured pieces and grief in the debris. But what the luckiest of adults learn, as we gingerly pick our way through life, it's the pieces of a broken fairytale that can be carefully tended and used to forge a new story: one with peek-a-boo smiles and friendly pirates and sticky popsicle kisses.

The couple had always had a dream of having two children. And so they did. ♥

For more information about in vitro fertilization (IVF), see Wendy's sidebar article on page 31.

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.



Is She a Real Mother of Twins?

Aaron & Kevin Beemer



by Patti Beemer

“Are you sitting down? We have premature twins born on Saturday and we want to place them in your home.”

With those words from the agency’s social worker, our lives were changed forever. Nearly twenty five years later, that moment is etched in my memory. Exactly four years earlier (to the day), my husband, Dave and I had submitted our initial adoption paperwork. The morning after that fateful call, we went to the hospital to meet our identical twin sons and brought them home a day later.

With Huntington’s disease (genetic neurological disorder) running in my family, we always planned to adopt. However, there was nothing that could prepare us for the arduous and emotional process of adopting. What is clear to me now is that whether you have nine minutes, nine days, or nine months to get ready, you are never really ready for multiples! Our first months were spent with round-the-clock feedings, major sleep deprivation, and immense joy! Adoption was the way we became a family and our daily challenges and joys were the same as others.

The process of background checks, interviews, and home visits took over a year. As Lois recalls, “Then we waited and waited and waited.” When the call came, they were asked if they would consider taking a family of six children. Lois was from a small family, her husband was an only child, and they were living in a tiny two-bedroom house. While their hearts went out to these children and they understood the need for them to stay together, they just felt they weren’t the right parents for them.

Their plans for a family were put on hold with an unexpected move to Colorado where Dave would open a new company office. They began building a home and after numerous delays, they started facing the reality that Dave was nearing the barrier age of the era – 40, and Lois wasn’t too far behind. Were they willing to complete the whole screening process again, as information was not shared between states? They decided to go forward one last time and almost nine months to the day later, the call came, “Mrs. Gallmeyer, would you and Mr. Gallmeyer consider adopting twin boys?” Inside Lois was screaming, “YES! YES!” but gained enough control to tell the social worker she needed to talk it over with her husband. In less than five minutes she called back and shared their answer...they would most assuredly consider twins.

The process began two days later when they went to the Social Services office to observe the boys. This wasn’t an ordinary twin adoption, though. Nearly two years earlier, the twins had been separated when the state took them into custody. At that time there was not a foster home that could accommodate two preemie infants. The boys had only seen each other on very occasional visits over those years. As they observed the boys through a one-way glass, it was apparent they were strangers to each other.

The boys were placed with Lois and Dave one at time. Their first son came home on the day after his second birthday. One month later his brother joined the family. One of their sons was nearly non-verbal after being in a foster family with one other child with a disability. His brother had been in a foster family with several older children and was much more verbal and active. Due to the unusual circumstances of their separation, they became the focus of a study of separated twins being done by the University of Denver. The Gallmeyers were fortunate to have the professors’ and researchers’ assistance and advice throughout the process of re-introducing their twin sons to each other.

As new mothers of twins, Lois and I were anxious to connect with oth-

Lois and Dave Gallmeyer, of Albuquerque, New Mexico, had a very different journey to their adoption of fraternal twin boys; Bill & John now age 33. After several miscarriages, they decided to explore adoption. They were living in Cincinnati, Ohio and after evaluating their options began working with Social Ser-

ers raising multiples, but, we faced some challenges. When she went to her first parents of twins club meeting she was greeted rather coolly and was told they would need to search their bylaws to see if she would qualify for membership since she “had only adopted her twins.” She didn’t return. I found my local parents of twins support group when my twins were nearly six months old. Years later I discovered I, too had been the topic of debate for a few members. They questioned, “Is she a real mother of twins?” One of the other members replied, “There are two little boys who call her mommy and that is as real as it gets!”

About three years after becoming a family, the Gallmeyers moved to New Mexico. The timing proved to be ideal. Their boys would be starting kindergarten in the fall and Dave would have the opportunity to open another company office. Shortly after their arrival, Lois saw a notice in the newspaper about the Albuquerque Mothers of Twins Club. She attended a meeting and was warmly welcomed. Today she is proud to be an Honorary Member of the club.

Lois and I would meet when our paths crossed a few years later. She was the Executive Secretary for the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc., (NOMOTC) and I was volunteering as my local club’s NOMOTC National Representative. When I called to ask a procedural question, I was ecstatic when Lois shared that she had adopted twin boys. We connected in a way that made me feel that I truly belonged. At the 1989 NOMOTC Convention in Charleston, South Carolina, a share shop was held and mothers of adopted multiples networked with one another. We weren’t alone and the joy I felt in sharing with others was immeasurable and something I will never forget.

Lois and I advocated for parents of adopted multiples and others in unique parenting situations. Today, NOMOTC has over 26,000 members and nearly 400 clubs throughout the country. Each of these groups provides parents of twins and higher-order multiples with support regardless of how they became a family and we applaud their efforts. ♥



Patti Beemer is the mother of identical twin sons, Aaron and Kevin, age 24, and a past president of the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc. and is currently serving as Parliamentarian for the organization. She lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado and is a special education teacher.

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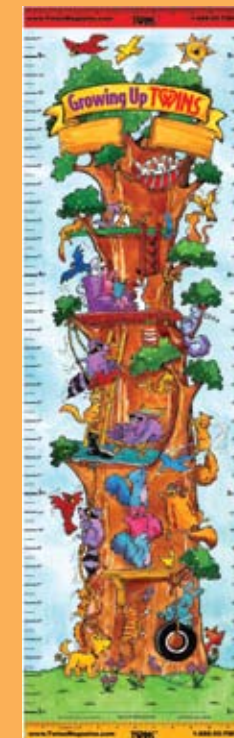
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Expect the Unexpected

By Dan England

Joe Baggett was on his way to work when he got a frantic phone call from his wife, Amy, full of nerves and tears. Joe followed the instincts that had made their six-year marriage run smoothly despite a long, emotional struggle with their attempts to have children. Six times, they had tried artificial insemination, and every time, it had failed.

The anxious, hopeful moments before the results came in, almost like the minutes before Christmas, only to have them rudely dashed apart, would challenge any marriage, but the Baggett's had weathered it well.

In fact, it didn't really hit Joe as to why Amy might be sobbing on the phone with him and feeling like crap, until later. Maybe that's because there were so many other, obvious reasons. The day the Baggett's gave up on having their own children, the Child Welfare office from Boulder, CO, close to the couple's home, called them and said someone, a friend of Amy's mother, had recommended them for a foster parent program and a possible adoption.

The adoption process was quite the opposite of their attempts to get pregnant, as it all went smoothly, almost too smoothly to be believed. They took classes in April, got certified in July and got a baby, A.J. right out of the hospital, just a few days old, in October. It was wonderful. "A.J. was a miracle," Amy said. "He was my baby from the minute we walked in the room. I cried my head off."

But in March of 2007, a little more than a year after they got A.J. and a few months after his adoption was finalized, Child Welfare called them again and asked if they could take A.J.'s half-sister, Rose, who was only a few months old and exactly less than one year younger than A.J. They agreed, and suddenly life was a lot more difficult. A.J. didn't really like having a new baby in the house. And this was in March, smack in the middle of tax season, and Amy worked as an accountant. So it made sense that Amy would be a little stressed, crying and not exactly feeling like she could run a marathon at the moment. But Joe followed his instincts and turned around from his commute to work. And then it hit him. "Are you pregnant?" Joe asked her.

Expect the unexpected...



The idea was crazy. In fact, the two were sleeping in separate beds and were exhausted. She took a pregnancy test. It was positive. They called a doctor right away, and the office just had a cancellation, and since Amy was a high-risk pregnancy, they did an ultrasound. And that's when they got the news.

Yes, they were pregnant. And it was with twins. Twins? Now?

A part of this couple was sad when the doctor told them, a week later, that Amy had lost a twin. But an even larger part was somewhat relieved. The reason her pregnancy was a high risk was that Amy had a defibrillator implanted inside her that shocked her when her heart was about to crash. She was hardly helpless - she even taught spinning classes at the gym - but the thought of putting that kind of a strain on her body had Joe breaking out in hives.

They were relaxed when they went into the doctor's office for their 19-week appointment. They settled in for their ultrasound. Only it looked a little strange. The other twin was back. The Baggett's already called them the miracle babies, but this was really strange. They came through the Immaculate Conception - remember the separate beds? And now it appeared there was some reincarnation going on. They were instantly in love.

"They were so cute," Amy said. "They were both just swimming around in there."

But the addition of the addition would cause some serious problems, and Joe knew it. He began to fret, again, for Amy's health. He had already convinced himself years ago that a pregnancy wasn't going to happen for them, and then he thought they were only having one. "We really tried to rel-

ish everything," Joe said, "but I was a wreck internally." Amy, too, likes to joke; only half-seriously, that adoption was the way to go. You could drink, stay active and then, boom, you've got a baby. Service!

Joe's fears were realized near the end. Her defibrillator shocked her four times in six weeks. When the identical twins, Andrew and Oliver, came early at 33 weeks, on November 7, it was another relief, even if they did have to spend a few weeks in the NICU. The NICU, while scary, wasn't bad. Amy had her own room right next to the boys' incubators.

That first few weeks were hell, tinged with joy. They both worked. Amy didn't want to take time off while they were getting all the care they need in the NICU. They had two kids who struggled with the sudden change and the fact that Mom wasn't home at night and Colorado had just started to show signs of a long, cold, brutal winter.

They never regretted their decision to adopt A.J. and to take in Rose, but those first few months were trying, as they are for any parents of newborn twins and two more under the age of two! Maybe it was good it didn't happen all those years ago. Joe, 45, and Amy, 39, enjoyed their carefree life when they were younger - pictures of rafting and backpacking trips still hang on their family room wall, next to pictures of babies - but they were ready to tackle the toughest circumstances now that they were older. "Someone upstairs thought we could handle it," Joe said. "You know, I'm not sure why they thought that." Things began to look up after those cold winter months. They found a quad stroller on Craig's List. The spring finally began to fight off winter, and they began to go on walks.

On those walks, the chaos in their lives seemed to melt away, along with the thick ice and snow. Problems would always crop up. Their washer would break down from the strain of 10-15 loads a week and they would have to pay an extra \$25.00 to ship the part overnight for repair. But on those walks, the sun would warm their backs, they would sniff the fresh air, and everything would seem to be OK. A few months later, deep into summer, they believe it more than ever. They have learned to expect the unexpected and enjoy life to the fullest. As they take their long walk down the road less traveled for parents of twins and more, it seems like they were meant to take this special journey all along. ♥

by Dan England



Adopting Twins a World Away...

The house that love built!

After two years of waiting, accompanied by hopes strung out thinner than a piano wire, the dream came true for Angi Wilson-Perkins and Jeff Perkins of Loveland, CO. They got the notice that they would be able to adopt Chinese twins on Friday the 13th. And as soon as they brought them home, they began to wonder if that date was an omen.

Angi was 39 and Jeff was 41. They were high school sweethearts and together for 10 years. When Jeff asked Angi if she wanted to marry him, she turned him down the first time. She wanted to finish school. When more than a year passed, Angi asked Jeff if he was going to ask her to marry her again, and he told her no.

You just let me know when you're ready, he told her, and we'll do it. So 14 years ago, she told him, and they were married.

Angi wanted kids but didn't want to get pregnant, so right away, they considered adoption. Only they didn't like the domestic rules of adoption. They didn't want to be selected by the mother. They wanted children under 3. It seemed much easier to go overseas, and they picked China because the process seemed more streamlined. They even specifically asked for twins.

Angi was an only child and didn't want to raise a lonely, only child herself. They both knew their babies would have a few issues growing up. They would never know their family. They would be in a country that wasn't their birthplace. They would always be different. "We wouldn't be able to help them a whole lot with those questions," Jeff said. "We thought it would be nice if they would have someone to talk to about what they were going through and that it would be nice."

Angi had another reason.

"Twins are fun," she said. When they began, it did seem easier. And then it wasn't.

"There were so many highs and lows," Angi said. "You would get excited, and then nothing would happen for four or five months." It got so bad, by the end of the two years, their paperwork was expiring, and they gave up on the idea of adopting Chinese babies. They mourned the dream over a vacation in Hawaii and were ready to start applying domestical-

ly, and that's when they got the call that there were two girls waiting for them.

They finished their vacation and soon after, brought home the babies. It was going to be the start to a joyful period. "Once you have them," Angi said, "it's like you never waited." Only the first few months, they said, were hell. They got the twins at 13 months. But before you start gritting your teeth and how lucky they were to avoid that first year, consider that China's bedtime hours are not the same as Colorado's. In fact, they're exactly the opposite. "They would go to sleep at 6 a.m.," Angi said, "and they would wake up at 6 p.m." For weeks, the two took turns staying up with them while the other got to sleep. By the end of the first week, they were both totally exhausted.

"They would go to bed, and we would stay up and think, well, maybe they will finally sleep," Jeff said. "Then we would go to bed, and a half-hour later, they would wake up, and we would realize that that was an hour that we could have slept.

"They would cry and cry and cry. When we came home, we thought, 'What the heck did we do?' More than a month later, the girls finally began to get used to the time change, and life returned to normal. Well, their new normal, anyway.

Life is better today, and in fact, it's never been better, they say. The girls are a little behind in speech, but their motor skills are developing nicely. They love their twins.

"We have lots of fun," Angi said. "They're learning so much. It's been the best thing we ever did." ♥

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.



About IVF

The advent of the test-tube baby is (trumpets raised) thirty years old. That's right, back in 1978 little Louise Joy Brown made her remarkable debut onto the pages of history and into our world's psyche at 5 lbs. 12 oz. Many were skeptical; Louise Joy seemed an oddity at best, a creepy science experiment at worst, a what-are-those-scientists-up-to-now? Decades later, we recognize Louise as the symbol of an exciting new era that heralded the beginning of in vitro fertilization (IVF), an exciting precursor to a grouping of fertility treatments that we now call assisted reproductive technology (ART). The formidable ART treatments would not only give hope to parents who struggled to conceive, but actually deliver babies into the delighted parents' arms. Sometimes, even two, three or more tiny bundles would make that exciting drive home. It was definitely not our grandmother's world. Today we know that little Louise didn't remain an only child for long, so to speak. It's estimated that over one million children were born due to the scientific methods of ART. The numbers of twin and triplet births skyrocketed between '90 and '04. In 2005 alone, the U.S. saw*:

- 133, 122 twin births (a number that about doubled since 1980 from 68,339)
- 6,208 triplet births
- 418 quadruplet births
- 68 quintuplet births
- ART was estimated to be responsible for:
 - ♦ 17 percent of twin births
 - ♦ 40 percent of triplet births

As ART professionals continue to perfect their science, revise guidelines on the number of embryos transferred and ponder the ethics of producing high order multiples given the known danger to mom and babies, the twin, triplet and higher multiple rates from ART will continue to decline. For many of us who awaken each day to the indescribable joy (and chaos) of life with twins or triplets, we rarely have the luxurious moment to give even a passing thought to our own long relationship with ART. The years of shots, the diamond tiara expense, the girlfriends and sisters who got pregnant seemingly by sharing a toothbrush with their husbands, the arrival of a Louise or, in my case, a Matt and a Josh, has a miraculous way of making all the anger, fear and pain of the infertility process vanish in a nano second. Back in the day, Louise was labeled a miracle test-tube baby. Today we simply call them "ours". ♥

* Statistics compiled from the National Center for Health Statistics.

A special thanks to Wendy Irvine for providing the information for this sidebar article.



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

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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.



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Stopping Sibling Jealousy With Your Singletons

by Dr. Barbara Nefer



Twins are a blessing, but their single siblings don't always see it that way. The excitement and attention of family and friends is typically multiplied when double bundles of joy arrive. Even strangers are drawn to ooh and ah over multiples. This can leave singletons feeling left out, wishing that some of the hoopla would spill over onto them.

As multiples grow, their single sibs might be jealous of their closeness and resent what they see as special treatment. "My younger sister hated having twin brothers," says Tony, an adult twin, looking back at his childhood. "Even though she was the baby, she felt like she was ignored while everyone fawned over us. She never understood how much I envied her because I was so tired of being compared to Tom, being dressed alike, and getting the same presents even though our tastes were so different. All she saw was the attention, and she felt that it was at her expense."

The rift that started in childhood carried through to the present. Tony and Tom are not close to their sister, and they blame those early resentments. Their relationship is cordial, but they're more like acquaintances than siblings.

How can you prevent this from happening in your own household? There are three key

words to remember: equality, emotion and empathy. You must ensure equal treatment for all of your children, acknowledge your singletons' emotions, and offset negative feelings by helping them develop empathy for the downsides faced by their multiple sibs.

Attention is a key area in which you must maintain equality. Make it a daily goal to give focused time to each of your children. Don't simply lump them together and treat them as a group. Establish and maintain special routines that are just between you and each individual child.

Gently guide extended family members and friends to be equal in their attention too. For example, when Aunt Shirley is fussing over the twins, say, "Yes, and Sammy is very proud to be their big brother. I hope they'll grow to be as handsome as him!" or "They're cute but they can be a handful. Thank goodness I have big sister Jo to help me out. I don't know what I'd do without her!" This gives the aunt a subtle reminder and positively reinforces the other child at the same time.

When complimenting your singletons, don't just focus on achievements. Single sibs often feel that they're at a disadvantage because twins get admiration simply for being part of a set. By making your other children

"earn" praise, you add blocks to the wall of resentment.

Prevent this by finding ways to compliment your singles for their own natural born assets: "Julie, I'm so proud of your beautiful red hair. I love the natural curls," or "Jake, you're growing so fast. You're my tall, handsome boy." This gives them credit for something that's as natural as being a multiple.

You can also bring up happy memories of their birth so they don't feel that their arrival was any less special. Positive recollections like, "When you were born, even the doctor was amazed at your cute little mop of dark hair" or "The first time I held you, I never knew I could feel so happy" will help reassure them that they were loved and welcomed just as much as their multiple sibs.

No matter how hard you try to maintain equality, a certain amount of jealousy is natural. Don't sweep negative emotions under the rug or make your child feel guilty for having them. Ignoring them won't make them disappear. They'll simmer below the surface and pop out later, even if it's not until adulthood. If you punish the jealous child, that only makes things worse.

Instead, openly discuss and explore their feelings. For example, let's say that your singleton seems to be resentful because she doesn't have a twin to play with. Your conversation could start like this: "It looks like you wish you had a sister who was closer to your age so you'd always have a playmate like Chris and Connie do. How are you feeling right now?"

If she opens up, she'll probably say that she's lonely, sad, and perhaps even angry. Don't judge her emotions or tell her she shouldn't have them. Instead, validate them with a statement that shows understanding: "I can see how it might feel lonely when they're having fun together and you don't have a playmate. I understand why it makes you angry, too. Sometimes it must feel very unfair."

After validation, you can turn the conversation around and start to build empathy for the challenges of being a multiple. It's easy for siblings to see the benefits, but they often miss the downside. For example, a common issue is comparing twins; teachers, caregivers, and extended family members often believe that if one has special talents or abilities, the other must too. This puts pressure on the twin who might not be as gifted physically or academically.

Use questions to lead the child to her own conclusion rather than simply telling her that twins have it hard too. You might say something like, "I know it must feel like Chris and Connie get all the attention, but how do you think they feel when people are always comparing them? Do you think it frustrates them

as much as their close relationship frustrates you?" Thinking about those questions will help her draw her own correlation between her feelings and those of their siblings.

Even if your youngster has a valid complaint, empathy is still an effective strategy: "I know you think Aunt Mary gave Bobby and Billy better presents for their birthday. Those bikes were very expensive, and it sounds like that made you a little angry."

"Do you think Bobby and Billy ever get upset about birthdays too? Even though they get great gifts, do you think they ever wonder what it would be like to have their very own birthday like you do? Imagine sharing your birthday with someone else. How would that make you feel?"

This approach doesn't put your other child on the defensive or make him feel like his emotions are "wrong." Instead, it acknowledges his viewpoint without judgment but also encourages him to view the other side and to consider the advantages of being a single.

Maggie, the mother of twins and a single son and daughter, has used these strategies successfully. "It's not always easy," she admits. "The twins were premature, so right off the bat they got more attention. But as things settled down, I became more aware of how the situation affected Ryan and Jada. I thought I was a fair mom, but I caught myself showering some extra attention on the babies. It's natural because they needed extra care, but I had to balance that with making sure their sibs were still feeling loved and important."

By making it a point to spend extra time with her singletons, letting them talk about their feelings towards the newest family members, and helping them understand why the babies initially needed more attention, she was able to keep peace in the family.

"It's going well now," she says, "but it's still a balancing act. I try very hard to minimize the rivalry because I want a close-knit family. Sure, the kids will have spats and tantrums; you can't prevent that totally. But if they know that they're all loved equally, I hope they'll forget the childish fights and build a bond that will last forever." ♥

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.



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Two Peas in a Pod - Personalized Afghan

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The Miracle of Hope

by Lonnie Somers, Fetal Hope Foundation

When we counsel families dealing with fetal distress and syndromes, we live the fears, hopes, tears and joys with them. When we see the loss of life, we grieve. When we see success, we celebrate. When we see others do amazing events to raise money to support our mission, we see hope.

The last month has seen some amazing miracles, from a rare and possibly first documented case of identical triplets surviving Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome (see this issue's NEWS) to a baby delivered twice; partially at 28 weeks to remove a tumor that was killing her and then she was returned to the womb and delivered some weeks later perfectly healthy. However one of the most striking miracles is that of identical twins Owen and Walter.

Walter and Owen suffered from Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS). At around 19 weeks they had fetal surgery with Dr. Ramen Chmait (many of you might recall that last issue's article featured an interview with Dr. Chmait). The surgery was successful, however another complication developed. Walter was suffering from Selective Intrauterine Growth Restriction (SIUGR). TTTS is a complication from a disproportionate share of blood going from one twin to the other. In SIUGR, there is a placental share issue. Think of the placenta as a piece of bread. One baby has most of the slices, the other very little. Typically a baby needs to have a third of the placenta to survive, however there are always those exceptions.

At 32 weeks, Walter and Owen were delivered to proud parents Rachel and James Blake. Owen weighed 3lb 14 oz and Walther weighed just a mere 14 oz. Not much more than the weight of a coke can and only 11 inches long. Despite his small size, Walter did quite well at first. Just a few days later the Blake's found themselves at Omaha's Children's hospital where Walter would have to undergo an aorta repair, which was complicated by his very small size. Despite all the odds, Walter came out of surgery just fine. He is quite



Little Walter at 14 ounces!

small, but he is doing very well and breathing now on his own. Walter's survival is nothing short of a miracle. While his placental

share is not yet known, it may be one of the lowest ever recorded with survival. Walter has become my hero and represents hope to many others. His size may be some 140 times less than mine, but his strength and perseverance could never be matched. Tidbits – Walter and Owen's miracle survival was possible because of awareness and early medical intervention. Fetal Hope would like to thank all of you that have done so much to help bring hope by donating and doing amazing fundraising events. We would also like to encourage you to help us reach our 2008 goal of getting 1000 people to donate \$100. This isn't much to give, but brings 100 times the hope. We appreciate any support as any amount helps. Go to www.FetalHope.org for more info or to donate.



We would also like to point out the following events that support the Fetal Hope Foundation: Climb4Kids (August 2008), Evergreen Healthcare TTTS Race for Hope – Seattle/Kirkland presented by Portland Bolt and Manufacturing (Sept. 20, 2008), TTTS Race for Hope – Charlotte presented by Carolinas Medical Center Women's Institute (Sept. 28, 2008), Fetal Hope's Birthday Bash – Charlotte (Oct. 18, 2008) and the 5th Annual TTTS Race for Hope – Denver (Nov. 9, 2008). Go to www.TTTSRaceforHope.org for more information on any of these events. Thank you for helping us in leading the way to HOPE! ♥

If you have pregnancy or other health questions about your pregnancy, children or your health, please email me your questions at: lonnie@fetal-hope.org and your question might be published.

Lonnie Somers, Chairman, CEO & Founder: Mr. Somers and his wife, Michelle, founded the TTTS Race for Hope and the Fetal Hope Foundation based on their own experience with TTTS that nearly took their daughters' lives. Having a passion for running and being a marathoner as well, Mr. Somers organized and developed the TTTS Race for Hope to spread awareness and raise funds.

As success of the event and awareness increased, Mr. Somers, along with the board, saw an opportunity to further support fetal syndromes and work directly with the leading fetal centers and medical professionals from around the world. This led to the creation of today's Fetal Hope Foundation.



Ken (left) and Chris Anstiss, 18-months-old.



A Definite Twin Connection

By Ken Anstiss
West London, England

Here is a new column we will run from time to time called: 'Tales from Twins' and gives twins of all ages the opportunity to share with our readers what it's like living as twins. Here is our very first submission, we hope you enjoy it!

I have a twin tale to tell of me and my identical twin brother. I live in West London, England, and my brother lives in New South Wales, Australia. We have been living apart for 34 years and have been feeling each other's pain both physically and mentally over the last 58 years. Whatever happens to my brother in Australia sooner or later happens to me. It is a strange feeling and I wonder if any other identical twins out there in the U.S.A. or in other parts of the world have experienced this same thing?

We have always experienced strange things throughout our lives as twins and it didn't end when my identical twin brother left England to live in Australia. It was such a strange feeling that I couldn't even begin to explain when my brother's plane flew off to New South Wales with his new Australian wife. We had lost many members in our family by then but the feeling of loss and sadness that I was experiencing that day just couldn't compare. I actually felt cut in half, like a part of me was dying. Over the years I have learned to live with the separation from my twin, although my wife and family have suffered, I am very lucky to have their support.

When we were about two-years-old we had our very own twin-language and would talk to one another. Our mum told us nobody else could understand us but it appeared that we knew what we were talking about as we would nod or shake our heads at each other. We were always very close and didn't fight much only when we were playing around.

As kids, we always got colds at the same time and also sore throats on occasion. However, I always seemed to be worse off than my brother. One time, our doctor decided to send Chris, my twin, to have his tonsils out but not send me! He was in the hospital a week and it was very traumatic for me (we were nine-years-old at the time) and while he was in the hospital I really missed having him by my side. The day after his operation, I complained to my mum about pain and soreness at both sides of my mouth, she looked carefully in my mouth but could find nothing. When we visited Chris in the hospital that afternoon and while he was lying on a cot looking very sad, he told me his throat was sore and that the doctors had hurt his mouth on both sides. Blood could be seen at each corner of his lips where the doctors had gagged his mouth open. What was strange was this was the exact spots in my throat where I had complained to my mum about.

We were quite tiny, thin and very placid when we were young. I can remember one day when Chris was bullied as he walked home from school. The bully was much bigger than us and he pulled my brothers cap off his head and then ran across the road. He threatened to throw his cap over the fence. As I heard him pleading to get his cap back I started to get really annoyed. The bully did throw his cap in the air and my brother started to cry as the boy continued to torment him. Then something happened and I just kind of snapped inside. I screamed at the bully "give my brother his cap back!" Then I ran across the road picked the bully up by his jacket and trousers and lifted him up high over my head and threw him into the road. I picked up the cap, dusted it off, and left him in a crumpled heap crying. My brother couldn't believe what I had just done and he asked me how I did it, but I really had no idea. To lift this bully above my head must have taken enormous strength and I remember him feeling as light as a feather. I just had to get my brothers cap back and stop him from being tormented and from crying. In normal circumstances, I would have never reacted that way but we were never bothered by the bully again!

While Chris was in Australia, I began getting pains in my chest. My wife was worried, but I assumed I had just overdone it in the garden. Chris phoned a couple of days later to say that he had been having chest pains and was rushed to hospital to discover he had a heart valve defect. He called me and told me to get myself checked out since it was genetic and that I might have the same problem. The hospital ran tests on me but they could find nothing wrong with my heart. Later that week I was back in my garden when I had a terrible pain in my chest that brought me to my knees and I nearly passed out. An ambulance was called and I was rushed to hospital where the doctors told me they thought I was having a heart attack and that my heart now had an erratic heartbeat.

Days later my brother phoned to say he was in hospital, the doctors had tried to shock his heart into a better rhythm but unfortunately it had stopped his heart altogether and they had to use emergency treatment to get his

heart beating again. When they shocked my brother's heart back into life, it was at the same exact time that I was in my garden passing out from the pain in my chest. I now have to take pills to control my heartbeat but strangely the hospital told me apart from the unusual beat, I didn't have a heart attack and there was still nothing wrong with my heart. The doctors were baffled. Our lives as twins have been following a similar pattern. I had terrible pain in my back one day and could hardly walk, only to find out later my brother had slipped a disc in his back. Whenever he gets back pain now I seem to get it but I don't have a slipped disc in my back. Another twin connection it seems.

It feels like we are still connected by an invisible chord since what happens to him seems to also happen to me. I feel his pain more than he feels mine... but I think that is through more of a need on my end. For over 58 years, we have been experiencing these feelings and I really don't see this changing for us. We have both saved each other's lives when crossing the road and saved each other from drowning, too. He nearly killed me, I nearly killed him and both times we were both just playing around.

My twin brother is left-handed and I am right-handed. I had two girls and a boy, and he had two boys and a girl. My twin was bullied at work and left his job. One year later my Forman did the same to me, and he was finally disciplined for it, but I left my job because of lack of support from the management. My brother changed his job from engineer to Psychologist; I changed mine to teaching and then back to engineering working in a university. When my brother was having problems at home, I felt the emotions, too and knew he was feeling sad. He later divorced and married again.

Most recently, I have been talking to my wife about moving to the coast to a smaller house and my brother just told me this week that they are downsizing and moving near the sea? We still know what the other is about to say before we say it and we will sometimes speak the same thing at the same time! It is weird and strange but after 34 years apart, I thought this connection would not be as strong as it still is. Having an identical twin is a closeness that no one person can understand...unless of course they are an identical twin. He dreams of me, I dream of him, we will always be together and I wonder if there are other identical twins out there that have had the same experiences? ♥



Ken and Chris Anstiss, 48-years-old. The first time they'd seen each other in 24 years.

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Seasonal photos of your multiples (for example: patriotic, spring, fall and winter holidays, etc.) for possible inclusion in our 25th Anniversary TWINS™ Calendar...

Photos should be color and at least 4" x 6" in size, and should be accompanied by a signed photo release form that can be downloaded at www.TwinsMagazine.com/CalendarRelease.html. By submitting your photos to TWINS™ Magazine via U.S. Mail or electronically you are releasing your rights to these photos for our use. Please note that we cannot use any professional photographs. On the back of your photos include an address label & phone number with your twins' names and ages along with their twin type (identical or fraternal). Send photographs to: TWINS™ 25th Anniversary Calendar ATTN: Art Director, 5748 South College Avenue, Unit D, Fort Collins, Colorado 80525. All photos sent to TWINS™ Magazine become the property of TWINS™ Magazine and will not be returned.

HOPEFUL HEARTS



By Adam & Terra Chez

October 2007 came and our daughter Gracie had her second open heart surgery at Children's Hospital of Los Angeles. Shortly after her corrective repair, we learned the surgery was not as successful as we had hoped. Gracie still had more than moderate leakage and within a few months would be facing another surgery.

We had scheduled her catheterization for January 10, 2008. We had no idea how rapidly our lives were going to forever change.

On January 8, 2008 Gracie went to St. Joseph's ER, for what we thought was going to be a normal routine visit. The doctors started treating Gracie for what they believed to be dehydration. One moment Gracie was being treated for dehydration the next moment she coded and was fighting for her life. After the longest eight hours of our lives, our sweet baby girl Gracie passed away. She went home to be with the Lord. That morning, January 9, 2008, God showed us simply how much we are not in control of anyone's destiny, even our children.

We knew Gracie's heart was weak, due to the fact she had another surgery planned, however despite her heart condition we had always been told her life expectancy would be around 65 years if not more, which gave us much hope. We will never know exactly what caused her to code that day. We chose not to do an autopsy, as much as we had wanted to fill our hearts with answers we knew it would not bring our sweet baby girl back and nothing can change the ultimate plan God has for us.

Although our hearts had gone into complete despair we knew we had to go on, not only for ourselves but also for our sweet son Luke. Through God's grace we pull the strength to get through each day. After going through one of life's greatest trials, we felt it was time to pour our hearts into a foundation and give back. April of 2008 Hopeful Hearts was established.

Our foundation has been formed on principles that will help build both awareness and support for all families that have been affected by Congenital Heart Disease. We are committed to help fund research for heart valve replacement and for the care involved for the corrective surgery through the integral healing and recovery process. Through this foundation it is our hope that we will promote children's health while honoring our son Luke and always carrying on the memory of our daughter Gracie.

Our life was forever changed after the passing of our daughter Gracie. Our hope now is to find a way to bring hope to families with children of congenital heart defects.



Hopeful Hearts *"Faith is what we hope for."*
FOUNDATION (Hebrews 11:1)
P.O. Box 8255
Newport Beach, CA 92658
<http://hopeful-hearts.org>

Adam Chez - Founder/President
adamchez@hopeful-hearts.org
Terra Chez - Founder/Director
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Upon learning of our twins' congenital heart defects 20 weeks in utero, we felt an extreme amount of mixed emotions. Our excitement of having twins turned into overwhelming uncertainty. Our daughter Gracie was diagnosed with Truncus Arteriosus and our son Luke with Tetralogy of Fallot. We were distraught thinking how and why this was happening, but we believed that we were blessed with these special children for a reason and we were going to be strong for them.

Luke and Grace were born February 9, 2005 at Long Beach Memorial hospital and within 48 hours were flown to Children's Hospital of Los Angeles. Our sweet daughter Gracie had her first open heart surgery on February 14, 2005. The same day our sweet son Luke had a catheterization to determine if he also would need open heart surgery. Upon learning we were able to hold off on Luke's surgery for him to gain weight and strength we were filled with joy. Our emotions quickly turned to extreme fear for our daughter, who was just wheeled out from a successful surgery. Within minutes of her return, her heart stopped and she went into cardiac arrest, hanging on to life. With God's guidance our surgeon, Dr. Vaughn Starnes, and the incredible CTICU staff helped resuscitate her after eight long minutes (an eternity to us). The following 24 hours were critical for our baby girl, as was the entire hospital, but we were so blessed to be home after a month.

We had four months to settle in at home and then we were back at the hospital for Luke's corrective open heart surgery. Luke's surgery went well and although his recovery was heartbreakingly painful for him and us, the repair was successful.

Our life was forever changed after finding out about our children's heart conditions and going through the heartache of both of our children having had open heart surgeries within their first six months. It was then that we discussed possibly starting a foundation for our children. Our hope was to possibly find a way to bring families together and support those who were going through the same devastating experience we ourselves had been through. Also, we were so grateful to Dr. Vaughn Starnes (Surgeon), Dr. Mark Skalansky (Cardiologist), and the entire CTICU staff. We wanted to be able to give back for all that we felt was given to us, through God's grace. Although the foundation was close to our hearts, our days turned into weeks and weeks into months and so on. Our life was filled with my husband's full time job, life with newborn twins, and doctor's visits with the Cardiologist, Neurologists, GI, and Pediatrician appointments. We put the foundation on hold, concentrated on our life, faith, family and friends.



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By Laurie Ford

SPIDERMAN

My boys' names are Dominic and Zachary. They will be turning three on October 11. The two's – well not so terrible but very interesting. We used a lot of tested and familiar phrases such as “you are getting a time out,” “please share,” “no, you cannot have candy for breakfast,” and “you can only have one,” more times than I can count.

Last year for Halloween my boys wanted to be Spiderman. I think the only interaction they had with Spiderman was with the sippy cups we got at the dollar store in a pinch, and ever since they asked me who was on that cup, they were hooked.

So we got them, well, their grandmas bought them a Spiderman costume for Halloween last year. These costumes weren't the kind you find at the local drugstore. These costumes were the expensive kind that you find from one of those costume magazines. The kind that most parents, particularly parents of twins, toss in the garbage with the thought “it's just for one day.”

But show that same catalog to a grandparent, especially the grandparent whose first grandchildren are twins, the next thing you hear is “I'll buy the costumes,” and the other grandma jumps in “I'll be one of them too,” and there we have it. Including gloves and masks and not to mention the shipping of these foam-muscle Spiderman we are talking a \$75.00 per costume price tag.

Now even though I didn't spend a dime on these costumes I feel since I am a stay-at-home mom, who can't sew or paint or do anything even remotely crafty, it is part of my duty to try and find as many ways as I can to save money. My big question this time is... can I talk the two-year-olds (soon to be three) into being Spiderman again this year? I mean let's face it; this is the only year I have a shot at repeating costumes. Once your twins are in pre-school you have no shot of it happening, particularly, as I have been told, if you are dealing with girls. Now here's my plan. I'll have to talk them into having a Spiderman themed birthday party. Last year my very vocal sons chose Curious George, which of course was fine. But this year I'll have to pull some mommy magic and tell them how cool it would be to go as Spiderman without reminding them that was their costume last year. Or that it would be cool to go again as Spiderman whatever seems to get their attention better. This may prove to be a little tricky however. Since nothing and I mean nothing gets past these two kids.

They remember the kids' names at our park district classes better than I do, what if somehow another two-year-old has already told them that you usually don't repeat costumes, that it's somehow not cool. OK, so maybe I'm being a little silly but you never can tell. Let me share a little story. One day I heard them telling each other “get out of my sight,” “get out of my sight,” back and forth and laughing so hard like it was the most clever thing they'd ever heard and at the age of two it was probably the case. Horrified, I calmly asked them “Where did you hear that phrase?” In unison they responded “pa.” Now my father is recently retired and is playing silly games with the boys such as snowball fight with soft sponge balls and “hide” as they like to call it.

That being said, I found that “pa,” being the answer to my question was very believable and very probable. I told them that this was not a nice thing to say. I'll talk to “pa” when he comes over tomorrow. I should also mention that they add the word “little” when talking about my dad as in “little pa,” He is about 5' 2.” They have also begun calling my husband's father “big pa” as he is about 6'1.” All parties are perfectly happy with how they're being described. When my parents come over the next day half-jokingly I say to my dad, the boys told me that you taught them the phrase “get out of my sight” and my dad says, “I did?” “That's what they said,” I respond. My dad denies it and I have a hard time believing his denial as it is just like my father to forget half the things he says. So, we all move on and let it go.

My parents stayed for dinner that night and we started to watch Shrek. Shrek is one of their favorite movies that out of exhaustion I popped in one Friday after a three-day bout of colds and flu that ran through each of us.

That being said my boys don't sit still for very long and do not watch very much television so we watch the abridged version. This consists of the first twenty minutes, ten minutes in the middle and the last fifteen minutes. We avoid the scary parts or what I deem slightly inappropriate for two-year-olds.

As we are all watching I suddenly hear one of the soldiers say, “Get out of my sight,” mystery solved. Little pa redeemed himself and the little boys couldn't stop laughing, actually none of us could. I guess I can't filter everything the boys see and hear. Well, I'm sure you saw this coming but the boys have decided they want to be Shrek for Halloween this year. I still have some time to convince them otherwise. In the meantime, I think I'll either mention to grandma what the boys want to be for Halloween, or maybe I should learn how to sew. ♥



Dominic & Zachary Ford

Laurie Ford is a stay-at-home mother to her twin boys Dominic and Zachary. She and her husband Michael have been married for seven years. Laurie recently began writing a bi-weekly column for her local newspaper “The Mokena Messenger,” entitled “Twin Spin” which chronicles her experiences as well as those within her community who are raising twins and higher order multiples.

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Reader Responses:

THE GREAT HALLOWEEN COSTUME DEBATE... STORE BOUGHT VERSUS HOME-MADE. WHICH DO YOU PREFER?

Halloween is coming and finding costumes for your twins can be 'doubly' fun! Whether you choose to buy them from a store, order them online or make them yourself, one thing is for sure, it is a ton of fun to see your little ones all dressed up in their costumes and to enjoy all the festivities that come with fall.

One of my most favorite memories of Halloween was when my twin boys were three. I took the time to make red and blue birdie costumes for them with baseball hats for the bills and a few extras from the local craft store; these were adorable and so much fun. I don't sew but was able to make these easy costumes by simply using

felt, craft feathers and a glue gun (a perfect solution for those of us who are craft challenged like me).

It was a huge hit and they were so adorable and unique. I even made a tree costume for myself adorned with a bird's nest and wooden eggs. I can remember walking through the tot parade where we live and everyone having a wonderful reaction to the tree and her two birds. Here's what other readers have to say about what they have done for Halloween.

~CDR



This was our first attempt to put on a set of store bought costumes, as you can clearly see Austin and Evan where not nearly as impressed. We ended up making their costumes and since our last name is Applebee we made one an apple

and the other a bee. This was a hit everywhere we took them; they did get a better attitude about the costumes after people started saying how cute they were. These two little boys are the last boys in my family tree to carry on our namesake all the family members were concerned since I am 45 years old that the name would end so all the Applebee's in the world think that my wife, Rhonda, is the Queen Bee. The family have put there Apple and Bee picture everywhere. They have even been featured in another health magazine that is published nationally! These two little boys have blessed our entire family and are so good hearted they touch everyone they meet, it would be an honor to be in you magazine which my wife reads the second we get it in the mail!

~ Tim Applebee, Walla Walla, Washington

The boys enjoyed their first Halloween being monkeys at 8 months old. (Even with the banana on their head, an older woman thought they were sunflowers!) We shopped around many places before finding the costumes at Wal-Mart for \$15.00 a piece. We called the boys the "Bobo Brothers" which are the mischievous little monkeys from the TV show Diego. Their big brother was Diego. ~

Abbey Harrison, Denver, Colorado



Thanks for your reader question about Halloween Costumes. This happens to be my passion. I absolutely love handmade costumes because they are the ones with the most time and thought put into it. It's amazing what you can dream up. I am a nurse at a well known teaching hospital in New Haven Connecticut. One Halloween I made my identical twin boys Steven and Drew, Doctors. They had handmade scrubs as well as handmade lab coats complete with their names and department. Of course they were pediatricians in the pediatrics department. We actually went to their pediatrician for a physical which was very close to Halloween dressed in their Doctors uniforms. They were a hoot; everyone couldn't get over the little Docs. Here is a photo to show you how much fun it is when you make your children's costumes. Everyone should try it at least once!

~ Noreen Zichichi, New Haven, Connecticut



For our twin boys first Halloween, we purchased their costumes online. We were able to research and find cute costumes at a great price. Pictured here, Ryan was a puppy and Dylan, a ducky. They were 8 months at the time. Our church had a "Trunk or Treat" night where the kids went up and down the street and trick or treated at each vehicle. The cars, trucks and vans were all decorated in different themes from The Incredibles to a small petting zoo complete with piglets and a bottle calf. It was a cold night, but our boys stayed toasty inside their costumes.

~ Kate & Roger Wollman, Bridgewater, South Dakota



This Grandma cannot wait until the twins have their first Halloween. When their mother was growing up, I made every Halloween costume and did we have fun! We have a picture album full of these precious memories. Can you imagine what it will be like with twins? I can make two costumes. It is only summer and I am already thinking about what to make my precious twin granddaughters. We don't do the door-to-door trick and treat thing, but we do the Harvest celebration at our church. I am sure all will be a big hit with the home-made costumes I will be making them. They just seem to be more traditional and less trendy. This Grandma loves it and hopes the CC girls (Chelsea and Callie) will also enjoy them this coming October 31st. ~ Marcia Weeks, Grandma to Chelsea and Callie (the CC girls)



My twin girls were 'Flowers in a Garden' for Halloween last year. I bought the flower part that they wore and then decorated their wagon with more flowers. They were the hit of the neighborhood but as the night went on they got very tired and soon began to wilt! They were sooooo adorable! In this photo they were 9 months old, Isabelle is on the left and Noelle on the right. Thanks so much for a great magazine!

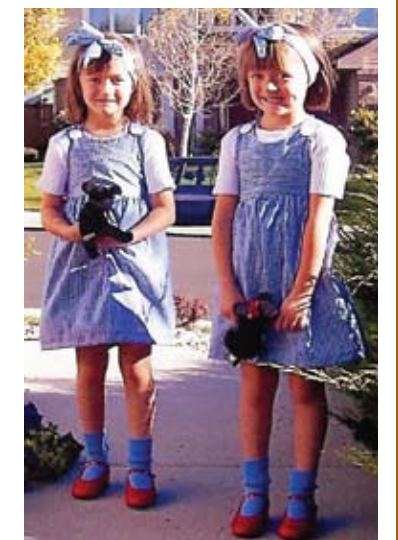
~ Brooke Thompson, Ladera Ranch, California

My two year old identical twin boys are very lucky their grandma makes their Halloween costumes. My mother-in-law is talented and she used to make my husband's costumes when he was little. We appreciate the fact that she is continuing the tradition of making special costumes for our boys each year. These pictures are Jack and Dylan McPherson in their handmade Duck costumes last year. ~ Amy McPerson, Lopatcong, New Jersey

Since my identical twin girls Kenadee and Kassidee were born in 2004 - I have always tried to have coordinating "themed" costumes. For their first Halloween I didn't have the time (or energy!) to sew something - so they were store bought "peas in a pod". Their second Halloween was planned months in advanced. They were Wilma and Betty from the Flintstones - along with a custom made "Flintmobile" by their Grandpa Wendell. Their third Halloween was quite applicable - Thing 1 and Thing 2. Not sure what they'll be this year. What I am sure of—the costumes will be handmade! You can't beat the originality, which is a much needed quality for twins! ~ Wendee Gabby, Mother of 4 year old twins



This past summer, my 8-year-old identical twin girls were relentless about getting their own bedrooms. It seems these days; each girl has to have something different than her sister. Accepting this rite of passage, I often go back in time when everything they had and wore was the same. Especially for Halloween! This has always been a fun-filled event as I made or purchased the exact same costumes, and because they were identical girls in identical costumes, somehow it made them that much more adorable! For these soon to be third-graders, Halloween costume choices just came up the other day....one wants to be 'a plum' one wants to be a 'pop rocker' I know that their independence is a celebration, but I will forever miss the good ol' days when this beautiful bittersweet photo was taken... ~ Ellen Brey, Fort Collins, Colorado



Tucker (left) and Keegan Brady



Be a Good Sport... and Let Me Win

When Twins Play Sports Together

When we arrived at the swim meet, my boys immediately jumped in the water to warm up while I scanned the roster of the day's events. Medley relay, butterfly, backstroke—check. Then I stopped. Not only were my fraternal twins both swimming in the 50-meter freestyle—we were used to that—but their seed times were so close that the league put them in the same heat, and in lanes right next to each other. Talk about head-to-head competition. What were we gearing up for?

When you mix school-age twins and sports, sometimes you create moments worthy of a tearful Hallmark card as each child cheers the other on. Unfortunately, other times their interaction in the sports arena resembles a wrestling match as each tries to dominate his co-twin. It's just the nature of the beast

when you have two kids who are the same age with similar interests and abilities.

Kathy Hird of Fort Collins, CO can relate. Her ten-year-old identical twin boys having been playing on the same soccer team for several years. Although her sons often encourage each other, it's not always the case. "When one twin performs better than the other, we encourage good sportsmanship and ask that he not gloat," she says. "But typically the winner gloats a little while pretending to support his brother. Deep down they both want the other to do well but also want him to come in second!"

So should parents steer their twins in opposite directions when it comes to playing sports? Will it be better for their individual growth and relationship if they compete in different athletics? Maybe, maybe not, according to sports psychologist and licensed therapist Joel Fish. "The relationship and the personalities of the twins are key factors," he says. The father of boy-girl twins as well as a singleton and the author of *101 Ways to Be a Terrific Sports Parent: Making Athletics a Positive Experience For Your Child* (Fireside; 2003), Fish believes parents need to look not only at the twin bond and how competitive they are but also at their emotional maturity and skill levels.

"In my clinical experience, the identical twin relationship is more intense and it can come out either in them wanting to do the same sports even in high school to having more difficulty being on the same team with one having more recognition than the other," he explains.

According to Fish, it can be a bit easier for boy-girl twins to compete on the same team. "Identity formation is a key challenge for young twins. Children want to answer, 'Who am I? How adequate am I?' And I think that when they are a different sex, they have a different starting point to answer those questions," he says. For boy-girl twins, those questions are easier to answer since they aren't constantly asked in relation to each other. And it's that difference in identity formation that translates to better cooperation on the same field.

Michelle Dowell of Fargo, ND says her six-year-old boy-girl twins are awesome T-ball teammates. "They encourage each other all the time," she says. "I never deal with them being jealous of each other."

What About Sibling Rivalry?

Letizia Ripandelli of Ontario, Canada says she let the soccer coach decide to place her six-year-old identical twin boys on the same soccer team. Like many monozygotic twins, Luigi and Umberto are well matched in ability as well as in size and weight. "It's difficult to tell them apart on the field from the way they play," she says. From her point of view, playing on the same team has kept her sons' rivalry to a minimum. "They're competitive boys and if they were on opposite teams they would not rejoice quite so much if their brother was doing better."

Yet according to Fish, when it comes to twins, parents don't always need to equal the playing field. "Parents are quick to squash that sibling rivalry especially around sports because it's so uncomfortable and there are so many

fears of how it's going to play out," he says. "Sometimes it's a natural sibling rivalry that can't really be squashed and instead goes underground." Fish advises parents to instead set some boundaries of the right and wrong ways to handle these feelings of jealousy. "You have to acknowledge it and normalize the sibling rivalry," he says.

If your twins are having difficulty competing together in sports, try to say something like, "I understand that you're upset that Johnny made the team but you didn't. But it's not OK for you to hit him or hide his glove. What you need to do is to talk to Mom or Dad about it and we'll decide the best way to handle that feeling."

Learning to Be a Good Sport

Yet it's a two-way street, according to Fish. "Parents have to look at both sides. The achiever needs to show it in a gracious way as opposed to a put-down," he says. "For the child who didn't achieve, parents need to give that child permission to feel upset, angry, and jealous but learn how to express it." Win or lose, there's always an opportunity for parents to help their twins mature emotionally.

Brenda Grinnell's ten-year-old fraternal twin boys have long recognized their differing abilities. Both her boys played on the same basketball team this past season but one was more able in the sport than his co-twin. "They did support each other, sometimes better than other times," explains the La Crescenta, CA mom. "We do emphasize good sportsmanship over victory without lessening the competitive edge. It's not easy and does create a lot of tears but that's what we're working towards," she adds. "Growth—both physical and mental—is never easy but it's an exciting process."

Logistics Have Their Place

For many families with twins, having their children play on the same team just makes more sense. Jan Bentley of Buckeye, AZ, says having her seven-year-old fraternal girls play on the same soccer team was a no-brainer. "If they had been on different teams, they would have had different practice days and different games times," she explains. "I wanted to be able to watch them equally and not have to be in two places at the same time."

Other parents agree. With family time so precious, no one wants to be the afternoon taxi driver. "It's easier to manage for me especially being a single mom working full time," adds Jyll Petro of Waterbury, CT, whose five-year-old identical boys play soccer together, too.

Although logistics and cost should be part of the decision-making process when it comes to picking sports for your twins, it shouldn't be the only factors. "Parents should look at what makes the most sense this year for their children and then re-visit that decision again the next sports season," Fish cautions. "I encourage parents to be honest with all the factors and figure out what's in the best interest of the children."

That's the conclusion that the Brady family of Fort Collins, CO came to. For years, ten-year-old fraternal twins Tucker and Keegan played on the same soccer team because it was easier. But once Tucker was diagnosed with Cold Induced Asthma, the family decided to switch him to an indoor sport that dealt more with upper-body strength. "Gymnastics seemed like the logical choice. He's thrived in this environment and has had many accomplishments and made many new friends," says mom Robyn.

As an added bonus, both boys have had a chance to tap into their own identities, free of comparisons from outsiders. "Many of their teammates didn't even know they were twins until one twin showed up at a game," Brady adds. "The boys are proud to be in different activities and tell everyone about it."

Take Your Cues from Your Kids

So what happened at my sons' swim meet? Neither boy seemed to notice going head-to-head and I didn't bother to call their attention to it either. I think I was more concerned with the issue than they were. Yet to my surprise, I found it easy to cheer for both boys at the same time. I didn't care who won or lost, I just wanted to see a great race. And I did. ❤️

Christina Baglivi Tingloff 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™ Magazine Parenting Bookshelf. Christina's website is www.talk-about-twins.com.



Bryan and Dylan Hird



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 psycho-therapist 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**

Expecting Twins, Triplets and More
Oklahoma City family physician Dr. Rachel McClintock Franklin is the mother of twins born in 2001. A frequent media contributor, including to *Twins™ Magazine*, Dr. Franklin provides the "girlfriend's guide to twin pregnancies" in this informative and often humorous book. Dr. Franklin's book includes information on nutrition and exercise, as well as choosing a doctor, preparing for labor and delivery. She also provides sensible strategies for coping through a twins pregnancy trimester by trimester, as well as understanding possible pregnancy complications. Dr. Franklin provides a reassuring book for new mothers about twin pregnancies from someone who has "been there, done that" and can help mothers enjoy their journey. The book includes a helpful resources section, including national, state and local support groups. Paperback, 280 pages. **\$14.95**

NEW! Chaos 2 Calm: The Moms-of-Multiples' Guide to an Organized Family
is 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**

Oh Yes You Can Breastfeed Twins!
A successful breastfeeder of boy/girl twins, dietician April Rudat provides expecting and new mothers of multiples a comprehensive and easy-to-understand handbook. Using up-to-date research and her own practical experience, April covers everything a new mother needs to know about breastfeeding her young babies. If you're considering breastfeeding your newborn twins, this is the book for you. You'll learn about the perfect nursing chairs for breastfeeding, common nursing problems, pumping, breastfeeding outside the home and sleeping through the night. Get detailed instructions on nursing twins and tips and suggestions on everything from clothing to saving money to constructing a practical nursery to handling spouses. Paperback, 239 pages. **\$16.95**

Twinspiration
Cheryl Lage, mother of boy/girl twins Darren and Sarah, Cheryl uses humor, personal anecdotes and a friendly, conversational tone in her helpful book, *Twinspiration*. Lage provides insightful, honest advice and practical information for new and expecting parents of multiples. Part guidebook and part personal diary, *Twinspiration* offers parents valuable insight into a pregnancy with twins and what life is like in their first year of life. Topics covered include pregnancy, preparing for their birth, feeding newborn twins, logistics and duties for newborn parents and more. Paperback, 302 pages. **\$16.95**

Married with Twins
Having and raising twins can destroy marriages. The divorce rate is frighteningly high for people beset by the sleeplessness, workload, and care and feeding of twins or higher order multiples, especially when there are other children in addition. *Married with Twins*, written by internationally known and respected parenting expert Dr. Joshua Coleman and father of twins, has written his first twin-specific book packed with friendly, helpful advice based on specific real-life relationship hurdles. Dr. Coleman is frequently called on by the *Today Show* and *Good Morning America* to offer tips on how to put the spark back in your own marriage... or keep in there in the first place when you hit the big bumps in the road. Through his use of humor and warm advice, Dr. Coleman details marital challenges and how they can be navigated while also parenting young twin children. Paperback, 106 pages. **\$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**

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 1 CD. **\$13.95**

Dancing Naked in Front of the Fridge
What began as a four-year-olds joyful, naked jig in front of a shiny refrigerator became a unique way to look at life as adults. To identical twins Nancy and Janna Sipes, twinship is like a dance in front of a mirror—each person constantly reflecting off the other. *Dancing Naked* takes you inside twinship and inside yourself for a fascinating view of relationships. This is a marvelous, entertaining book for twins, anyone who is close to twins and all of us who want to enrich our important relationships. Paperback, 228 pages. **\$16.95**

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**

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The Bobbsey Twins

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Anne Marie is an artist. Hiding in the branches of Jamie Hamlin's maple tree, she draws pictures of people, places and things on her street and in her neighborhood. She also writes her story as a series of linked poems providing details about herself and her family, including twin sister Mary Anne. Author Tracie Vaughn Zimmer is a twin, as is illustrator Andrew Glass. Together, they provide a vivid portrait of a year in the life of a twin. For readers age 8-12. **\$16.00**

The Bobbsey Twins have long entertained children with their wide-ranging adventures. There's now a new line of early reader books for young children featuring twins Freddie and Flossie. Though they look alike, Freddie and Flossie are similar, but are also different; one is loud, one is not. Freddie likes to play fireman, Flossie likes to play store. **\$3.99 each**

Twin to Twin
Rhythmic text and playful illustrations take the reader through an exciting day with rambunctious twins, a brother and a sister, who share a special bond as they play with toys, jump in a pillow pile and learn to walk. Celebrate the fun of young toddler twins with this joyful book for children ages 2-5. **\$15.95**

My Twin My Friend
The joy of being a twin is explored in this entertaining, rhyming story by the mother of two sets of twins. Twins have a special friend who is both alike and different, though they were born on the same day. Though they sing and play and laugh together every day, they also have important differences. With a special bond between them, the twins understand the gift of twinship. Lucky me, lucky you! For young readers age 2-4. **\$16.95**

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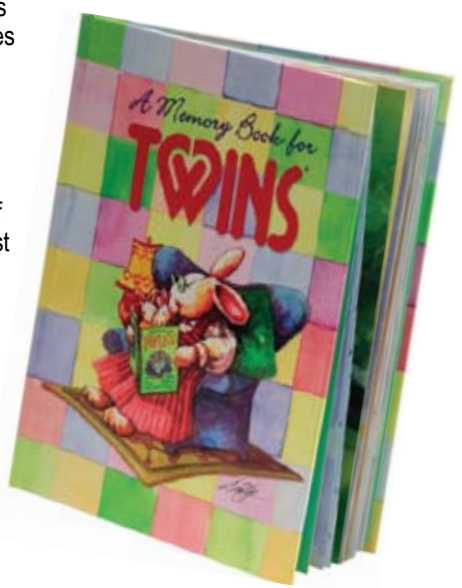
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 I promise to see you each as one,
 Two connected, yet free lives begun.
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 I promise to encourage your treasured bond,
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 Blessed with heaven's gift of two,
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 ~ By Teri Harrison

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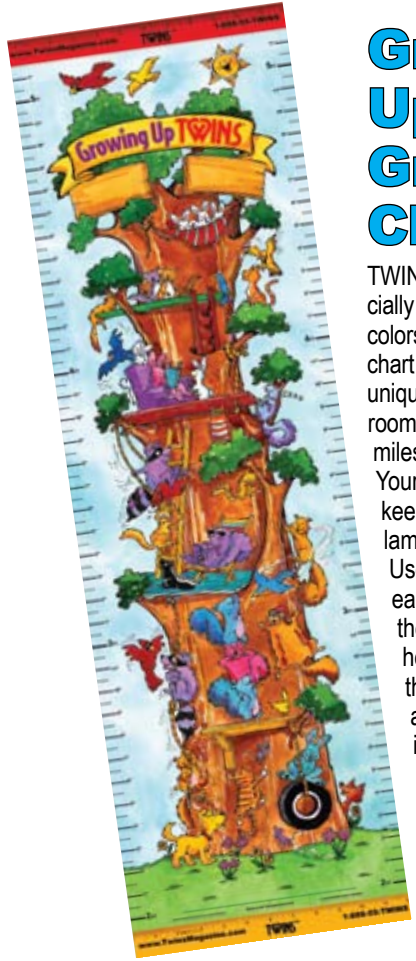
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TWINS™ Events Calendar Sep/Oct 2008

September

Sunday, September 7, 2008 - Contra Costa Parents of Multiples of Northern California will be celebrating their 50th Anniversary with a picnic at the Pleasant Hill Park in the San Francisco east bay area. For further information contact Christine Klinghoffer at cambook@aol.com or **310-210-9714**.

Saturday, September 20, 2008 - TTTS Race for Hope 5K Run/Walk, CMOM's Kids Fun Run, NOMOTC Family Festival and Sponsor Expo will occur at the Charlotte North Carolina Freedom Park. For further information contact Talitha McGuinness at talithia@tttsraceforhope.org or **980-721-5799**.



Sunday, September 28, 2008 - TTTS Race for Hope 5K Run/Walk, Wink Cupcakes Kids Fun Run, NOMOTC Family Festival and Sponsor Expo will occur in Kirkland, WA. For further information contact Cory Wilson at corey-wilson8@comcast.net or **503.919.1806**.

October

October 10-12, 2008 - Missouri Organization of Mothers of Twins Club will host their Annual Convention in Kansas City. The Northland Mothers of Multiples is hosting this convention. Contact Tricia Harman, Convention Chair Person at **816-792-4428** or convention2008@kcnorthlandmoms.com.

October 16-19, 2008 - Multiple Births Canada National Conference at the Delta Markham. For additional information visit www.multiplebirthscanada.org or contact Heather Sher at heather_scher@sympatico.ca.

Saturday, October 18, 2008 - The Fetal Hope Foundation is excited to announce the Fetal Hope Birthday Bash on Saturday, October 18th, in Kannapolis, North Carolina. The event will feature dinner, entertainment and a Silent Auction with proceeds going to the Fetal

Hope Foundation. Please contact Talitha McGuinness at Talitha@FetalHope.org or **980-721-5799** for additional information.

October 25, 2008 - The Central Connecticut Multiple Connection is having a Halloween Party from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at the South Windsor Library. For additional information contact **Jennifer Krasusky** at jkrasusky@sbcglobal.net

Contact customerservice@twinsmagazine.com with your club/organization's state-wide events. Include date, event and contact information and Twins™ Magazine will promote this event in an upcoming issue. Please allow a two-month prior time frame for events to make issue deadlines.

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TWINS™ MAGAZINE
READERS...**

**THIS ISSUE'S QUESTION:
HOW DOES YOUR FAMILY
CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS?
DO YOU HAVE ANY
FAMILY TRADITIONS YOU
WOULD LIKE TO SHARE
WITH OUR READERS?**

Send in your response via e-mail to: reader.responses@twinsmagazine.com and don't forget to include a photo of your twins in action! Response can also be mailed to: 5748-D South College Avenue, Fort Collins, CO 80525. In order to be included in the upcoming November/December issue of TWINS™ Magazine, responses must be received by September 30, 2008. We hope to hear from you with your responses!

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Double Takes

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1 Addison & Brayden
3 Months
Republic, MO



2 Anna & Benjamin
15 Months
South Bend, IN



3 Caitlin & Abigail
7 Months
Swartz Creek, MI



4 Cassandra & Danielle
6 Months
Alpharetta, GA



5 Cecilia & Stephen
2 Years
Herndon, VA



6 Connor & Matthew
11 Months
Redmond, WA



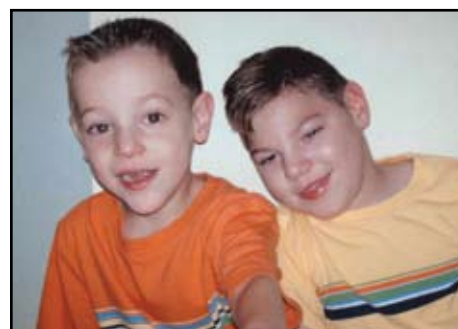
7 Demi & Vicki
5 Years
Staten Island, NY



8 Emily & Madison
2.5 Years
Cherry Hill, NJ



9 Eric & Nicole
2 Months
Oakton, VA



10 Evan & Wyatt
3 Years
Colorado Springs, CO



11 Hayden & Brendan
6 Years
Fresno, CA



12 Lorenzo & Luciana
16 Months
Millville, NJ



13 Kayla & Chloe
10 Months
Charlotte, NC



14 Greyson & Caroline
3.5 Years
Kennesaw, GA



15 Kyra & Neela
11 Months
Houston, TX



16 Logan & Dalton
4 Months
Clovis, CA



17 Owen & Logan
11 Weeks
Alexandria, VA



18 Seth & Benjamin
3 Years
Upper Sandusky, OH



19 Stefan & Ian
4 Months
Arvada, CO



20 Talia & Phoebe
3 Years
Berkeley, CA

Based on parental reports:

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

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By Jeremy Greenburg



Twin Peaks (& Valleys)

My wife and I have been slaves to our twin infant boys for eight glorious weeks (at the time this essay's being written). We feel extremely blessed—that is, when we don't feel extremely exhausted.

The twins already seem to have a natural rivalry. If one spits up a little, the other will spit up a lot. If one cries for twenty minutes, the other will go for an hour. I believe that down the road, this competition will drive to them toward success, both academically and athletically. But as it is now, they're both fierce contenders in a game of "Break Daddy's Will."

My wife, it should be known, seems born to parent. She's got the patience of a saint. Plus, when it comes to soothing a crying baby, she's got nipples and isn't afraid to use them. But when I'm on duty, I have no such silence-invoking endow-

ments. So I've developed three techniques to stop a baby from crying—none of which work. I'll share them with you, so that when your twin infants inconsolably lament their existence, you too can fail to soothe.

For starters, if your babies appear to have gas, I recommend the Berlin Airlift. Hold a baby with one hand under the ass, with the other supporting the neck, and evenly swing him or her up and down, and in a circle, as though you're on the Dumbo ride at Disneyland (and be thankful you aren't Dumbo—with all the crying, the last thing you'd want are bigger ears). This will usually quiet the baby, until you stop the Airlift—at which time he'll go back to crying like a Wall Streeter who's bet his fortune on mortgage-backed securities.

Next, for those times when it's 3 AM, and you have no idea why your baby's crying, I recommend doing the Soiled Swinging Serenade. The key to this technique is that after singing songs and attempting to soothe the baby by placing it in its rocker or baby seat, or cuddling it as you rock in a chair, you must finally realize that the reason why he or she's crying is because of a dirty diaper. Hopefully, you'll only have to do the Soiled Swinging Serenade once.

Finally, when all hope is lost, use the Midnight Snack. This is when you say "Screw it" and bottle-feed them a hefty dose of either breast milk or formula, in an attempt to make your baby feel the lethargy that adults only experience following Thanksgiving meals. But be careful to ALWAYS burp your baby following the Midnight Snack, or it'll quickly turn into the Midnight Yack.

Fortunately, something recently happened which reminded me of the joy these children will bring: one of the twins projectile-crapped on my dog in the middle of a diaper change.

I'm not sure how it is for other men. What the moment is when they realize that what they may have initially feared would be the end of life as they knew it is actually just the beginning of a richer, more fulfilling life. I had always imagined that this would occur the first time they looked into my eyes and didn't spit up. I'd thought that I'd be overwhelmed with emotion the first time they smiled—even if the smile was only due to gas. But life isn't that simple. There was just something about the unconscious act of fecal aggression towards my Australian Cattle Dog Dagny that somehow made me think, "That's my boy."

I am somewhat embarrassed to admit this. One can only imagine how a reader interprets or judges this sort of twisted pride. But I actually think that the explanation is quite beautiful. You see, although I'm in my thirties, I'm very young at heart (that's a nice way of saying I'm immature). Comedy keeps me young, and I think part of the fear of having children, to men like me, is that the responsibility of parenting will divorce them from the youthful, sophomore parts of their identity. We fear that the part of ourselves that loves watching South Park is going to be permanently replaced by a guy who demands that during dinner, all elbows be kept off the table. We dread becoming the guys who are so fed up with their kids' antics that they become humorless disciplinarians. We shudder at the thought of suddenly yelling, "Knock it off. That's not funny!" Then we would look around the room asking, "Dad, is that you?"

But then, when Dagny walked over to the changing table with her canine nose high in the air at just the right time, I realized that I've got nothing to fear. If anything, life with kids will be even more full of moments that cause my wife to roll her eyes. Having kids won't be all work and no play. And although there will be times when I can't laugh, so as not to encourage bad behavior, I'll never truly lose my sophomore identity. If anything, I'll just outsource it to my children. ♡



Jeremy Greenburg is an internationally headlining comedian, a blogger for Pregnancy and Newborn Magazine, and the author of the forthcoming book *Relative Discomfort: The Family Survival Guide* (Andrews McMeel). Learn more at www.relativediscomfort.com or www.jeremygreenberg.com.



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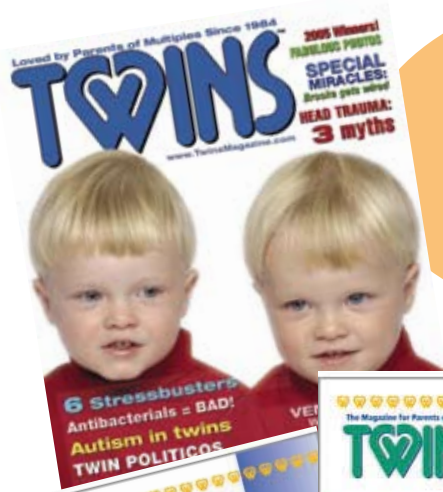
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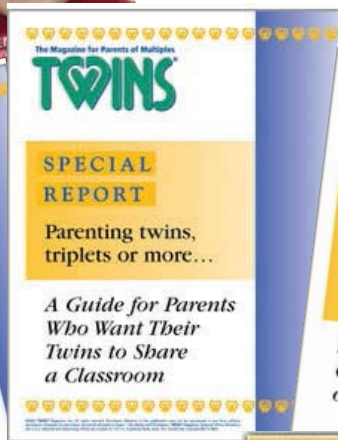
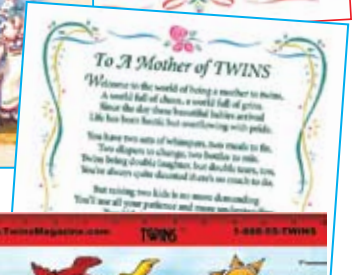
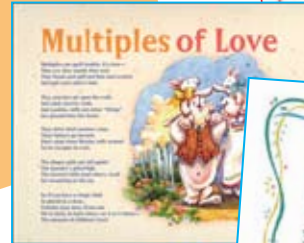
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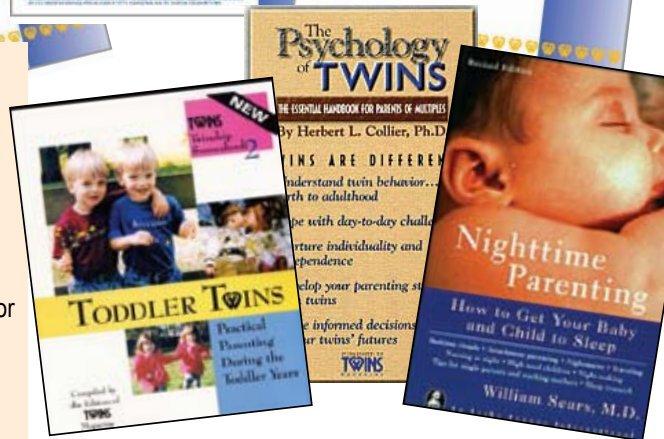
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