

# Passages #9



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## **Yes, there are twins.....**

Human beings were not designed to bear litters. Either during gestation or after. I've had 3 kids before the twins (all the others one at a time). At the time, I thought having a newborn baby was stressful, but I had no frame of reference for newborn twins. People told me having twins was hard, but believe me, that was an understatement. Patricia Maxwell Malmstrom and Janet Poland, in their book, The Art of Parenting Twins, calls it "twinshock". They even included an entire chapter called "Adjusting to Twinshock." The key word is "stress". There is no magic strategy for dealing with the overwhelming stress, but they suggest a lot of little strategies. Prioritize, take one day at a time, focus on survival, take care of yourself, especially eating healthy and exercise. Let go of nonessentials, like straightening up the house, folding clothes, community activities. Try to enjoy your new celebrity status; going out with twins in a stroller attracts a lot of comments and attention. "Try to keep your sense of humor--often when the going gets tough, the tough get the giggles."

The babies will be six months old on April 4, and I'm just now starting to feel like I'm coming up for air. The little darlings are sleeping at the moment, so this issue of Passages will encompass how much I'm able to type until they wake up.

## **Coping with chaos.....**

Some of my own coping strategies include finally getting a housekeeper to clean my house one day a week. I was amazed at how good it feels to come home to a clean house. I've been going to the Mothers of Multiples meetings; they don't have any magic answers on how to cope either, but they're the only ones who understand what I'm going through. And the ones with triplets and quadruplets make my problems seem insignificant. One of the mothers of 2-year-old triplets related the story of the day they found out how to get their diapers off, and how much fun it was to play in their bowel movements. I have to say I've never had to deal with anything as obnoxious as that. The book does point out that the kids can gang up and together come up with mischief a single child couldn't even imagine!

The Mothers of Multiples club had a yard sale yesterday, and I got to pick up some cute outfits cheap. One of the best things about having twins is getting to dress them in cute matching outfits. That is, whenever I have the energy to think about niceties like that.

The biggest surprise to me is how parenting twins seems to affect my cognitive

abilities. You can't concentrate when there are two babies to focus on (not to mention the three-year-old big sister!). Newborn babies are so demanding, it's literally impossible to completely meet the needs of both of them, and it seems like part of my brain is constantly spinning its wheels trying to figure out how to do the impossible. Or at least how to minimize the deficit.

Janice, as a twin, did you ever get the sense of being emotionally deprived? I guess when you only know being a twin, it's impossible to compare, but I definitely feel that the twins don't get as much attention individually as my other babies did when they were little. I guess that's the fear of every mother of multiples, that their children's needs aren't getting met. The flip side of the coin is that they have to learn patience from an early age.

### **Finding the good**

The other book I bought, The Joy of Twins and other multiple births, by Pamela Patrick Novotny, devotes a chapter to "What's good about twins". She claims "twins can be more confident, supportive, innovative, substantial, self-knowing, sought-after, and giving." The twin relationship gives the children a headstart in developing social skills. Our society is fascinated by twins and their mystical relationships, and she cautions parents of twins to discard these cultural stereotypes. Still, I can't help but envy them their special relationship and the opportunities that await them. Cathryn also talks about being jealous of the twins and wishing she had a twin. Her temperament test showed her to be an idealist, who prizes interpersonal relationships above everything else, and she sees twinship as the ultimate relationship.

I try to refer to the twins by their names, Samantha and Haydon, and not call them "the twins" or "the babies". I worry that they won't be able to develop as individuals. I read the results of a survey of twins, and three fourths of them stated they resented being referred to as "the twins". But it sure is a convenient shorthand! All right, from now on, I resolve to call them Samantha and Haydon, and not "the twins."

They both can roll over front to back, and Samantha can roll over back to front. Neither one has teeth yet, but both seem to have sore gums like they're trying to cut teeth. And they're real close to being able to sit up. They're growing like weeds; they're both over 13 pounds and 24 inches long. We're supposed to take them for their 6 month check ups the first week in April.

I'm going to be a "parent" again any day now. Indiana, my warmblood mare, is expecting her first baby, and today is actually her due date. She's very large around the belly. I felt the baby move a couple of days ago! I'm really nervous about her delivery; I've never attended a horse birth before. But we're looking forward to having a baby horse; they're so cute!!!

Wow, this is turning into a really long nap! We took the kids to the Aiken Steeplechase yesterday, and I guess they're pretty tired. Maybe they'll let me type some

### **Mailing Comments SFPA 219 (caution: these are not in order)**

**The Southerner, Jeffrey Copeland.....**Sorry for messing up your first mailing with my non-attendance... I was there in spirit though.....

**Rear-Ender '00, Guy Lillian.....**Another amazing year ended. It's hard to believe we're actually in the middle of 2001. Hopefully, it will be better than 1984..... It sounds like you had a very eventful year; congratulations!

**Fantasy and Reality, Jeffrey Copeland.....**You know, I really enjoy hearing your political viewpoint. You seem so intelligent, and it really seems like you've thought about your political stance. And yet you've come to the completely opposite conclusions that I have.

For what it's worth, the Miami Herald's recount proved that Bush would have won if all the recounts had been done after all.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying the Republican party is perfect. I have a lot of problems with some of their platform planks, i.e. doing away with abortion. I'm just really tired of how much money I have to give to the IRS, and how much waste there is in our Big Government. You have to admit, a lot of silly, expensive, wasteful bills pass in our Capitol. I'm just hoping the Republicans really can cut back a lot of that. On the other hand, as ex-military, I would like to see better defense spending.

Your reviews make me want to see some of these movies; I guess I'll have to wait until they come out on video and I'm not sleep-deprived; I don't think I could stay awake long enough now. I haven't seen *Erin Brockovich* or *Miss Congeniality*.

ct Gary Brown: Have you read the novelization of The Phantom Menace? It goes into Anakin's inner demons, namely his anger and shame at being enslaved (witness his quick, angry response to Padme when she innocently asks if he's a slave), and his fear for his mother, which we see only briefly in the movie. The next Star Wars novel, Rogue Planet, also goes into Anakin's psyche, and shows how close he is to being seduced by the dark side. Even as a preadolescent, he has a very quick temper, and in the novel he reflexively uses the Force to kill in a moment of anger and fear. And he's addicted to the thrills of speed and danger. Plus he's developing a disdain for the Jedi council, knowing that he has more talent in one pinkie than most of them combined. Only his gratitude for Qui Gon Jinn and Obi Wan keeps him at the Jedi Academy.

ct. Gary Brown again: re slipped discs: When I had that slipped C6 disc and my left arm was going numb, that was one of the scariest things that ever happened to me. I went to a neurosurgeon, and when he said I didn't need surgery, it was a huge relief. I just took steroids for a couple of weeks, and now it seems to be 99% better.

ct me: What do you think of the allegations that Hillary bought the New York election with some of her husband's pardons. .... I wouldn't mind living in Seattle; I have good memories of the 6-week rotation I did in Tacoma in medical school. But if I wanted to go to Maui more, why wouldn't I just move to Maui? ..... I have a comment I make to my patients when they all say the same thing before their pap smear; they all say "I hate this", and I always say, "Well, you know, people who like this really worry me."

**Spiritus Mundi 181, Guy Lillian.....**So are you planning a SFPA wedding? I hope I can come! ..... SFPA's 40th anniversary? Doesn't seem possible.....

ct me: Thanks for the words of encouragement; I feel like I've been in a fog for 6 months, and it's finally starting to lift. They are totally and completely cute babies. I know "Hayden" is the usual way to spell that name, but I thought it would be less confusing to spell it "Haydon" since "Larson" also ends in "on", and the most common

misspelling of "Larson" is "Larsen", get it? Okay, well it seemed to make sense at the time..... Kyle bought a color printer, so whenever I get off my butt and figure out how to print digital photos, I will include some in my zine. He's not here now, so I don't think it will be today; I'm still pretty intimidated by technology..... (Addendum later: as you know by now, Kyle did print up a photo cover for me. I think it came out pretty well....)

ct Gary Brown: Rosy's mother is a Kelly Freas fan? Neat!

ct Gary Robe: What's the "MCI that's going to whack you?" I'm not familiar with that acronym.....

ct Irvin Koch: I think the Matrix "sequel" is going to be a prequel..... I'm actually looking forward to it/them, although not as much as Cathryn. ....

**Trivial Pursuits #93, Janice Gelb.....**We just signed a refinance of our mortgage for 6.875%, and of course the interest rates dropped another .5 the week after we did it; oh well, it's not worth it to go through all that again. At least we're out of the PMI now; that saves about \$80 a month.....ct me: Thanks for the positive comments; distraction is definitely an understatement! I'm not sure what you would call the way twins affect your ability to concentrate... .... Well, I looked 7 months pregnant when I was 4 1/2 months pregnant, and I looked 4 months pregnant a month after giving birth. So I take it you were premature? (Half of twin pregnancies are.) How early were you? Did she know she was having twins? Until the last 20 years or so, over a third of twin pregnancies weren't diagnosed until after the first baby delivered!

*The babies are starting to wake up. I'm going to have to cut this short. Maybe I'll be able to do more after they go to bed if I'm still conscious.....*

*It's five hours later, and the babies are all asleep now. So let's continue as long as I'm conscious.....*

**Yngvi is a Louse and other Graffitos #69, Toni Weisskopf.....**Enjoyed the Quotations from the Federalist newsletter; a couple of them I have read before. I especially like the one about voters in a democracy voting themselves money from the public treasure. And the rising tax burden, from 5% in 1950 to 40% today; I wasn't born yet in 1950, but are we really getting 8 times better services from our government? The apathy is definitely rampant. Thanks for your Look at the Election Dispute. I agree with you 100%, and couldn't have said it better myself. I was getting so sick of hearing about "uncounted" ballots; they were all counted twice. Some people either chose not to vote, or were too dumb to realize that they hadn't voted when they thought they did. That doesn't give anyone license to use ESP to guess what the "intent" of the voter was. My brother, who lives and voted in Broward county, reported that there were multiple warnings about making sure the chads were punched all the way out, and to inspect the ballot before turning it in. I don't see why we should spend millions of dollars to make up for people who chose not to follow instructions. And, as you pointed out, it didn't matter anyway, Bush would still have won.

**Home with the Armadillo #45, Liz Copeland.....**It sounds like you had a milder winter than we did. We've had several hard freezes. To me, it's too cold when the horse's water

bucket is frozen in the morning. .... I did send out some Christmas cards. A few. ....

ct Gary Robe: I've never heard that statement, but it sends chills down my spine, "schools actively try to slow down the fast students." I've been saying for years that gifted students are discriminated against.

ct Eve Ackerman: I told Cathryn pretty much the same thing you told Allie: that she should have a career to pay the bills, and then if she wants to act, then she can do that as a hobby. She's also interested in psychology, and she's also talked about music therapy and psychiatry. But she also wants to be involved in theatre. She's planning to go to Emory University in Atlanta; she applied early decision and was accepted. I'm real excited about it, of course, since Emory is my alma mater.

ct me: I'm not sure you can say I have stamina; the sleep deprivation has been getting to me. It seems like I can't drink enough coffee any more. ....

I was intrigued by the George Will column on "social 'winks'" and common sense. I just finished reading The O'Reilly Factor by Bill O'Reilly, the Fox News guy. It's an interesting book, not very politically correct. He promotes common sense throughout the book, and I hope that enough people read it and take it to heart! It would be great if our society decided that common sense should be common again.

**Random Thoughts, Steve Hughes.....**I think everyone should know that hand counting is less objective and less accurate than machine counting. That is, everyone with a brain to think about it. Unfortunately, there are enough uneducated Americans that are easily inflamed into not trusting machines. I'm glad it's over because I got so tired hearing it over and over. One good thing came out of all the recounts, though, I got started watching Fox News. What a relief to finally have an alternative to the Clinton News Network.

**Tennessee Trash #39, Gary Robe.....**ct me: Thanks for the congratulations. I'm beginning to think I'm going to need plastic surgery to get rid of all that stretched-out skin; it's hard to believe that my belly actually got that big.....

**Guilty Pleasures 17, Eve Ackerman.....**Thanks for the *Mazel Tov*. Congratulations on the Bar Mitzvah.

**Twydrasil and Treehouse Gazette #68, Richard Dengrove.....**ct David Schlosser: I did hear the story on the radio about the Atlanta school systems banning recess in favor of extending reading classes. Kind of makes you worry about our school systems. It just seems to me that there is too much material for the kids to learn, in the face of too many parents to fail to prepare their kids adequately. Kids should come to school with certain basics, like manners, hygiene, discipline, respect for authority, basics of the English language, and a rudimentary familiarity with what books are and what literate people do with them. Too many kids come without these basics, and the schools have to start from scratch. So the schools have to get rid of "nonessentials" like physical fitness and fine art.

ct me: I haven't lost all the weight yet, but I'm working on it. I've lost 45 pounds, but I gained a lot more than 40 pounds (like about 57 pounds). Of course, a lot of that was water weight from all the swelling I had..... My husband didn't think all the swelling was attractive.....

Page 5 and last, that's all for now, folks.