



"To keep new lives living."

REFLECTIONS

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President

Lisa Biakanja

Vice President

Mary Williams

Treasurer

Shari Morinishi

Recording Secretary

Mary Ann Garcia

Historian

Carole Guttilla

Parent Contacts

- Lisa Biakanja

(714)960-9897

lbiakanja@yahoo.com

- Debbie Gemmill

(760)747-4429

mom2127@aol.com

- Irene Holguin

(909)783-3709 (Spanish)

gisie01@yahoo.com

- Shari Morinishi

(714)952-1466

sharmori@comcast.com

- Mary Williams

(714)846-0229

zach4596@aol.com

- Mary Ann Garcia

(714)403-1814

mriversgarcia@yahoo.com

Grandparent Contact

Carole Guttilla

(714)524-7647

gutticarole@netzero.com

Medical Advisors

- Thomas G. Keens, MD

Professor of Pediatrics

University of Southern California

School of Medicine/Children's

Hospital, Los Angeles

- Henry Krous, MD, Vice-Chair

Director of Pathology/Children's

Hospital San Diego

Public Health Advisor

Penny Stastny, Public Health

Nurse/Medical Professional

Technical Consultant

Andrew Beale

Unisys Corporation

Executive Director

Barbara Estep

gisoc@compull.net

FROM A PARENT'S POINT OF VIEW...

"Grief and Marriage"
Debbie Gemmill c 1988

In this period of time between Mother's and Father's Days, I am thrown back in time. It was during these same few weeks that John and I suddenly became bereaved parents. On Mother's Day I happily opened gifts from two children; on Father's Day John sadly opened just one. Each Father's Day since has been a reminder to me of just how differently Ty's death affected each of us.

It's so easy for people to make flat statements about other people's grief. "If they really love each other, they can get through this." "If their marriage falls apart, there was something wrong with it to start with." "Something like this can really make or break a marriage." The feeling was that this was somehow a test of our love—if we survived, then we won. Frankly, we weren't up to a test. We had lost enough already.

As you have undoubtedly realized, everyone must bear his own pain. It's just not true that you can share it—wouldn't we all give it away if we could! I didn't know that then, and what I wanted the most was to share my pain with John, and to take some from his aching heart. What we learned was what Harriet Sarnoff

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Addressing Parental Smoking in Pediatrics and Family Practice: A National Survey of Parents

Jonathan P. Winickoff, MD, MPH, Robert C. McMillen, PhD, Bronwen C. Carroll, Jonathan D. Klein, MD, MPH, Nancy A. Rigotti, MD, Susanne E. Tanski, MD, and Michael Weitzman, MD

MGH Center for Child and Adolescent Health Policy, Harvard Pediatric Health Services Research Program, Boston Massachusetts

MGH Tobacco Research and Treatment Center, Boston, Massachusetts

Social Science Research Center, Mississippi State University, Starkville, Mississippi

University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, Massachusetts

AAP Center for Child Health Research and Strong Children's Research Center, University of Rochester, New York

Background:

Parental smoking has been associated with increased rates of sudden infant death syndrome, low birth weight, otitis media, asthma, and decreased lung growth. No prior parent surveys have assessed national rates of screening and counseling for parental tobacco use in the context of their child's visit to primary care.

Objective:

To assess and compare rates of pediatrician and family practitioner screening and counseling for parental smoking.

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REFLECTIONS

P.O. Box 17432
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Editor: Cory Morinishi

Reflections is a quarterly publication of the Guild for Infant Survival, Orange County—a non-profit organization. *Reflections* is committed to the collection and dissemination of accurate, up-to-date, scientific and lay information and the correction of misinformation related to SIDS. The Guild is dedicated to the support of families and friends suffering the death of an infant to SIDS.

The Guild For Infant Survival, Orange County Information:

2130 E. Fourth Street #125
Santa Ana, CA 92705
Ph: (714) 973-8417
Fax: (714) 973-8429
(800) 474-SIDS (7437)
Email Address:
gisoc@compuall.net
Website Address:
www.gisoc.org

Newsletter Deadlines

If you would like to contribute an article or poem to an upcoming issue of **Reflections**, please contact: Cory Morinishi at (714) 952-1466 or e-mail him at shar-mori@comcast.net. The next newsletter deadline is 7/1/05. We encourage your participation!

Addressing Parental Smoking in Pediatrics and Family Practice: A National Survey of Parents

(continued from Page 2)

Design/Methods:

Data were collected by telephone survey of households from July to September 2001. The sample is weighted by race and gender based on 1999 US Census estimates to be representative of the US population.

Results:

Of 3,566 eligible respondents contacted, 3,002 (84%) completed surveys; 902 of those were parents who had a child seen by a pediatrician (62%) or family practitioner (38%) in the past year. About half of all parents who visited a pediatrician or family practitioner reported that they had been asked about household member smoking status (52% vs. 48%). More parents who visited a pediatrician reported that they had been asked about rules prohibiting smoking in the home than those who visited family practitioners (38% vs. 29%). Of 190 (21%) parents who were smokers, fewer than half reported being counseled by either specialty about dangers of second-hand smoke (41% vs. 33%) or risks of modeling smoking behavior (31% vs. 28%). Similarly, fewer than half of parental smokers received advice to quit (36% vs. 45%).

Conclusion:

Overall rates of screening and counseling for parental smoking in pediatric and family practice are low. Despite some differences between specialties, significant opportunities exist to improve tobacco control activities in primary care settings that serve children.

SIDS DEFINITION

The new general SIDS definition is “the sudden and unexpected death of an infant under one year of age, with the onset of the lethal episode apparently occurring during sleep, that remains unexplained after a thorough investigation including performance of a complete autopsy, and review of the circumstances of death and the clinical history.”

THANK YOU

Employees Community Fund of Boeing,
California

And

CJ Foundation for SIDS

Your support is deeply appreciated. Your grants allow us to continue our community outreach program and maintain our office.

Dr. Boyd Stephens

A message sent by Gwen Edelstein, RN, PNP, MPA Program Director of the California Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Program:

It is with heartfelt sadness that I share with you that Dr. Boyd Stephens died at his home in Daly City on Saturday at the age of 65 after a long battle with cancer.

Dr. Stephens received his undergraduate education at San Jose State College, graduating with a bachelor's degree in science. He received his medical degree from UC Irvine College of Medicine in 1967. He did his residency in forensic pathology at the San Francisco coroner's office and in 1971 took over as Medical Examiner until his retirement last year.

Those of us that were fortunate to know Dr. Stephens were not only impressed by his credentials and overwhelming knowledge as a SIDS educator but also knew him as a compassionate and caring SIDS advocate. He was involved with SIDS research for over 30 years and was instrumental in the development and implementation of California's standardized death scene investigation and autopsy protocols. He was also a long standing member of the State SIDS Advisory Council. He was an integral player in the education of coroners and medical examiners to ensure the accurate diagnosis of SIDS and in his kind and sensitive way offered to interpret autopsy findings to those impacted by a SIDS tragedy. In 1997 Dr. Stephens received the Senator Daniel E. Boatwright Award for extraordinary service on behalf of Californians touched by SIDS, an honor that he richly deserved. Dr. Stephens will be greatly missed, but the impact he made on the California SIDS community will live forever.

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Donations have been made in the loving memory of the following babies by those who loved them:

In Memory of Christopher Byron Phillips
Marie T. Bowen

In Memory of Mary McGuire
Jeanne Allison

In Memory of Lukas
John and Mary Ondrak

UNITED WAY DONATIONS

Elaine L. Nelson

Roxanne Raftery

Douglas Hand

Sheri L. Hancock

Kathryn Boekenooge

Thank-you Kathleen

The Guild would like to thank Kathleen Rudi, the former editor of the newsletter, for all her hard work and dedication. She toiled tirelessly over the years donating her time to our cause. Congratulations on the new addition to her family, and we wish her well in her future endeavors. Thank-you once again.

Ask The Doctor

This column offers our readers the unique opportunity to ask questions of a medical nature which will be answered by **Thomas G. Keens, MD**, Professor Pediatrics, University of Southern California School of Medicine/Children's Hospital Los Angeles and **Henry F. Krous, MD**, Professor of Pathology & Pediatrics, UCSD School of Medicine, Director, San Diego SIDS/SUDC Research Project, Children's Hospital San Diego. Please address your question in writing to either of our experts and mail to:

GISOC, P.O. Box 17432

Irvine, CA., 92623-7432

or e-mail to gisoc@compuall.net.

We thank Dr. Keens and Dr. Krous for being willing to volunteer their time and expertise in this way.

Books By: Debbie Gemmill

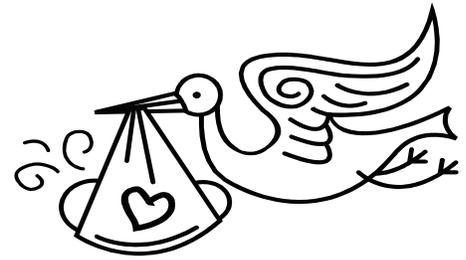
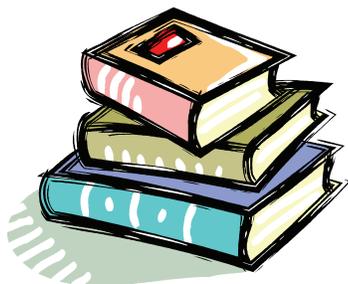
The Chance to Say Goodbye... a personal account of a family's loss of a child told through journal entries and poetry.

(Beachcomber Press, \$9.95.)

Beginning Again; SIDS Families share their Hopes, Dreams, Fears and Joy. Beginning Again is the result of a survey of over 100 SIDS families who have gone on to have more children. In it, parents discuss their decision to have another baby, their pregnancies, and their subsequent children.

(Beachcomber Press, \$10.95)

Books may be ordered by contacting Debbie at Beachcomber Press (760) 747- 4429 or by email (BeachPress@aol.com).



The STORK REPORT

Cameron Joseph Ricciardi

Born January 7, 2005

8 pounds, 21 inches

Congratulations to the Ricciardi's!

Is there a new little one at your house? If so, we would love to share your happiness. Please send all pertinent information to the Guild office for publication in our next newsletter.

ANNUAL DONATION

The cost to print and mail the ***Reflections*** newsletter is steadily rising. Therefore, it is important that we have your latest contact information. If the address shown on your newsletter is not correct, please e-mail Barbara Estep at gisoc@compuall.net or call her at (714) 973-8417 with your current information.

The annual donation of \$20 to support the cost of printing and mailing our quarterly newsletters will be greatly appreciated. Please take a moment to mail your donation in today.

FROM A PARENT'S POINT OF VIEW

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Schiff says in "The Bereaved Parent": A common grief is not the best possible adhesive to cement a marriage." That is a shocking disappointment to realize when you are reaching with desperate fingers from opposite ends of a sinking lifeboat.

I had expected John to be his usual "tower of strength." He had expected me to be my usual organized self, to somehow put this in order. Under the weight of our individual sorrow, we failed miserably at these roles we had, up until then, successfully filled. What we both needed to do was to grieve—freely, fully, with no restrictions. It was too hard to do with each other. A large part of the problem was that we were suddenly forced to deal with a situation that we had been given no preparation for. Like many SIDS parents, this was our first mutual experience with the death of an oh-so-loved one. I didn't have a clue what to do for him. He was equally at a loss. And that seemed to make a very bad situation much worse.

We were lucky to have family and friends to lean on. It seemed easier for me than for John though. While I had friends I could cry with, his friends, like many men, weren't comfortable with tears or painful reminiscing. I still cringe when I recall one of John's closest friends, in a way of a compliment: "At least you didn't make the rest of us feel bad." That, unfortunately, sums up what makes it so hard for any two people to grieve together, but especially parents: We don't want to make the other person feel bad.

The most helpful thing for our marriage was the availability of Guild meetings. John quite honestly, went only because I asked him to, but there he learned things that helped him understand my grief. He heard other mothers describe their aching arms and he saw that I wasn't going crazy—I was grieving in a pretty usual way. I learned the same sort of things about his grief. I saw how much harder it was for the dads to express their pain. And I listened to other moms talk about the dads who weren't at the meeting, how they grieved in a solitary way, how they didn't want to talk about it, that they just grieved differently. It helped so much to know that, once again, in a different way, we were not alone.

I guess the key word is "different." I think it's normal to wonder who hurts the most—mom or dad, but the question gives way to reality; grief is not a contest and pain cannot be compared.

Whatever your beliefs about the difference between men and women, it seems pretty safe to say that we do grieve differently. Respect the difference and seek out what you need from various sources to help you through your personal pain—family, friends, other SIDS parents—all can provide a bridge for you to cross over.

Our marriage survived our grief, and yes, I guess I'd have to agree that it was strengthened as a result. I believe the strength came largely from the realization of our differences and the acceptance of them. It was not an easy road to travel, but how glad we were when we came to the end of it and found that we were together. As Schiff says: "Value that marriage. You have lost enough."



2005 MEETING CALENDAR

Parent Support Meetings– All meetings are from 7:00—8:30 PM.

*** Please RSVP to the parent host prior to the meeting**

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| July 12, 2005 | Home of Chris and Nancy Eckert
26501 Valpariso, Mission Viejo
RSVP to (949) 768-1813 |
| September 13, 2005 | GISOC Office
2130 East 4th Street, Suite 125, Santa Ana
RSVP to Lisa Billings at (714) 973-8417 |
| November 8, 2005 | Home of Lisa and Krist Biakanja
20732 Alicante Lane, Huntington Beach
RSVP to (714) 960-9897 |

Business Meetings– Business meetings are held at the home of Lisa Biakanja located at 20732 Alicante Lane in Huntington Beach. Meetings begin at 7:00 PM. If you would like to have an item added to the agenda, please contact Lisa at (714) 960-9897 or lbiakanja@yahoo.com.

July 12



**GUILD FOR INFANT SURVIVAL, ORANGE COUNTY
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