Twins: Double the Love

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Whistlestop PERSPECTIVE

By MELISSA GROOS, Active Aging Center Program Manager
and JENNIFER GOLBUS, Marketing Strategist

Twins: Connection, Collaboration, Cooperation

We were tickled when we were asked to write this month’s Perspective on twins, as this topic is near and dear to our hearts! Melissa Groos has a fraternal sister, Christa, and Jennifer Golbus has an identical sister, Lisa, and is mother to fraternal twins, Adina and Jonah.

Reflecting on what it means to be twins has helped us appreciate the soul-filling work that Whistlestop is doing.

Melissa: My fraternal twin, Christa, is the dynamic, creative, and adventurous muse of my life. Three words that best describe her are: loving, funny, and true. These personal attributes guide her daily in her roles as a devoted wife, a mother of two teens and two rescue Greyhounds, a great aunt to one, an aunt to 15, a sister-in-law, and sister to five. She is not only a terrific twin, but also my soul mate for life.

Jennifer: I’m finding it difficult to put into words how I feel about Lisa. It might be best expressed as a feeling. It feels like home: safe, nurturing, and endlessly supportive. Lisa is like a mirror for me to better see myself and to strive to be my best self. We often finish each other’s sentences or say things at exactly the same time. Growing up, people called it “the Gould sisters in stereo.” We sometimes start laughing so hard together that we have tears streaming down our faces and can hardly breathe, often for several minutes on end, while others in the room look on in bemusement – because there was nothing (at least not to their ears) that was actually funny enough to elicit such a response.

When I’m away from my twin, I definitely feel like there is a part of me missing, and when we are reunited, I feel so happy it’s hard to describe. So, it’s difficult to put words to the sense of awe and gratitude I felt when I myself was blessed with twins a little over 11 years ago. I tried to capture it in a song, which I call “Breath of Heaven.” The life lessons continue as I watch Adina and Jonah grow, and it’s truly an honor to witness.

Twins inspire fascination and allure for so many. The idea of looking like another person somehow transfixes our imaginations. But for us, being twins is oh so much more than having a doppelganger. An intimate connection like no other begins in the womb, where twins share space, life-giving resources, and begin a lifelong bond. The twin bond fascinates and inspires because of its deep roots and undeniable power. We both feel blessed with this unique relationship in our lives. But here’s the thing that is so exciting for us both as newer members of the Whistlestop team: the essence of being a twin is also at the very core of Whistlestop’s mission – connection, collaboration,
Barbara Feels Blessed
Having a Twin Sister

By JOHN BOWMAN

The number of twin births in the U.S. has leapt by about 75% in the past 30 years, according to the National Center for Health statistics. That means that now 1 in 30 babies born is a twin.

While this may be a remarkable revelation to most of us, it’s not so surprising to Whistlestop volunteer Barbara Ann Begley and her family. Not only is Barbara a twin – her identical twin sister is Bernadette (Betsy) of San Francisco – their paternal grandmother is an identical twin. Besides that, Barbara’s and Betsy’s two brothers both had fraternal twins, all males!

Following is our interview with Barbara for this special Twins issue:

Who is older, you or Betsy?
I am, by five minutes. But I tell everyone I’m younger.

Do you two get along okay?
Absolutely. Always have, best friends. Betsy has a wonderful husband, Tim, who shares our birthday, believe it or not!

How did you and Betsy get along as kids?
Most of the time we had a ball as sisters and as a family, with the usual sibling rivalries, i.e. clothes, boyfriends, etc., but most of all, keeping our own individual identities. We are very similar and very different.

Any funny or poignant stories about being twins?
Too many to go into now – changing classes, changing dates, buying the same dress for our niece at different times without knowing it. Wearing the same colors to events without checking first and so on.

Did you usually dress alike?
Up until 6th or 7th grade our mother insisted, but then we decided enough was enough. We could have double the wardrobe by dressing differently.

Did you have similar interests? If so, which ones?
Yes: music, theatre, movies, books, walking, hiking, biking, volunteering, entertaining, and we’re both very social.

See BARBARA BEGLEY on page 4
What is your volunteer role at Whistlestop? What do you like about it?
Working at the Jackson Café as a cashier. I love greeting and interacting with the people who come for lunch, and working with the staff and volunteers. I miss it when I have to be somewhere else.

Has Betsy ever volunteered at Whistlestop?
No, but she comes for lunch once in a while.

How often do you see each other now?
At least once a week, if not more.

Anything else you would like to add?
I feel very blessed being an identical twin. As a child, it’s like being a celebrity and as an adult people look at you and go “Wow! There are two of you. How cool!” It is extremely important, however, to keep your own individual identities, and I think we’ve done that big time!
Flying Jewelry in San Rafael?

Sonoma photographer Richard Pavek got this shot of an Anna’s Hummingbird at the water reclamation ponds in San Rafael. Anna’s are among the most common hummingbirds along the Pacific Coast, yet they’re anything but common in appearance. With their iridescent emerald feathers and sparkling rose-pink throats, they are more like flying jewelry than birds. Though no larger than a ping-pong ball and no heavier than a nickel, they amaze viewers with their thrilling courtship displays, males climb up to 130 feet into the air and then swoop to the ground with a curious burst of noise that they produce through their tail feathers.
Keep Learning at WHISTLESTOP

For a full list of classes, check out the calendar at whistlestop.org/classes/calendar or grab one at the Active Aging Center (930 Tamalpais Ave, San Rafael).

Class fees are listed as member/non-member prices. Call 415.456.9062 with questions or to sign up.

Do you have a knitting project that needs to be finished? Are you stuck on a stitch and in need of a little expert guidance? There is an informal knit/crochet group that meets here at Whistlestop on Wednesdays at 1pm. Call the front desk for more details: 415-456-9062.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Luck o’ the Irish Luncheon
Thurs, Mar 16, 11:30am-1:50pm, Lunch; 12-12:45pm, Bread & Roses Presents™ Free concert; Fee: $10/$12; Jackson Café
Celebrate your Irish heritage or be Irish for the day! Feast on traditional Irish fare and enjoy live, free music provided by Bread & Roses Presents™, featuring Cormac Gannon and Kyle Alden. Discounted membership price tickets until 5pm March 15 at the Front Desk; $12 day of event.

Be Bold for Change: Collaborative Fashion Show
Tues, Mar 7, 12-1pm, Jackson Café; 1:30-2pm, shopping; Fee: regular Café prices/menu
Hospice by the Bay & Whistlestop pair up to honor International Women’s Day through fashion and food. Models showcase fashion trends available for purchase. Call Caroline Remer at 415-454-0998 for more information.

Whistlestop Volunteer Fair
Thurs, Mar 30, 3-5pm; No Fee
Make a difference every day! We are seeking friendly and reliable volunteers who want to give back to their community. Volunteer positions include: CarePool volunteer drivers, Meals on Wheels drivers, Jackson Café lunch servers & cashiers, ESL tutors (no second language required). Call Laurie Vermont, 415-456-9067 for info.

Write On!
Tues, Mar 7; 1-2pm; Fee: $3/$5; Facilitator: Robert-Harry Rovin, published author; sign up at Front Desk
A creative writing program nurturing well-being through self-expression, using a short guided meditation followed by a timed writing with opportunity to read your writing to the group for only positive reflection.

The Powerful 3: Music, Movement & Relaxation for Brain Health
Tues, Mar 14, 10:45am-12pm; Fee: $3/$5; Facilitator: Kat Downey, author, musician, movement therapist, Reiki practitioner
Therapeutic music, movement & relaxation improve your brain health. Move, express, connect with Kat’s talents, energy and compassion during this workshop. Sign up at the Front Desk.

Citizenship Tutoring for Native Russian Speakers
Tues, Mar 14, 11am-12pm; $30 for 6 months; Facilitator: Anna Ladyzhenskaya
Receive individual attention while you study and prepare for your citizenship interview and exam. Individual preparation of the N400 citizenship application provided. Call Anna at 415-456-9062, ext. 138 with questions.

Multicultural Bingo for the Health of It
Tues, Mar 21, 1-2pm; No Fee; Facilitator: Caroline Remer, (Bilingual English/Spanish) Multicultural Coordinator
Play multicultural bingo every other month for improved health, cognitive abilities, and socialization. Bingo will be translated into Spanish. Call Caroline Remer at 415-454-0998 for more information.

Poetry Writing
Thurs, Mar 23; 2-3:30pm; Fee: $5; Facilitator: Stephen Galiani
Poetic forms, with an emphasis on memoir, will be discussed along with time to share, listen to, read, and discuss each other’s poems. Please bring a self-written poem or one of your favorite poems (maximum 40 lines). Sign up at Front Desk.

Mixed Media Art Books
Thursdays, 10:45am-12:30pm; Fee: $40/$45 for 4 weeks; begins 3/23; sign up at Front Desk
Get ready to “think outside the book” as you learn how to create personal and expressive pieces of all shapes and sizes. Using mixed media, such as altered papers, photos, collage, fabric, and found objects, you will discover how to create unique art books and journals. Call Anna, 415-456-9062, ext. 138 for info.

Community Breakfast
First Friday of each month, 9-10am; Fee: $3/$6; Jackson Café
Drop in for the best deal in town. Join us for a tasty, hot buffet breakfast, which includes beverage, fruits and juices. Call Sophia, 415-456-9062, ext.129 for info.

New/Highlighted Classes/Workshops

See CLASSES on page 8
TECHNOLOGY MAR-APR 2017
Pre-registration and payment required. 415-456-9062

iPad/iPhone Basics 1:
Getting to Know Your Device
Tuesdays, March 7 & 14, 10am-12pm (2 classes)
Fee: $48 Maximum 8 people
In this personalized, two-week course, you’ll be guided through how to make calls, send emails and texts, download music and add applications. This course is for those new to the iPad and iPhone world. Each session provides one-on-one help and comes with instructional handouts. Bring your charged-up Apple device to class.

Managing Your Photos
Tuesdays, March 21 & 28, 10am-12pm (2 classes)
Fee: $48 Maximum 8 people
In this two-week course, you will learn different ways to preserve your photos, organize them into folders, edit them, back up and print them. Bring your digital cameras, flash drives or whatever you save your photos on and we’ll show you how to retrieve them, save in one place, and use software to make the process easy and fun.

Intro to Computers (Windows)
Tuesdays, April 11, 18, 25 & May 2, 10am-12pm (4 classes)
Fee: $65 Maximum 8 people
Designed for first-time computer users, you will learn how to start your computer and turn it off, use the mouse and keyboard to perform basic computer tasks, use Windows components to create and print a document, identify the basic parts of a computer and their use, search the Internet to find information and set up an email account.

iPad/iPhone Basics 2:
Essential Built-in Applications
Thursdays, April 20 & 27, 10am-12pm (2 classes)
Fee: $48 Maximum 8 people
In this two-week course, review the basics of using your device and learn how to get the most out of your built-in apps, including Photo editing, iCloud, Calendar, Siri, E-mail, Texting, Facetime, Maps/GPS, and more. We’ll show you how to find and install new apps, and how to update, delete and organize your apps for easy access. Bring your fully charged device, Apple ID, and Apple password to class. (For Apple devices only)

OPEN LAB
Every Monday and Wednesday, 10am-12pm; No Fee
Use our PCs to access the Internet. Volunteer staff available for advice on problems with your laptops and tablets; they can help you with software applications. Apple assistance is available on Wednesdays from 11am-12pm.

We are looking for bridge players who are interested in learning how to play Online Bridge. Call 415-456-9062 to add your name to the list. When there are enough people for a class, we will contact you with time and date.

MARIN COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING MONTHLY MEETING

Thurs, Mar. 2 | 10am – 12:30pm
Where: Larkspur Central Police Authority
Topic: Age-Friendly Marin

Whistlestop Weekly ACTIVITIES
Please view our most recent class schedule at www.whistlestop.org/classes/calendar/ or call 415-456-9062 for updates to the schedule.

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<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>INFO</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:30AM-10:30AM</td>
<td>Zumba Gold</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
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<td>Therapeutic Massage</td>
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<td>10:00AM-NOON</td>
<td>Computer Lab</td>
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<td>10:30AM-12:30PM</td>
<td>Mixed Media Art Books</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
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<td>3/2-4/27; no class 4/13</td>
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<td>Brown Bag Pantry</td>
<td>415-456-9067</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00PM-4:00PM</td>
<td>Yoga with Kelly</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
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* At Albert J. Boro Community Center (Pickleweed)
Things That Make Twins Unique

From HUFFINGTON POST

The number of twins in the U.S. is multiplying. According to a 2012 report by the National Center for Health Statistics, their birthrate rose 76 percent from 1980 to 2009. This could be due to the fact that more women over the age of 30 are having children and more are using fertility drugs and assisted reproductive technology, both of which increase the likelihood of multiple gestation.

The result? As many as one in 30 babies born in the United States is now a twin. With so many twins among us these days, it’s high time we celebrate some of the most interesting facts about them.

Identical twins do not have identical fingerprints. You might think that because identical twins supposedly share almost the same DNA, they must also have identical fingerprints. Well, that’s not true.

Fingerprints are not solely generated based on DNA. When identical twins are conceived, they start out with the same fingerprints, but during weeks six through 13 of pregnancy, as the babies start to move, they each touch the amniotic sac, and unique ridges and lines are formed on each twin’s hand that result in different fingerprints.

Mirror image identical twins have reverse asymmetric features. About 25 percent of identical twins develop directly facing each other, meaning they become exact reflections of one another. According to About.com, “they may be right- and left-handed, have birthmarks on opposite sides of their body, or have hair whorls that swirl in opposite directions.” This occurs when the twins split from one fertilized egg more than a week after conception.
Volunteer of the Month | By LAURIE VERMONT

Penny Markrack

Penny, an identical twin and fourth generation San Franciscan, has volunteered throughout her life. Beginning in her tweens, she was a candy striper at San Francisco Children’s Hospital. After graduating from San Francisco State, she quickly started a family and moved to Marin to raise her children someplace more kid friendly and, most importantly, someplace sunny.

Throughout the years while she was raising her four children, Penny continued volunteering for organizations, which meant a lot to her, including two stints as the president of the PTA for her children’s school.

When the kids were grown, Penny was happy to go to work. She had a job as a tour guide for school groups from Southern California visiting the Capitol in Sacramento and attractions in San Francisco, like Alcatraz. She then worked for 18 years at a small company providing personal growth and relationship services and seminars for adults.

When Penny had the opportunity to retire, she decided to volunteer at Whistlestop in the Jackson Café. She is a regular, volunteering two or three days a week. Last year, when we were between Café coordinators, Penny stepped in and volunteered every day, providing consistency and guidance to the other volunteers.

Penny loves the wonderful atmosphere at the Jackson Café. She enjoys working with her fellow volunteers and the staff. Her favorite thing is having the opportunity to meet the people who come in regularly to share a delicious and affordable meal. If you are vigilant and discerning, you can occasionally see Penny’s twin Pam, when she comes to visit her sister. Penny is one of three Jackson Café volunteers who have a twin.

Penny’s free time is spent with her five grandchildren and the choral group, Singers Marin. She is looking forward to traveling to Iceland with the singing group, where they will perform in four different venues. Her travel will continue in late spring when Penny will celebrate her oldest granddaughter’s college graduation with a dream trip to Kenya and Tanzania.

“Penny brings cheer to all of us in the Jackson Café. Her beautiful smile is always ready to welcome and serve our guests. She will often take the time to chat with those diners who are seeking a little company,” says Sophia Osorio, Nutrition Coordinator.

‘Huevita’

By LISA BRETONES

Editor’s note: Please enjoy this whimsical song called “Huevita,” written by Whistlestop Marketing Strategist Jennifer Golbus’ identical twin, Lisa. Jennifer and Lisa call each other Eggie because they came from the same egg in the womb. See if you can spot the 11 different egg references sprinkled throughout the song.

‘Huevita’

Did I ever tell you I admire your firmness? / Stand up to a world that like crazy boils around you / And did I ever thank you for showing me the sunny side? / Well you pick me up, you turn me around, and say that I’m …

Scrambled! C’mon, scramble me too / Huevita, you know that I’d do anything for you / So come jump in and we’ll mix into one / Together’s the game you know we’re having some fun

Well, did I ever tell you I’ll be there to hold your hand? / On those soft-boiled days when you don’t seem to understand / So don’t you worry, Egg dear, if you’re feeling a little bit fried / Well I’ll pick you up. I’ll turn you around and say that you’re …

Scrambled! C’mon, scramble me too / Huevita, you know that I’d do anything for you / So come jump in and we’ll mix into one / Together’s the game you know we’re having some fun

Huevita! Well scrambled, fried, or flipped on your back / Well I don’t care if your shell’s got a crack / ‘Cause you’re my Egg, and I’m your Egg too / So Huevita, you know that I’d do anything for you / Yes, you know that I’d do anything for you!

Visit Whistlestop’s YouTube channel or use this URL to listen to ‘Huevita’ online: youtu.be/vXuTR3rqOfg
Make a difference every day!

We are seeking friendly and reliable volunteers who want to give back to their community.

Thursday, March 30, 2017
3:30pm - 5:00pm
Whistlestop
930 Tamalpais Ave
San Rafael CA 94901

Volunteer positions include:

• CarePool drivers
• Meals on Wheels drivers
• Jackson Café lunch servers & cashiers
• ESL tutors (no second language required)

For more information contact
Laurie Vermont,
Volunteer Program Manager
415.456.9067
lvermont@whistlestop.org
Rain was pouring on Marc Enout, paratransit driver, as he walked near the Whistlestop building. He greeted a client he knew, a woman with Down Syndrome. She asked if he could give her a ride to the bank. Because policy requires passengers to call ahead, Marc replied, “I can’t do that, but I can walk you over.” He did so, lifting his umbrella over both of their heads.

This might not be a typical encounter, but it does typify the spirit of Whistlestop and Marc Enout’s personality. “What do I like about the job? Everything!” he said.

“I like helping people. My dad calls it stocking up on Karma chips.”

March 18 is National Transit Driver Appreciation Day and Whistlestop appreciates Marc and all of its drivers.

A typical day for Marc starts early with paperwork before he leaves to pick up kidney dialysis clients. “They are always the first passengers of the day. I either take them to their appointments or pick them up after. Sometimes clients will wind up getting a kidney transplant. I get attached to them and it chips away at me when any of them move on.”

I could stand for hours, watch you as you sleep
The rise and fall of two tiny chests could make a mother weep
And I find that I am humbled by the deepest kind of joy
Dear God make me worthy of this little girl and boy

—from Breath of Heaven, written by Jennifer Golbus for her twins Adina and Jonah, pictured above. Listen to the full song atyoutu.be/eGwJza94HLI
How to Make a Will That Works

by SERENA D’ARCY-FISHER

You would be surprised how many people pass away each year without a will, or intestate. Famous figures like musicians Prince, Bob Marley and Jimi Hendrix, billionaire Howard Hughes and artist Pablo Picasso died intestate. Whether your estate is large or small, state laws apply when there is no will, and large taxes and fees will likely greatly reduce the value of your estate.

It’s always a good idea to get professional, competent legal advice when drawing up or revising your will. Having a sound will can greatly reduce expenses, and the time it takes to settle an estate and help ensure your wishes are carried out.

A will is private and the contents do not need to be shared with anyone, even by witnesses. However, at death a will becomes a public document and anyone can request to see it. It is recommended that you discuss your estate plans with close family members to avoid unpleasant surprises and potential challenges to your will later.

Following is some general information to consider when planning for the future distribution of your property to family, friends and charities.

Draw up a list of the people and charities that you wish to provide for in your plans. Write a list of all your assets, including properties, art, jewelry, life insurance, retirement plans, bank accounts, investments, collections, and special items that have important meaning to you.

The next step is to consider who you would like to match with these assets. You may want to consider the advantages of setting up a trust if there are young people involved, as a way to reduce taxes, or to relieve a surviving spouse of the challenge of managing investments. You can also consider charitable trusts after family and loved ones have been considered.

Whistlestop, in partnership with the Legal Aid of Marin, offers free half hour appointments for Marin seniors during a two-hour window on the first four Thursdays of the month. Appointments can be scheduled through the Information and Referral Office, 415-459-6700. If you would like a free booklet on “How to Make a Will That Works,” or want to learn more about making charitable gifts to Whistlestop, contact Serena D’Arcy-Fisher, CFRE, at sfisher@whistlestop.org, or call 415-456-9062, ext. 114.