

A Stranger in a Strange Land

Doug Tarter

“The Posse”

Okay, so you quit that awful job, scaled back on the golf, the cigars, and the expensive vodka martinis and you're ready to join the at-home dad brigade. Now what? Well, obviously you're going to want to acquaint yourself with your kid's teacher(s), map out the local parks, join the PTA, and commit to memory all the current family friendly movies and DVDs, but those things are all relatively easy and don't particularly take a great amount of finesse on your part. Very soon it'll become apparent that something crucial is missing, a void is growing, and it's quite possible that you won't know what's causing it. Well my friend and comrade, if you haven't noticed already, your adult-to-adult interaction time has been reduced to a polite tete-a-tete with the crossing guard at the corner, and perhaps a wave or two as familiar minivans pass by. The time has come for you to form your posse.

Whether you voted for her or not, Hillary was onto something when she reminded us that “It takes a village to raise a child.”

At the very least, it takes a good group of moms and or dads with good kids and an even better grasp of Lamorinda, as it pertains to children.



Stay-at-home dad Doug Tarter with his "posse"

Now hopefully you've trained your kids well and they've chosen excellent friends for themselves because excellent kids are usually the byproduct of excellent parenting, which means that all you have to do is use your considerable charm and wit to win the parents over. During the last couple of years I've compiled a crack team of moms who both entertain and support me; Angie, the epitome of warmth and giving, Rhoda, energetic and inspiring, and Lynne, “UberMom,” who always knows where the kids are supposed to be at every hour of every day.

I highly recommend a group of four. It's the perfect number for playing bridge, going to lunch, fitting in a compact car, and most importantly it's a big

enough group that in a pinch there's always someone to save your posterior by picking up the kids when you're forced to stay a little longer at the Lafayette Reservoir because you just know that on the next cast you're going to land that trophy bass.

Just a few words of caution, make sure every member of your posse has a vehicle that will transport at least seven people. If you invite one member of the group to shop for blemished All-Clad pans at TJ Maxx, invite them all. And, never ever go to lunch with them at that new Yankee Pier restaurant on Mt. Diablo because there are all these boutique-type shops that surround it and they're sure to insist on shopping at each one while you are forced to sit on the curb twiddling your thumbs.