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From Front Page

Seeing Double: Nothing Says Togetherness Like Twins

... continued from page A1

"We (Ferber and husband, Stan) were relieved to find that there were only two, since we already had a 3-year-old son, Michael, and three boys would be quite enough. Of course, life with 'three under 3' was hectic and demanding in the beginning and we relied on friends during those early months," she said. Older twin Mark shared a nursery with Alan but as they grew each boy was given his own room "to nurture their individual identities." They enrolled at the same university with different majors. "Ironically, they were both drawn to music in a big way," Ferber said. Both became professional jazz musicians.

Ferber's advice for mothers of twins: "Ask for help in the early years and give equal time to siblings."

Amy Morosini's doctor told her, "I hope you're ready for twins." Her husband paled. Twin births run in her mother's family, and her second cousins later had twins. The pregnancy was a difficult one, Morosini said, but when Jake and Nick arrived one month early "it was an instant family." She was naïve, she said, to think she could do it all. "I wasn't expecting I'd have any problems," she said.

Lacking immediate family nearby, Morosini scrambled to get help and enrolled in a twin support group. "I wish I'd done that before they were born," she said, suggesting parents line up help right away. Night nurses or doulas book months in advance. "You're going to need time to sleep." The Morosini twins are both competitive and each other's best friend, but still two unique individuals.

Lafayette resident Lynnette Potter and her husband were elated just to be pregnant, "however on the way home from the doctor's office my husband and I started to panic; we already had a 9 month old at home," she said. The pair shared a room until they were 6. "I think kids probably always feel a loss of identity when someone refers to them as 'the younger sister of,' or 'twin sister of,'" she said, but she learned that no matter how similar their age and upbringing, each will develop their own personality. "With twins, the learning curve for parenting can be twice as steep."

Deborah de Lambert of Orinda thinks it's fortunate she had her twins first. Mother of fraternal twin sons Jarett and Kyle Visher, she explained that by the time their younger sister arrived, de Lambert thought, "I'll never be able to go grocery shopping!"

She pictured herself wearing a baby in a carrier and "getting on with life." Instead de Lambert was nearly overwhelmed just receiving her first week's supply of diapers from a diaper service. She remembers being "flat out exhausted," adding "that first year is really tough." However once the boys reached pre-school age "it got pretty easy and a lot of fun."

Then came simultaneous adolescence, and "that gets a little hairy," de Lambert admitted. When Kyle kicked Jarett out of the room they both shared it was like "getting a divorce." But her twins remain so connected they don't realize they're connected, she said. "They take their best friend around with them," she said.

Cailey and Shannon McVay of



Cole and Ryan Sitar



Cheryl and Dylan Potter



From left: Alan, mother Kathy, and Mark Ferber.

Photo courtesy Kathy Ferber

Lafayette say it's "cool" being twins. "The girls do a lot of things together," said their mother, Beth McVay. "But their personalities are different and actually complement each other." As babies, Cailey was into arts and crafts and Shannon was always into animals; now, Cailey is thinking of becoming a lawyer and Shannon is thinking of becoming a nurse.

"They think they have telepathic powers with each other," their mother said, and "they always look after each other." Because they had the twins first, McVay did not join a support group. "We didn't know any better," she said. With 16-plus feeds per day and 16-plus diaper changes a day, having lots of family support and help during that time period is a blessing, McVay said.

"Enjoy it," counsels de Lambert, of the time a parent will spend raising

twins, "it's an amazing relationship." Bradley added, "Everyone smiles at twins."

In 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 131,269 twin births, just slightly over 3 per cent of the nearly 4 million reported births that year. Triplets, quadruplets, quintuplets and "higher order multiples" were even rarer, accounting for only 5,417 births, collectively. Prospective parents of multiples can tap the following organizations for help:
Multiples of America
<http://www.nomotc.org/>
Twin Valley Mothers of Twins
<http://www.tvmotc.org/>
Contra Costa Parents of Multiples
<http://www.ccpom.net>
Twins by the Bay
www.twinsbythebay.org