TWILESS TIMES

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FALL 2011



THE 2011 TWINLESS TWINS CONFERENCE IN MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA



President's Corner

Dear Twins.

am honoured to be named as your new President and proud to represent our organization. I am also comforted to know Renie Hallford will remain as Past President. I have already sought his wise counsel.

Many of our members have recently returned from our annual conference held in the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. I was very pleased that our organization had reached out and welcomed twenty first time conference attendees. They came hoping to find understanding and support in their healing journey. I was gratified to meet many of them, as well as be re-acquainted with old friends and make new friends.

I look forward to meeting many of you over my term and working with you to continue and progress this wonderful organization. I truly am impressed with our members.

I am also very impressed with our regional coordinators and the members of our board of directors, both outgoing and incoming and, of course, our wonderful Executive Director, Michelle Getchell. TTSGI could not exist without them.

Ray Boyle, President >



THE EMPTY CHAIR

"Journaling Through The Grief"

By Sandy Goad

e are already many months into this year. How are you doing with your new year resolutions you made this past January? Most of the time my resolutions are forgotten by the end of January. But there is one resolution that I promised myself to keep this year and I have. It is one that I wish I had kept many years ago. I have found through others, who have experienced grief, how valuable keeping a journal can be in the healing process. When the loss of a twin becomes too difficult to talk about, many people have come to grips with their sorrow through writing. Maybe, now, you might let journaling help you put your grief into words.

You may find that the act of writing out your thoughts will help you clarify and come to grips with them. This process is called journaling. You can write anytime you need to talk. It is a safe way to discharge anger and it can help diminish any guilt. It is also a good way to unload sorrow that you are not willing to share with anyone else.

All you have to do is get a notebook of some sort and start writing. Let your thoughts and feelings flow through your pen onto the paper. It's a great release! Don't worry about your sentence structure, composition or making sense to others. Just let it flow. You'll be surprised at how the words will come once you start. It's important to date your entries so that when you come back later and reread what you've written, you will be able to see just how far you have come. Your journal will become a yardstick by which you can measure your growth through your grief. When you think you have not made any progress, you can just pick up your journal, read some past entries, remember where you were and discover how far you've come.

Your notebook is your personal book. It's not for publication or for anyone else to read; it's just for you. It can be an important part of your therapy, your healing, and your growth. There is no time limit or expectation for completing your journal. Pause as needed to reflect and to heal. In time, you will be able to let the dark feelings out and make room once again for the light to come in. As you journal through your grief, I hope you too will find healing and rediscover the joy of living one day at a time.

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VOLUNTEER!

If you are interested in volunteering for TTSGI, there are many opportunities available to you!

We are looking for volunteers who can assist their Regional Coordinators or help with the TTSGI website.

Please contact your Regional Coordinator using the website's "Contact Us" map in your area.

Go to: www.twinlesstwins.org

DONATION OF KIDNEY

By Joseph Basehart, twin to Gerard John

Unfortunately, I won't have any more vacation time to attend this year's conference. I donated a kidney to a friend and a priest (the same person), Fr. Richard Ryan, C.M. After testing, which began in October 2010, we found we were a match. On March 24th, The University of Colorado Hospital transplant team with Dr. Michael Zimmerman 'harvested' my donated kidney and gave it to Fr. Ryan. He had been on a 5 year waiting list and had already been on dialysis for two years, three days a week. We are both doing well, thanks be to God, and thanks also to the many folks and family who prayed for us and our recovery. praying, as well as Sandy Meyer and other Twinless Twins in Minnesota. We will keep this year's conference in our generosity?! Spread the word and keep us in your prayers. prayers even though I am unable to attend. Please say hello to Sandy Meyer and the other fine folks who will be at this year's conference. I go back to work fulltime on June 24th for the first time in 3 months. It will be an adjustment. It felt like a pre-retirement/vacation I won't

have ever again. Next year I vowed to give up dust from under my bed, for Lent, instead of body parts.

Sincerely, Joseph Basehart, twin to Gerard John 3318 South Laredo Court, Aurora, CO 80013. www.funny2me2004@yahoo.com

P.S. I have learned there are somewhere near 85,000 people, in the United States alone, who are waiting for a Surgeons are standing by. kidney donation. donations are the best. The expected lifetime of patients are extended by 20 more years, if the organ is healthy. It was totally worth the experience to be able to give the gift of life to a friend. But Father Ryan was also the recipient of a liver from a deceased person, about 6 years ago, that There are many people in the Denver Metro area who were was another miracle of life. Who knows, someone you know could help someone live a full life because of your

> Thank you. God bless, take care and have a great conference and a wonderful summer. •

TTSGI MEMBERSHIP

The benefits of being a member of Twinless Twins Support Group, International are numerous. If you are not already a member of TTSGI, please consider joining – the \$50 per year membership fee will not only support a great organization so that we are around for new twinless twins, but you will receive our quarterly newsletter, full of twin stories, poems, information about regional meetings and updates about our annual conference and other information about the organization. You will be able to attend our national conference each year, as well as support your region by attending local meetings. If you enjoy talking to others about your twin loss, you can join our chat room. So, you see, being a part of the TTSGI family will enable you to more easily bond with other twinless twins. Please consider joining by going online at www.twinlessless.org and completing the membership form. Thank you from the Board of Directors of TTSGI.

A BIG thank you goes out to Suzanne Wedow for all the work she did while on the Board (2007-2011). She was instrumental in obtaining Board training at two of the fall board meetings. In addition, she was the lead person on the Five-Year Strategic Plan, which is now in effect. This past year, in conjunction with Mary R. Morgan, Suzanne created a resource directory (Regional Coordinator Handbook) for the Regional Coordinators to guide our RC's in their roles to help twinless twins

in their healing journey. We will miss you, Suzanne, and wish you well.

Welcome to our new members of the Board, Kevin Johnson and Ruth Selig! Margaret Daffin was re-elected for another three-year term and Renie Hallford will remain for one year as a non-voting member to mentor our new President, Ray Boyle.

Dawn Barnett, Board Member >



Suzanne Wedow

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE A TWIN?

By Shelby Britt Miller, twin to Shannon Britt Miller

From the time I was a child, through the passing of my identical mirror twin Shannon Britt Miller in adulthood that was the question that was asked most. My answer was quite simple: "It is all I know and it is amazing -- what is it like to not be a twin?" Who knew that I would one day have the answer to both of these questions?

Growing up, Shannon and I were always together. We attended University together. started two companies together and never were apart for any truly

extended period of time for 35 years. The "twin bond' is real. I was the first to hear her heart beat in utero, and then in mid-August 2009 I would be the last to hear her heart beat. An entire life cycle we had lived together, and now WHAT???? It was no longer "we," no longer "the girls," "the twins," "Shannon and Shelby." It was just me and "I." This is the scariest moment. Your twin dies, and it is all you have known your entire life and you are now left to pick yourself up and start everything over as a singleton... and how would I do this? I struggled intensely to try and find someone that could understand what I was going through as a twin losing my twin. It seemed impossible to even have others a massive brain bleed. I could not believe what I was acknowledge the difference in grief twins go through hearing. "She has a week-old baby and a 3-year-old," I but to have others try and understand this loss of myself was crying and screaming. I knew it was over and I was seemed to be an impossible battle. I looked to the alone. Soon my family made it to the hospital to hear twinless twin organization for support. I did find many useful tools, but I had to share these tools with my family and friends to understand what a completely different experience of loss it is for a twin than that of losing a parent, child or sibling. This was my identical twin and I just needed to be acknowledged and heard.

Shannon had given birth to her second daughter on August 5, 2009, and she also had a 3-year-old daughter.



We owned our own company that we ran from my parents' home. Our family is extremely close, and we are always together. A week after the birth, which had no complications, Shannon had a migraine headache (we often got migraines). After taking medicine, she still had a headache so we decided to go to the hospital as she was nauseated and would need fluids and a shot. As we were driving there, my instinct kicked in and my gut told me something was going on. It was as if something had taken over and I was on autopilot. We arrived at the ER and I asked immediately for her blood pressure to be taken

and for her to be taken to have a CT scan. Neither one of us had ever had high blood pressure; it was actually always very low. Even during birth, her pressure was below normal, but for unknown reasons on this day her blood pressure upon intake was 198/100.

I was in shock and scared and just wanted help. So I got her to a room and we waited... for an hour and a half begging for a doctor to bring her blood pressure down and take her to get a CT scan. Unfortunately, the hospital did nothing to help and I held my twin down as she started having a seizure, became paralyzed on her left side and was now unconscious. Shannon died from the dreaded news that she had zero chance of survival. We would wait 36 hours for her to be completely brain dead.

There was never even a second thought that she was going to donate her organs, not even a twinge of it not happening. I asked a nurse, "How long?" She replied,

(Continued on page 5)

"Tonight or tomorrow." I looked at her and said, "Could you please call the organ transplant team in?" She looked at me stunned and said, "Well I think they are 30 miles away." My reply was, "I do not care if they are in New York -- just get them here." Shannon was going to donate everything. In the face of tragedy, her children would know that their Mommy is a hero.

That she is. As I continue to get through this - including undergoing brain mapping and brain surgeries to be sure I'm okay since identical twins have identical brains -- I have to find peace somehow. I walk the beach daily and find sea glass so that her children know that Mommy is thought of all the time, every day. This is my time with Shannon and God and to marvel at the absolute beauty that this world offers. I realized in time that I was one of the most blessed humans ever. I had an identical twin and WHAT A GIFT FROM GOD. I experienced a safety net of unconditional love and a bond most people will never know. I got to have that for 35 years and what a true blessing that is.

I actually became sad -- not that I lost my twin because I know she is with me daily, but that everyone on this earth did not have a twin. They would never experience this bond and love,

and that is so sad to me. I was so blessed, and for that I thank God and I honor my twin and her love.

Shannon was able to donate everything -- all her organs, eyes, bones, and tissue. She was so healthy she saved 40 people alone with her bone marrow and at least 50 more with her skin, not to mention her major organs. She was truly a hero. It was this past April that we heard from a recipient, from the person who received the organ I most wanted to know about: her heart. We met her recipient and his most beautiful family. My family listened to Shannon's/Raymond's heart beating so strong. She was living on, and this gentleman was able to live and love his family and children because of her gift of life. That was such an amazing moment, to hear her heart again giving life. I was so proud to be her twin.

As I got more involved with our organ donation foundation, I found myself feeling very alone and saddened that there were things for parents, children, siblings -- but where was the stuff for twins? There I was once again feeling alienated by a support group. I wanted this to change. I never wanted a twin to feel left out again. To lose half of yourself and it not be acknowledged was overwhelming. So it led me to give information on

twinless twins and twin loss to our organization locally. I was told that there were never any other twins that had lost another. After a week I received the call. "Thank you so much for that information. We actually had a twin that had a twin that donated this weekend, and the information was exactly what was needed." Now I constantly think and wonder how many twins are out there going through this and not being acknowledged? How can I help to get the twins support and recognition? I looked to the National Organ Donation Foundation; this truly is the group that is the backbone of honoring Shannon. I just knew that with their vast knowledge and commitment to honoring donors and donor families that they certainly would honor a donor's twinship. So now I sit looking to hear from other twinless twin donator surviving twins. I look to you so that we can acknowledge your twinship and lend support where needed.

I honestly am so very blessed to be a twin and I honor and cherish this gift I have been given. Shannon is the twin I strive to be like, a hero in life and death.

If you are a twinless twin who's twin was an organ donor please contact me or if anyone has any questions I am more than happy to help. Let's honor our donors and our twinship!

shelbybrittmiller@yahoo.com 910-685-5779 ♥



2011 Conference the Best!!

By Dawn Barnett

his year marked the 11th conference I've attended since 1997 and in my opinion it was THE best one.

planning began in March with our first conference call did on the raffle/auction.

lasting over an hour. We had three or four more of these resulting in what I hope y'all thought was a very successful three days full of cheers, tears and lasting friendships. We had a large group of new attendees and many alumni to support them.

Highlights were the boat ride (going up and down in the

too good for me) and friendships made there; a wide choice out of tickets! of breakouts which everyone could choose from; Darcie Sims in her presentation of vegetables as a personality and having laughter which we all need at times like this; the

memorials made to our founder, Dr. Brandt and in addition, my friend and comrade/sis, Linda Pountney, receiving the Dr. Brandt Award.

I wish to thank those on the conference committee. Michelle Getchell, Joan Angelis, Sandra Brown, Carolyn Shane and the local twins for all the work they did in preparation of the conference. I would also like to thank As one of the conference committee members, the Carolyn Shane and Sandra Brown for the hard work they



Yes, I have stage fright, believe it or not, and Carolyn obliged by getting everv time announcement needed to be made on the raffle/silent auction. And organizer that she is she helped us keep everything moving in an orderly manner. She also took charge at the auction so that Sandra and I could do the bidding, which we love to do! In addition, a BIG thanks to Margaret Daffin for helping me sell the 50/50

locks reminded me of being in an elevator so that wasn't tickets at the banquet. We sold a record number and ran

All in all I think 2011 will be a memorable one for us

THANK YOU



special thank you to all twinless twins and others involved in organizing the 2011 Minneapolis/St. Paul Conference - Michelle Getchell, Dawn Barnett, Sandra Brown, Carolyn Shane, Joan Angelis and her team and many other twins who worked to make the 2011 conference a great one.

Margaret Daffin, twin to Josie 🛡

A CONFERENCE TO REMEMBER

had a wonderful, healing, fun, bittersweet time at the Twinless Twins Conference in Minneapolis. I learned so much about myself. I had debated attending the conference this year due to the rising cost of airfare but I knew in my heart that I NEEDED to go. I can honestly say it was worth every penny. To get hugged by Eileen and Shirley as soon as I came in the door—where else but at a twin's conference does that happen? It was also nice to see Janet Baird and Kevin Mullen in the lobby as they have helped me tremendously the past couple of months. This is a place where I become the person I was when my twin Janet was still alive, someone with a smile all the time. That is such a gift.

Darcie Sims is a brilliant speaker. I have not laughed so hard in a long time! It helped me to understand a lot about myself by checking off the characteristics that describe me (I'm an eggplant). How funny to hear twins say "I'm a radish or I'm an eggplant". It was like having our own secret language (a twin thing). Mary Morgan's session on "Sustaining Relationships" was enlightening. She validated our feelings, that whatever we feel is normal.

The boat cruise was beautiful (and the air conditioning was appreciated by all!). Thank you so much Joan! There is something so calming about being on the water. The rose petal ceremony was especially meaningful to me. My heart felt lighter after releasing the petals from my hand into the water. Thank you Mary Morgan for being a catalyst to my family becoming whole again!

When I left on Sunday morning I was feeling a little sad to go home. I started walking very slowly to my gate and who should be sitting there waiting for her flight (which was delayed an hour) but Janet Baird who was feeling the same way. I think that was our twins at work!

Jennifer Rudd, twin to Janet •







Sarah Flower, twin to Ann, married Billy Landry on her birthday July 31, 2011. It will be ten years since her twin Ann died - October, 2001. Following is a short article that Sarah wrote for TTSGI in 2007.

Valentine's Day Blues

By Sarah Flower, Ann's twin

y favorite valentine will always be my twin Annie. It was a holiday we loved, but not for the usual reasons - we sent each other cards, carefully searching for the best mix of love, sweetness and humor to say you're my favorite valentine – be mine. To me a heart will always be two mirror halves clasped together as twins, like us. The hardest Valentine's Days were the first after Annie died in October, 2001. think I told my partner Bill that first vear that he would never ever be my Valentine – that he shouldn't expect a card or chocolate or a special dinner from me ever on February 14th because Ann would always be my only Valentine. (Partners of

twinless twins aren't enviable!) I couldn't bear that I'd never get another card from Ann, that I could never send her the special one I'd found and hear if she liked it.



But I'm noticing that each year little by little my heart is relenting and there's more room for love besides Ann's. I'm still mad and resentful that it is not how would choose it to

be but there's the reality that yearning for someone that I can't reach and stubbornly demanding that only her particular kind of love is acceptable to me will only doom me to disappointment and gloom in this life until



it's over – what kind of existence is that?

I can instead have hope that I can find aspects of the love I seek in new ways, pulling me closer to friends, drawing me out to seek companionship when I'm lonely, risking vulnerability to love and be loved here and now. I can't say that I'm happy about it – resentment is tough to conquer! – but it's a much more hopeful way of facing life for now until I see Ann again.

I'm still disappointed. The first year I sent myself a card from Ann saying how hard she knew it was for me and wishing me all

the strength possible; the second, I think I sent myself a card from myself, encouraging me to be brave, to love and be loved. Some years I've bought a few cards, not writing in them but saving them, just to have them. Some years I haven't been able to walk into any store selling Valentine's Day cards at all. So it's a process. Not a good or a bad one, just what it is. I never know in advance how I'll really feel just yearning for that wonderful connection again, even if just a glimpse, in words on a card.



TWINLESS TWINS CONFERENCE 2011

By Janet M. Baird, twin to Margaret

I didn't realise the second time would be even better. Last year (Detroit 2010) was my first ever TT conference - 6 years after I lost my identical twin Margaret. The conference was a revelation. Looking back I can see how much 'progress' I have made since Detroit. Just even meeting other twinless twins had an effect.



I wasn't even going to come in 2011 - but somehow I just had to. I think I 'cracked' around November time. I just had to see the twins again and enjoy five days of special companionship and respite from my journey of one. So Minneapolis 2011 began to shape. After the shock of the airfare (I had to pack in as much teaching as I could right up to coming plus exam marking), I began planning an itinerary-including a stay at St Paul's monastery before and another monastery in Dubuque afterwards, to make the most of my time in America. I finally set off from Manchester airport in England on July 15th looking forward with hope. But would the 2011 conference be as good? How could it possibly live up to Detroit!

Reader, it did. (That's a mis-quote from Jane Eyre, by Charlotte Bronte!) In a sentence it was on a different level or was I on a different level? Maybe it was because I wasn't a first timer. (Oh, the joy of pulling on my blue lanyard!) – or maybe the content of the sessions were just right for me. They were all so good I had trouble deciding which to go to. I found Darcie Sim's talk not only really funny but also very relevant to how I, as an eggplant try to cope with my grief journey without my twin. After 51 years of travelling with her, my route is not always easy to find.

Mary Morgan's question and answer session seemed to talk right to my soul and the relationships session the next day was relevant and so valuable. Listening to a safe circle of twinless twins all revealing their expectations of a relationship after their twin loss brought up deep emotions for me. If Detroit was a revelation, then Minneapolis was an epiphany- a series of life changing discoveries. Realising how I was, how I am is 'normal' for a twinless twin.

Apart from the powerful sessions, the Marriott Airport hotel was spot on, the boat ride and the essential yellow school bus were superb and the weather (I am British, so I always mention the weather) was ... HOT!

Ohio 2012? Don't even mention it! ♥



WORDS FROM BOB YARMEY, TWIN TO ALAN, SPOKEN AT THE MINNEAPOLIS CONFERENCE IN HONOR OF DR. RAYMOND BRANDT

I never would have believed that anything good could possibly come from the sudden and tragic loss of my twin Alan in 1991. I wrestled in the fog of my grief for over a year before a work colleague told me of a special man he watched on a recent Sally Jessie Rafael show talking about the loss of his twin. He provided me with the telephone number shown at the end of the show's credits. That evening I wasted no time making that momentous call. This marked the start of my grief

recovery process. Compassionately guiding me out of my grief fog was Dr. Raymond Brandt. For several hours - as though he had no other personal concerns, he focused his undivided twinly attention on my desperate need for understanding and help. For awhile, I truly wondered if I might be going mad dealing with the grief from my still fresh and raw emotions of Raymond validated practically loss. everything I felt tormented by. Soon afterwards, he even made a special trip to Dallas to be my house guest and lovingly help me re-adjust to life as a twinless twin.

Like myself, Raymond also didn't realize that much good could ever come from the sudden loss of his twin Robert as they both worked on a power line project in 1949. Very shortly after his twin loss, Raymond later confessed of bringing lots of anger and rage over as he found himself being placed in mortal combat against the North Koreans. As a deeply profound Christian, killing was repugnant to him. Yet the simple truth was that it was kill or be killed. The anger and rage produced by his twin loss translated into fighting with a ferocity which made his ultimate survival possible. Or - he would later wonder - could it possibly be his twin guardian angel helping to protect him?

Fast forward about four decades. Dr Raymond Brandt had distinguished himself as a Purdue University Professor of Engineering; he held several patents for firearms safety devices; had raised a family of four sons; testified numerous times as an expert witness in Federal Courts; and had developed a family homestead for children to visit with

their school classmates. He even built a large Christian day care center just outside Ft Wayne. It was a huge expense. Raymond was hoping for some promised state funding. However secular state officials started insisting on restrictions to prayer in his daycare center. Raymond refused to acquiesce. Going it alone - at more considerable personal expense, Raymond's project was completed and he refused to allow God to be shoved into the background. God's presence in his life was Raymond's greatest desire. Not only did he acknowledge God's providence in his survival as a Korean War POW but he knew with unwavering faith that God had seen him get the better of three separate episodes of cancer.

The time had grown ripe to launch his special twinless twins support group. The concept was a profoundly selfless undertaking. For many years, Raymond had to endure his compartmentalized grief as a solo experience. Anything he could do to ensure future twinless twins didn't have to suffer through the same agony seemed a divine calling to him. Those of us who witnessed those early foundational days in the early 1990's clearly got to see firsthand what an incredible dynamo Raymond was. Talk about a man on fire! His energy seemed absolutely boundless! "HH twins" or healing by

helping was a mantra we early members often heard Raymond reiterate.

Special mention must be made of Raymond's often referred to "bride" - Miriam Brandt. As a fine Christian lady, Miriam worked alongside Raymond to promote and help organize twinless twins. Despite not fully comprehending the ramifications of twinless grief, she nonetheless devoted a tremendous amount of effort in support of her dear husband's goals. I can't fathom any other dedicated secretary and sacrificing wife who so willingly and so graciously aided in the successful creation of this group. For both the Brandt's, thousands of hours - hours which could have been used to enjoy many more good and fun things in life together were sacrificed in favor of organizing membership rosters, publishing and mailing out the twinless publications, preparing for numerous nationwide media events and shows – etc., etc., etc., etc.

The first three conferences were graciously hosted by the Brandt's at their home just outside Ft Wayne. What an

(Continued on page 17)

The Work of Healing By Helping Continues In Memory of Dr. Raymond Brandt

hear what your heart is saying about what it's like to lose your twin. These gestures of help are at the core of the with a monetary contribution that feels right to you. Twinless Twins International Support Group.

other with phone calls, each communications and small gatherings. We extend a helping hand to each other in many other ways too, knowing that healing is a process.

certainly done at as low a cost as possible. You might be surprised to know that all of the many services TTSGI provides are accomplished on a budget of approximately \$75,000 a year!

But TTSGI needs your help to keep these services within the limits of the law. available to anyone who needs them. With more funds of

Sometimes it's the little things that matter—a twin course we could do more and hope to have a larger fund hug, a warm smile, someone who can really listen and this year to work with. So, this is what we're asking you to do now—help to support the valuable work of TTSGI

As it has been 10 years since our founder, Dr. This is what members of TTSGI do day after day: we Raymond Brandt passed away our goal for 2011 is to raise \$10,000 in contributions from our members and friends of TTSGI. Please give in memory of Dr. Brandt or your precious twin.

Enclosed in this newsletter are a donation form and Often this work is done behind the scenes and it's an envelope. Please decide to support TTSGI's work by filling out this form and sending it to our home office. TTSGI thanks you for your donation.

> Twinless Twins, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit taxexempt organization and your donation is tax deductible

LINDA POUNTNEY, RECIPIENT OF THE 2011 DR. BRANDT AWARD

I was humbled, thrilled, and almost speechless to receive this award because I knew him and benefited receive the 2011 Dr. Brandt Award.

Many years ago I learned about TTSGI and simply called the phone number, not knowing what to expect. Our founder Dr. Brandt answered the phone. He gave me encouragement and hope.

Dr. Brandt meant so much to me and continues to mean a lot to this organization. It is such an honor to

from his compassion. Since then, our organization has grown, but I see so many new and old twins giving to each other. In my opinion, this is our mission.

You may never know what it means to another twin you reach out to. Chances are, it means a great deal. For this, I want to thank each and every one of you.

Linda Pountney, twin to Paula Pountney >











IN RECOGNITION OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS SINCE SPRING 2011

America's Charities

Blake Amundsen – two fundraisers from candy sales to be used for conference Joan Angelis and Harold Roberts – sponsors of the conference boat cruise

Phyllis Ashliman – monthly pledge - where most needed

Dawn Barnett – monthly pledge – general fund, conference assistance, membership, memorial ad and donations for new home office computer and conference

t-shirts- in memory of my twin sister Daryl

Mary George Beyer – donation and memorial ad in memory of my twin, Georgia Mae Terry Raymond Boyle – monthly pledge, donations and memorial ad in memory of James Joseph (Jimmy)

Sandra Brown – conference costs in memory of Sammy

Dorothy Bruch

Caryn International Model & Talent Center – sponsor of conference programs

Merna Crasper – in memory of my twin, Verna

Margaret Daffin – quarterly pledge and donation in memory of my twin, Josie

Miriam (Brandt) Doetsch – in memory of Dr. Raymond Brandt

ExxonMobil Foundation – for volunteer hours and matching grants by

Margaret Daffin in memory of her twin, Josie Wilson

Doris Giroux

Jacquie Goldman – donation for jacket received from Eileen Jensen

Goodsearch – website search engine

Robert Gorecki – donation on behalf of Pamela Fender who lost her twin Steve Pepper –

I hope you had a rewarding, positive time at this year's event, Love Bob

Renie Hallford – conference costs in memory of Ernest "Ernie" Lamar Hallford

Lorraine Horstman – Dr. Brandt memorial donation

IGive.com – money earned from online searches

International Twins Association – memorial ad (Sandy Meyer)

Eileen Jensen – memorial ad in memory of Elaine Moench

Madleen Katkauskas

Susan & Kevin Lee – in memory of Keith, twin to Kevin Lee

Christopher Malcomb – scholarship fund in memory of my mom,

Karen Malcomb, twin to Ellen Swingle

Roberta Margolin – in memory of my twin, Jane Margolin

Cheryl Mertens – in memory of my twin, Theresa Swanson

Sandy Mever – memorial ad in memory of Sally Ann Walls

Mary R. Morgan - general fund

Richard O'Hanlon – memorial ad in memory of my twin, William O'Hanlon

Shyam Rai

Julia Ramey – monthly pledge for general fund

Carolyn Reed - in memory of beloved twin Carol Sgarzi

John Roberts Motor Works Company

Judith Rockey – Judy Rockey, twin to Janice Thompson

Shirley Sauer – memorial ad in memory of Sally

Ruth Osterweis Selig – gift of stock in memory of Rollyn Osterweis Krichbaum

Carolyn Shane – memorial ad in memory of Cary

Sharice Smith – memorial ad in memory of Letrice "Ncole" Smith

Jim and Ellen Swingle – scholarship fund in memory of my mom, Karen Malcomb, twin to Ellen Swingle and in memory of my mom and uncle, Genevirve Moore-Surline and Gene Moore

Beverly Smyk – monthly pledge

Dena Stitt – conference costs in memory of Dean

Joan Tsotsones – the best twin in the world! To Jean, Happy 51st Birthday, Lovie!

Suzanne Wedow – monthly pledge in memory of my twin Sandy

Judy Wilson - general fund

Joyce Woodman – in memory of my twin, Joan Folsom

We apologize if we have missed you.

Please let us know and we will recognize you in our Spring 2012 newsletter.

RAFFLE AND AUCTION DONORS AT THE

2011 NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL

John Amundson Joan Angelis Dawn Barnett Dana Bridges Sandra Brown Dottie Bruch Thomas Bruch Linda Burke Mary Cannon Margaret Daffin Lea Eriksen Lucille Erlewine Felice Pamela Fender Angela Fulton Doris Giroux Bessie Godfrey (in memory) Jacquie Goldman LeAnn Hallford Kelly Hammons Eileen Jensen Kevin Johnson Venice Lacy

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Thank you to all who participated in the raffle and silent/live auctions at the 2011 Minneapolis Twinless Twins Conference. If your name is not listed above, we apologize and thank you.

(WORDS FROM BOB YARMEY— Continued from page 10)

radiation treatment. Returning later and obviously both sides! weakened, he joked about how easy we would be able to pick him out in the crowd by looking for the guy with the glowing underwear!

Raymond will never forget what a saintly person he truly I am most certain that both the Brandt's are pleased and was. It is my fervent hope that the newer members of this proud for all your continuing HH efforts in perpetuating group might now enjoy a deeper appreciation for this this great group and its cause. May your work continue to group's founder. Regardless, each and every one of us be blessed! twinless twins should be so very thankful for his vision

and forethought; his servant hood and compassion and ultimately - the healing path he helped put us all back incredible heart-rending experience to behold! To see on. He would have us never forget that "ONCE A TWIN, Raymond affectionately hug and wipe tears from his new ALWAYS A TWIN! It gives me a profound sense of joy found twinless companions was to witness God's ultimate to envision Raymond functioning as a bridge person. He is call for us to love one another. Despite carrying his own bridging the love shared between all us earthly twins and crosses, Raymond maintained great integrity of character. our "WOMBMATES" - whom Raymond must be Early members of TT will not forget him having to steal thoroughly enjoying in Heaven alongside his own dear away for a few hours from one of our conferences for a twin Robert. He now has full revelation of twinship from

On Raymond and Miriam's behalf, I wish to acknowledge and applaud the ongoing efforts of TT's officers, board of directors and regional reps - especially Those of us fortunate to have personally known the long timers (Michelle, Margaret, Dawn, David, Dena)!

TWINLESS TWINS SUPPORT GROUP INTERNATIONAL

2011 DONATION FORM

Please enter the required information below if you would like to sign up as a Donor for Twinless Twins Support Group International.

Please print **this form** and mail it, along with your check, money order, or Visa/MasterCard/Discover information to:

Twinless Twins Support Group International P.O. Box 980481 Ypsilanti, MI 48198-0481 Or fax to: 1-888-205-8962

(Alternatively, you may make your donation online at **www.twinlesstwins.org** and use the DONATE button in the middle of the left hand side of the home page.)

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Twinless Twins, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit tax-exempt organization and your donation is tax deductible within the limits of the law.

The Board of Directors of TTSGI would like to welcome Meredith Yelton, twin to Emily, as our new Regional Coordinator for the Southeastern Region. Following is a little background information from Meredith:

33 oard members of Twinless Twins Support Group,

My name is Meredith Yelton. Most of you know who I am through meeting each other at the Annual Twinless Twins Conferences. I'm writing you this letter to express not only my gratitude for the support you've all given me, but to request the possibility that you will place me as the Southeastern Regional Coordinator.

For those of you who haven't met me, I'd like to give you a little back ground about myself. I'm 23 years old from Greenville, South Carolina. I went to Clemson University for college and majored in Health Administration. My twin sister Emily also went to Clemson with me. We lived together all but our freshman year, which of course we realized was a mistake from the beginning. Emily and I were inseparable. We had the same friends, played all the same sports, and were clearly true identical twins.

During our sophomore year of college, on the weekend of October 28, 2007, Emily and her boyfriend, along with 9 other kids went to the beach for a fun vacation. On Sunday morning, my family got a call to tell us that the beach house she was staying in was completely engulfed in flames. They told my parents that they didn't know which kids had survived and they should probably just come to the beach as soon as possible. Before they even made it, police had called to say Emily, along with six other students had died, including her boyfriend and our other best friend Justin.

The months following Emily and my friend's death were all a blur. First, shock, then depression; I was on a road to nowhere fast. This is when my therapist and I decided it would be a good idea to find a support group associated with twin death where I could feel more understood. I then remembered seeing a packet of information sent from Twinless Twins the second week after Emily died. That very day I left my therapist appointment, sped home and logged on to the TTSGI website and joined a group of the most special people on earth.

I would like to be considered to be the Southeastern Coordinator because I would like to try to give back to the organization that has helped me through some of the hardest years of my life. During the three years I have been a member of Twinless Twins, I have grown into the woman I am today. I believe that a huge aspect of my confidence in

me, and the faith I have to move through my life is from the immense amount of support given from Twinless Twins. I would like to be in a position to help other twins get to the place I am in life. I never believed I would get to the point of accepting my sister has died, and living a life I know she would be proud of, but I believe Twinless Twins has given me that. I know I could never give as much back that has been given to me, but I would love the opportunity to try. I hope ya'll will consider me, and look forward to seeing everyone next year at the conference!!

As an added note: I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board of Directors at TTSGI for appointing me as the new Southeast Regional Coordinator. As soon as I have arranged my first regional meeting, I will let everyone know."

Love, Meredith Yelton, twin to Emily



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NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL MEETING, MAY 2011

In York, Maine, twenty-one people gathered to learn from each other, celebrate their twinship, and share emotions and experiences on their healing journey. Caryl Edwards and Lynn Boston hosted, and Linda Pountney facilitated the meeting.

New member Paul Marshall wrote this about his experience:

Before I left that afternoon to attend my first Twinless Twins meeting in Maine, I told my wife that this is the only group that I wish I did not qualify for to join. No one chooses to lose their twin and when it happens no one can prepare you for the way in which it changes your life and the personal pain and loneliness that accompanies this loss. The loss of my twin has been tempered by the support I have gotten from my wife and family members as well as the support of others who have shared in the loss of their twin.

As I entered the room of the meeting and was in the presence of other twins I felt a sense of comfort. Finally, I was in the presence of others who can relate to my journey since the loss of my twin Peter. Their stories, although different, were accompanied by the same feelings of loss, loneliness and pain I have experienced. It was hard to hear what others had to say, but we were all here to listen and support each other. The support given each other helped to lift some of the emotional weight from my shoulders. As I left my first meeting I knew that although my story of loss was unique, I shared with others in our journey of healing for the loss of our twin.

I will definitely take part in other meetings and I encourage anyone who has lost a twin to also do so, for we all gain strength with our partnership in a group which none of us chose to qualify for.

Paul Marshall, Twin to Peter >



CANADIAN GATHERING

It was such a joy seeing everyone again at the

I gathering we had this year in May. It was held in London, ON. In attendance, were Ray, Madleen, Jackie, Darlene, Kari (new twin) and myself. We met at the Days Inn on a



beautiful spring day. Our agenda started with introductions which led to everyone having a chance to talk about their twins. Learning about each other's experiences as well as listening to the reminiscing stories brought us closer to each other like it makes us feel each time we meet. It ended with a meal where I hoped everyone had enjoyed.

Jennifer unfortunately couldn't make it to the gathering this year, but I would like to personally thank her for all her hard work in helping me prepare this event. There were other family members present: Darlene's mother and niece (twin's daughter) Jackie's niece (twin's daughter) as well as my sister, Pauline. It was a smaller crowd than intended due to previous engagements from some whom were not able to attend, but in all it was a great day.

I am not sure where the meeting will be next year, but this year I have asked anyone who would have suggestions for upcoming cities/locations for our next gatherings to please come forward and help plan. I will still be involved to do some of the organizing, but every little bit helps! For those who couldn't attend, you are more than welcome to participate.

Thanks for helping plan another super gathering and meeting new twins is always a rewarding experience!

Doris, *twin to Dianne*Regional Coordinator for Canada ♥

SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL GROUP AT 2011 CONFERENCE

From left to right: Kevin Johnson Margaret Daffin Dawn Barnett Sandra Brown Matthew Vierling Alfredo (Fred) Ojeda John Rohrer

Dr. Raymond Brandt (Photo) >

The Board of Directors of TTSGI would like to welcome Pamela Fender, twin to Steve as our new Regional Coordinator for the West Coast Region. Following is a little background information from Pam:

ear Board Members of Twinless Twins Support Group International,

Returning from this year's conference, I've had a bit of time for reflection. While I was there, I took some time considering the position of Regional Coordinator for the West Coast. This position has been vacant for a year and a half now, and I strongly believe that someone of my experience would be a perfect fit for this position.

As you may or may not know, I have sort of been acting as the Regional Coordinator, as Dawn Barnett and Michelle Getchell have forwarded on several "new" twinless twins' names to me and I have been speaking with them, consoling them and sharing stories. I have even been in contact with twins outside this region. I have spoken to at least six new twins in the last couple of months. The sharing of stories (only when they want to hear my story, I am brief in the details, because it is about them now), has helped me in my own personal growth. Through this organization and my own grief counseling, I have learned compassion and listening skills, two essential qualities for this position. I held a regional meeting in my home last November, where Dawn was able to attend, and am planning on holding another regional meeting in my home this November, before the holidays. There will be some new twinless twins attending as well as some alumni members.

I have been a member of this organization for two years. I am one of many who found this support group searching the internet.

There is a twinless twin in the bay area who signed up to go to the conference last year. He couldn't bring himself to go. He happened to attend my meeting last November and we have had several phone conversations. He claims, because of my meeting, it encouraged him to attend the conference in Minneapolis. What a joy that brought to me, to help even one twinless twin! I want to continue helping other twins, to "pay it forward", so-to-speak, what I have gained through TTSGI. Currently I am in contact with a twin in this region who lost her twin in January. I gave her "homework" to do, to begin journaling, as I believe this is a powerful tool for healing.

I have been a part-time substitute teacher during the school year for 13 years and have been working on writing a book of my memoirs. It has allowed me to spend time talking with twinless twins who need to be heard and shown compassion. After all, as another twinless twin, I "get it."



M y twin brother Steve lived in the Los Angeles area, where we grew up. We were always best friends. Unfortunately he became very depressed

and estranged himself from me about two years before he died. We did communicate, however, several times before he planned his suicide. Steve took his life and passed away on December 3, 2008. He was assisted in his suicide by one of our brothers. We were 54 years old. The special breakout session on suicide at this year's conference,

which was arranged by Joan Angelis, has been life-changing for me. I learned a great deal about Steve's illness and I was "awakened" to the fact that he could not control his illness. Miraculously, my



anger lifted and I've never felt so much freedom.



I attended my first conference last year in Detroit. What an amazing experience it was for me. I was finally surrounded by others who understood me. Many of the twins

I met last year approached me at this year's conference to tell me how much I have changed since last year. I was told by more than one Regional Coordinator, that I have

(Continued on page 23)

(LETTER TO TTSGI—Continued from page 22)

come a long way. I have made many wonderful new lifelong friends and continue my friendships throughout North America. I have learned an incredible amount about myself through this organization.

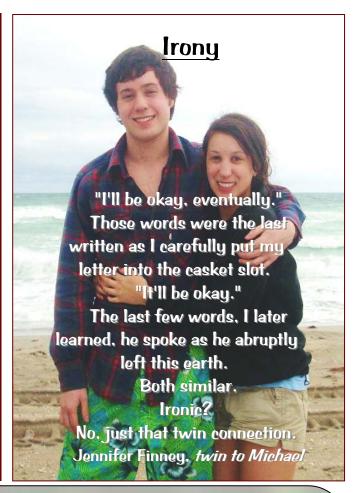
I would like to become more involved with TTSGI. My husband is encouraging me to take this position. In fact, it was originally his idea in the first place! How blessed I am to have such a supportive husband. Thankfully, I also have the support of Sandra Brown, Debe Bloom, Joan Angelis, Doris Giroux, Mike Karbeling, Sarah Beebe, John Rohrer, and Eileen Jensen, amongst other twinless twins.

I now ask if you would consider my taking the position of

Regional Coordinator for the West Coast.

Pamela Fender, twin to Steven Pepper ♥





Side by Side

Today we are twenty and so very far apart, In miles, yet we remain close at heart, at soul. Ever so close you seem to be. We have been side by side since before our birth, Together we have always been. But the day has long since come and gone When we were babies, dressed alike In a stroller built for two. We grew up so differently. Trying to become ourselves Wasn't always easy to do, But grow up we did. Never fading, ever growing, Is the special bond between The two middle girls. Behind you I will stand forever, No matter what our separate lives may bring us. You will be my twin sister forever, That no one can change. I will cherish always the memories Of the childhood we shared, Growing, learning, living side by side.

Kris M. Hanson Lundeen, twin to Kim M. Hanson Shaw

My Second TTSGI Conference

irst I was going, then I wasn't, then I was, then I wasn't. Then my husband, Jack, said to me, "Pamela, I want you to go. I know how much the conference helped you last year. I really would like you to go." So, I booked my flight to Minneapolis. I arrived the day before the conference. (Take note: airfares are generally less expensive on Wednesdays!)

When I arrived at the hotel, I was greeted by Joan Angelis, Sandra Brown and Dawn Barnett, all seated in the lobby. In her deep southern drawl, Sandra Brown asked, "So, Pam. How do you think you've changed from last year to now?" That was certainly unexpected, but what a great question! I didn't have to think about it, because the answer was so clear to me. "Sandra, last year I was so angry at my twin. All the twins at the conference were telling me that it was going to get better, that there was light at the end of the tunnel. I thought they were all saying that to me to make me feel better." (Of course they wanted me to feel better!) "But, somehow I discovered that they were right. There is light at the end of the tunnel. And it does get better because it certainly had for me."

The first full day of the conference began with our keynote speaker Darcie Sims. We were given a handout. As I scanned it, I noticed that there were 4 categories of personalities. I thought, "Oh, no. I sure hope she isn't going to group us into specific categories." But I decided to listen with an open mind and see what she had to say. After all, I heard only great things about Darcie. She was extraordinary. She brought humor where there was sadness. She shared her personal experience with grief and opened herself up to us. It was incredible and I learned a lot. What a great beginning to our weekend.

Then there was self-introduction time, time for the "newbies" to share their stories. I wanted to share something briefly with the group, at the beginning. I was adamant about being brief, as to leave plenty of time for the newcomers to share their stories. I went to the front of the room. Standing beside Dave Jones, I addressed the twins. "I just wanted to share something briefly with you and not go into my whole story." I told them about what I shared with Sandra the day before. "If it wasn't for this organization, I honestly do not know where I would be. I want to welcome the newcomers for your courage and bravery to be here this weekend."

After lunch, there was a special breakout session for those of us who lost our twins to suicide. This was the pinnacle of my weekend. It was life-changing for me. I am grateful to Joan Angelis for arranging Dr. Dan Reidenberg, Executive Director at SAVE (Suicide Awareness Voices of Education) to speak with our small group. I gained a tremendous amount of knowledge. Miraculously, the weight of anger was lifted from me. I finally felt a sense of freedom.

It was wonderful re-connecting with twins I met last year and meeting new members of Twinless Twins. I am grateful to all of them for sharing themselves with me. My hope for them is experiencing growth and compassion as I have through this year-long journey of healing.

Joan was the ideal roommate. She was so much fun; she made me laugh. But more importantly, she helped in my healing through her words of connection, compassion and love.

Next year in Columbus.

Warmly,

Pamela Fender, twin to Steven Pepper

As an added note: I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Board of Directors at TTSGI for appointing me as the new West Coast Regional Coordinator. I will hold a regional meeting in my home in Sonoma County, California on November 12, 2011. Details will follow in an e-mail and/or phone call to current members.

NOTES AND NOTABLES ...

TWIN PHOTO LOST

arcella Slawson, twin to Rita, from Toronto, Canada, lost her twin photo at one of the breakout sessions during the conference in Minneapolis. She had placed it on the chair next to her. If anyone finds this photo, please contact Marcella at 416-654-0214. Many thanks.

Margaret Daffin >

2012 CONFERENCE SITE

ear Twins: our 2012 conference location will be Columbus, Ohio. Details to follow in the near future.

i Everyone,

My name is Kevin Mullen, twin to Brian. It was great seeing all my old friends -

Janet, Jen, Dena, Michelle, Renie, Terry, Crystal, Margaret, Kevin and so many others. I met a few new twins - Matt, Brea, Becky, Fred, Sheri and Venice. I was so happy that Linda, twin to Paula, received the Dr. Brandt Award. I missed seeing Jon Hilber, twin to Justin, Sean Joyce, twin to Tom, Jason Brewster, twin to Adam, Ken Spoor, twin to Kevin. I was very surprised to see my old friends Bob Yarmey, twin to Alan and Paul Heiden, twin to Pete. I'm really looking forward to next year's conference in Columbus, Ohio.

Kevin Mullen, twin to Brian

OUR OLDEST MEMBER

lzora Wangermann, 92, recently lost her twin, Elnora Wood. Elzora is the oldest member of TTSGI. She and her husband, Jim, attended the 2011 conference in Minneapolis. We so enjoyed having them with us and look forward to seeing them next year in Columbus, Ohio.

Margaret Daffin, twin to Josie



Twinless Twins Support Group International P.O. Box 980481

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contact@twinlesstwins.org

LIVE TWIN CHAT

The live chat is getting very active on twinless twins.org - check it out under *Get Involved*.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Spring Issue: February 10th

Summer Issue: May 12th

Fall Issue: August 11th

Winter Issue: October 27th

Submissions should be emailed to: twinlesstimes@yahoo.com



Rare Pronghorn Twins (image by Tad Motoyama/Los Angeles Zoo)

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Write For The Twinless Times Newsletter

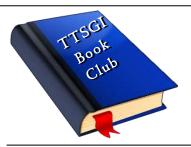
All members are invited to submit articles for publication in the Twinless Times. The email subject should be "Twinless Times Submission."

Submit to: twinlesstimes@yahoo.com

Stories about you and your twin are always welcome and rewarding to see in print. Our founder, Dr. Brandt, encouraged the act of writing as a means to healing.

We value articles about twin meetings, conferences, your healing journey, twin book reviews, poems, or words of wisdom. Photos can be emailed with your article in JPEG format. Please be sure to identify each person in your photos.

All articles should be sent as a Word document and we ask that you keep any article to 500 words or one page.



RECOMMENDED TWIN BOOKS

www.twinlesstwins.org/store/recommendedbooks:



"TWIN LOSS"

By Raymond W. Brandt, PhD

Dr. Brandt was the founder of Twinless Twins Support Group and was considered by many an authority on twin loss. The 400-page book discusses all aspects of the loss and also speaks to the family members on how to help the survivor twin.



"LIVING WITHOUT YOUR TWIN"

By Betty Jean Case

Author Betty Jean Case generously makes a donation to Twinless Twins each time one of her books is purchased through us. Betty is a twin, grew up with twin siblings, and had a set of twin grandsons. This 150-page book discusses how to keep living without your twin and best friend by your side. It also explores the uniqueness of twin loss.



"WE ARE TWINS, BUT WHO AM I?"

By Betty Jean Case

This book focuses on what it is like to be a twin, including the problems of keeping your uniqueness. Betty Jean's candor and insight into twins speaks volumes about identity within a twinship. With her usual clarity, she sheds light on this unique aspect of twinning, making reference to the many twins she spoke to.



"EXPLORING TWIN RELATIONSHIPS"

By Betty Jean Case

This book examines the twin relationship and all aspects of being a twin. Betty Jean has personal insight into twins and speaks with clarity; making reference to the many twins she studied.

"THE LONE TWIN: A STUDY IN BEREAVEMENT AND LOSS"

By Joan Woodward



The reader is taken through the closeness of being a twin, including its negative aspects and twins' need to be different to one another. But what happens when twins are separated, especially by death? The text examines death and bereavement of twins, including the parental attitudes to the surviving twin, the surviving twin's guilt, coping, bereavement in childhood and adulthood. The book also covers the psychological effects in later life for children who lost their twin at birth. Throughout, the book is illustrated by the words of lone twins themselves. This book is available through the TTSGI website or through the distributor, International Specialized Book Services (http://www.isbs.com/partnumber.asp?pnid=307963).



"My Twin Vanished Did Yours?"

by Dr Brent Babcock

A survivor himself of a vanished twin, Dr. Brent H. Babcock is sharing with the public for the first time his knowledge concerning the vanishing twin.

REGIONAL COORDINATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION — 2011

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