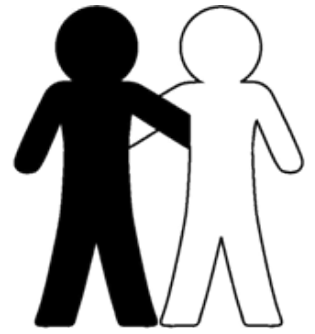


# TWINLESS TIMES



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FALL 2014

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As we move through summer, another conference has concluded. Planning is already underway for the 2015 conference to be held in Nashville, TN. A deeply appreciative thank you is necessary for the Conference Committee, who are so quietly effective that everything runs seamlessly for our attending twins.

It is also a point of changes for our Board. This year Ruth Selig, Kevin Johnson and Margaret Daffin saw their terms conclude. Margaret indicated a willingness to serve another term and both Ruth and Kevin indicated that they were content with one term. Both have very busy lives and there are time opportunity costs. I will miss them both deeply for their commitment and wisdom.

In addition to Margaret continuing with her invaluable service, I'm pleased to welcome Venice Lacy and Renee Manger to the Board. Many will remember Venice from the conference as one of our very theatrical auction models. Her strong people skills will lend themselves beautifully to TTSGI as a peer to peer support organization. Renee Manger joins with a strong background in foundation management with good Board experience. We have and have had a professional Board.

I wish to recognize Barb Terry for agreeing to succeed our long serving South Central Regional Coordinator John Rohrer. Barb has an empathetic heart and she will do amazingly. Barb epitomizes the heart and soul of TTSGI, our volunteers.

Many perhaps see TTSGI as mainly a conference based organization. It is of course, so much more. The Board, as stewards of TTSGI and the legacy of Dr. Brandt, endeavor to run the organization in a way that supports and facilitates our volunteers and our twins, who may need support throughout the year.

Ray Boyle, President



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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.

Please contact your Regional Coordinator using the "Contact Us" map on the website or from the RC Listing on the back page of this newsletter.

Go to: [www.twinlesstwins.org](http://www.twinlesstwins.org)





## THE EMPTY CHAIR

by Sandy Goad, twin to Jim

### “When You Wish Upon a Star”

“When You Wish Upon a Star” is a song that most of us have heard and even sung. Walt Disney made the tune famous along with many other artists who have recorded it. The first words of the tune go like this:

“When you wish upon a star,  
Makes no difference who you are,  
Anything your heart desires  
Will come to you.”

Every time I am with a group of twins who have lost their twin, I hear them say things like, “I wish he hadn’t died” or “I wish I had her back.” If life were only as simple as wishing on a star to make our dreams come true.

Another wish I often hear in a Twinless Twins group is “I wish my friends (or church, or synagogue or neighbors, or relatives) understood what I am going through and were more supportive.” This is a wish that has some possibility of coming true if those of us who have lost a twin are able to be honest with the people around us and help them understand how we are feeling. What do we wish others understood about our loss? Here is a partial list of our wishes:

1. I wish you would not be afraid to speak my twin’s name. They lived and were so special to me. It helps me to know that you remember them too.
2. If I cry or get emotional if we talk about my twin loss, I wish you knew that it isn’t because you have hurt me; the fact that my twin died has caused my tears. You have allowed me to cry and I thank you. Crying is healing.

3. I will have emotional highs and lows, ups and downs. I wish you wouldn’t think that if I have a good day my grief is all over, or that if I have a bad day I need psychiatric counseling.
4. Being bereaved is not contagious, so I wish you wouldn’t shy away from me.
5. I wish you wouldn’t expect my grief to be over in six months. The first few years are going to be exceedingly traumatic for me. As with alcoholics, I will never be “cured”, but will forevermore be recovering.
6. Our birthday, the anniversary of their death, and holidays are hard times for me. I wish you would tell me that you are thinking about my twin on one of these days, and if I get quiet and withdrawn, just know that I am thinking about them.
7. It is normal that most of us will re-examine our faith, values, and beliefs after losing a twin. We will question things we have been taught all our lives and hopefully come to some new understanding with our God. I wish you would let me tangle with my questions without making me feel guilty.
8. I wish you understood that the only way I can get through this grief is to experience it. I have to hurt before I can begin to heal.

For those of us who have lost a twin, instead of sitting around and waiting for our wishes to come true, we have a chance to teach people some of the things we have learned about our grief. We can teach these lessons with great kindness, believing that people have good intentions and want to do what is right, but just don’t know what to do with us, or we can sit and wait. But, I believe our twins would want us to help the world understand.

## MISSION:

**TTSGI provides a safe and compassionate community within which twinless twins can experience healing, understanding, and the opportunity to help others cope with the loss of their twin.**

## TTSGI GUIDING PRINCIPLES: ONCE A TWIN, ALWAYS A TWIN

TTSGI has four guiding principles:

1. Once A Twin, Always A Twin
2. You Are Not Alone
3. Healing by Helping
4. Journey to Healing

The Fall Edition will focus on the first one:

**Once A Twin, Always A Twin** – The twin or multiple birth experience, whether it is experienced exclusively in utero or continued for any period of time following birth, is a profoundly important human experience, differing in major respects from all other forms of human interaction. Twin loss can be experienced in deep and unique ways. This special “twinsip” experience of loss is recognized, valued, and honored by TTSGI.

The next two stories show what the principle of Once a Twin, Always a Twin means.

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*“Once a Twin, Always a Twin: My first TTSGI Conference”*  
By Lea Eriksen, twin to Eve

I lost my twin, Eve to a rare form of bone cancer on September 18, 2003. I found TTSGI a couple of months after Eve died. I was feeling particularly sad one day, and I realized I can't be the only twin in the whole wide world who has lost a twin. So I googled the phrase “twin loss” and found the group. I immediately joined the Twinless Twins email group that existed at the time, and found twins who truly understood my loss. They gave me great advice like just remember to breathe. I wasn't ready to go and face my grief at the TTSGI conference that year in Chicago, but by 2005 I was ready and went to the conference in San Francisco. It was a transformative experience for me. I found the email that I wrote to the email group in the year after the conference, and I have included it below.

*Sat Apr 29, 2006. It has been 2 1/2 years for me since I lost Eve. I wear a bracelet in Eve's honor that says “We are never*

*far apart” and lately I have been getting inquiries as to what does that mean... So even though it is difficult, I reply that my twin sister died from cancer and this bracelet was sent to me with a poem, and I wear it every day. When I say this, I am totally composed and the reactions I get are mostly awkward in nature. But I want to be honest and I want people to know what the bracelet is about despite the awkwardness. I find that overall talking about Eve with singletons is awkward. And I will tell you that with the exception of my mom, there is no one I would rather talk to about losing Eve than my twinless twin friends.*

*I went to the conference in SF last year and it was such a meaningful experience for me (and for my mom and little sister who also went). It was cathartic and emotional and uplifting and reassuring. The level of warmth and compassion in the room was overwhelming. I knew then that I can't let excuses get in the way, and that I have to go to the conference every year. Even though life gets busy and I neglect to write here or keep in touch. I know that this group is important to me. I'll never forget meeting Bob during the second day at the conference and he had such a kind face and he said “hi I am Bob”, and I started to speak and just burst into tears. I couldn't stop crying, because I needed to get it out. He was so understanding and just held me while I cried. And then there is Joseph who took me and my family under his wing the entire conference. Also, it was such a joy spending time with Kevy and his mom too. These are but a few of the twins who I met at the conference who touched my soul.*

*Anyway, to all the twins out there who find comfort on this list, just know that there is even more comfort when you meet one another in person. It is simply amazing. I hope to meet more of you in Del Ray Beach this year.*

I kept the promise to myself and haven't let excuses get in the way. I have attended every single conference since San Francisco in 2005. Baltimore was my 10th conference. I honor my twinsip by attending and every conference has helped me in my healing journey. I hope to see you all in Nashville next year!

*"Once a Twin, Always a Twin:  
My visit to the Twins Days Festival"*  
By Kevin Mullen, twin to Brian



Matt Gragnani, Kevin Mullen, Mike Gragnani

At the end of July, Mom and I set off for Twinsburg, Ohio. We started going through towns in New York where my great-grandparents lived, then we set off west only to get stuck in the middle of New York with a dead battery. There we met some nice people who helped us get towed, set up in a hotel, and a garage where they worked on the car first thing in the morning. We were only three hours behind schedule getting to the hotel in Twinsburg, Ohio.

The theme this year was "Twinstock" or the "Groovy 60s." Everywhere you looked you saw people from the 60s: Austin Powers, Sonny and Cher, Wilma & Betty from the Flintstones, Star Trek personnel, the Beatles in their yellow submarine, The Double-Mint gum girls and an abundance of hippies!

At night there were parties, karaoke and dancing. The kings this year were Matt & Mike from Illinois. They love to party, and one night there was a fake wedding with them marrying another set of twins!

Sunday night is twin bowling, and just like last year I bowled with Ed, another twinless twin. He's a B, I'm an A, so together we were a set. Not my best game ever, but we had fun anyways.

I enjoy Twinsburg because I like to celebrate being a twin.

"Once a Twin, Always a Twin"



Rachel Zronek, Kevin Mullen,  
Matt Zronek



Ryan Grabfelder, Kevin Mullen,  
Justin Grabfelde

*In Memory of*  
*my Identical Twin Sister Carmen*  
**June 26, 1945 - October 28, 1978**



*You passed away 36 years ago  
and left so many happy memories,  
and your husband Chuck  
joined you 30 years later.  
You would be so very proud  
of your children.*

Sue Gruman Kraft  
Audra Gruman Coppa  
Karla Gruman Rippchen  
Mark Gruman

*Once a Twin, Always a Twin,  
Camille*



## Trail Keeps Memories Alive

*Twins Debra (Debbie) Bledsoe and Dana Bridges shared a lifetime of memories, many of them right here in Butler. “Our family ran Harry’s Dari King—that’s what we were known for,” Dana recalls.*

**A**s adults, the twins were the best of friends and even lived next door to one another. Debbie worked in the Butler school cafeteria and loved visiting South Padre Island.

So when Debbie was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 34, Dana was right there at her side. “Debbie was always the strongest twin,” Dana says. “She fought breast cancer fiercely for 18 years, but lost her battle at age 51. When she passed, it was like losing half of myself.”

Shortly after Debbie’s death, Dana and her husband, Eddy, were visiting South Padre Island when they noticed a memorial trail near the city’s convention center. “Debbie loved it there, so we immediately purchased a tree in her memory,” Dana explains.

For most people, that’s where the story might have ended, but not for Dana. When she returned to Butler, she began to think, “Why can’t we have our own memorial trail right here?”

After gathering advice from friends and family, Dana presented a plan for a walking trail lined with trees to the Butler Parks and Recreation Board. “The idea was met with open arms,” she says.

In April 2007, Dana’s dream for a “Trail of Memories” to honor her sister took shape. With the help of Ed Orstadt, a master gardner from Adrian, family and friends laid out the first phase of the trail. It included 60 flowering trees—Cleveland pears, purple leaf plums, dogwoods and two types of redbuds. The original trail is located on the west side of the Aquatic Park, south of the Butler City Park.

“Many hours of hard work planting, mulching and watering have helped make this dream come true,” Dana says.

Today, the trail is part of the Bates County Community Health Foundation. Nearly 200 trees wind through the City Park and across High Street to the Bates County Memorial Hospital (BCMh) campus. The expansion allows patients, visitors and employees to use the trail near the hospital.

“Anyone can dedicate a tree to the memory of their departed loved ones,” Dana says. “The trail allows us to share our pain and grief with others who have lost someone, and helps us remember how special they were to our own lives and to our community.”

Though most of the trees are dedicated to people who are connected to the area, Dana says the trail has touched people worldwide. “We even had one memorial from a twin who lost her twin in the Czech Republic,” she says. Memorial benches also dot the landscape so walkers can stop to enjoy the peaceful beauty of the trail.



Eddy and Dana Bridges

“There are so many people and organizations who have helped make this trail possible,” Dana says. “I just want to thank my husband who helps maintain the trees, the City of Butler, the Parks and Recreation Department, the BCMh maintenance crew and the Bates County Community Health Foundation for all their support. Debbie would be so proud of all we’ve accomplished!”

### Plant a Tree, Plant a Memory!

You can adopt a tree or bench in memory of your loved one too. Flowering trees and a memorial plaque are available for a \$75 contribution. Benches are available for a \$150 donation. All contributions are tax deductible through the Bates County Community Health Foundation.

Funds also can be donated to the Debra Bledsoe Trail of Memories \$500 Health Care Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded each year at the community’s Relay For Life event to an individual in the health care field pursuing advanced education.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** on how you can adopt a tree or bench on the Trail of Memories, visit [www.trailofmemories.org](http://www.trailofmemories.org) or call **660-679-4915**; or the Bates County Community Health Foundation at **660-200-7072**. Forms also are available at Citizens Bank of Butler and Butler Farm Bureau.

## THE LONELIEST TIME OF MY LIFE

By Wolfe Zucker, twin to Steve

The first time in my life that I felt lonely, I celebrated! My twin brother has just left our Queens home for college in Tuscon, Arizona while I went to Upstate New York.

I was alone. I felt loneliness. Never had I in my life experienced what all those childhood authors moaned about: loneliness. Their hearts plopped out on the page leaving purple blood (and prose) in between the periods.

Finally I knew what writers from dysfunctional families were feeling. Some were lonely because they had lost a girlfriend at twelve years old. Some because of acne. Some were lonely because they had lousy friends, cold relatives, bad neighborhoods; some went to schools inhabited by bad teachers, some were lonely because they were miserable louts. Anybody could see that, except the authors. Nobody even invited them to their table at the school cafeteria. Nobody called them.

Well, I tried feeling those feelings for myself. In the cold of Endicott, I walked along the river Sunday morning alone. I ate at my own table. I stayed home studying for six days straight without going out for a beer. I didn't write my summer sweetheart who I had met busing dishes at a Catskill mountain hotel. I didn't make one attempt to join a Fraternity.

I had to develop the emotional skills of sadness and writing skills of self-pity. Now I could write a literary masterpiece and get published. I went beyond whining and complaining with my classmates. I cried in my room, alone of course, when my Lebanese roommate was out with his olive skinned girlfriend.

I did have a few slips from tragedy to melodrama, like the time I wrote my mother

to send toothpaste. She wrote back snippingly, they sold it in drugstores.

I always walked alone to school classes helped in my loneliness by the cold. Endicott was always one degree about the necessary temperature to kill you. The thrill of loneliness like most new experiences, sex, drunkenness, and my first school grade above a "C," lasted only a few intense months.

I wrote a letter to my twin brother in Arizona baring my gashes. I wrote that I wished that I had chosen Arizona and could now be on campus in a tee-shirt. He didn't write back. Possibly he was too busy being lonely or he didn't feel like breaking up a good depression. Or he wasn't into English Literature and moping authors like I am.

The poor man transferred out of Arizona after a year. He cited bad grades and not fitting in with the wealthy classmates from the West. I'm sure, from my perspective, that our family gene pool and all the western diet of whole-cow steak and iceberg lettuce didn't help either.

Now in my adulthood from all the loneliness I have felt in between wives and with them, I know the subject. Still, I have not been overwhelmed by the drowning floods of loneliness until eight months ago when he died.

It is not my job I have lost or a partner or anything I could call conscious. It is my unconscious. I am not suffering from "What will I do?" or "Who will I do it with" or "Who will e-mail me on Valentine's day."

It's simply, "Who am I" without the physical proof that I exist.

The one I was welded to is gone.

I am a flat frame where once there was a mirror.



## KEVIN'S CORNER

By Kevin Mullen, twin to Brian

“Baltimore, MD: My 15th Conference”

On July 16th 2014, I flew to Baltimore to attend my 15th TTSGI conference. My cousin's wife Emily and son Connor picked me up at the airport. This is a special meeting as my cousin Jason is just four days older than Brian and myself, and amazingly we look very much like each other. This was my second time meeting Emily and the first thing she commented on was that we still looked a lot alike. We discovered this likeness years ago at Jason's grandfather's funeral when we saw Jason's high school graduation picture which looked like mine.



Kevin Mullen, Jason Little, Connor Little

After going out to dinner and spending time visiting, I was off to the hotel. I unloaded my things in my room and then went to the lobby to meet and greet. First, I saw Mary, Dena and Michelle. I stayed up late so I could greet Kevin and Sandra who came in on a delayed flight.

As always it's sad to realize that we are meeting new twins because it means they have lost their best friend. This year there were 20 folks like Alice from Florida, Lindsay from Connecticut, Kyle from D.C., and Casey from Georgia.



Lindsay Marottoli,  
Kevin Mullen



Kevin Mullen, Alice Bailey  
saying Paula's name!

On Friday, Mary R. Morgan was the keynote speaker and later we went on a beautiful afternoon memorial walk at the Harbor and then to dinner. At Saturday's banquet there were two Angel

Awards given out - one to Beverly and the other to Sarah - for their work helping to manage the TTSGI Facebook page.

Now comes the truly sad time as it is Sunday and so many goodbyes until next year. Remember that's only 362 days until Nashville, so get your singing voices tuned up!

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## POST 2014 TTSGI CONFERENCE

By Terry Lewis-Foor, twin to Sherry

The conferences just get better and better all the time! There is nothing like face to face support from other Twinless Twins! I really appreciate the Twinless Twin who paid for the charter buses that was not in the budget. A big thanks goes to the Board members and regional coordinators for their hard work and the time they all put into making the conference a success. Congratulations to Beverly Smyk and Sarah Beebe, recipients of Dr. Brandt Angel Awards. I have been a member since 1994 and attended my first conference in 1995. I continue to need the support from my Twinless Twins Family. Baltimore was my 13th conference and I'm looking forward to the Nashville conference in 2015! The Baltimore conference brought in some amazing new twins!



# 2014 TTSGI CONFERENCE

*Baltimore, MD*

















## 2014 ANGEL AWARDS

By Dawn Barnett, twin to Daryl

This year, I was honored to present the 2014 TTSGI Angel Award to Beverly Smyk and Sarah Beebe. They have been fundamental in helping me out with the TTSGI Facebook page in which we have over 1600 members presently. I don't know what I would've done without their assistance as we need to monitor the site 24/7 and at times it can be a monumental task. Even though they have full-time jobs and family, they are there for me when I have been out of town or unable to be there for health reasons. A true administrator of a Facebook page is there to show support at all times, give hope to those newly grieving twins who come onboard, keep the peace when grieving twins might post things they don't really mean, post inspirational pieces, and help all the members feel at home and "like family". I think they've shown all these qualities and perform 120%.

I also am honored and feel blessed that they are my friends, and we feel as if we are sisters (although I could be their Mom, as I have sons their ages). Congratulations, Bev and Sarah; an award well-deserved!

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## 2015 CONFERENCE

Twinless Twins 2015 Conference to be held in Nashville, TN, sometime in July 2015. More Information to follow.



## 2014 MEMORY WALK, BALTIMORE MD

The 6th TTSGI Memory Walk was held around the Inner Harbor in Baltimore, MD on Friday evening, July 18th. Buses took twinless twins, family members and friends from the hotel to the Inner Harbor on a glorious, warm sunny evening.

Some of the twins carried the Memory Walk banner, which had been signed by all twinless twins, in memory of their twins. Each year, the Memory Walk is held as a fundraiser for TTSGI and this year we raised approximately \$1,000.

Thank you to all who walked and supported this wonderful event.

Margaret Daffin, Host of the 2014 Memory Walk.



## 2014 MEMORY WALK DONATIONS

**Dawn Barnett** – in memory of her twin, Daryl  
**Linda Burke** – in memory of her twin, Lee Burke  
**M. Cecilia Coloma** – in honor of Cynthia McCratic, twin to Cesar  
**Lea Eriksen** – in memory of her twin, Eve Richards  
**Nancy Esposito** – in memory of her twin, Nina Marie Young  
**Laurie Everitt** – in memory of her twin, Judy  
**ExxonMobil Foundation** – matching grant from Margaret & Paul Daffin  
**Kendra Felder** – in memory of her twin, Courtney  
**Laura Grandstaff** – in memory of her twin, Tamara Lynn Thomas  
**Patrick Pointon** – in memory of his twin, Mike  
**Margaret S. Ramsey** – in memory of her twin, Mary  
**Joan Sandherr** – in memory of her twin, Jean  
**Peter Spanitz** – in memory of his twin, Paul  
**Alice Ward** – in memory of her twin, Anita Bailey Lanier  
**Joy Wempe** – in honor of Mary George and Georgia Mae  
**Jessica Wickey** – in memory of her twin, Jennifer

### **The following donors gave in honor of Margaret Daffin, in memory of her twin, Josie Wilson:**

Dr. Susan Williams	Amelia & Raymond Tobin
Joanne & Steve Downes	Carol & Albert Knowlton
Paul & Margaret Daffin	Meggy & Brandon Biss
Jacqueline Moss Fetzer	Joyce & David Barr
Lynn Ferguson	Sharon Michaels
Jane Borst	Jocelyn & Timo Lehtola
Michael M. Ameen	Janeil Bernard
Adriana Boretti & Pedro Jaldin	Lester & Sue Smith Foundation
Eleanor & Ken Jicha	Kevin & Christine Brown
Phuong Vuong	Betty Yianitsas
Angela McCarthy	Tracey Smith
Terhi & Dale Chambliss	

### **The following donors gave in honor of Kevin Mullen, in memory of his twin, Brian Mullen:**

Shannon Baldwin	Kevin Mullen
Donna Blackburn	Sue Mullen
Joan Finlay	Matt Mullen
Debbie Goetz	Terri Zinc
Sharon Little	

I apologize if your name is not shown and you gave a donation for the Memory Walk – contact Margaret Daffin, [medaffin@aol.com](mailto:medaffin@aol.com)



## TURNING 40

by Jennifer Rudd, twin to Janet

As my 40th birthday approached I was not looking forward to it. It would be the first milestone birthday without Janet. We didn't have a party when we turned 30, but we both knew it was special and bought each other jewelry. I bought her a bracelet with our initial on it, and she bought me a necklace with our birth sign. It looks like two 6s back to back. It was often hard to buy each other presents which were a surprise because we went shopping together, but this was.

Turning 40 meant I was leaving my 30s behind and I didn't want to. It was the hardest birthday I have ever gone through. It was painful how much I missed her. Everyone said "oh summer solstice baby". Yep, blue skies and rainbows and yet it would never be that without Janet, my twin and best friend.



I asked a friend of mine to draw a picture/cartoon in my birthday card. We exchange Christmas cards and she always draws a picture of me and Janet in it. It's very special. My birthday was on Saturday and a big envelope arrived in the mail on Thursday. I promised my friend that I wouldn't open it until Saturday. On Friday I was having a very hard day, so I decided to open the card. She had drawn a big card with me and Janet in a hot air balloon. When she draws a cartoon portrait in a card it's always black and white and this was in color. She told me that her pencil crayon kept breaking (green) and she told Janet "come on girl help me out" and it didn't break from that point on. She wanted to have a place that she knew would be special to us. I had forgotten that one of the last things we did together was

go to the balloon festival in our city. Inside the actual birthday card was my picture with me, my friend and Janet with our cake. It's funny how it makes me happy and sad when I look at it.

I put a tribute in the paper in honor of our 40th birthday including the poem that I wrote the year before. It touched so many people. I ended up going to an Inn near my house for lunch with a dear friend who is very understanding. We had a wonderful afternoon and were treated like royalty. I got my nails done. There were two chairs in the room and one was empty since my friend had a facial in another room. Afterwards I thought maybe it wasn't empty after all.

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## PARTICIPANTS FOR THE AUCTION/RAFFLE

By Dawn Barnett, twin to Daryl

The Board of Directors and raffle/auction team of Carolyn Shane, Dawn Barnett, Sandra Brown and Dave Jones would like to thank all of our members and friends for donating auction and raffle items at the conference and for those of you who were present to bid on the auction and raffle items. I think you will all agree that the Saturday evening live auction is not to be missed and is always such a wonderful way to end the conference. As this is our biggest fundraiser of the year, we need your support and we certainly had plenty of it this year with lots of interesting and beautiful items for the raffle and silent and live auctions. A big THANK YOU!

TTSGI made approximately \$734 Silent Auction; \$730 Raffle; \$1,078 50/50 and \$6,625 Live auction. The raffle/auction team comprised of Carolyn, Sandra and myself, and I would like to give a big thank you to these people for taking time away from the conference to help us out in the raffle, silent auction and live auction.

Lea Eriksen  
Diane Fisher  
Eileen Jensen  
Venice Lacy  
Dena Stitt

Margaret Daffin  
Terry Lewis-Foor  
Kevin Johnson  
Domenick Abbate, Jr.  
Marc Reichel

Joan Garcia  
Wolfe Zucker  
Kristina Kofoot

Also, a huge thank you to our wonderful Auctioneer, Dave Jones. Because of everyone's tireless efforts, it made 2014 one of the most successful years for fundraising and we couldn't have done it without you all!



# 2014 TTSGI CONFERENCE RAFFLE & AUCTION DONATIONS

Dawn Barnett	Laurie Everitt	Kristina Kofoot	Joy Shiller
Steve Bergman	Kurt Foor	Venice Lacy	Beverly Smyk
Mary George Beyer	Joan Garcia	Terry Lewis-Foor	Peter Spanitz
Ray Boyle	Mary Ann Gomez	Jane Malcolm	Michael Spitaletto
Dana Bridges	Jacquie Goodman	Kevin Mullen	Dena Stitt
Sandra Brown	LeAnn Hallford	Dr. William Penney	Lisa Summers
Linda Burke	Paul Heiden	Ann Perez	Anita Talbot
Judy Clark	Caren Hoffman	Alyssa Pratt	Barb Terry
Leslie Cutler	Amy Hoyt	Peggy Ramsey	Donna Vierling
Margaret Daffin	Eileen Jensen	Susan Riddle	Matt Vierling
Paul Daffin	Kevin Johnson	Joan Sandherr	Alice Ward
Pamela Daniels	Joanne Jones	Sam Satterlee	Jessica Wickey
Miriam Doetsch	Cheryl Kantor-Goldenberg	Becky Sehenuk	Camille Wissmann
Lea Eriksen	Pat King	Carolyn Shane	

Thank you to all who participated in the raffle and silent/live auctions at the 2014 Baltimore Twinless Twins Conference. Your generosity and willingness to give is so appreciated. If your name is not listed above, we apologize and thank you.

## FIREFLY

By Brent Parker, twin to Rick

It's a murky dusky darkness on this slightly heavy summer evening. I see a lone flicker of light... and then it's gone. Then a few feet further along another flicker "on" and then as quickly "off". Uncharacteristically, a lone firefly hovers a few feet above the grass. His flight pattern is erratic. I see him flicker on and then off again three or four more times. At the edge of a Christmas tree shaped bald cypress (a gift from my twin) there's one last flash. I look intensely for another, but none appears. He's gone into the shadows of the tree and disappears.

Some days later, at about the same time of the evening, the lone firefly again appears. He's moving from my left side to my right. This time he flies closer to where I've stopped in the yard. I stand silent and still, my eyes fixed intently. He however takes the same path toward the bald cypress. Again, he evaporates into the shadowy outline of the tree.

The third and final appearance comes a week or so later, at a similar time and place. But this time his flickering path of light comes directly towards me, not to the tree. So ever so carefully I extend out my arm, my hand and fingers in a greeting gesture, and waited. But no, he did not alight, not on the tip of my fingers or any physical part of me. I looked to both sides and even behind me, but all that greeted me was darkness and silence. He simply had disappeared from sight again. A calmness surrounded me. I realized he was not gone because I could feel him inside of me. We are still "one", my brother. You wrote me knowing you would probably go first. "I will be everywhere for you always". And my last written words to you were, "we'll be together forever, always connected no matter what comes". And so, you are always with me, my beloved brother.

In Loving memory of my twin Rick.



## FACEBOOK COMES TO THE RESCUE OF ANOTHER TWINLESS TWIN

By Dawn Barnett, twin to Daryl, Head TTSGI Facebook Administrator



This is a real Twinless Twins Support Group Facebook exchange that happened right before the conference:

**Domenick Abbate Jr.** I am a twinless twin, I lost my brother a few years ago to cancer caused from 9-11. I recently just joined this site & everyone has been wonderful and very understanding, I have been going through a really hard time & hitting a rough patch lately. I would like to attend the event in Baltimore. I tried to call and no one got back to me or had any answer for me at the hotel. I also had sent a check to join the Twinless Twin Support Group website a few weeks ago and I'm still not showing as a member, and was not able to sign up for the conference & now it is showing that it is closed. Can anyone help me with it? Or, if there's any way that I could attend it? I'm a few hours away from Baltimore & I'm willing to go there if I can get in.

**July 16 at 9:51pm**

**Dawn Barnett:** Domenick, it is not too late to register as you can do it as late as 6:30 tomorrow night for early check-in for first time attendees as a walk-in. The hotel # is 410-859-8400 for reservations. Hotel is at Doubletree Hilton BWI Airport, 890 Elkridge Landing Road, Linthicum, MD. Hope to see you there!

**July 16 at 10:07pm**

**Domenick Abbate Jr.** Great! Thank you Dawn! I will call and head down tomorrow, looking forward to meet.

**July 17 at 4:53am**

**Dawn Barnett** So glad you're coming, Domenick. Don't be nervous – we'll be on the lookout for you – I will be busy but will check on occasion the lobby area and see if there are new ones arriving. You'll have around 35 other new ones joining you for the first-time hospitality gathering tonight at 7:00.

**July 17 at 5:03am**

**Dawn Barnett** As an explanation to the problems Domenick was experiencing, Michelle, the Executive Director of TTSGI, has been in board meetings yesterday and traveling Tuesday. Anyone wishing to come to the conference and unable to do so online can come to Baltimore and register as a walk-in so there's never a time where it's "closed" or that we turn anyone away. I'll be looking out for Domenick and any other new attendees who might show up during the time as allowed as I'll be really busy.

**And the rest is history** – Domenick showed up at the conference, we met and greeted him. He posted this after conference: "Being away these last few days with this group has opened my eyes to a lot of stuff that I never took into consideration & I also learned a lot. I also learned that no matter how we lost our twin we all walk this crazy same path feeling lost like someone just reached in and ripped out a part of our spinal cord. I want to thank every one of you & hope that this program keeps growing bigger and bigger. I hope that the public will start learning one day more about Twinless twins, including psychiatrist and therapist. This group saved me. If it wasn't for you guys pushing & convincing me to go I never would had made it this far. I love you all. Since I got home I have been getting many texts from you all & I can't wait till our next meeting. I will try to inspire other new members like you have done with me. You are my family & I love you all. God Bless. Special thanks to my angels Carolyn and Dawn for being there for me."

## WEST COAST REGIONAL MEETING

By Pamela Fender, twin to Steve  
West Coast Regional Coordinator

It was time to arrange a meeting in San Diego... finally. The West Coast region has many members in the San Diego area, so I made a trip down south and held a support meeting in May. There were 10 twins who attended the meeting and... 6 support people!

Susan Zanca-Burwin graciously hosted in her beautiful home. During our meeting, my husband, Jack brought the support people out for a meeting of their own. They had the opportunity to share their feelings, questions and discovered that they, too, have a commonality. We each had plenty of time to share our stories, although filled with many tears, we felt the togetherness of our not-wanting-to-be-a-member-of-this-club feeling. As usual, we broke bread with our twin family. Susan planned out the meal with lasagna (regular and meatless), Caesar salad, garlic bread, fruit salad and yummy sweet individual desserts.

The day was perfect. As the weather cooperated, we dined in the backyard. We laughed and shared more stories.

Jack and I stayed on until it got dark. And, as always, it's difficult saying goodbye – until we meet again.

Top photo of twins (left to right): Betty Swerda, Lisa Cox Summers, Donna Walker, Onesphore Harelimana, Susan Zanca-Burwin, Jason Noble, Pearl Davison, Pamela Fender and Deborah Kling (Erin Miller-not pictured)

Bottom photo of support people (left to right): Jay Burwin, Lorna Cannon, Steve Davison, Jack Fender, Marsha Noble, Joan Kling



## THANK YOU TO JOHN ROHRER, SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL COORDINATOR

By Margaret Daffin, TTSGI Board Director

We at TTSGI would like to thank and acknowledge John Rohrer, the South Central Regional Coordinator, for his dedication and willingness to continue as RC since the Dallas Conference in 2007 – seven years! John has now decided to step down and hand over the position to another.



Most members are unaware of the hard work that encompasses being a Regional Coordinator – being available for newly grieving twins who have lost their twins and to counsel them; send materials out to new members; schedule regional meetings two or three times a year for groups; meet individual twinless twins at home or at a convenient location; attend the annual conference, and many other requirements.

John has volunteered his time and efforts to forward the cause of TTSGI and mentor those new twinless twins and encourage them to become members.

We thank you for a job well done and we wish you well for the future.





## **WELCOME TO BARB TERRY, TWIN TO BRIEN, NEW SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL COORDINATOR**

Brien and I grew up, much of our lives, in a secluded Ranger Station in the middle of the Rocky Mountains as our dad was a wildlife biologist for the U.S. Forest Service. We grew to love our many experiences in nature.

Brien and I went our separate ways in our 20s. Around this same time, he developed schizophrenia, cancer of the brain (as it is referred to), causing him to have a shortened life. I lost him at age 54.

I was his twin, but there were many times I felt maternal towards him as we aged. He could remember the cutest tales of our childhood, many of which I had forgotten; and each one made him give a smile and a hearty laugh. He would recall when we, as young hikers, wore sheep bells so as mom could keep better track of us; we found a baby rabbit in an old rusted trash can out in the woods and fought over which one of us could keep it (neither of us got to); we spent many a day arrow point hunting, a favorite family hobby. I was glad Brien had such memories to sustain him through his dreary days.

He was my gift, not only as a twin, but as a person for whom I could shower love and compassion.

I feel it is very important, as twinless twins, to come up with ways to feel that connection and bond as we live on without our twins beside us. One way Brien and I ‘connected’ and remained close during the years we lived apart was to plan to look up at the moon at the same time on the same night (especially during phenomena such as lunar eclipses). It was our own unique way to not feel so far apart. So today, I do the same; I know Brien is there too looking at our moon.

We each, as twinless twins, can find such ways to help us along and not feel very far from our twin. My hope is that each can and will share his or her ideas with others.

Barb Terry, South Central Regional Coordinator

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## **TTSGI IN THE NEWS**

Recently, the good work of the TTSGI Facebook page was profiled in an August 1st ABC News on-line story called “Twinless Twins Grieve Together” by Syndey Lupkin via Good Morning America. To access the story type in the following URL or google “ABC twinless twins”:

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/twinless-twins-grieve/story?id=24780120>

# NEW AND RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS

## TTSGI WELCOMES TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS:



### **Venice Lacy, Florida**

Venice joined TTSGI in June 2011 only four weeks after her identical twin sister Toni suddenly passed away from complications of Acute Myelogenous Leukemia (AML) on May 28th 2011. This was only one month after her diagnosis, when Toni was only 40 years old. Venice says she was lucky to find the group weeks before the 2011 conference in Minneapolis and has been to every conference since. She likes to be there to reconnect with her Twinless Twin family but to be there also for our “Newbies.” It can be scary coming to the conference for the first time.

Venice was born and raised in New York City. She currently lives in Aventura, FL, a northern suburb of Miami. She has worked for Tiffany & Co. for almost two years as an Operations Professional. She is an avid runner and has just finished her 2nd half marathon in San Diego, CA. She ran as a member of the Leukemia Lymphoma Society’s Team in Training. Venice raised \$5000 and ran the event in loving memory of Toni. Venice is honored to be a part of the TTSGI Board of Directors.



### **Renee Manger, Connecticut**

Renee Manger, twin sister to Stephen Manger, was born and raised in Stamford, CT and is a graduate of Boston University School of Management. She balanced a rewarding professional career in the field of Human Resources for leading financial and consumer firms including Chase, Priceline.com and J. Walter Thompson, along with her current charitable interests in the New York, Connecticut and Los Angeles areas. Renee luckily found TTSGI a few weeks after her twin brother Stephen’s untimely death. Since then she has attended several regional and national conferences and looks forward to serving on the TTSGI Board.

Thank you to the following two Board members who both served on the board for three years. We wish them well with their current endeavors:

### **Kevin Johnson, Texas**

Kevin, twin to Kelvin, has been a member of TTSGI since 2007. He was a walk-in to the Conference in Dallas in 2007 just months after his twin Kelvin had died unexpectedly from Congestive Heart Failure. He joined the board in 2011 and has emceed the Saturday banquets at the past two conferences, and called many first timers after the conferences in order to check in with them. Currently, Kevin is working on creating a memorial for his twin Kelvin as part of the new Parkland Memorial Hospital called the Kevin and Kelvin Johnson Twin Chapel Garden.

### **Ruth Selig, Washington D.C.**

Ruth, twin to Rollyn, has been a member of TTSGI since 2000. She lost her identical twin sister to breast cancer just before their 40th birthday on February 4, 1983. She first attended a TTSGI conference in Cincinnati in 2000. Ruth joined the board in 2011 and has served as Secretary and helped craft the Strategic Plan for TTSGI. Currently, Ruth is working to turn her sister’s journals into a joint twin memoir called “Missing Half”.

# TWINLESS TWINS SUPPORT GROUP INTERNATIONAL

## 2014 DONATION FORM

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

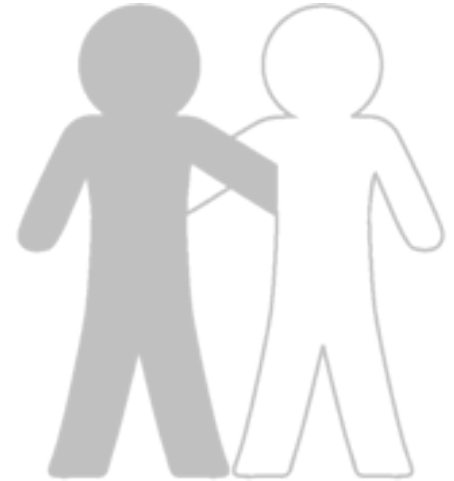
Please print this form and mail it, along with your check, money order, or Visa/MasterCard/Discover information to:

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](http://www.twinlesstwins.org) and use the DONATE button in the middle of the left hand side of the home page.)

### Designate Funds – please check one:

- General Fund       Conference Assistance Fund  
 Scholarship Fund       Matching Gift



### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_  
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### PAYMENT OPTIONS:

Amount of Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Canadian twins should send money orders in U.S. funds only**

- In full at this time.       Check enclosed       Credit Card  
 During the month of \_\_\_\_\_.  
 By making pledge payments of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ consecutive months/years.  
 My company has a Matching Gifts Program. I am mailing a completed form.

Name of matching company \_\_\_\_\_

Recognition for the Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Credit Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Credit Card: \_\_\_\_\_ (Visa/MasterCard/Discover)

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ (no dashes or spaces)

Credit Card Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (mm/dd/year)

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

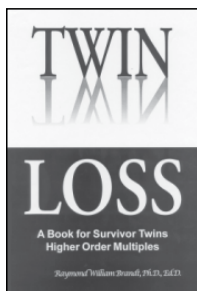
# IN RECOGNITION OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS SINCE SPRING 2014

## America's Charities

- Phyllis Ashliman** – monthly pledge in memory of her twin, Phil  
**Doris Bauer** – in memory of her twin, Dorothy Bauer  
**Raymond Boyle** – monthly pledge and donations in memory of his twin, James Joseph (Jimmy)  
**Sandra Brown** – in memory of her twin, Sammy  
**Pat Cahill**  
**Merna Casper** – for our 80th birthday  
**Virginia Cetuk** – in memory of her twin, Linda Samuel Bickford  
**Margaret Daffin** – quarterly pledge and donation in memory of her twin Josie  
**Lea Eriksen** – in memory of her twin, Eve Eriksen Richards  
**ExxonMobil Foundation** – for volunteer hours and matching grants by  
Margaret Daffin in memory of her twin, Josie Wilson  
**Gale Erlewine** – in memory of his twin, Dale  
**Goodsearch** – website search engine  
**James (Renie) Hallford** – 2014 conference assistance  
**Virginia Holleman** – in memory of her twin, Betsy (Elizabeth) Katz  
**Mary Hoover** – general fund, in memory of her twin  
**Elizabeth Hoyt** – in honor of her twin, Elaine Hoyt-Darling  
**IGive.com** – money earned from online searches  
**Eileen Jensen** – general fund in memory of her twin, Elaine Moench  
**Cindy Kacinko** – in memory of her twin, Tim F. Bagnell, my dear Twinnie  
**Cheryl Kantor-Goldenberg, DDS** – in memory of Dr. Barbi Kantor-Goldenberg  
**Joette Kofoot** – 2014 conference assistance  
**Yvonne Kubicek** – in honor of Margaret Daffin  
**Kevin Lee** – in honor of his twin, Keith Charles Lee  
**Terry Lewis-Foor** – 2014 conference assistance, in memory of her twin, Sherry  
**June Loertscher** – in memory of her twin  
**Renee Manger** – in memory of her twin, Stephen  
**Linda Mykietyn** – in memory of her twin, Lee Burke  
**Mary R. Morgan** – general support and contingency fund, in memory of her twin, Michael  
**Susan & Kevin Mullen** – in memory of his twin, Brian  
**Northeast Region** – in loving memory of your wife and mother, Madi to Steve Bergman and family  
**Oppeheimer Funds** – matching gift in honor of Sarah Beebe  
**Katie O'Toole** – in memory of her twin, Crissy  
**Ruth Osterweis Selig** – gift of stock in memory of Rollyn Osterweis Krichbaum  
**Robert & Yolanda Penny**  
**John Roberts Motor Works Company**  
**Carolyn Shane** – in memory of her twin, Cary  
**Mary Ann Slota** – to contribute what I can for this Twinless Twins group  
**Marie Smith Elliott** – in memory of her twin, Joseph Tucker Smith  
**Beverly Smyk** – monthly pledge in memory of her twin, Donna  
**Stuart Smyth** – to Elisabeth as a gift from Stuart K.J. Smyth  
**Dena Stitt** – for miscellaneous expenses, in memory of her twin, Dean  
**Debra Swanson** – in memory of her twin, Marcia Shives  
**Barb Terry** – general fund in memory of her twin, Brien Jeffrey Swant  
**Camille Wissman** – in memory of her twin, Carmen, twin to Camille  
**Susan Zanca-Burwin** – in memory of her twin, Linda Binder (RIP)

We apologize if we have missed your name in this listing. Please let us know and we will recognize you in our Spring 2015 newsletter.  
Contact Margaret Daffin at [medaffin@aol.com](mailto:medaffin@aol.com)





## “TWIN LOSS”

By Raymond W. Brandt, PhD

Dr. Brandt was the founder of Twinless Twins Support Group International 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.

## “BEGINNING WITH THE END”

By Mary R. Morgan

In this startlingly frank and moving memoir, Mary R. Morgan struggles to claim an individual identity, enabling her to face Michael’s death and the huge loss it engendered. With remarkable candor, she shares her spiritually evocative healing journey, which moves her forward into a life of new beginnings and meaning, especially in her work with others who have lost a twin.

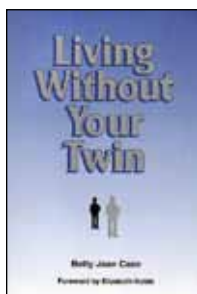
All proceeds from the sale of “Beginning with the End” will go to TTSGI as requested by the author, Mary R. Morgan. The book can be purchased through Amazon for \$26.95.



## “LIVING WITHOUT YOUR TWIN”

By Betty Jean Case

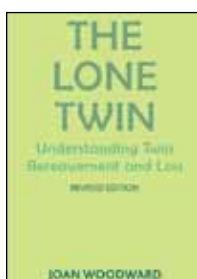
Author Betty Jean Case generously makes a donation to Twinless Twins each time one of her books is purchased through us. Betty is a twin, grew up with twin siblings, and had a set of twin grandsons. This 150-page book discusses how to keep living without your twin and best friend by your side. It also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



## “THE LONE TWIN: A STUDY IN BEREAVEMENT AND LOSS”

By Joan Woodward

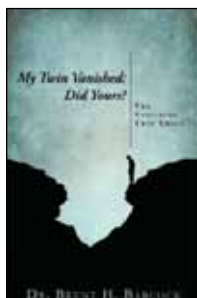
The reader is taken through the closeness of being a twin, including its negative aspects and twins’ need to be different to one another. But what happens when twins are separated, especially by death? The text examines death and bereavement of twins, including the parental attitudes to the surviving 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.



## TWINLESS TWINS SUPPORT GROUP, INTERNATIONAL™

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Raymond Boyle – President (2016)

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Matt Vierling– Secretary (2016)

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Margaret Daffin – Director (2017)

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Venice Lacy – Director (2017)

Renee Manger – Director (2017)

Becky Sehenuk – Director (2016)

Board Emeritus: James “Renie” Hallford

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Michelle Getchell

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P.O. Box 980481  
Ypsilanti, MI 48198  
1-888-205-8962

[contact@twinlesstwins.org](mailto:contact@twinlesstwins.org)

### TWINLESS TIMES BY MAIL

We hope you are enjoying the full color electronic copy of the Twinless Times. However, if you are still interested in receiving the Twinless Times as a mailed hard copy, please send your name and address to Michelle Getchell at [contact@twinlesstwins.org](mailto:contact@twinlesstwins.org) and she will mail it to you. Please note that the holiday issue will still be mailed to everyone.

## WRITE FOR THE TWINLESS TIMES NEWSLETTER

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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](mailto: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.

## NEWSLETTER ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINES

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**Spring Issue: February 10th**

**Summer Issue: May 12th**

**Fall Issue: August 11th**

**Winter Issue: October 27th**

Submissions should be emailed to:  
[twinlesstimes@yahoo.com](mailto:twinlesstimes@yahoo.com)

**Twinless Times Co-Editors:  
Lea Eriksen & Emily Heekin**

# REGIONAL COORDINATORS - CONTACT INFORMATION - 2014

## UNITED KINGDOM

### JANET BAIRD AFFILIATE MEMBER

janetmaybaird@hotmail.co.uk  
Tel: 011-44-1423-816340  
Mobile: 011-44-7711-768877

## CANADA

### DARLENE MOORE

sf49errice@rogers.com  
Tel: 1-(705) 294-0060

- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland
- Nova Scotia
- Ontario
- Prince Edward Island
- Quebec
- Saskatchewan

## NORTHEAST

### CAROLYN SHANE

cc7@tewnj.org  
Tel: 908-463-4770

- New Jersey
- New York

## NEW ENGLAND

### • POSITION OPEN •

contact@twinlesstwins.org  
Tel: 1-888-205-8926

- Connecticut
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- Rhode Island
- Vermont

## MID-ATLANTIC

### MICHAEL KARBELING

mkarbeling@gmail.com  
Tel: 301-565-9290

- Delaware
- District of Columbia
- Maryland
- Pennsylvania
- Virginia
- West Virginia

## SOUTHEAST

### PAMELA ROBERTS

pamelaroberts0507@att.net  
Tel: 404-423-8685

- Alabama
- Florida
- Georgia
- North Carolina
- South Carolina

## NORTH CENTRAL

### JOAN ANGELIS

joan.sea.angel@gmail.com  
Tel: 612-741-6583

- Iowa
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Nebraska
- North Dakota
- South Dakota
- Wisconsin

## MIDWEST

### SARAH BEEBE

sarahtwintoheidi@gmail.com  
Tel: 773-297-8890

- Illinois
- Indiana
- Kentucky
- Missouri
- Ohio

## SOUTH CENTRAL

### BARB TERRY

babsterry@hotmail.com  
Tel: 936-443-5373

- Arkansas
- Louisiana
- Mississippi
- Oklahoma
- Tennessee
- Texas

## SOUTHWEST

### EILEEN JENSEN

twinjensen@msn.com  
Tel: 970-641-4362

- Arizona
- Colorado
- Kansas
- New Mexico
- Nevada
- Utah

## NORTHERN MOUNTAIN

### • POSITION OPEN •

contact@twinlesstwins.org  
Tel: 1-888-205-8926

- Idaho
- Montana
- Wyoming

## WEST COAST

### PAMELA FENDER

pdfender@yahoo.com  
Tel: 707-588-8824  
or 707-484-7547 (cell)

- Alaska
- California
- Hawaii
- Oregon
- Washington