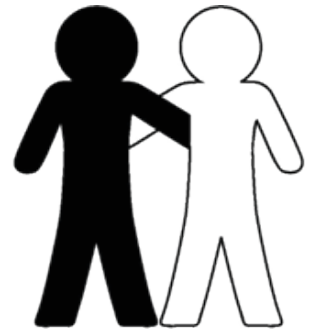


TWINLESS TIMES



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WINTER 2015

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Twins,

As we draw nearer to the holiday season (Thanksgiving, Christian, Jewish and other observances), it has been another year where many twins found us. It ranged from twins who lost their twin at birth, decades ago, to twins who lost their twin just a few weeks ago. Parents who lost one of their twin children also found us. Twins found us, because of our volunteers: our Regional Coordinators, Facebook moderators, Conference Committee, and our Board with their wide and varied responsibilities.

I recently hosted a Canadian regional meeting in my home in Toronto. Healing can happen at any age and stage in twin loss. One twin after many decades of ignoring their twin loss, decided to address it. Another twin, who lost their twin suddenly and inexplicably, found themselves in a deep core shaken shock. Others like me, after being Twinless for fifty-five years, just miss their twin, every day.

Yet, we can meet, whether it is a conference, a regional meeting or our Facebook group and know there are other twins who understand. A common element is that our parents, spouses, siblings, and children don't understand. There may be preconceived thoughts that the surviving twin should be over it. That judgement is absent with peer Twinless. We must however, take the steps and be responsible for our own healing, but the load can be diminished by knowing other twins understand and are there to support us. You do not have to be alone in your feelings.

For the twins who will go through this season marking the first time without their twin, it will be hard. I hope you will have fond remembrances of your twin and allow yourself permission to smile in this warmth.

As you know, our organization depends upon membership dues, conferences and contributions in order to continue to operate. In 2015 we have had a large gap in our contributions, as compared to 2014. For the second year in a row, a generous donor has agreed to match any donations made to our Double Your Donation campaign until the end of the year. This is very important that we seize this opportunity. Please help us diminish this contribution gap and contribute. Details are in the newsletter, as well as on the website. Thank you.

Ray Boyle, President



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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.

TWINLESS TWINS SUPPORT GROUP



HELPING TWINS WHO HAVE LOST THEIR TWIN



THE EMPTY CHAIR

by Sandy Goad, twin to Jim

I'M NOT READY, YET

This holiday season I would like to share with you some words of Darcie Sims, a well known grief educator, my mentor and friend, and an exceptional keynote speaker at four of our National Conferences. May you find the same peace that Darcie found in the midst of your memories and may your holiday season be filled with reasons to be thankful.

“We should know better by now. It shouldn't keep surprising us, but it does. No matter how hard we try, no matter what we do to prepare ourselves, it still happens. Year after year it arrives without delay. It may be filled with both anticipation and dread. And it is always announced by the universal cry of “I'M NOT READY YET!” It's the holidays that are coming and I'M NOT READY YET... for grieving, for handling the holidays, for stuffing a turkey, for finding a place for everything. I'M NOT READY YET for Christmas.

I'M NOT READY for the annual flood of memories that always spill out as we unpack the stockings from their tissue-wrapped nest. I'M NOT READY yet for the clutch of pain that still wraps my heart in grief as we place the ornaments on the tree. I don't think I'm ready for no one to remember our hurt, let alone the joy our loved ones gave us.

I unpacked the silver today, intending to polish it and place it in the dining room so it would add its shimmer to the festive decorations. I wasn't ready for the flood of memories that came back as I traced my fingers over the delicately carved designs in the coffee pot, remembering how my mother patiently taught me how to polish good silver. I wasn't ready for the loneliness that swept over me as I placed the tea pot on the tray and suddenly wanted to call Mom. And now that I had found it and set it out, I wanted someone to remember with me all those talks my mom and I had shared.

So I'll just have to figure out how to handle the holidays I'm never going to be ready for. As long as the stockings are up and the silver is polished and ready, then let the holidays come! We'll decorate our new house with the treasures that speak of our history, finding joy in the memories they spark. We'll bring with us some of the old, add a few pieces of new, and practice the art of blending yesterday with today in hopes of creating another memory for tomorrow.

I guess it doesn't matter whether you have moved or whether you've been in the same place for generations. It is still an unsettled feeling when, for the first time, no one remembers the journey you've been on. The first time no one mentions The Name there is a hollowness in our being that leaves us empty and feeling alone. I'll hang the special ornaments, enjoy the silver tea pot, and cherish the warmth of the love these gifts of remembrance bring. No one else has to know the story for me to acknowledge it and remember it. No one else has to know the pain for me to share the joy of having these things be a part of my now.

We'll gather together and count our blessings, not only naming the ones around the table, but including those whose lives have touched ours in countless ways. One does not have to be present to be alive in the hearts of those who shared a few moments of the journey together. The heart never forgets, even when the world does.

No, nothing fits this year, just like nothing fit last year or the year before. But it's getting better, improving either with age or experience, or patience. Or maybe it's because it is simply becoming a thread in the continuing fabric of our lives. We will probably always be a bit unsettled, unnerved when the roll call finds a name missing or a chair empty. But then, why shouldn't we be a little sad when a light goes out in our world?

So this holiday season, gather in your blessings and count them ALL. Count the blessings of the people in your story and find the peace that comes with counting a holiday of joy remembered and love shared. Peace to us all wherever we may be.”

In memory of Darcie Sims

HOLIDAY GIVING – GIVING SO THAT OTHERS MAY RECEIVE

As the Holidays approach, we would like to ask you all to consider giving this season to TTSGI in memory of your beloved twin.

Year after year TTSGI has been here for each one of us, for the twinless friends we meet at conferences and meetings, and for all new twinless twins reaching out for compassion and healing for the first time.

But the non-profit organization that supports us in our time of need also needs us to be there too!

TTSGI provides us with first-class quarterly newsletters, conference planning and coordination, communication services via our website and telephone, financial management, a board of directors to provide guidance, regional coordinators, who are there for you, and so many “behind the scene” services. And, just like any organization or household we have a budget to meet, and we have a “wish-list.” *TTSGI can continue providing support and services with the loving help of all of us!*

How can we help? By sending TTSGI your donation or by making a pledge to give on a regular basis – monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually, whatever plan works best for you. *By setting up a giving-plan you give TTSGI the gift of financial planning – and the essential resources to help us thrive and grow.*

Once again this year, we are fortunate that an anonymous donor of TTSGI is generously matching all year-end donations received, so please give, knowing that your donation will be doubled for TTSGI.

If you agree that giving is receiving, please complete the donation form in this newsletter and send it to Michelle Getchell. She’ll make the arrangements to deduct the amount stated from your bank account or credit card as instructed by you. Alternatively, you can send a check to Michelle on a regular basis. Donating online at our website is quick and easy. Any amount is welcome (but please “stretch” if you can!)

You can make a donation or pledge in memory of your precious twin – it’s a gift that only you can give – so that TTSGI can continue to give back.

In Gratitude - Margaret Daffin, Fundraising Coordinator



DOUBLE
the **DONATION**
Giving with the power of two!

Right now, through the generous gift of an anonymous supporter, any donation received will be matched, dollar for dollar! If you give \$100, it turns into \$200!

Every gift, no matter the amount, will be used to help support hurting twinless twins around the world.

Make a donation today by visiting www.twinlesstwins.org.

TWINLESS TWINS SUPPORT GROUP INTERNATIONAL

2015 DONATION FORM

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

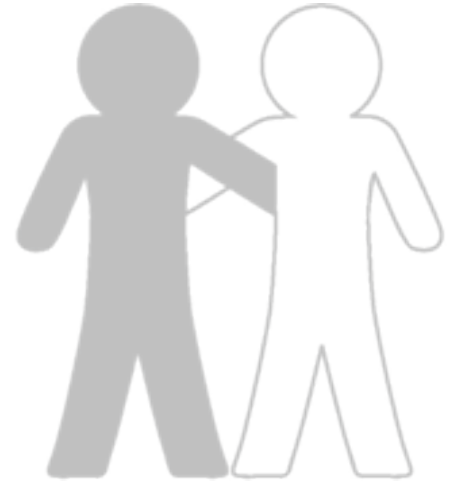
Please print this form and mail it, along with your check, money order, or Visa/MasterCard/Discover information to:

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 at the bottom left hand side of the home page.)

Designate Funds – please check one:

- General Fund Conference Assistance Fund
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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.



MY SOUL MATE

By Jennifer Rudd, twin to Janet

This is my favourite picture of me and my twin. For me a soul mate would be someone who knows you better than you know yourself and that was who Janet was. She was someone who I could talk about anything with. Even things I wouldn't talk to Mom about. She was my best friend, someone to go places with. When we went on the train I always had someone to sit beside and she would let me have the window seat. I had a roommate when we travelled.

She took care of me when I was sick and I did the same for her. We loved cooking together and were always a step ahead of the other person. I loved going Christmas shopping with her... now I order my stuff online. When we went clothes shopping, she was the person who would tell me "no, that doesn't look good".

We could give each other a look and know immediately what they were thinking. I miss that. She made me laugh. We had the same zany sense of humour.

It's why I have such a connection with my cousin's widow because she lost her soul mate too.

When I go to the twinless twins conference I feel at home because I'm surrounded by people that have the same bond that I have. Being a twin means that bond can never be broken.

SAVE THE DATE: 2016 CONFERENCE

The 2016 TTSGI Conference will be in Ypsilanti, Michigan near Detroit from July 14-16, 2016.

Online registration will open January 2016 with a limited time "early bird" rate of \$199 at www.twinlesstwins.org/events.



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 Winter Edition will focus on the second one:

You Are Not Alone — Twinless twins need to be heard and to know they are “not alone” in their feelings. Every twinless twin has a history and a story to tell, a sorrow to express, a pain to endure, a twin to remember, and a life to continue to live. TTSGI encourages the sharing of stories and feelings in a mutually supportive environment without judgment or unsolicited advice. Members of TTSGI offer compassionate listening and emotional support for sharing and telling these stories. Information shared among twins is held in confidence in mutually supportive group settings.

Below is a story of a twin that illustrates what it means that you are not alone.



KEVIN'S CORNER

By Kevin Mullen, twin to Brian

Unlike so many, my loss is different because I never really met my twin - we had only shared the nine months we were together in the womb. In many ways over the years, I have felt him with me. What I later found out is that there are many out there with stories like mine, but who didn't have parents that were upfront with them.

A friend of my father told him once, after dad and I returned from one of the conferences, that he had lost his twin shortly after birth and had many of the same feelings that I talked about. He had never told anyone about this because he thought people would think he was strange.

When I was in high school, I did a project on Twin loss, which several of you participated in. Afterwards, one of the school nurses asked to read it, because she had adopted a young girl whose twin had died shortly after birth, and she had noted things that the child had said or did that seemed unusual to her. Several other teachers came to listen to my presentation to learn and understand.

On one level we are alone because only we know what that missing part feels like, but on a higher level we are never alone because our feelings and memories are something that will always be with us.

I write to folks so they can have someone that they can express their feelings or memories to whenever the moment hits.

MY JOURNEY TO BECOMING AN INDIVIDUAL – PART II

By Dr. Camille Johnson Wissmann Pharm. D., twin to Carmen

Note: Part I was published in the Fall 2015 Newsletter.

The journey I can compare to the growing of my boys to become individuals. I started mentally as a two year old. Two of my biggest problems were dealing with cliques and being able to be assertive and deal with controversy. I realized “we were a clique” growing up. If we agreed on something we did not care if we were not included. The “bubble burst” at her death and I started wanting to be included. I started asking people what could I do to change so that I would be included? People’s approval and acceptance became very important. I eventually found a group called “Celebrate Recovery” and realized that I had the “Approval Addiction” that Joyce Meyer wrote about. What a freedom for me when I realized that I was putting these people’s opinions over God’s and that God is the one who is the most important to please. The extreme comparison I received as a twin had caused me to have low self-esteem.

I went back to school and got my non-traditional Pharm. D. from Purdue so that I could be a patient advocate. The most important lesson I learned is how to be assertive. I learned that I needed to support my recommendations with facts and then if the Doctor disagreed, I would just say that I would document their decision in the medical chart or on the back of the prescription. Most of the Doctors would change their decision and I would get 99% of my recommendations OK’d. Now when I am yelled at by a Doctor with an ego problem I just think to myself, “He’s yelling, his blood pressure is going up and he will die before me” and I am not emotional myself.



My grief journey included depression and I went through a lot of anti-depressants. At one point a Doctor decided I may have ADHD and gave me a timed release stimulant. I did not sleep for three days, I ended up in a psych unit again and because of being up for three days, I was diagnosed with a manic-depressive disorder and given Depakote and Wellbutrin.

After 25 years I found a group called “Twinless Twins Support Group International.” Finally I found people who understood what I meant when I said “Part of me died.” I learned that we actually suffer from a post traumatic stress syndrome since our stress is to become an individual which we were not even in the womb.

In November, I was at a seminar and learned that Depakote can cause interference with bone formulation and can cause osteopenia and osteoporosis. In four years I had gone from being 5’ 7” to 5’ 3.5”. Depakote can also cause “word finding” problems and I was having problems with that. (I had blamed it on old age since I will be 70 this year). I asked for a re-evaluation of my diagnosis and to be taken off of Depakote. It took me four months to see a psychiatrist.

Meanwhile, in December my best friend had a vision. She saw me standing and there was a shadow falling away from me which was attached at my feet. The shadow looked like me, but was transparent and shadowy. She knew in her mind that this shadow was my twin, Carmen. It was rooted in me very strong. She said she felt the vision was telling her that finally I would be released from my long struggle to become an individual.

At Christmas last year was the first time in 37 years that I did not have to force myself to enjoy the holidays. It seemed to me as if the cloud had raised and I could truly enjoy life.

I saw a Doctor in early March and I told him of this Christmas experience and that I thought being given Depakote and Wellbutrin was not appropriate for me. In fact, since I could not get into a Doctor for four months, I had gradually taken myself off of Depakote. He agreed that I had been suffering from

PTSD and he gave me a sheet to determine if I still had PTSD. I passed with flying colors that I am no longer depressed. He halved my dose and in May I am sure I will be able to stop completely.

I have given lectures at Christian Pharmacist Fellowship on when to use drugs with grief. Depression and not being able to sleep are stages of grief and must be dealt with without medications, maybe use medications as a crutch for a while, however continuing them for a long period of time will slow or stop the grief process.

I screamed at God that He could never turn evil to good when Carmen died. I was suicidal when, for one year, I saw her in the mirror instead of me when I combed my hair. Yet, I can see how he used my struggle to become an individual as a way for me to be a better pharmacist and a stronger individual.

I became active in "Celebrate Recovery" and learned we all have some sort of addiction not just the alcoholic or narcotic abuser. I am active in Twinless Twins Support Group and can help other twins in their grief process and journey to become individuals. Most important, however, is the fact that I have been able to "forgive" the Doctors who made the medical errors and I can walk beside those individuals who struggle with forgiveness. I can also show true empathy to my patients and share what I have learned through the hard work of becoming an individual.

I have recently been told that my macular degeneration is progressing and I will be legally blind. I am taking the positive approach that God will show me how He will be using me with this problem. (My macular degeneration is hereditary from Sweden – my mother and her sister became blind and my brother became blind at 54). We all have a choice in how we deal with our illnesses and are responsible for our own health.

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*

BLOOD MOON ON SEPTEMBER 27, 2015

By Barb Terry, twin to Brien

There were about 15-20 twins that posted on Facebook about the eclipse on September 27, 2015 here in the United States and even across the ocean in England. This was how my twin and I would stay connected once we lived apart. We would wait for a full moon or an eclipse and look at the moon at the same time... and it just felt neat knowing we were seeing the same thing at the same time. Just a connecting moment... and the twins on Facebook liked this idea too.

*I see the moon; the moon sees me
The moon sees the one that I long to see
God bless the moon and God bless me
And God bless the one I love*

Here are some of the posts and pictures taken by Twinless Twins that night.



Katie Thomas, twin to Stephanie from Kent,
South East England

“These were taken in my back garden on September 28th”

From Cathy Whitehouse, twin to Linda
in Merlin, Oregon
“I saw the tail end of it here in Oregon. Clear
as a bell but didn’t clear my trees until almost
done. I put a chair in my yard and sat in the
moonlight and visited with my sister.”



Marge Clapp, twin to Mary in Grant’s Pass, Oregon.
“This is taken with my camera”



Taylor McDaniel, twin to Neil in Los Angeles, California
“From Los Angeles”

Barb Swank Terry, twin to Brien
“I have tears in my eyes just thinking of all of
us from... Wisconsin, Arizona, North Carolina.,
Kentucky, Texas., Missouri, Oregon, etc... all
doing and looking at the same thing... We are
connected... and I bet our twins are seeing that
moon too. Thanks, all of you.”

NEWS FROM OUR UNITED KINGDOM AFFILIATE

By Janet Baird, twin to Margaret

TWIN'S WEEK AT KYLEMORE ABBEY

Seven twins stayed at Kylemore Abbey, on the west coast of Ireland, during the last week of August 2015. I arrived on the Saturday after a long bus journey from Dublin airport and a 4am start at Leeds Bradford airport. I met up with Martina at Galway bus station. We had never met, but we knew instantly we were both twins. The scenery grew ever more beautiful as we drove towards the west coast of Ireland. Maria, one of the twins, met us at the bus stop in her hired car. It only took 20 minutes to reach the Abbey. The actual castle is late 19th century and was built by Henry Mitchell, who lived there with his wife Margaret and nine children. She died of dysentery in 1874 while they were away on holiday in Egypt. After a succession of owners, the Benedictine nuns from Ypres in Belgium bought the Abbey in 1920. Later they opened a girls' boarding school which only closed in 2010. The University of Indiana in America has now leased the building and will use it for undergraduate courses in Irish studies for their students.



We actually stayed where some of the nuns had their cells on the ground floor. The rooms or cells are really small and basic but radiate a simple sense of lightness and wellbeing. We had shared showers and toilets on the corridor. It was very like being at boarding school!

Four twins had already arrived at the Abbey: Maria, Helen, and the two Catherines. The week was open to all twins and the idea was you could arrive and leave when you want. It was a historic occasion as it was the first residential event for the Lone Twin Network (LTN) and also the first time the Irish Lone Twins met together.

After a mug of tea outside in the sunshine, it was time to walk down to the Church for Vespers at 6pm. Services are optional for guests and are held three times a day.

Vigils and Lauds at 7.15am, Mass at 12.15pm and Vespers at 6pm. The church is beautiful but simple and was converted from the school's sports hall. After supper the twins there met for a meeting with Sister Julian and we told our stories. The twins who had arrived the night before had already talked.

After breakfasting Sunday, I walked along the lake to the Church. The first service always seems special. You can see the mountain behind the Abbey rising up and also the statue which was placed on the mountain by the Sisters. It is a steep and dangerous climb up to it as one of our twins found to her cost. She slipped and fell on the wet scree. Originally the Sisters took the statue up by donkey.



I had a second breakfast with the others after church and then we had a short meeting before sadly Helen had to leave. She was flying from Knock airport which is two hours north of Kylemore. After our meeting we waved her off, with sadness. We then went for lunch at the Abbey restaurant. Every guest is given a coveted voucher which entitles you to a two course lunch, with home grown vegetables and homemade soup. The two Catherines left later that afternoon and we waved them off from the car park. Sister Julian joined us after supper and we had a valuable discussion.

We were looking forward to Bernadette and Fran joining us Monday... They arrived late because of roadworks, but we met up over lunch. Bernadette had just come for the day so we had a meeting in the afternoon, which was so special. I will never forget her describing how her early loss twin is so very much with her. The idea of setting up meetings for twins in Ireland was one of the main objectives of the week at Kylemore. All the Irish twins there were keen to keep in touch and start meeting.

All too soon Bernadette had to go so we walked down to meet her patient husband and her two little dogs. The next morning Martina was leaving so we walked down to the car park to wave her off in pouring rain. Those left had lunch and then went shopping with Sister Julian.



ONESHIP

During our week at Kylemore, one of the more precious parts of our experience was the sharing of how it actually feels to be a lone twin and how others perceived this. One twin named Maria came up with a wonderful new word for the way we experience the presence of our twin.

I had written a poem for another early loss twin who was there and I had used the word “union” but I wasn’t satisfied with it. Another twin, Sister Julian suggested ‘TwinShip’ but then Maria suggested a new word:

Wednesday saw the departure of Maria, which left just two twins at Kylemore. The coming and going of twins added to the dimensions of the week in a way as fresh ideas kept the momentum going. But as always twins are not good at saying goodbye.

“OneShip.” Note the capital letter mid word for Ship. To me OneShip perfectly describes how we feel. We are still together and at one with our twins, even though they are not physically present. We are on a journey, a voyage and we are on the same ship as our twin.

One of the most valuable outcomes of the week was, for me, the artistic output. Alison brought her outstanding art work, which depicted her feelings over her twin loss. Sister Julian also showed us her incredible abstract art and gave each twin a signed original. Maria wrote a poem for the first time in her life. I will never forget arriving back from Vigils to find the poet in her dressing gown, waving her words excitedly.

The discussion then went deeper. How do other non-twins see our loss? As TwinShip? We didn’t feel they could see our OneShip. Only a lone twin can experience that. Then Maria suggested the word LoneShip. That is maybe how others see us. The surviving twin, alone, adrift on their own ship. The word most used is friendship. But we can see so many other ships sailing along side, across the uncertain sea of lone twin life. TwinShip, OneShip, LoneShip.... A whole fleet of ships. I like OneShip best. I will use it as much as I can. Introduce it into the English language. Thank you, Maria. And thank you, Sister Julian and Kylemore, for inspiring us to look deeper. OneShip. You heard it here first.

The next two days were quiet but wonderful. The weather was spectacular, with rain scudding down the valley in visible veils of water. We went out in the car with Sister Julian to weather watch. That evening we lit the real fire in the lounge and sat round watching the flames leap from the logs. Then Alison arrived for the weekend. We soaked up the peace and healing of Kylemore and reflected. There is no other place like Kylemore for healing and peace.



I left after the weekend feeling strengthened and restored. Our huge thanks go to Sister Julian for her boundless hospitality and kindness and to Mother Maire the Abbess and the community there for allowing us to be guests. As I sat in Starbucks at Dublin airport, Kylemore twin’s week was already feeling like a dream. But I know there will be lasting healing and that the Irish twins will meet and support each other.



Here is Maria’s poem:

OurShip

Born in TwinShip
 Live as OneShip
 Heartbroken in LoneShip
 The invisible LoneShip
 Hope -
 In Lone Twin Network FriendShip

Maria Bailey, Rose’s twin



MIDWEST REGIONAL GATHERING - OHIO

By Susan Schneider, twin to Robin

Do you remember that old saying “you can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink?” I thought a lot about that saying last Saturday.

Over 20 lone twins rsvp’d that they would be coming to Columbus for the regional meeting. There were five or six who were new to the organization. I remembered how Michelle and Diane each talked to me for several hours when I first called TTSGI, so I listened to several newly grieved twins on long phone calls, which ended with them sounding eager to attend a meeting. One woman emailed “My life is falling apart. I promised my husband that I

would get help. I’m just lost.” A man emailed that he was so angry that his identical twin brother had died, this group was just what he needed. Another woman emailed “This is far worse than losing both parents. I am drowning.”

My first national TTSGI meeting was eight months after Robin died, and I was a mess. The other surviving twins held me up (literally at the balloon launch) and it is a true blessing to be able to return the favor. Our family lost Dad a year after Robin, two weeks prior to Mom and Dad’s 59th wedding anniversary. Mom comes to the Columbus regional as a support person. She fretted that, with support people, we would overflow the private room at Panera. She fretted that the cake would not be big enough.

The day before the meeting, I got a call from the lone twin who had intended to spend the night in Columbus rather than drive home several hours in the dark. She was not going to make it. Since she was one of the twins who would be new to the organization, I was a bit disappointed.

The day of the meeting, Anita, twin to Rita, arrived. I was glad to see her, as she missed last year. No one else came. I may be a bit old fashioned, but it surprised me that all the others did not contact me to tell me that they would not be there. Or at least some of them, but not one other did.

This is not an ego thing with me. My twin and I loved to cook and bake, and we threw dinner parties that were overflowing with happy guests. I have been to other lightly attended regional meetings. Still, I was prepared with copies of one of Sandy Goad’s, twin to Jim, “Empty Chair” articles.

This to me, was about the five or six newly bereaved twins. I was so looking forward to giving them renewed hope. I thought there would be so many other twins who could share their coping skills. “Healing by Helping others” really resonates with me. I was looking forward to hearing their stories. After I listened to their concerns, I would have told them that right after Robin died, I no longer “fit” in the World. All our lives, we were the Schneider Twins. Yes, there was Susan the individual. And there was Robin the individual. But there was also an entity “SusanandRobin” or “RobinandSusan”. Not only was Robin gone, but “SusanandRobin” also was no more.

I needed to tell them that it gets better. It is never perfect again. But it does not stay so bleak. And some of the other twins who lost their twins years ago would probably have echoed the thought. Then I recalled the story Michelle, twin to Missy, tells. About her reluctance to attend her first TTSGI meeting. About how her sweet husband encouraged her to just go into the hotel, to just venture into the room to see what it is like. Now, Michelle is our executive director.

So, I salute your courage, those of you who pushed yourselves to attend that first meeting or conference. And Anita, my Mom, and I had a lovely lunch. We talked about her progress, and mine, since we last saw each other. Right now, we both plan to attend the national conference in Michigan next year. We did not have the problem of an overstuffed private room. And there was plenty of cake for everyone!

Anita took home lots of cake. (the baker nailed our logo on the sheet cake which was half white/half chocolate under the buttercream frosting). Mom and I had the Panera staff take the remainder to their break room. I’ll bet that the Panera crew looks forward to our visit next year.

And those five or six newly lone twins? I will email each one to encourage them to attend the national conference in Michigan in 2016 if they can. Also touch base with the other fifteen or so surviving twins who intended to come to Columbus but then didn’t. Not to chide them, but to ask for their recommendations on how I can make the regional more valuable to them.

And if any of you have an idea or two about how to ease the fears of newbies to try out a TTSGI meeting, or how to make the regional meeting more enticing to the veteran members, email me at robinsusan29@gmail.com or call me at Twin Horizons Travel at 614 793 8855.

But you know what? Sometimes, you can lead a horse to water but...

SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL MEETING

by Alyssa Pratt, twin to Karyn

The South Central Region met on October 24, 2015 at Walnut Ridge Baptist Church in Mansfield, TX. Thank you to Sandra Brown for helping find a location for the meeting! Although the weather was not ideal, there was still a good turn-out. In attendance were Kevin Johnson, Sandra Brown, Russell Scott, John Rohrer, Mandi King, and Alyssa Pratt. This was the first regional meeting experience for Russell and Mandi, and we are so glad they were able to join us!

Much of the meeting was spent sharing stories and memories about our twins. We listened to the song "Never Alone" by BarlowGirl. We ended the meeting with a candle lighting. An adaptation of a Prayer for Lighting the Shiva Candle was read and "Angel by Your Side" by Francesca Battistelli played as we lit our candles and spoke our twins' names. It was an uplifting way to end our time together.

Following the meeting, most everyone was able to go to lunch together. We enjoyed good company and delicious food before sharing hugs and going our separate ways. Future meetings are being planned for Arkansas and Houston, TX. More information will be available following the winter holidays.



MIDWEST REGIONAL GATHERING - CHICAGO

By Sarah Beebe, twin to Heidi

On Saturday, September 26 we had a lovely Midwest Twinless Twins Support Group International meeting at the home of Paul, twin to Pete. Our time together included laughter, tears and companionship as we remembered our twins, talked about our experiences of grief, shared our ideas and strategies for coping, and explored new twin connections. There were a lot of hugs and a feeling of togetherness and peace that always happens when twins spend time together. We concluded our meeting with a beautiful candle lighting ceremony that Paul put together. Seeing all of the beautiful light honoring our twins was a moving experience.

A big thank you to Paul for providing the lovely atmosphere of his home for our gathering.

Those pictured:

Front Row: Joyce twin to Janet, Janice twin to Joyce, Elaine twin to Irene, Sarah twin to Heidi, Marci twin to Michaelene,
Back Row: Di, twin to Donna, Jennifer twin to Michelle, Cathy twin to Char, Paul twin to Pete, Stephanie twin to Jonathan



MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL MEETING

by Michael Karbeling, twin to Howard

The Mid-Atlantic Region of Twinless Twins met in Frederick, MD on Saturday, October 24. I only wish that all of you could have been there to experience, first-hand, this beautiful day in Frederick and the healing that took place as Twinless twins came together and experienced love, support, encouragement and hope. We gave this weekend to ourselves, as twins, to help us on our path toward healing.



Among the 14 twins that attended, we welcomed four new Twinless twins; Jedidiah Smith, twin to Aaron, Jennifer Allison, twin to Janene, Jennifer Gonzalez, twin to Jeannette, and Beth Saffer, twin to Susan. A special thank you goes to Sandy Goad, twin to Jim who lovingly supports us in so many ways, Jennifer Roberts, twin to Ellen, who volunteers to put our roster together for our meetings and to Ruth Selig, twin to Rollyn, who volunteers to facilitate many of our meetings.

We held our morning meeting in the conference room of the Hampton Inn and began by introducing ourselves, sharing experiences from the 2015 National Conference in Nashville, TN and sharing plans for the 2016 National Conference to be held in Detroit. After a short break, with our chairs in a circle, we shared about our twin loss. Ruth Selig, twin to Rollyn, introduced the group sharing and facilitated the group discussion. In that circle, we opened our hearts and shared while being surrounded by the comfort and support of other Twinless twins. Our motto, "healing by helping others" was witnessed by those in the circle. Four new Twinless twins each received a special "Angel of Remembrance" as a reminder of the weekend and as a reminder that they do not walk alone. Then we held our candle-lighting, and read "We Remember Them" by Sylvan Kamens & Rabbi Jack Riemer

At the rising of the sun and at its going down, We remember them.
At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter, We remember them.
At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring, We remember them.
At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer, We remember them.
At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn, We remember them.
At the beginning of the year and when it ends, We remember them.
As long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us as we remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength, We remember them.
When we are lost and sick at heart, We remember them.
When we have joy we crave to share, We remember them.
When we have decisions that are difficult to make, We remember them.
When we have achievements that are based on theirs, We remember them.
As long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us as, We remember them"

After our meeting, we went to a restaurant in Frederick and enjoyed being together and getting to know each other and the supporting guests who joined many of the new twins. What seemed like such a short time, had come to an end, but the time we spent together on that Saturday will always be remembered by the photos we still share from our meeting and the memories we carry with us.

We hope that if you have never had the opportunity to come to a regional meeting you will join us at our spring meeting in Frederick, MD. You will leave knowing that you have found a place of hope and will never walk alone. Look for more details about the next meeting on the TTSGI website.

Those Pictured (*= new twins):
First row: Beth Saffer*, Jennifer Allison*, Ruth Selig, Jennifer Gonzalez*, Betty Brinker.
Back row: Michael Karbeling, Jessica Mills, Leslie Pennypacker, Laura Granstaff, Marcia Ann Palmer, Scott Andrews, Alia Pfiesser, Keith Duff and Jedidiah Smith*.



NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL GATHERING

By Garry Rayno, twin to Jerry

Changing Colors, Changing Feelings was the theme of the fall meeting of the New England Region Twinless Twins Support Group International gathering in Providence, Rhode Island, October 3, at The Meeting House, the oldest Baptist Church in America.

The meeting, hosted by Larry Wilson and facilitated by Linda Pountney and Garry Rayno, drew 13 twinless twins -- four first time attendees -- as well as six support family and friends. The feared hurricane predicted earlier in the week to hit the east coast never materialized but did prevent a few from attending the meeting, particularly if they were planning to fly into Providence.

The meeting drew a diverse group, some with losses more than 40 years ago to a teenager who lost her brother to an overdose this spring, an all-to-common occurrence here in the Northeast, which is in the throes of a heroin/ opioid and synthetic drug epidemic. Three twins had losses within the last year-and-a-half and another, who has been a member of TTSGI for many years but had not attended a regional meeting.

Keeping with the meeting's theme the discussion began with the changing seasons and how that can impact our emotions and what twinless twins can do to cope with their loss. Other topics included twin guilt and the need many twins feel to take care of family and friends before dealing with their own grief. And Linda reminded everyone they need to be easy on themselves - that beating ourselves up over our twins' loss does no good.

Many told their stories of their losses and others discussed lingering problems they continue to face. Halfway through the meeting, Larry led a tour of the church, explaining its origins -- originally established by Roger Williams, the founder of the Baptist Church -- and regaled the group with a musical jazz piece he wrote with words from the 23rd Psalm.

After more discussion, the meeting ended with a candle lighting ceremony to honor our twins as music played and poems were read. Most gathered that evening at Joe's American Bar and Grill for dinner and many one-on-one discussions with the addition of a couple more support people.

After dinner there was the Providence Water-Fire Celebration honoring the fight against breast cancer. Linda told the gathering that Garry had agreed to be the new Regional Coordinator for New England. Linda and Garry will work together as the New England committee to oversee the work of TTSGI to help twinless twins with their loss.

The spring meeting is planned for York, Maine although no date has been set.

Those pictured: Dot Valhouli, Eliza Daly, Mike Kane, Joan MacGillivray Lee, Talia Biddle, Larry Wilson, Michelle Thomas-Monteiro, Garry Rayno, Cindy Dehner, Linda Pountney, Lori Payne and Beverly Williams.

NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL GATHERING

by Joan Angeles, twin to Jean

The meeting for the North Central Regional Gathering was held on August 15, 2015 at the Minneapolis Central Library. Thank you to all who attended the meeting.





CANADIAN REGIONAL MEETING

By Ray Boyle, twin to Jimmy

On Saturday October 3rd, I hosted a meeting for the Canadian twins. Two of the attending twins had traveled 350 miles from the Montreal area. There were twelve of us who were Twinless. One twin brought her adult daughter. The twin felt that it was an opportunity for her daughter to sense what she was going through in her twinloss. As we who walk the Twinless path know, it is a different grief.

I had prepared a luncheon for everyone and afterward, we had the chance to share our twinship. Following, we were able to have brief breakout groups. As is often the case, I found that we just didn't have enough time, even though we were together for four hours.

Those pictured: (back row) Karen Shields, Patricia Wilbee, Heather Ellis, Joycelyne Lalonde and Monique Richards. (on couch) Carol Jacques, Stephanie Klein, Darlene Moore, Doris Giroux and Mary Stephens. (on floor) Beverley Smyk and Ray Boyle.

WELCOME TO THE GARRY RAYNO, TWIN TO TERRY, OUR NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Garry Rayno has been a member of Twinless Twins Support Group International for seven years. He lost his identical twin Terry to cancer 10 years ago. Garry has been the contact person for the New England region for the past three years and with former Regional Coordinator Linda Pountney, has facilitated and organized regional meetings for the past year.

Garry lives in New London, NH with his wife Carolyn and their two dogs. Garry is a journalist covering the New Hampshire State House and this year the state's first-in-the-nation Presidential Primary.

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" form on the website or from the RC Listing on the back page of this newsletter.

Go to: www.twinlesstwins.org

TTSGI WINTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

The TTSGI Board of Directors' Winter Meeting was held in Los Angeles on November 7th. Thank you to Dena Stitt for organizing and hosting the meeting.



From left to right standing: Margaret Daffin, twin to Josie; Lea Eriksen, twin to Eve; Terry Lewis-Foor, twin to Sherry; Venice Lacy, twin to Toni; Michelle Getchell, twin to Missy; Becky Sehenuk, twin to Jenny; Dena Stitt, twin to Dean; Matt Vierling, twin to Mark; David Jones; twin to Dennis; and in front is Ray Boyle, twin to Jimmy. Not pictured: Renee Manger, twin to Stephen and Renie Hallford, twin to Ernie.

GIVE WHILE YOU SHOP

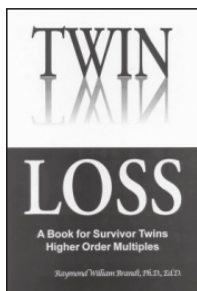
You can shop online and give to TTSGI at the same time!

iGive.com

iGive.com will link you to hundreds of popular retail websites. A portion of your online purchases will go directly to Twinless Twins. To date, over \$366 has been raised from you all using this site.

GoodShop

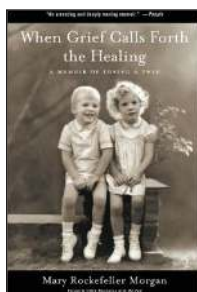
Use GoodShop.com when you shop online – they work with more than 2,500 major brands, have over 100,000 coupons and donate a percentage (up to 20%) of every purchase you make to us.



“TWIN LOSS”

By Raymond W. Brandt, PhD

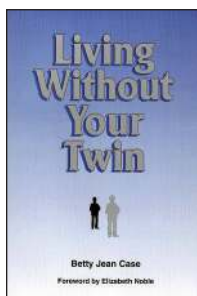
Dr. Brandt was the founder of Twinless Twins Support Group International and was considered by many an authority on twin loss. The 400-page book discusses all aspects of the loss and also speaks to the family members on how to help the survivor twin.



“WHEN GRIEF CALLS FORTH THE HEALING”

By Mary Rockefeller Morgan

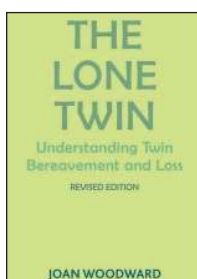
In this startlingly frank and moving memoir, Mary R. Morgan struggles to claim an individual identity, enabling her to face her twin brother Michael’s death and the huge loss it engendered. With remarkable candor, she shares her spiritually evocative healing journey, which moves her forward into a life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



“LIVING WITHOUT YOUR TWIN”

By Betty Jean Case

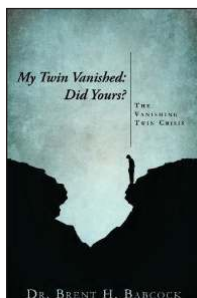
Author Betty Jean Case generously makes a donation to Twinless Twins each time one of her books is purchased through us. Betty is a twin, grew up with twin siblings, and had a set of twin grandsons. This 150-page book discusses how to keep living without your twin and best friend by your side. It also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

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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 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

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.

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

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

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