

# Season's Greetings from the Vallone Family!

## DON & AMY'S ANNUAL HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER

### 2005 Edition!



#### Volume 7

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### “The Most Wonderful Year Ever!”

**H**appy Holidays

and welcome to the 2005 edition of Don & Amy's Holiday Newsletter. 2005 marked the birth of both of our children. Our twins were born at Strong Memorial Hospital at 9:10 and 9:12 pm on Monday, January 3rd. There were many long and sleepless nights following that one. In this year's new s-letter, you will get to read about some of the fun we have had with the twins during their first year of life. Unfortunately, we have very little else besides the babies to talk about this year. However, as boring as it sounds, 2005 was the most wonderful year ever!



**Read  
on.....**

### “The Change of Life”

No, I'm not referring to the mid-life crisis that stares at us from around the corner. This is a crisis of different sort. As you know, we are now raising twin girls. Samantha Rose and Maranda Laurel have been a blessing in our lives, but have certainly created a startling change in our lifestyle. Gone are the days of the care-free couple, going out on the town every night.... Dinner and dancing at the finest establishments.... wild parties that would sometimes last all night long! No.... Wait... We never did those things anyway! OK, well maybe it's not THAT much of a change. But now we find ourselves going to bed at 7:30 in hopes of getting a restful night's sleep, and planning every waking moment around the little ones' schedules.

Amy has adjusted remarkably well to being a full-time Mom. She spends her days eating bon-bons and watching Life-time movies on cable TV. Then she sits back and enjoys watching the lawn boy ride his mower around the yard while she sips on a cool drink and talks on the telephone with her other friends who now “work at home”. Now, wait, that's not right either! I think the part about the phone calls is fairly accurate, but those calls are mainly part of a Mother's support network in between hourly feedings, bottles, playtime, or diaper changes. As she changes her baby-vomit soaked clothes for the third time each day, she reflects upon what a joy it is to be her own boss – the queen of her castle - with her loyal subjects never more than a few feet away from her at all times. Then its off to the kitchen to plan dinner for her husband, who she also knows will expect to see progress being made on the list of household chores when he gets home from a hard day at the office.

In reality, the husband expects minimal accomplishment, knowing the non-stop schedule that the wife has to maintain all day. With a gasp, the husband walks in

to find every fear that had overwhelmed his thoughts throughout the day..... to be unfounded. The twins are gleefully playing in the living room, each sparkling clean and freshly changed into clean pajamas. Uncommonly alluring smells are wafting from the kitchen as a gourmet meal has been prepared and awaits his arrival (yes, I am still talking about AMY).

The twins are ready for an evening bottle to top off their full bellies and to lull them into a restful sleep. Serenaded by lullabies while the babies drift off to sleep, the gourmet meal is consumed by the hungry couple.

After the husband cleans up the kitchen, eagerly anticipating an evening alone with his mate, he finishes to find her undressing for bed! With even more excitement he prepares himself, only to then find his wife already asleep like an angel.

I don't think either of us would trade any of the sacrifices we have made to change our style of life. Whether it be getting up during the night to change messy diapers and soothe the painful teething, or cutting a shopping trip short because someone in the family (you have two guesses) begins to throw a temper tantrum - the chubby little cheeks and the soft, warm, cuddly bodies of your little babies melts every bit of frustration and exhaustion away like butter....NO, even better - like the finest chocolate! When you get a big, wet, open-mouth kiss and a clinging hug from your little one, you know you have begun a most welcome change of life!



*The Twins at 7 months*



## “Claustrophobia!”

If you haven't been invited over to our house lately, don't feel unwanted. We just don't have room for you! Our home has been taken over by creatures referred to by some in the scientific field as “children”. These “children”, as some call them, need a surprisingly vast amount of space to exist given their relatively small size. Although they stand only a mere two feet tall, they seem to require at least ten times more space than the average six-foot tall variety of their species.

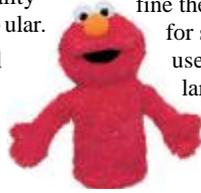
As a requirement of their subsistence, brightly colored plastic “things” that make loud, obnoxious, and repetitive noises are required to be placed on the floor of every room at a spacing of no more than twenty inches apart for ease of access by the creatures at all times. Some of the noises are apparently intended to be music or communications in their own language, possibly recorded by members of their own species.

Among the conversant communication objects, there are many that take the form of a red furry monster with a bright orange nose and a (gay?) demented personality that seem to be quite popular.

Larger, more mechanical objects that can actually accommodate the small creatures must also be placed in each room scattered amongst the smaller objects. Apparently these larger objects serve either some developmental or pacifying purpose when the creatures are not using the smaller objects or conversing with the gay monster.

Sleeping arrangements are also different with these creatures. There must be facilities set up in each major room of the house to accommodate them for napping and independent play time, complete with eight blankets near each.

As you or I would find it acceptable (even preferable) to use the same room of the house every time for the removal of bodily waste, “stations” for this purpose must be set up in a corner of every room—



complete with all of the cleaning and pampering supplies necessary to “complete the job”.

Often times it is necessary to confine the creatures to a caged area for safe recreation. The cages used for this purpose must be large enough to accommodate both of them and several dozen of their communication devices.

The creatures also consume a surprisingly large amount of food and need to be fed six to eight times a day to satiate their enormous appetites. Half of all food storage areas must be devoted to their special dietary items alone. Jars of a mashed substance called “Gerber”, boxes of hard biscuits that are chewed by the creatures (even before they have teeth), and large cans of dehydrated liquid that the creatures drink, are primary foods. Special food preparation devices and storage containers take up the remaining half of all storage space in the kitchen. This leaves the remaining zero percent of space to be used for containing one-hundred percent of our food and

cooking supplies, adding to the overall congestion of space.

After ingestion of the strange food substances, which for some unknown reason always results in a selective quantity being rejected and either tossed or expelled to all nearby surroundings creating hours of daily cleanup, a portion of the meal will invariably end up on their clothing in a bizarre ritual that may have roots in an ancestral hunter-gatherer's feasting celebration. Consequently, laundering of the creatures' uniforms must be done multiple times daily. Between the piles of alternating clean and dirty laundry, only random empty spaces can be found scattered throughout the house to serve as footholds to hop and skip sideways while navigating from one location to another.

Research is currently ongoing into alternative methods of dealing with the space management issues. Current leading solutions include use of prescription drugs and alcohol.

## “Revenge of the Obsolete Cat”

Here's an update on the “Obsolete Cat”. I'm sure you're thinking by now that our annual newsletter would not be complete without some mention of Autumn. Although temporarily dragged from the spotlight to make way for Samantha and Maranda, the cat refuses to sink quietly into the shadow of obsoles-



*Autumn kicks a few fragile keepsakes to the floor and sprawls out on the fireplace mantle when the master bedroom is not available*

cence as planned. She continues the charade of playing “best friend” to the twins – pushing her way ever closer into the family circle at story time, and letting the girls pet her and endure the painful pulling out of handfuls of fur. She has had a sinister plan from day one, I just know it. She has watched our attention shower onto the twins this past year, and she has carefully evaluated the situation for the most effective recourse. After noticing that we really can't pay close enough attention to what she does (and where she does it), she has found a way to turn the situation to her advantage. Knowing that we have to keep the bedroom door open to listen for the girls at night, she finds satisfaction in sneaking into the bedroom when she knows full well that it is off limits to her.

Just knowing that she can get away with being in our bedroom is not enough for her. She has to emphasize the fact by making it known to me that she is able to break the rules. She does this by pouncing

onto the bed at two o'clock in the morning and settling at MY feet. As I awaken startled from a sound sleep to shoo her away, she deliberately and defiantly stares back at me then settles her head back into a comfortable position on the blanket—knowing full well that I don't want to wake Amy up after a long day with the twins. We purchased an expensive slip cover for the sofa in the living room. This has always been our favorite piece of furniture. However, it has also been Autumn's favorite. She leaves a trail of fur chunks covering the cushions and has completely destroyed the fabric along the corners that she uses as a scratching post (this activity led my defense for her declawing several years back). Since it is a difficult piece of furniture to

vacuum and clean, the slip cover seemed like the perfect solution because it is machine washable. Autumn, of course, realizes this and will have no part of letting me take the easy way out. Whenever we can't find the cat, it is almost a sure bet to head over to the sofa and look for a large “bump” protruding out from underneath the slip cover. She has found a way to navigate under the cover and make a comfortable little nest. Apparently, the only thing better than her favorite sofa is her favorite sofa with a cozy privacy tent over it. I officially give up. Does anyone know what the average life expectancy of a cat is (....or how to change it)?

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

