

BABES IN DYKELAND!

A lesbian family finds an outpouring of community support following the birth of triplets

by Risa Krivé

Photographs by
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Sheila Robinson



They were considering the name Risa for one of the babies. Risa means laughter in Spanish. It is my name. I thought it would aptly fit a baby born into this happy home.

Phone calls after the births indicated that happy had become hectic for this household. The telephone machine plays a tape of three screaming infants and Mimi's sweetly whispered madonna message: "We're a little busy now..."

Sheila picks up the phone with the phrase, "Are you coming to help?"

I was coming

to interview for this article. But it is impossible not to be drawn into this domicile where three babies hold dominion. They need to be cuddled, carried, changed...and they could draw the desire to care for them out of the most distant caller. We each hold a baby on our laps and talk to them as much as about them during our conversation.

The babies are six months old. Sheila is 35. Mimi is 36. The couple has been together for six years. I ask them, "When did you decide you wanted to have babies?"

Sheila gestures towards Mimi. "She better go

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Perhaps other states give birth to superstar skaters who allegedly conspire to whack opponents' knees out of Olympic competition; to male senators who make unwelcome sexual advances to every woman in Washington; to homegrown homophobic organizations that garner roughly half of the vote in a general election. Perhaps. On the plus side, perhaps there are other places besides Portland where alternatively impregnated lesbians give birth to triplets, where those triplets are nurtured by an entire community, where that fertile generosity of nature and neighbors creates a commonwealth of cooperative child rearing. Perhaps. But I only know of one. It seems this occurrence is an Oregon original.

Roses, yarrow, sage and lavender greet me at the threshold of the home of the new triplets and their lesbian moms. More of Mimi and nature's handiwork, I imagine. I had met Mimi Luther (the biological mother) and her partner Sheila Robinson previously, at their house in the Hawthorne District of Portland when the triplets and the second story being built to accommodate them were both under construction. The parents and their domestic partner, Buddy (longtime friend Karin Lang), seemed remarkably calm as they prepared for the imminent multiple births.



(Left to right) Risa with soulwatcher Jackie Bloom, Jan Carpenter with Gabby, and Buddy holding Sam