Little Man raises ethical issues about family values, child rearing and quality of life.

audiences don't even connect the gay issue; they connect a parenting issue or as a family issue. I don't see a difference."

Speaking of differences, many viewers will see a difference between the pragmatic Baba and the spiritual Conn that resembles the difference between blue and red state ideologies.

"We had a huge argument on camera about our spiritual beliefs and whether an entity has the right to come into the planet. We had that in several cuts, but then it was like we did not want to turn this into an abortion rights issue, and we were both very locked into our perception of what the other person was saying," says Conn. "It didn't feel fair to either one of us to use that footage. We were afraid Gwen would not come off sympathetic, but it has been the reverse. More people are upset with me for me moving with him being on the planet."

This question seems legitimate. Regardless of how adorable Nicholas is, what kind of life is he living? His eyesight and hearing are poor. He suffers from dysautonomia, which is the body's inability to regulate body temperature, heart rate, breathing and digestion. What hopes does he have? How much will he continue to suffer? Accordingly, what kind of ethical dilemmas did Conn go through with regard to perhaps exploiting Nicholas as a subject for her film? After all, he has no say in the use of these images.

"I made this film to let the world know that this is what you go through when you have this experience. It isn't pretty," says Conn. "Nicholas' journey here is about being a messenger—and not just from being in the film. Everybody who meets him or sees him on film—their experience with him is about the absolute joy of being on this planet. Knowing his personality the way I do, I think he will consider showing that joy as a gift. He's the most spiritual person I've ever been around. He just exudes the most loving, wonderful energy on the planet. He really is a magical being. I do feel he's absolutely OK with this. I'm not saying that to defend the position—I really believe that with everything I have in me."

Would you do it all over again?

"In a heartbeat," says Conn.

Epilogue

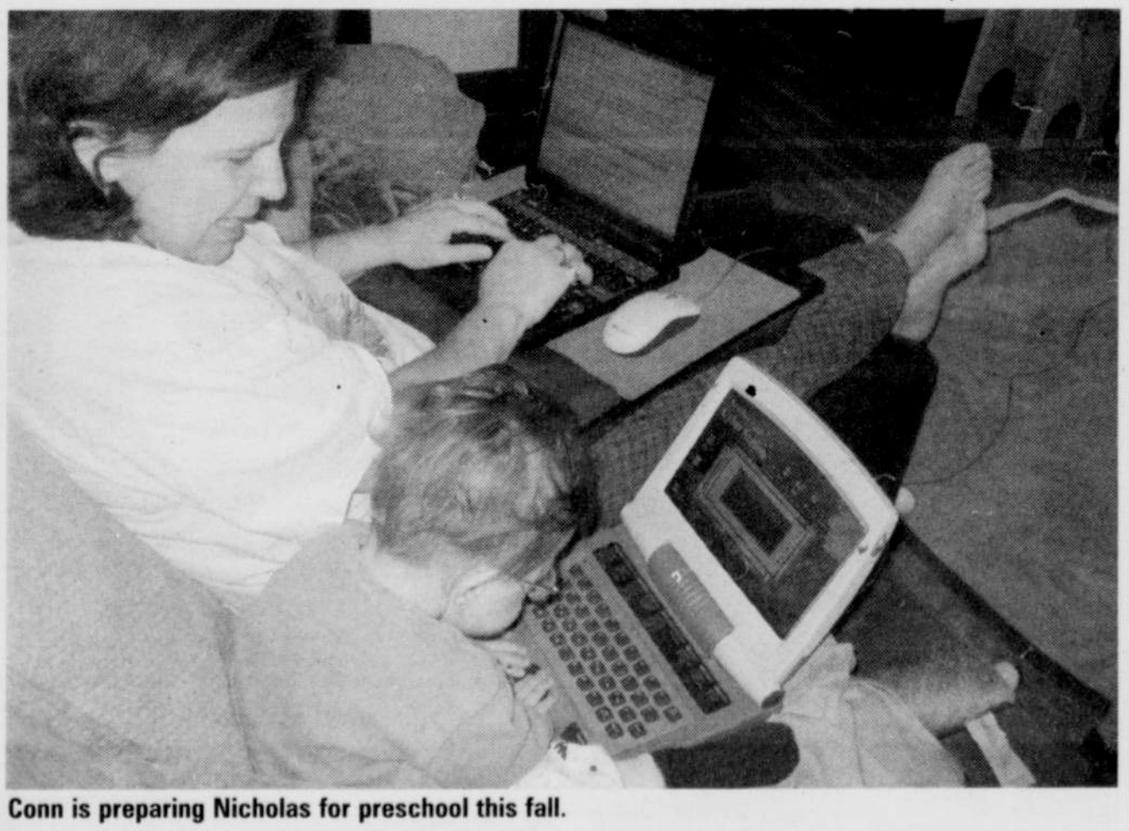
The story of the *Little Man* has changed since the film was completed. Today Nicholas is 4 years old. He is 3 feet tall and weighs 30 pounds. He still suffers from dysautonomia. Baba and Conn are preparing him for preschool this fall.

"He is the happiest person I know, bar none," says Conn. "I call him Mr. Enchantment for good reason—he teaches, he amazes, and he is the purest love I have ever known."

For all intents and purposes, Mary is out of the picture, but both his moms and sister will stand by him until the end.

LITTLE MAN *premieres 8 p.m. May 12 on Showtime. A DVD release is scheduled for June 15.*

JOHN ESTHER *is a Los Angeles free-lance film critic whose work has appeared in* Cineaste, Curve, Lesbian News *and* The Harvard Gay & Lesbian Review.



Conn is preparing Nicholas for preschool this fall.

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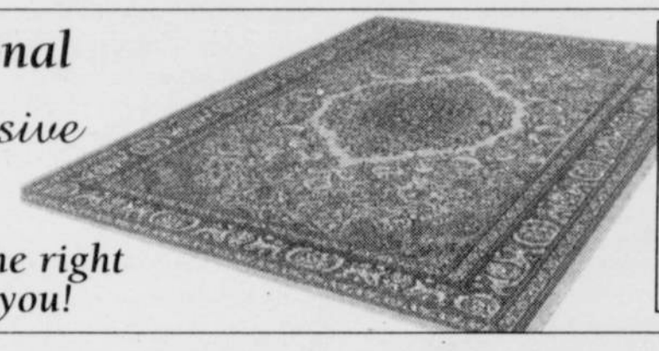

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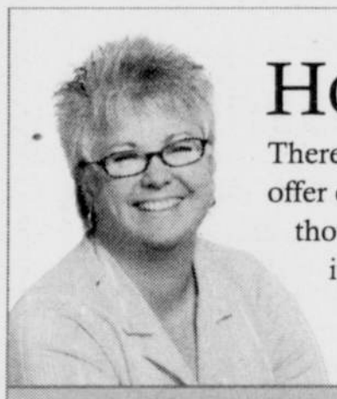

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