

PARTING SHOT FROM DANNY MILLER

A weekly snapshot from The Daily Astorian and Chinook Observer photographers



Kendrik Byman, of Longview, Washington, leaps from on top of a hill overlooking the beach Sunday at Fort Stevens State Park.

ODDITY

Rocking fatherhood

A dude's how-to guide on staying cool

By LEANNE ITALIE
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Before parenthood, Chris Kornelis rocked it as a music writer for Seattle Weekly. Two kids later, he's still making a living as a writer, a freelancer, and recently added a new book to his resume, a how-to guide for dads-to-be who want to stay cool.

And he rocks that, too. Who else gets Guns N' Roses bassist Duff McKagan to write his foreword, in which he recalls of his own road trip to fatherhood: "I remember reading 'What to Expect When You're Expecting' when my wife was pregnant with our first daughter. I also remember being, quite frankly, freaked-the-(bleep) out."

Well said, Duff.

This book, "Rocking Fatherhood," takes a cheeky week-by-week approach that might just soothe some new daddy nerves and help out in the empathy, sympathy, gotta-buy-some-gear departments.

With kids who are now 5 and 14 months, Kornelis, 34, takes on everything from ear infections to egg poaching, breast-feeding to bonding. There's swaddling, playlists and quirky interviews, like his chat with the pediatrician of his childhood.

There's also the angst he endured after being laid off from Seattle Weekly while shouldering the responsibility of breadwinner for a growing family. Was it time to abandon big dreams in favor of fatherhood? Forget taking career

risks to earn a bigger paycheck?

Ultimately, he decided his "big project" post unemployment wasn't a big project at all. It was a lifestyle choice: to continue freelancing and writing books so he could be around for the family.

A conversation with Chris Kornelis:

AP: What kind of cool are you writing about, the cool of being a music journalist or the cool that helps you avoid being stabbed in the neck by your pregnant and emotional wife?

Kornelis: The cool as in not losing your cool and remaining calm and really taking the opportunity to enjoy the special time that is having a new baby. It's a really exciting time. It's not the time to get unnecessarily stressed and anxious.

AP: Where do dads go wrong generally during pregnancy?

Kornelis: For me, I was able to kind of subconsciously, in a way, forget that my wife was pregnant and not always be as attentive as I should have.

My wife has a different definition of cleanliness than I do, for example. If it weren't for her I would literally be living in my own filth. There were times during her pregnancy when I would actually get frustrated. Like why are you cleaning the shower, why aren't you sitting down and putting your feet up?

That was bad on me. I should have said ... I know she has a hard time relaxing when things aren't picked up and I need to step forward and do a little bit more.

AP: Do you think younger dads get it more than, say, the "Leave it to Beaver" dad?

Kornelis: My dad was a fantastic father. My dad was a very active dad. He didn't have

as many of the opportunities that I did in the sense that there wasn't as much of a flexible work environment. I have had more flexibility so I've played a slightly different role.

It's not a function of my dad not getting it, because he really did. It was the reality of the time.

AP: Why is the diaper bag so important to dudes? What is your dream bag?

Kornelis: It IS important. You're going to be using it all day, every day. Get a bag that's not like a fanny pack. Buy something you can see yourself carrying. There's no reason to put on the sweats and use a gross nylon bag. Get the good one. I say go for it. We're still members of the human race. If you can treat yourself, treat yourself. Get a leather backpack if that's what you like. I like the Filson bags.

It's the whole having a baby changes everything and it sucks undertone. You don't have to give up.

AP: What are some of your cautionary tales?

Kornelis: The sleep deprivation is real. The sympathy pregnancy weight is real. I just gave away a pair of \$200 jeans because I've been very sympathetic for the last couple of years.

Another thing is the over-worrying about breast-feeding. I wish we would have spent less time the first time around worrying about whether our son was fed off the breast or with a bottle. He's going to turn out just fine either way.

AP: Your elephant in the room during pregnancy is "What to Expect When You're Expecting." What's your take on that pregnancy bible?



"Rocking Fatherhood: The Dad-to-Be's Guide to Staying Cool"

Kornelis: We had it in the house. You take it for what it's worth. It has good information but it places as much emphasis on all of these things that could go wrong that probably aren't going to go wrong. ... I mean, people generally don't need to be worried about

shark attacks but that book is like a shark attack for every week.

AP: So what's on your list of things many parents think they need to know during pregnancy, but don't really need to worry about?

Kornelis: We should be

focusing on what we know is going to happen, focusing on the family and not things that have very slim chances of ever happening. We should be focusing on what we know is going to happen, focusing on the family.

While other newspapers give you less, The Daily Astorian

GIVES YOU MORE

From left: Hillary Borrud,
Mateusz Perkowski,
Paris AchenCAPITAL
BUREAU

Our new

covers the state for you