

**BBB AUTISM SUPPORT NETWORK/
AUTISM SOCIETY ONTARIO
(YORK REGION CHAPTER)**

PRESENT

THE E-NEWS

http://www.bbbautism.com/about_bbb.htm

CARE AND FEEDING OF THE CAREGIVER

Volume 5; Issue 3

June 13, 2002

Without meaning to sound whiney, I think we are the most misunderstood, hardworking and least taken-care of people on earth! By 'we' I mean those of us who love someone with autism; more specifically the primary 'caregiver'. This could mean the mom or dad – but also a stepparent, grandparent, uncle, aunt or friend.

We are misunderstood because many people in our communities don't seem to know *how* to 'treat' us. Are we saints? Are we students? Are we an obstacle in providing education/service to our children? Does the unsuspecting and uneducated population view us as cruel when they see us patiently waiting for our children to provide us with a picture communication card or ignoring an eardrum-shattering tantrum in the mall?

We aren't supposed to care about what others think, but by the very nature of our situations, we are emotional. These are our babies and we want what is best for them. So we lose sleep and struggle and remortgage our homes in the hopes to provide that elusive element that is going to help us to sleep better and help our kids to live full, independent lives often neglecting what *we* need in the process.

This issue is dedicated to us. There isn't going to be entirely about autism/pdd in this issue except for how it applies in the stories submitted by our wonderful contributors – we are going to discuss how to take care of ourselves, so that we can take care of those whom we love – in a no-nonsense, realistic way. We will also talk about warning signs of caregiver overload.

I am not going to say "You *must* take time for yourself!". I know better than to come up with a line like that. All I would be doing is putting extra pressure on you and demanding you make room for one more task in the day. Instead, let's look at some practical ideas to make life easier, and along the way hear a few personal stories from other caregivers just like us!

The following issue contains a cornucopia of ideas to help take care of YOU, the caregiver.

Bee Cool, Liz

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LATE BREAKING NEWS

NOTE TO ONTARIO RESIDENTS FROM NANCY MORRISON:

Thursday, June 20, 2002 at 1:00 p.m. will be a very important day at Queens Park for those of us with children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and are frustrated with the lack of sufficient funding for ABA Therapy services. The Ontario NDP Party, headed by Tony Martin

from Sault Ste Marie and Shelly Martel from the Nicklebelt (Sudbury), want to bring forward the funding issue in session at Queens Park. They are asking that as many as possible attend the parliamentary session on that date. If your autistic children are able to join you that would even be better. Session would be from 1 p.m. to approximately 3 p.m. Arrangements have been made for a press conference beforehand with the three families from Simcoe County.

Please R.S.V.P. your attendance, with names and addresses of all those attending, by Tuesday June 18th to the Email address below. This information must be supplied ahead of time to gain entry into the session. They will have room for hundreds; please don't be shy in attending. We want to make a loud cry for help on that date.

morrisonpn@aol.com

Take care, now...

By Liz

Whenever we fly the friendly skies, we are told: "In case of emergency, oxygen masks will drop from the overhead bin. For those traveling with small children, be sure to fasten your own mask before assisting your child."

For those of us with children on the spectrum this analogy means nothing. We work very hard to take care of everyone around us before attempting to fasten our own oxygen masks. Unfortunately, we sometimes experience such burnout and stress that we collapse before even reaching for our lifeline. We know we have to find ways to take care of ourselves, but how do we do this with the everyday challenges we face?

Care and Feeding of the Caregiver

- Learn to ask others (spouse, family members, teachers, etc.) for support. Be specific about what you need, firm in your method of asking, and appreciative for what others do to help. This can be a difficult step, after all somewhere we got the idea we had to be super-parents. Why? Because we think other people expect it of us.
- Lower your stress threshold. Okay, this sounds odd; after all shouldn't we be learning to deal with larger quantities of stress than the typical family? The answer is no. As Dr. Richard Carlson suggests in his book "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff...", "Our current level of stress will be exactly that of our tolerance to stress. You'll notice that the people who say, 'I can handle lots of stress' will *always* be under a great deal of it!" If we raise our tolerance to stress, we will learn to accept even more responsibility and confusion until our stress level reaches our tolerance level. Notice your stress early, way before it gets out of hand.
- Change your standards for housekeeping (and other tasks that don't *really* matter). Did you ever notice how housework can sometimes put you over the edge? You have dealt with inordinate amounts of stress, then suddenly your daughter forgets to throw out her apple core and you *lose* it! If at all possible, hire someone to come in every so often to clean, but try to relax about your own obsession with tidiness. In various polls we've conducted at BBB Autism, we've asked how our members deal with stress; many people cite this attitude as a way they lessen unwanted frustration and negative feelings. It can be quite liberating!
- Hand in hand with the above is make peace with imperfection. Are you obsessed with losing 10lbs? Get over it! If you are at a reasonably healthy weight and are taking care of yourself physically, don't go crazy over a few pounds.
- Find a healthy physical outlet. Discover a sport or exercise you really enjoy, and then do it regularly — either by yourself or with an "exercise buddy." Take a Tae Bo class and punch out the stress; take a cycle class and beat stress to the finish line. Out- walk, run, bounce, jog or play it. You'll feel better, look better and sleep better!
- If you feel you would like to start eating healthier, check out the Food Guide and try to get a good variety of healthy foods. If weight gain is a health risk, organizations such as Weight Watchers® offer healthy, sensible alternatives to fad diets. Sometimes, paying attention to such things can take the focus away from our stress for a period of time.
- Take pleasure from music, movies, magazines, museums, and even favorite television programs. It's OK to take time for yourself to "escape" every once in awhile. If you are experience warning signs of burnout, do NOT read anything about autism and do NOT watch Rain Man for the fiftieth time. If you feel you have to unsubscribe from the E-News for a period of time, no one will be hurt...we all need an autism vacation occasionally! ☺

- Give yourself permission to say, "No." I have a tendency to reach out to others to the point where I sometimes lose myself and my feelings. I can spend hours trying to help someone through a rough time and then I'm stunned when they walk out of my life without even a 'thank you'. I need to learn to say 'no' more often; in other polls we've conducted, this appears to be a problem area for most of us!
- Find someone you trust — relatives, friends, and baby sitters — to take care of your child so you can get away. You can try a respite worker (in home or out of your home). For more information on respite, check out this link: <http://www.bbbautism.com/respite.htm>.

The Future

- Find someone to talk to. It can help if this person has already been through something similar, then you can compare notes.
- On advice: It can be frustrating to have someone shoot down every single one of the ideas you give, but ask yourself if that person even asked for advice to begin with. When someone gives *you* unasked-for advice, thank him or her even if the idea sounds ridiculous. They are only trying to help.
- Retain your sense of humour. Sometimes the most embarrassing or difficult moments turn into hilarious anecdotes down the road.

Don't Forget to Breathe

Sometimes you have to slow down before you can gain momentum. You're not being selfish if you find ways to take care of yourself. You're just getting that extra whiff of oxygen so you can move ahead with renewed energy and commitment. When your chest feels tight, stop and take several huge breaths. You will be surprised at how good this can help you feel!

Above all, if you start to experience some of the signs of burnout listing in this issue, don't be afraid to seek some professional help!

Now, if only I could learn to do as I say! ☺

WELCOME TO THE ZOO!

Welcome to this new, recurring feature by BBB Autism Member Michelle E. Michelle is mom to three wonderful boys, two of whom are on the autism spectrum. For years, she's entertained us with her stories, now we have convinced her to turn her thoughts into a regular column for all to enjoy. Get yourself a cup of coffee, sit back and join us for this issue's trip to the "Zoo"!

CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER

Having children in general is stressful. Having a special needs child is definitely stressful. Having more than one child in the family makes it even harder because of trying to divide up the attention that one gets over another. Also, life is stressful -- everyone has different stressors in their lives.

But the caregiver of any child who has special needs has to learn to avoid certain issues such as exhaustion, panic attacks, depression, own health issues (because they put everyone else's needs first) and burn out.

I have had all of the above. And I have two children with ASD and one with ADHD. I have been a mom for 10 years now - and I love my kids dearly. However, they are a handful and exhausting and I have tried to learn to give myself time for myself.

It is easier for me now than it was seven years ago because all my kids are in school full time. For those of you who have young children, it's even more challenging because they are around all the time which makes it more difficult to do things for yourself.

I think one of the hardest things to do for a Mom is to take care of herself. So much effort and time goes into the family! Often the caregiver is exhausted, depressed, overly anxious and doing ten million things at once so that we don't have time for ourselves.

And after years of running on fumes, we finally run out of gas. That's when burn out occurs.

The thing that all caregivers have to realize is that you need to be able to recognize the signs BEFORE the burn out occurs. I am still trying to get this part right in my life; I can see the signs yet I still manage to avoid them until it's too late.

But I am getting better at it. Maybe one day I will get it right. LOL

I suffered from burnout and deep depression and anxiety a few months ago. Some of the things I am doing now are working to get me back on track and some of the things I am doing are still making me overwhelmed. Its all a balancing act and it takes practice to get it right. I am still practicing LOL.

I try to relax by going on the computer, reading books and I am trying to get back into walking. (It hasn't happened yet)

I am trying to keep my weight off. I did it for myself over 3 years ago (losing 60 lbs) and it is something I am proud of.

I go talk to a doctor once a week to vent all my frustrations and that helps immensely. I had stopped doing that for almost a year then after the past few months I had I decided to go back and it has helped a lot.

Getting check ups are important; something I haven't done but should be doing. Keeping yourself healthy is very important. I did start taking vitamins and I am trying to eat healthier.

And rest: we all need to rest. The sleep deprivation most of us get is what starts the downward cycle and finishes us off when we go into burn out mode.

I didn't sleep for so long a few months back. I just couldn't relax and couldn't sleep. My mind was Constantly in motion worrying and plotting and trying to figure out how to deal with all those issues so I couldn't think straight. It made me feel like I was going insane and couldn't deal with anything. I was in full burn out mode.

So you must take care of yourself or you won't be able to take care of your family.

That statement bothers me because "You should take care of yourself first because you are IMPORTANT as a PERSON first - then as caregiver, spouse, friend etc. If you always put yourself last you may make it to martyr status someday but you are going to be one burned out martyr. LOL.

Finding something I really enjoy doing: writing about my experiences with my children and ASD and running the New Jersey support group and making new friends with other parents with children on the spectrum and giving them a friend when they need it the most. That's what I enjoy doing.

I have gotten gift certificates for massages for birthdays and other holidays. That's all I really want and I have told my family that. Now I just need to go use them.

Going away with my husband and NO children was really nice. It was so relaxing and nice to be able to be alone with him. That did me a world of good. And it did US a world of good as a couple being alone together with No STRESSORS (AKA the children, schoolwork, work for DH, etc.)

Going away alone to see my friends in Canada was one of the biggest relaxing moments of my life. It was the first time I ever went anywhere alone since I have been married. All I did was sleep, eat and hang out with my buddies from the BBB Board. IT was great. Two days to myself and I ordered room service and watched cable movies LOL.

What I realized is that it is OK to need a break. And to take one.

Its OK to go see my dad in Florida once in a while alone and drink pina coladas and lay out in the sun lol.

And it's OK to take off once in a while to go to a conference in Toronto, Canada (next time I might actually go to the actual conference lol) and it's OK to want to be alone. Sometimes the Caregivers get OVERSTIMULATED TOO!!!!

We deserve breaks whether it is just to take a nap or getting away. We work our tails off day and night trying to do what is best for our children. And we do a damn good job.

I am still working on getting to the point of doing things for me. (I have the traveling part down to an art) I can rest when I need to because the kids are in school. I still need to take better care of myself - like going to the doctor - but hey we can't do everything right all at once lol.

One day the kids will be grown up and what will we have to show for it???? Will we look 20 yrs older and be half dead because we gave every last ounce of energy to our family and nothing to us???? Or will we be healthy and hopefully content with the way our lives have gone -- nobody knows the answer to that but if we help ourselves now we have a better chance on living a happier life in the future. And our children would want us to have that.

WHAT SPECIAL THING DO YOU DO TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF?

By Khris

I find that the best thing for me to do is to have regular outlets rather than waiting until I am on the edge and about to explode. I take one evening or afternoon a week to myself while hubby watches the kids and do whatever I want. Many times I run errands or go shopping (which my husband can't understand), but knowing I have gotten something accomplished and can mark something off my list for the next day (and have less places to drag the kids to) is actually fun to me, and a great stress reliever. We also try to take regular time for my husband and I to be alone together. Weekly date night is a must to keeping our relationship going and communication lines open.

By Lynn

What I do for myself is go to work. Now you might think this is crazy but I work with the public every shift and I find it therapeutic! It takes me out of my home and all the "Drama" and puts me in touch with what is happening in the rest of the world. I have worked at the same place for almost 10 years! People come in and chat about all their problems because they "know" me and it gives me a broader view of everyone's lives and I don't just focus on my problems! When that fails me (and it has been known too!) I take my sisters to a movie or paint a room or something! Anything that will allow me to relax long enough to realize there is more to life than stress!

By Bernie

I try to pamper myself whenever I can, like getting a pedicure or buying something nice to wear. Sometimes just getting together with friends and hanging out alleviates a lot of stress. In the fall a co-worker and I will be taking a Yoga class together to relieve some tension. Plus I try to eat healthy, always go for my annual physicals and take care of myself the best I can so that I can be there for my family.

Let's Face it...

Good intentions run rampant throughout our lives. Logically, we all know we should be taking better care of ourselves, but we still have a deep down need to make things right for our kids with ASD. Recently, BBB Member Khris sent me this article she'd written. It's a common sense approach toward things to have in place for your child. Especially helpful to those of us just beginning our journey, the steps are easy, fun and instructive. Having them written down like this can help you organize your strategies and maybe end up with a little extra time for yourself after all!

Things you need to know about your ASD child

By Khris R

You should be doing "speech therapy" all day long- mostly this consists of talking (which is good, because we can all do that). Label everything around you- narrate your life, give him the words for what he is doing and what you expect that someday he will be saying. Encourage him to talk by giving him the opportunities (even if he can't yet, he never will if you don't pause to give him a chance). Combining oral language and visual cues will increase language and communication skills and lesson frustration. More importantly than having him talking now is to have him communicating now. (PECS or ASL are commonly used with ASD kids)

Sensory integration issues are seen in almost every child with an ASD, even if you are not sure if your child has these you need to do some research to make sure (The Out of Sync Child is an excellent book for this). Sensory issues can look like behavior problems to the untrained eye, they are not consistent from day to day and week to day, and they can cycle, but they can also be worked through with Sensory Integration Therapy, or sensory based Occupational Therapy. The Out Of Sync Child will allow you to identify which areas your child has problems in and how to work on it, but remember that sensory play should be done on a daily basis at home in addition to any formal therapy the child receives if any improvement is to be seen. Push him just a little bit further than he wants to go- the goal is more each time, not stagnation.

Any skill that your child has difficulty in acquiring needs to be broken down into the basic steps and taught in pieces, using positive reinforcements (never punitive punishments) and lots of praise. It feels a little like training a puppy at first, but this is the most effective method of teaching these children. Always model the task to be accomplished along with verbal and/or visual cues. Do not attempt to teach your child "age appropriate" tasks before he has the precursory skills for them.

Almost all children with ASDs have poor fine motor skills- this is another area that an Occupation Therapist will help your child with. But in order to see improvement you must give him opportunities at home every day to use his fingers, hands, arms and shoulders. Hang a chalkboard on the wall, or tape some paper to a door and let him draw or paint, play with hinged clothespins and Popsicle sticks, Legos, tongs, and any games that require him to use his fine motor skills.

Social skills should be one of your main areas of focus in working with your child. If he can smile and say hello, he can get a job as a greeter at Wal-Mart even if he isn't a whiz at math or spelling, but if he does great with academics and has no social skills he will never be a productive member of the work force. Give your child as many opportunities to socialize as he can handle (listen closely to his cues). Encourage turn taking with games and filling in the blanks of songs and nursery

rhymes. Require eye contact from your child when you are speaking to him or him to you. Remind him of his manners even if he fails to heed you at this time. Do not use his disability as an excuse for poor manners, but look at him at his developmentally appropriate level. (i.e. if he is at the 3 year old level developmentally, even if he is 8 years old- expect what you would of a 3 year old, not an 8 year old)

Irrational fears, obsessive interests, and anxiety are usually par for the course for these children. Do not allow your child's routine or rituals to inhibit your family life. Let the child know that you will not allow his obsessive thoughts (naming it something like the little black monster or Mr. OCD makes it easier to understand) to control your life. De-sensitize him to his fears by pushing him just a little further towards it than he wants to go each time. Demonstrate to him that the things he is afraid of do not hurt you or another loved one and encourage him to join them.

Provide daily structure for your child, but never allow them to become so rigid in their routines that things cannot be switched.

Use visual cues, social stories and routines to introduce new situations, people and events. Always give the child fair warning before any changes or special events. Give the child coping mechanisms to deal with unpleasant circumstances rather than avoiding them altogether. Expand his circles a little every day, don't allow him to get into a rut. When you see that start to happen, throw in a little something unexpected.

The people who provide your services (whether it be school district, disability center, or other) will not tell you of all the programs available (they may not even know of all of them) it will be your job to find out what you want for your child and how to get that for him. I have found that other parents are the best source of information, but gumption and focus will get you pretty far as well. Don't be afraid to ask questions of the people you come into contact with, they may have information that they don't know you are in search of.

The most important thing though, is to take care of yourself- if you qualify for respite USE IT. Take regular breaks to do things you enjoy. Exercise, eat healthy, and get plenty of sleep. Take care of yourself so that you can take care of your child- it's a big job and you can't do it on an empty tank.

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Reader's Digest claims "Laughter is the Best Medicine". With this in mind, we've provided an extra hearty dose for this issue's prescription to stress!

A SPOONFUL OF HUMOUR!

For those who love the philosophy of hypocrisy and ambiguity. Also for those of us that are old enough to understand George Carlin! A few statements to ponder ...

1. Don't sweat the petty things and don't pet the sweaty things.
2. One tequila, two tequila, three tequila, floor.
3. Atheism is a non-prophet organization.
4. If man evolved from monkeys and apes, why do we still have monkeys and apes?
5. The main reason Santa is so jolly is because he knows where all the bad girls live.

6. I went to a bookstore and asked the saleswoman, "Where's the self-help section?" She said if she told me, it would defeat the purpose.
7. What if there were no hypothetical questions?
8. If a deaf person swears, does his mother wash his hands with soap?
9. If a man is standing in the middle of the forest speaking and there is no woman around to hear him, is he still wrong?
10. If someone with multiple personalities threatens to kill himself, is it considered a hostage situation?
11. Is there another word for synonym?
12. Isn't it a bit unnerving that doctors call what they do "practice"?
13. Where do forest rangers go to "get away from it all?"
14. What do you do when you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?
15. If a parsley farmer is sued, can they garnish his wages?
16. Would a fly without wings be called a walk?
17. Why do they lock gas station bathrooms?? Are they afraid someone will clean them?
18. If a turtle doesn't have a shell, is he homeless or naked?
19. Why don't sheep shrink when it rains?
20. Can vegetarians eat animal crackers?
21. If the police arrest a mime, do they tell him he has the right to remain silent?
22. Why do they put Braille on the drive-through bank machines?
23. How do they get the deer to cross at that yellow road sign?
24. Is it true that cannibals don't eat clowns because they taste funny?
25. What was the best thing before sliced bread?
26. One nice thing about egotists: they don't talk about other people.
27. Does the Little Mermaid wear an algae bra?
28. Do infants enjoy infancy as much as adults enjoy adultery?
29. How is it possible to have a civil war?
30. If one synchronized swimmer drowns, do the rest drown, too?
31. If you ate pasta and antipasto, would you still be hungry?
32. If you try to fail, and succeed, which have you done?
33. Whose cruel idea was it for the word "Lisp" to have a "S" in it?
34. Why are hemorrhoids called "hemorrhoids" instead of "assteroids"?
35. Why is it called tourist season if we can't shoot at them?
36. Why is the alphabet in that order?? Is it because of that song?
37. If the "black box" flight recorder is never damaged during a plane crash, why isn't the whole airplane made out of that stuff?
38. Why is there an expiration date on sour cream?

A SPOONFUL OF HUMOUR

30 WAYS TO HANDLE STRESS

1. Jam 39 tiny marshmallows up your nose and try to sneeze them out.
2. Use your MasterCard to pay your Visa.
3. Pop some popcorn without putting the lid on.
4. When someone says "have a nice day" tell them you have other plans.
5. Find out what a frog in a blender really looks like.
6. Forget the Diet Center and send yourself a candy gram.
7. Make a list of things that you've already done.
8. Dance naked in front of your pets.
9. Put your toddler's clothes on backwards and send them off to preschool as if nothing was wrong.
10. Retaliate for tax woes by filling out your tax forms with Roman numerals.
11. Tattoo "out to lunch" on your forehead.
12. Tape pictures of your boss on watermelons and launch them from high places.

13. Leaf through National Geographic and draw underwear on the natives.
14. Go shopping. Buy everything. Sweat in it. Return it the next day.
15. Buy a subscription to Sleezoid Weekly and send it to your boss' wife.
16. Pay your electric bill in pennies.
17. Drive to work in reverse.
18. Relax by mentally reflecting on your favorite episode of the "Flintstones" during that important finance meeting.
19. Sit naked on a shelled hard-boiled egg.
20. Refresh yourself. Put your tongue on a cold steel guardrail.
21. Tell your boss to blow it out of his toupee and let him figure it out.
22. Polish your car with earwax.
23. Read the dictionary upside down and look for secret messages.
24. Start a nasty rumor and see if you recognize it when it comes back to you.
25. Bill your doctor for the time spent in his waiting room.
26. Braid the hairs in each nostril.
27. Write a short story using alphabet soup.
28. Lie on your back eating celery....using your navel as a salt dipper.
29. Stare at people through the lines of a fork and pretend they're in jail.
30. Make up a language and ask people for directions to vW/{KoY(d[WkY--

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LINKS GALORE!!!

LD and the Grieving Process <http://www.schwablearning.org/Articles.asp?r=91>

Stresses on Families http://www.patientcenters.com/autism/news/stress_family.html

Self-Assessment Tools Online <http://stress.about.com/cs/selfassessment3/>

Managing Traumatic Stress: Tips for Recovering from Disasters and Other Traumatic Events

<http://helping.apa.org/daily/traumaticstress.html>

The Guide to Aromatherapy <http://www.fragrant.demon.co.uk/>

Workplace Bullying <http://www.stress.org.uk/bullying.htm>

Stress UK (includes; finding a therapist in the UK, Consulting, and What to Expect in a Session)

<http://www.stress.org.uk/help.htm>

Prevent Holiday Burnout <http://stress.about.com/library/weekly/aa121300a.htm>

Migraine. What is it? <http://headaches.about.com/cs/migraineis/>

Stress and Headaches

<http://headaches.about.com/sitesearch.htm?terms=stress&SUName=headaches&type=0&TopNode=3042>

Undoing Stress <http://www.lessons4living.com/stress%20topics.htm>

Headaches: Alternative Treatments <http://headaches.about.com/cs/alternative/>

Facts about Valerian <http://stress.about.com/library/weekly/aa101601a.htm>

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff and more... <http://www.dontsweat.com/>

Yoga Finder –find a class by country/state/province etc, plus mail lists and more: <http://www.yogafinder.com/>

Musical Healing: Music Therapy in Health and Disease

We know that music therapy can be useful to some of our kids, but did you know it can help us as well? In healthy individuals, music therapy is often recommended as a part of a stress management program or accompaniment to physical exercise. *Read the rest of this article here:* <http://stress.about.com/library/weekly/aa052901a.htm>

Placebos & Antidepressants Work the same Way

Antidepressants also cause additional brain changes
<http://mentalhealth.about.com/library/weekly/aa050502a.htm>

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WARNING SIGNS OF BURNOUT		
<i>Physical</i>	<i>Emotional</i>	<i>Behavioral</i>
Clammy Hands	Anxiety	Blaming Others
Diarrhea	Depression	Crying
Dry Mouth	Fear	Irritability
Eating Disorders	Frustration	Short Attention Span
Halitosis	Grief	Over activity
Upper Back Pain	Isolation	Negative Attitude
Heart Palpitations	Sense of Powerlessness	Short Temper
Stiff Neck or Shoulders	Sense of Worthlessness	Taking Risks
Weight loss/gain	Shutting off from friends	Exhaustion

E-NEWS BITES: *Classified Ads*

"AUTISM FRIENDS: (www.autismfriends.com) Come check out our 800+ links, Shopping section fundraisers for parent run sites coming soon!) Family pages and our Community section for chats 5 days a week!

Coming soon to Autism Friends! Parent tips, ponderings and wisdom!

Autism Friends is a Member supported website run by a parent. We are always looking for parent contributions! Book recommendations, photos, best links, personal stories, poems & artwork by our creative geniuses. Contact Tina at: founder@autismfriends.com. Tina"

THE GENEVA CENTRE announces: a) Summer Training Institute is scheduled for August 19-23, 2002 in Toronto and August 19-20, 2002 in Halifax. Brochure may be viewed in PDF format at <http://www.autism.net>

b) **Geneva Centre International Symposium** is scheduled for October 23, 24, 25, 2002 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. The Symposium 2002 brochure has been mailed out and is available at <http://www.autism.net>. This year you have the option to register on-line; major discounts for early bird registrations. Also, for the first time, delegates from around the world can access 8 presentations of the International Symposium 2002 live through the Internet. Some presentations have special interest for adults on the autism spectrum.

Do you have an event, announcement, information or a request? Email us at liz@deaknet.com and we'll put it in an upcoming E-News issue. Email early to avoid disappointment! BBB Autism is not responsible for misrepresentations of persons or agencies utilizing this service.

COMING SOON: Plain text versions of all of our newsletters and BBB Guides available online for those who have trouble downloading graphics or reading current versions. These versions will also be suitable for printing. You asked for it; it's on its way!!! ☺

15 OF THE FUNNIEST MOVIES YOU MAY NOT HAVE SEEN...(or How to Shoot Milk Out of Your Nose)

...in no particular order

Get comfy on your couch and pop in a movie that will leave you rolling on the floor laughing!

Some Like It Hot <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0053291>
Monty Python and the Holy Grail <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0071853>
Galaxy Quest <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0177789>
Harvey <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0042546>
A Christmas Story <http://families-first.com/movies/xmas-story.htm>
The Odd Couple <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0063374>
Swingers <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0117802>
This is Spinal Tap <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0088258>
Trading Places <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0086465>
Dogma <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0120655>
The Bird Cage <http://www.mgm.com/mgmhv/birdnew.html>
A Fish Called Wanda <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0095159>
I Love You To Death <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0099819>
Raising Arizona <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0093822>
It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0057193>

Here are some other lesser-known, offbeat, fantastic flicks!

Memento <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0209144>
A Shallow Grave <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0209144>
Trainspotting <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0117951>
Fargo <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0116282>
Flirting <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0101898>
Muriel's Wedding <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0110598>
Defending Your Life <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0101698>

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS....THERE'S ALWAYS CHOCOLATE!!!

Not for those of us trying to reach a healthy weight, but indulgence (within reason) occasionally is not a bad thing. Moreover, it can lift your spirits!

Absolutely Sinful Chocolate Chocolate Chip Cookies

Makes 2 dozen, Prep Time: 15 Minutes, Cook Time: 12 Minutes, Ready in: 40 Minutes

Ingredients

2 1/2 (1 ounce) squares unsweetened chocolate

1/2 cup butter

2 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 1/4 cups white sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2/3 cup sour cream
2 cups semisweet chocolate chips

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). In the microwave or over a double boiler, melt unsweetened chocolate and butter together, stirring occasionally until smooth. Sift together flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt; set aside.
2. In a medium bowl, beat sugar, eggs, and vanilla until light. Mix in the chocolate mixture until well blended. Stir in the sifted ingredients alternately with sour cream, then mix in chocolate chips. Drop by rounded tablespoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheets.
3. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes in the preheated oven. Allow cookies to cool on baking sheet for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely. Store in an airtight container.

Chocolate Martini

Makes 2 servings, Prep Time: 5 Minutes, Ready in: 5 Minutes

Ingredients

4 fluid ounces chocolate liqueur
3 fluid ounces vodka
1 (1 ounce) square semisweet chocolate, grated

Directions

In a cocktail mixer full of ice, combine chocolate liqueur and vodka. Shake vigorously and strain into 2 chilled martini glasses. Garnish with chocolate shavings.

200 Recipes with the word 'chocolate' in the title!!!

<http://search.allrecipes.com/SearchResults.asp?site=allrecipes&allrecipes=allrecipes&q1=chocolate&Search+Allrecipes%21.x=8&Search+Allrecipes%21.y=5>

From All Recipes.com <http://allrecipes.com/default.asp>

BBB PARENT GUIDES

CONTAINS PRACTICAL INFORMATION BY PARENTS FOR PARENTS Available on request, e-mail liz@deaknet.com and ask for: (now available in PDF format)

1. Halloween
2. Epsom Salts (long version)
3. Epsom Salts (condensed)
4. Pros and Cons of telling your ASD child his/her diagnosis
5. How we advocate for our children
6. Guide to holidays and large family gatherings

A notice to our readers...

The founders of this newsletter and the BBB Autism support club are not physicians.

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The editor reserves the right to make decisions as to whether contributions are appropriate with respect to content, length, etc. We will not publish offensive material using foul language, or contributions that are inflammatory or disrespectful to decisions by other parents (i.e. therapies). We do not generally accept contributions if they are ads for private service agencies/clinics. We are also unable to accept contributions after an issue has been completed. We reserve the right to edit content, but will inform you in advance if we are going to do this. ☺

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