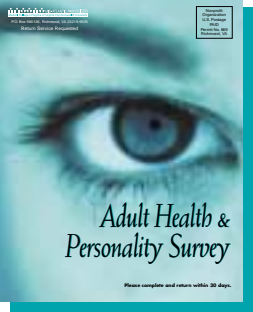


Meet the MATR Twins
Continued from inside

using, begrudgingly admitted that Grant and Greg were right, despite the fact that nobody (including the professor) had ever noticed the mistake before.
Greg and Grant are both very thoughtful about what it's like to be an identical twin. Grant feels that because identical twins are constantly compared, they "probably grow up a little faster than the average person. Twins kind of figure out who they are faster because they think about that stuff." Greg agrees that twins are "constantly forced to struggle with individuality," but adds this advice for young twins: "Try to be yourself, and if that means you're like your brother, then so be it."

Heads Up!

The MATR has several new projects "in the works." Keep your eye on your mailbox for invitations to participate in studies and, if you're an adult twin, for the MATR Adult Health and Personality (AHP) Survey, pictured here. We use the information provided in this survey primarily to help us identify people who may be eligible to participate in specific research projects, like the chronic fatigue syndrome and depression studies described below. If you are a twin between the ages of 24 and 60 and haven't received the AHP by May 31,2001, please call us and let us know so we can send you one.



Later this year we will begin calling parents of preschool and school age twins to collect information on the twins' health and development. This information will help the MATR identify factors that put children at risk for developmental problems later in life. The time you take to complete these surveys and interviews is always very much appreciated, and your participation makes important health-related research possible.

A New Study on the Genetics of Major Depression

By 2020, major depression will be the second leading cause of disability in the world. Major depression will afflict one of every five people at some point in their lives. The burden of depression is enormous to sufferers, their families, and to society.

Dr. Patrick Sullivan and colleagues at Virginia Commonwealth University have just begun a research study that will attempt to uncover the genes that cause this poorly understood illness. If Dr. Sullivan and colleagues are successful in identifying genes for major depression, these findings will likely lead to important insights into environmental factors that are also involved in major depression.

Dr. Sullivan and colleagues are hopeful that this work will lead to a better understanding of, and better treatments for, major depression. The study will be possible only with the help of MATR participants. If you are interested in this project, please complete and return the Adult Health and Personality Survey. For more information about this study, go to the MATR's web site, www.matr.vcu.edu. Click on the "What's New" button, then on the link for the Major Depression study. You can also call the MATR at 1-800-URA-TWIN or Micah Eads (project coordinator for Dr. Sullivan) at 804-828-8135 for more information.

New Study on Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

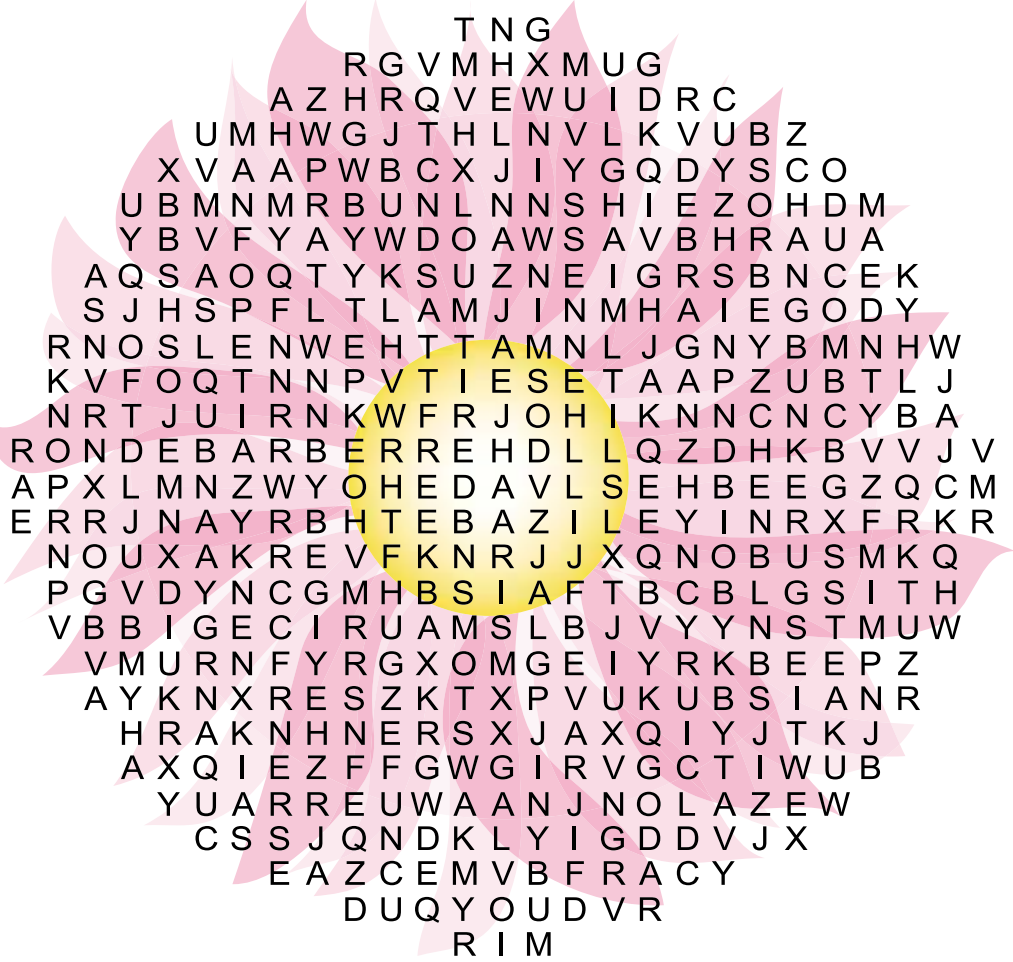
Researchers at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia and the University of Washington in Seattle are conducting a study of chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS). Chronic fatigue syndrome is a complex and incapacitating illness affecting half a million people in the United States. Despite considerable research, fundamental questions about its definition, causes, and relationship to similar illnesses remain only partially answered. Researchers are hopeful that findings from this study will lead to better treatments for chronic fatigue syndrome.

Information is needed both from twins who have symptoms of chronic fatigue and from those who do not. Eligible twins who complete and return the MATR Adult Health and Personality Survey (see announcement above) will be contacted by letter or telephone and invited to participate in the chronic fatigue study.

For more information about this study, please visit the MATR web site at www.matr.vcu.edu. Click on the "What's New" button, then on the link for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Study. You can also call the MATR 800# or contact the CFS Project Coordinator at 804-828-8107.

Kids' Corner

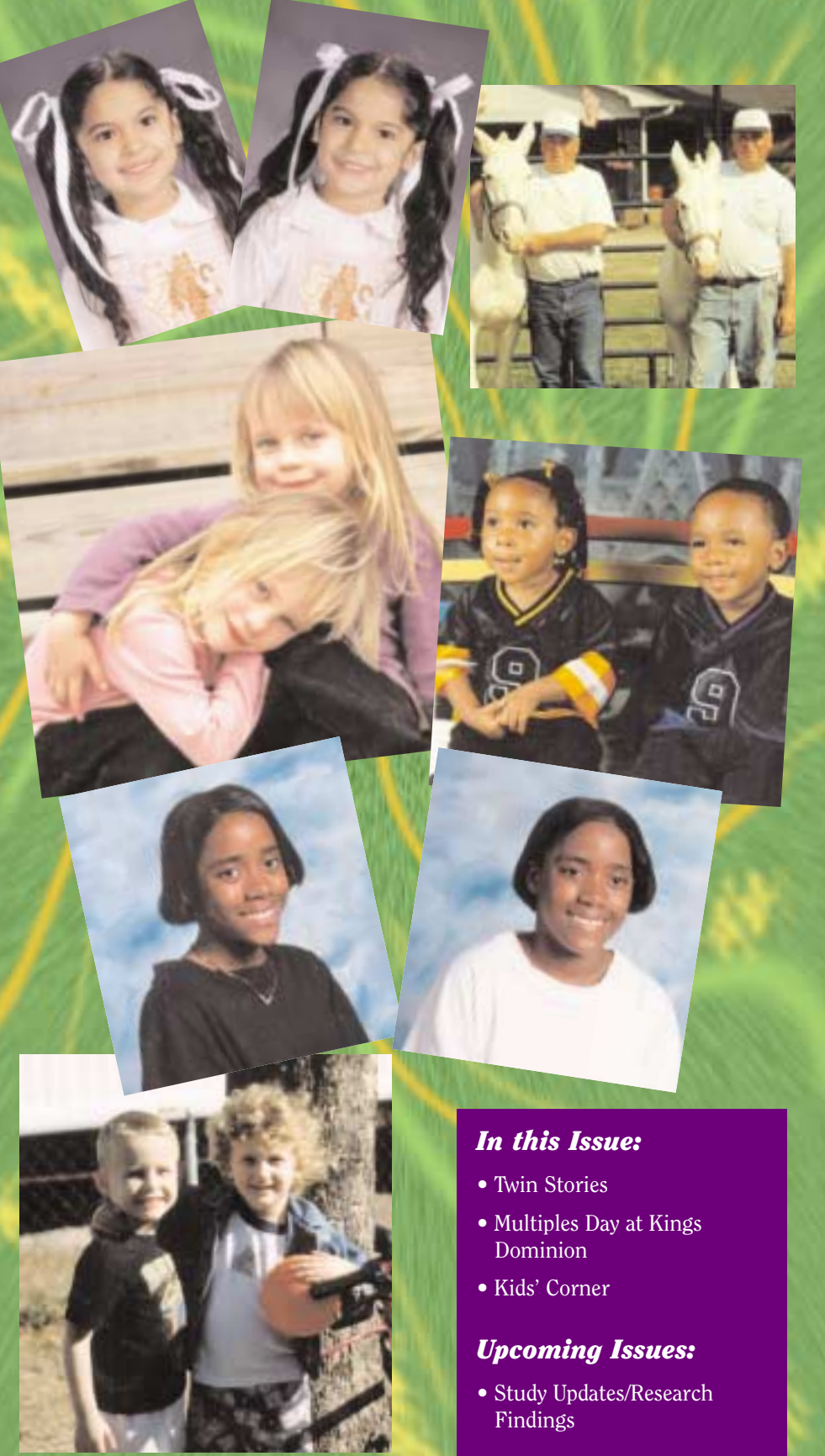
Below is a list of famous twins and twin researchers, with a little bit of information about who they are and what they do. See if you can find their names in the puzzle below.



- Debra Ganz and Lisa Ganz - Authors of The Book of Twins and owners of Twins restaurant in New York City, the only restaurant with an all-twin staff
Nancy Segal - Author of Entwined Lives, an excellent summary of scientific knowledge of twins and findings from twin research
Ronde Barber and Tiki Barber - NFL stars who play on the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and New York Giants, respectively
Eng Bunker and Chang Bunker - Conjoined twins, born in Thailand in 1881 who settled in North Carolina
Abigail Van Buren and Ann Landers - Popular advice columnists
Ashley Olsen and Mary Kate Olsen - Actresses from the television series "Full House"
Matthew Nelson and Gunnar Nelson - Sons of late singer Ricky Nelson, Matthew and Gunnar formed the rock band Nelson which had a #1 hit on the pop charts ("I Can't Live Without You") in 1990.
Jill Hennessy and Jacqueline Hennessy - Jill Hennessy is an actress on the T.V. show "Law and Order."
Robin Gibb and Maurice Gibb - Founding members of the Bee Gees
Elizabeth Bryan - British pediatrician and twin expert

Logo for the Mid-Atlantic Twin Registry, featuring the VCU logo and text: MID-ATLANTIC twin REGISTRY, Medical College of Virginia of Virginia Commonwealth University, http://www.matr.vcu.edu, 1-800-URA-TWIN (872-8946), P.O. Box 980003, Richmond, VA 23298, Return Service Requested, Nonprofit Organization U.S. Postage PAID Permit No. #869 Richmond, VA

Twin Matters
A Family Newsletter from the Mid-Atlantic Twin Registry Volume VI



- In this Issue:
• Twin Stories
• Multiples Day at Kings Dominion
• Kids' Corner
Upcoming Issues:
• Study Updates/Research Findings

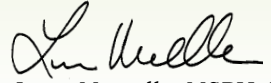
A Message From the Directors

Greetings once again from all of us here at the MATR. We're happy to report that the registry continues to expand. This spring we are initiating new efforts to contact twins of all ages in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. We are focusing on contacting as many twins as possible in South Carolina, where our presence is not yet as well known as it is in Virginia and North Carolina. Those of you in "the Palmetto State" may see news articles and advertisements about the MATR in your local newspapers over the next few months.

The MATR is also making a special effort to reach adult twins in all three of its states. While research with young twins remains extremely important, there is also an urgent need to have adult twin participants in the MATR. If you know any adult twins (ages 18 and up) who might be interested in being a part of the MATR, please ask them to call 1-800-URA-TWIN for more information.

As always, we are very grateful to the many twins and their family members who make the MATR's work possible. By taking part in health-related research, you play an essential role in scientists' efforts to understand, prevent, and treat a wide range of health and behavioral problems. Thank you very much for your participation.

Sincerely,



Lenn Murrelle, MSPH, PhD



Linda Corey, PhD

Multiples Day at Paramount's Kings Dominion

The MATR is proud to sponsor the 7th Annual Multiples Family Day at Paramount's Kings Dominion. We invite you to join in the fun with other twins and their families on Saturday, July 21st 2001. Enjoy rides and events and gather with other multiples and some of the MATR staff for an all-you-can-eat picnic lunch from 12pm – 2pm.

You can order special discount tickets by mail (@22.00 ages 13 and up, \$18.00, ages 3-12, kids 2 and under admitted free). Save \$16.99 off the regular general admission price for ages 13 and up and up to \$20.99 for ages 3-12. Picnic tickets must be ordered in advance and are \$9.75 for ages 13 and up and \$5.00 for ages 3-12 (Kids 2 and under eat free). When you order your tickets, don't forget to enter the contest for the oldest and youngest multiples, and the multiples who traveled the farthest distance! Mail-in orders must be received by July 13. You can find a printable electronic version of the Multiples' Day brochure on our web site. Just go to www.matr.vcu.edu, click on "What's New," then on Multiples' Day Brochure.

The MATR is sponsoring this event to recognize the unique status of twins and other multiples and to say "thank you" to our participants. All multiples and their families and friends are welcome!

MATR Web Site and Email Changes

The MATR's web site and email addresses have changed. The new web site address is www.matr.vcu.edu. It's a whole lot easier to remember than the last one! Please bookmark the page and visit often. While you can still send email through the feedback form on the web site, you can also now send email directly to matr@vcu.edu. As always, you can reach us at our toll-free telephone number, 1-800-URA-TWIN (872-8946).



Meet the MATR Twins

Have you ever wondered why we ask for your "twin stories" in every issue of *Twin Matters*? We'd like to give members of the MATR the chance share their experiences as twins with all the other twins and their family members who read the newsletter. In this issue, we've profiled three pairs of MATR twins. Jill Meads and Judy Woods are identical twins in their 40's who are world-champion weight-lifters. Stacy and Tracy Byrd are fraternal twins who are best friends and have played basketball together for most of their lives. Grant and Greg Vogl are identical twins who share a passion for learning and are both working on Masters degrees in Engineering Science and Mechanics. We hope you enjoy reading about these twins as much as we enjoyed talking to them in preparation for this article. Please note that all the twins profiled here gave the MATR permission to publish their photographs and stories.

Judy Woods and Jill Meads

At some point in our lives, most of us go through a time when we just don't feel as "together" as we'd like. Whether we feel like we need to do something differently in our work, school, or personal lives, there are those times when things just don't seem to be going our way. That was how Judy Woods felt seven years ago. She was in her late 30's, didn't feel as healthy as she'd have liked, and felt the urge to do something new and positive for herself. Although she'd never participated in athletics, in 1994, Judy started working out, mostly just to lose a few pounds. She found that she especially enjoyed lifting weights. About a year later, her twin sister, Jill Meads, joined her at the gym. Both sisters were hooked by the "totally new adrenaline rush," and before long, someone at the gym suggested that the two enter a weight-lifting competition. Since then, both Judy and Jill have each won two world titles in their respective lifting categories.



Judy Woods



Jill Meads

Judy likes to wear bright orange nail polish; Jill sticks with more neutral colors. Jill adds, "We have similarities, but we're definitely our own people, and twins need to develop that." Like many identical twins, Jill and Judy have their share of funny stories of "coincidence" and mistaken identity. They've worn the same outfits to work by chance so often that nobody at the office even finds it remarkable anymore. Once, Judy's husband even got a little confused, mistakenly planting a kiss on Jill. Then he turned around, saw his "real" wife and realized his mistake!

Jill and Judy are vibrant, fun people who seem to find a wealth of enjoyment in their friendship, their families, and life in general. Judy says they are proof to women their age that, "Just because you're over 40 doesn't mean you can't start something new, take on new challenges." Jill agrees, adding, "It's never too late to start living more healthily."

Jill and Judy won their first world titles in the Amateur Athletic Union at a meet in

Atlantic City in 1999. Judy's winning lifts in the Assist Gear category included a 300-lb squat, a 145-lb bench press, and a 320-lb dead lift. Jill's lifts in the Raw category were a 230-lb squat, a 120-lb bench press, and a 300-lb dead lift. Last November, the twins faced one of their most difficult meets in Las Vegas. Jill had a sinus infection, both twins were jet-lagged, and the meet was organized so that lifters had long expanses of counterproductive downtime between lifts. Despite these challenges, Jill and Judy prevailed, taking home their second world championship titles.

As close as they are, the two say they are very different people. "We have our own personalities," says Judy. "I'm more extroverted like our dad, and Jill is more conservative, like our mom."

After graduating with honors from Virginia Polytechnic Institute's Engineering Program last spring, Grant and Greg Vogl decided to stay at Tech to work on Masters degrees in Engineering Science and Mechanics (ESM). The Vogls, who participated in several studies through the MATR in the 90's, are passionate about learning and very insightful about their relationship as twins.



Grant Vogl

equipment that ensures safe take-offs and landings in larger planes. Grant hopes that eventually an affordable, compact system will improve the safety of people who fly on small aircraft. In addition to taking classes and working on his research, Grant also leads "Statics Study Session," a tutoring session for undergraduate students in "Statics," a required course for all engineering majors. Greg is focusing on an area of Engineering Science known as "Thermal Waves." He analyzes "how glass particles embedded in a matrix of metal affect that composite material's heat-transfer properties." As far as

Stacy and Tracy Byrd

Stacy and Tracy Byrd have been playing basketball together since their elementary school days. Like Judy Woods and Jill Meads, the Byrd twins have always shied away from competing with one another. Stacy says that when she and her brother were playing on their high school basketball teams, people would often ask, "Who's going to score more points?" But that wasn't how she and Tracy looked at things. Instead of competing, Tracy and Stacy supported one another, helping each other keep their spirits up after a loss and each other's egos in check after a win. Stacy says the two always encouraged one another to play "for the next game," not the last one.

For Stacy, the fact that she is 15 minutes older than her brother is one of the fun parts of being a twin; she can tell Tracy on



Tracy and Stacy Byrd

their birthday that he has to wait 15 minutes to open his presents! Stacy says that the most frustrating part of being a twin was when she and Tracy turned 16 and had to share a car. "He'd wake up earlier than I would, and get the car all the time!"

The twins, who are now 21, are good friends. Stacy will be returning to college next fall, and Tracy, who works for IBM, is encouraging her to try out for the basketball team. The two are going to train together to help Stacy prepare. Stacy is planning on majoring in

Physical Education with a minor in Music; when she is finished with school, she wants to be a volleyball and basketball coach. The music, she says, "is just for me."

Grant and Greg Vogl

practical uses of Thermal Waves go, Greg says, "I'm more concerned with the theoretical aspects – someone else can apply it!"

Grant and Greg, while certainly very unique individuals with separate, full lives, share many characteristics. One of the most noticeable is their great love of learning. Asked what accounts for their academic success, Greg answered, "Being very interested is always

the main key, because if you're really passionate about something, or really like it, it'll motivate you to do the work. It won't feel as much like work ... it's more about learning."

Grant explains that majoring in ESM, which is a somewhat unusual engineering major (compared to the old standbys like Civil, Electrical, and Mechanical), has given him the chance to think about engineering issues in a creative, fun way. Both twins also attribute a great deal of their success to their supportive parents.

Grant and Greg's shared tendency to "think outside of the box" once led them to simultaneously detect an obscure error on an Engineering exam. The professor, who had written the textbook the class was



Greg Vogl

Continued on back