

## Lily welcomes Maya, squeezes head



Lily, Maya, Maya's head, and grizzled adult hours after Maya's October 25 birth.

Lily welcomed her baby sister to the world a few hours after Maya Louise Neff's Oct. 25 birth, and then squeezed her sibling's head.

Maya's head, subject to far worse abuse earlier in the day, brushed the incident off.

"I don't think it was intentional," Maya's head said.

Initial worst-case fears of Lily seeing the household's permanent addition as a rival to be crushed were unfounded. The 2 1/2-year-old recognized Maya as the house pet she has been denied.

"I want to pet Maya's head," Lily says.

Maya, for her part, appears to recognize Lily as an animate object.

### Mountain sheep herded



Lily, mountain sheep

Lily spends her weekdays at Mile High Montessori, roughly a nine-iron away from the home. For much of the year, her stock answer to "what did you do at school today" was "hit the boys." Her father hopes this answer holds through high school.

Lily also came up with Maya's pregnancy name, "Macaroni." This name has graced the U.S. Social Security Administration's top 500 baby-names at no point since 1900.

At press time, Lily was three feet tall and weighed roughly 28 pounds. Maya is two feet tall and weighs an estimated 12 pounds. If the girls' relative proportions hold and Maya grows to her mother's size, Lily will be 8'4" and weigh 303 pounds.

Lily's German skills are improving, though she responds to all questions with the answer "Marienkäfer," which means "ladybug."

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## CAROL HAPPY, FATIGUED

Carol has rejoined the ranks of women with an intimate understanding of the distinction between a medulla and a Medela.

She spent the year working roughly half-time from home as a contract programmer for Leanin' Tree, whose superb greeting cards you must go out and buy in bulk.

Since late October, Carol has been on the Front Range Diet,<sup>®</sup> a proven weight-loss program

involving absolutely no exercise or culinary sacrifice. Simply bear a human child, breastfeed it 10 times a day, and watch those pounds just melt away.

Maya's low-maintenance demeanor — unlike her sister, she will take a pacifier, drink from a bottle and does not insist on falling asleep in parental arms — has been a welcome surprise.

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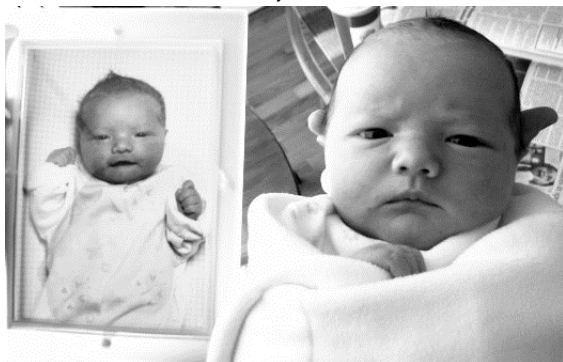
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Carol, top, with very full hands

## Lily born again

Lily was born again in late October. She stressed that her rebirth was strictly literal.



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### **Squirrels, birds spotted on squirrel safari**



Lily, left, with Grandpa Doug in a Squirrel Safari Vehicle. Note decoy golf clubs in back of Safari Vehicle.

Lily spotted eight squirrels and several small brown birds on a July squirrel safari.

Her paternal grandfather organized and led the safari. The pair, accompanied by a photographer, ventured in the wilds of the Dearborn Country Club and Extremely Small Game Reserve.

Grandpa Doug had strapped his golf clubs in the back of the Safari Vehicle. This artful deception fooled the many golfers on the course that Friday afternoon. None suspected that a man riding about the country club in an

erratic and apparently aimless fashion, with one set of clubs for three people — one perhaps a blonde dwarf — represented anything out of the ordinary.

Lily's most vivid impression from the experience was her father's urinating next to a Dumpster in the golf club's maintenance area.

When Grandma Kay asked Lily if she'd had fun on her safari, she replied: "Daddy went pee-pee outside."

When driving past the local golf course, Lily now says, "Look, mom, there's a squirrel safari."

### **A teaching moment: The Golden Rule**

Lily is in her "why" phase. "Why can't I push Luke?" She asked, referring to a classmate. Todd recognized a teaching moment. "You don't push Luke because you don't want Luke to push you," Todd said. "It feels bad when you get pushed, and Luke feels bad when you push him."

Carol added, "It's called the Golden Rule. Do unto others..." "As you would have them do unto you," Todd finished.

There were a few moments of contemplative silence. Then Lily asked: "Why don't I have three eyebrows?"

### **Todd conscious, breathing**

Todd continues to while away his days paging languidly through multi-volume histories and, occasionally, sipping lattes at cafes until the staff get testy.

Or he would, at least, were it not for the intervening reality of his Daily Camera newspaper job writing stories about space missions, microbes and nuclear-weapons cleanups. And then there's time with the girls and the dishes.

So his personal time is confined almost exclusively to the Denver-Boulder bus. He writes everything from a book proposal on the Deep Impact comet mission (Attention literary agents: It's a great story) to holiday newsletters in the bus, which is now turning left into the Broomfield Park-n-Ride.



### **In memoriam**

Todd's grandmother, Frances Plumtree, passed away July 31. We all miss her dearly.



Grandma Plumtree & Lily, June 2003

### **TRAVEL REPORT**

The year saw pleasant trips to the Midwest for a squirrel safari and to Park City, Utah to visit Lily's cousin Drew and his handlers. The trip predated new cousin Sophie, whom we are eager to meet.

The most notable trip was to the East Coast, where the Neffs spent a week in Vermont with old friends from Tokyo, the Raleys and the Elks. The scene was somewhat different than mid-1990s Japan, when we were more concerned with precipitating hangovers than regulating the hot-tub temperature for pregnant wives.

Todd also attended his Fletcher reunion, where he saw old friends and provided a case study on how to minimize the value of a Fletcher degree.

Carol and Lily enjoyed two jaunts to Texas, one to Lily's wintering maternal grandparents on South Padre Island, a second to Auntie Kathleen's in Houston. Todd greatly enjoyed a fishing expedition to British Columbia, financed by Grandpa Doug, and found the unremitting chill rain a refreshing contrast to Denver's stubborn sun.

The Neffs also had the pleasure of a summer visit from Paris by Phileas, Leandra and Celia Pflanz and their parents; we hope they come again soon.

