

ON THE LIGHT SIDE

Hubby's 'Mommy List' better than mine

Just when I start to think I'm a good mother and begin to praise myself as the reason my daughter is so darn adorable, I realize I may not be so great after all.

It all started last week when my 20-month-old used the potty for the first time. There was no coaxing, no pressure, and surprisingly, no bribery.

I praised her up and down. Screamed the good news to Daddy. Quickly located my in-laws to relay the milestone and the underlying message that I'm a good mommy.

But then the afternoon came. I kept asking her all day if she had to go pee pee.

Finally, she said yes. I took her upstairs, pulled off her diaper and sat her on the potty. She smiled at me. Got up. Ran to the hallway. Stood in a corner. Gave me a mischievous smile and, well, you can guess what she did after that.



CHERRI GREENO

I had pressured her too much. She was now peeing in the hallway.

And so, those few short hours of feeling like the best mother in the world were lost. It made me think of all the ways I had failed as a mother that week. And like any one crazy enough to think of all those things, I made a list.

I call it the "Bad Mommy List."

1) I let my daughter have a baba (bottle) before bed — and didn't brush her teeth afterwards.

2) When the last of the strawberries fell on the floor I quickly picked it up and let her eat it.

3) I gave her a juice freeze before dinner — and, yes, one after dinner too.

Sometimes, I figure, it's just easier to give in than to deal with a fussy child for an hour. Of course, I'm simply setting myself up for the same demands the next day.

I know this. But yet, I continue to do it. It's a battle of the wills and the little one is winning.

When I was pregnant with her I had a list of rules I planned to put into effect when my bundle of joy was born and as that bundle of joy grew up.

1) Stay away from the pacifier.
2) Blend my own healthy baby food.

3) Let the baby cry it out when it's time for bed — no sleeping with mommy and daddy.

4) When it's time for discipline, be strict. Say no and stick to it.

5) No junk food.

6) No TV.

You get the picture.

And you likely get what I'm about to say next.

I've followed none of my rules.

In fact, I've broken all of them.

So taken was I with the miracle my husband and I were blessed with, I immediately starting letting her sleep in bed with us. I reasoned it was easier to breastfeed through the night.

So unwilling was I to deal with her cries that I gave her a pacifier. Now, she sleeps with one in her mouth and one in her hand.

So guilty I feel for working all day while she's at the babysitter's that I give her treats when I get home. Usually it's a simple juice freeze but sometimes, it's a cookie or a real sugar-fuelled Popsicle.

So in need am I for a little bit of time to clean the dishes or sit for a minute by myself, I turn on the television and do everything but beg her to watch a cartoon.

I won't even tell you what we recently bought for the car to help ease those long vacation drives

(but I'll give you a hint — it attaches to the headrest and when I put a Caillou DVD in it it keeps her entertained for hours).

After making this depressing list my husband reminded me of the "Good Mommy List."

She may eat a strawberry off the floor but at least we keep the floors clean.

She may have a freeze but she knows to put the freeze wrapper in the garbage, not on the floor, afterwards.

She may get a bottle before bed but don't I make sure her teeth get brushed every day?

And, he reminded me, that she's happy. She's healthy. She's kind, generous and loving.

She's perfect in every way. I like his list.

• *Record reporter Cherri Greeno has just given birth to a second, beautiful daughter.*

PEOPLE: TERRY BARNA

Acting feeds the ham within

BY VALERIE HILL

RECORD STAFF

Terry Barna is a man of many faces, many talents and a hard guy to slot into a single category.

Trained as a food microbiologist, he is also an entrepreneur who possesses a brain that actually enjoys sorting mounds of research statistics. And he cut his entrepreneurial teeth in the corporate world as a vice president at the polling firm, Angus Reid, and then later as an insurance executive.

OK, so we have an extreme right brain thinker, a business guy. But then again, maybe not. Barna is also a classic triple threat of the theatre world: "I'm a good actor who can sing and dance if I have to," said Barna, a very busy professional actor from Waterloo and the newest host of the Rogers Television cable talk show, *Daytime*.

For a guy who recalls tap dancing on table tops and conducting puppet shows to passersby while working as a food chemist at J.M. Schneider, it's hard to imagine him up to his eyeballs in market research data and actually loving it. But that's what makes the guy so interesting.

Barna, a University of Waterloo graduate, was working for an insurance firm when he started seriously considering switching careers to acting. So when the organization restructured and he was offered a healthy buyout package, suddenly there was opportunity. It was an omen, he surmises, and now the actor is fully committed.

"I would just die if I couldn't do summer theatre," said Barna, 46.

A little melodramatic perhaps, but then considering in his short career as a pro he has appeared in commercials and on stages from Drayton to Mississauga to Orangeville and had a part in the movie *Hollywoodland*, he just might have found his niche. Comedy seems to be his thing. "There was a time when I thought it would be great to move to L.A., win an Academy Award," he said.

But on reflection, seeing all the paparazzi-driven madness of Hollywood, he changed his mind, preferring to live semi-anonymously in Waterloo with his wife, Lynne, and their children, 18-year-old Rachel and 14-year-old Christian. He continues to run his



Terry Barna and co-host Susan Cook-Scheerer on the set of *Daytime*.

WHEN TO WATCH

■ *Daytime with Susan Cook-Scheerer and Terry Barna* airs weekday mornings live, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., with same day repeats at 4 and 11 p.m. on Rogers Television, Cable 20.

market analysis business part time because he just can't let go of those delicious stacks of statistics.

"I have a great life," he said. "There's something about being a big fish in a smaller pond. People stop me in the grocery store, say they saw me in something and say 'I've never laughed so hard in my life.' That really makes my day."

For Barna, there is nothing as thrilling as being on stage, delivering a line and hearing the audience respond. It's fun, compelling and feeds the ham within.

"I've never been afraid of speaking to crowds of a thousand or so," he said. "I look for the humour in things, see the humour in things and show the humour in things."

Oddly, when he gave up the corporate

world and turned to acting, his kids suddenly saw a different dad. "They had never seen that side of me before," he said. "My kids only knew me as a businessman. That was really eye-opening for them."

As for the Rogers gig, he noted it came after he was asked to guest co-host in the spring and when the full-time job became available, he won the spot.

"It will keep me in front of the camera . . . it's a great volunteer gig," he said.

Rogers does provide its hosts with a small honorarium, more importantly it's a valuable learning experience. "It's an incredible opportunity," Barna said.

So far, he has a contract to do five shows a week until next spring after which he'll return to summer theatre, though he's also hoping to do more television and movies, get that mug in front of a camera. He loves every aspect of performing, of energizing his life and family with his high spirits and sense of fun.

"My lifetime dream is that someday, my grandchild will look at me and say 'Grandpa, grow up.'"

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RESEARCH FILE

How well do kids grasp story details?

■ **Study conclusion:** Very young children can step into the minds of storybook characters.

■ **Researcher:** Daniela O'Neill, associate professor of developmental psychology at University of Waterloo and head of the UW centre for child studies, with graduate student Rebecca Shultis.

■ **Study focus:** This new study explored children's storytelling ability by focusing on how well they comprehend stories instead of how well they tell them.

"Children around the ages of three to five are fairly limited in their verbal abilities and many previous studies have relied on methods requiring children to tell a story orally, potentially underestimating what they can do," O'Neill says.

The study offered a new method to evaluate storytelling ability that can pick up differences in the abilities of the younger children.

Researchers looked at how children understand stories.

They looked at whether children, like adults, are able to build up a model of the story in their minds, and "step into the mind" of a character.

"It turns out, from the results of our study, that indeed this is one important way in which children appear to be developing with respect to their understanding of stories during the preschool years."

The researchers asked the children to listen to a story about a character who was in one location, but was thinking about doing something in another.

"Tracking the thoughts of characters to different locations they are thinking about is something we do very easily as adults and really is an impressive perspective-taking feat," O'Neill says.

"But can children also do this? It turns out that five-year-olds can, pretty much like adults, but that three-year-olds have much more difficulty doing this."

In the study, two models were placed in front of the children depicting the two locations — a barn and a field.

In both locations there was a cow. Children were told that the character was in the barn, but was thinking about feeding the cow in the field. Then, immediately after this sentence, children were asked to point to the cow.

"This is an ambiguous request, since there are two cows present," O'Neill explains.

The results help us to better understand how children's narrative ability is changing and developing very early on in a new way we didn't know about before, O'Neill says.

"Children with delays in their language use also often have difficulty with comprehending and producing narratives.

"This can become quite an issue once children reach school and are faced with many more tasks that require good story comprehension skills."

The study potentially provides a new way to understand some of these difficulties and differences in perspective-taking ability that may hinder story comprehension and production.

■ **Published:** The study, entitled *The Emergence of the Ability to Track a Character's Mental Perspective in Narrative*, was published in the July issue of *Developmental Psychology*.

SOURCE: *University of Waterloo communications and public affairs department.*

COMPUTER QUERIES

Backing up data the safe way to go

Q: I was told by a friend it is extremely important to back up the data that is on my hard drive. I was wondering why this is so important and what are the options I have to make sure that I don't lose all the information on my computer?

— Patricia Babas

A: Your question is in fact a very important topic that should be recognized by anyone who uses a computer on a regular basis, especially for business use. If you're reading this article and thinking, "I don't need to back up my data . . . it will be fine," then think again! You wouldn't drive without insurance would you?

Let me paint you a picture that explains what your hard drive is doing while you are using your computer. Imagine you're sitting in your car and you put it in neutral and press the gas pedal so it's revving up at very high speeds and you hold it there for a long period of time. On average, your hard drive disks spin at 7,200 r.p.m. (revolutions per minute) all the time, much like the car with your foot on the gas pedal. After time it will break down — it's inevitable.

Hardware or system malfunctions account for 44 per cent of all data loss; human error accounts for 32 per cent (Oh no, what did I just do?!) I know you've said it!



KEVIN WAUD

(www.protect-data.com).

Now think about the countless hours you have spent sitting in front of your computer doing leisure, business-related activities or school work. What about all your pictures that are now not in photo albums but saved on your computer? How about that huge library of music and movies you have collected over the years?

Here are some options you can use to effectively back up your data to ensure that when this happens you will not be in tears but instead know that you can get the problem fixed and add your important data back on the hard drive once again.

■ The first option is the USB stick or memory stick. This option is fairly inexpensive but you are limited to the memory capacity which, at most, is about four gigabytes. This is enough for file backup but probably not pictures and music.

■ The second option would be a CD or DVD which is cheaper but also limits your memory capacity even more, and may even

scratch, thus becoming defective and useless.

■ Option No. 3 is an external hard drive. There are two ways you can purchase one of these; one would be a backup hard drive that comes with backup software; we recommend the Maxster One Touch. This hard drive will be more expensive but is very easy to use and will schedule your backups for you.

The second way is a generic external hard drive which can hold sometimes up to 500 gigabytes of memory. The difference? It still requires you to manually save your data much like the memory stick or USB device but still has the capacity to store much more information.

■ The final appropriate option for a home-based user is to use an online product such as the "Data Deposit Box." This online program is very easy to use and extremely cheap. Your files will be automatically backed up and stored in a centralized server (very secure using bank encryption standards). The cost of this product? About \$1 per month for the average user.

We certainly hope that you now understand the importance of backing up data and what options you have to do so.

• *Kevin Waud is a manager at OnSite Computer Services in Waterloo. Send your questions to him at questions@oscomputerservices.ca.*