

# MDAH Newsletter ... December 2002



## Minnesota Dads At Home

Minnesota Dads At Home is a non-profit organization whose mission is to bring together at-home dads to provide support, learning and fun for themselves and their families. All fathers who spend time at home caring for their children are welcome to join our network.

Web Site: [www.slowlane.com/mdah](http://www.slowlane.com/mdah)  
Email list: [mdah-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:mdah-subscribe@yahoo.com)

### NEXT DAD'S NIGHT OUT JANUARY 16!

Mark your calendars for the next MDAH Dad's Night Out January 16 at Minnehaha Bowling Lanes. Come at 6:30pm for dinner and drinks. We have lanes reserved at 8:00 for some no pressure pin bashing. There are also plenty of dart boards if that is your fancy. Minnehaha Lanes is located at 955 Seminary Ave. in St. Paul, 2 blocks east of Lexington and 2 blocks north of Minnehaha Pkwy, in a forlorn little strip mall. Contact Paul Johnson if you plan to be there or for more info at [pjohnson@goldengate.net](mailto:pjohnson@goldengate.net), 651-695-9853 (h), 651-285-2970 (c).

### NEW MDAH WEB SITE

Work is beginning on restructuring and updating the MDAH web site. Features will include current contacts information, an activities and playgroup calendar, a regular newsletter and helpful resources for parents and Dads. A launch date has not been set but is expected to be scheduled for mid-late January. Watch for more news after the holidays. If you have questions, suggestions or wish to offer your web site design expertise, contact Tom Vytlacil at [tt66@attbi.com](mailto:tt66@attbi.com)

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### YMCA PLAYGROUP DATES

Kids N Coffee playgroup at the White Bear Lake (Northeast) YMCA is not going to be held Thursday, December 26. But all is back to normal beginning Thursday, January 2. January dates are every Thursday (Jan. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30), 9:30-11:30 am. Cost is \$2 per family and all are welcome (you do not have to be a member of the YMCA).

### SELECT SPECIAL EVENTS

If you know of some special events that other MDAH Dads and families might want to consider, be sure to send a submission for the newsletter (see below) or to the MDAH email list. Here are a few select events picked out by our activities and events committee. If you would like to organize an MDAH field trip, contact Dave Weiss at [weissdave@attbi.com](mailto:weissdave@attbi.com). See our calendar of events below for currently scheduled events.

- [Holidazzle Parade](#), now through Dec. 29 except Christmas day (25<sup>th</sup>), Wed-Sun, 6:30-7:00pm, Nicollet Mall from 12<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> streets. [tcfholidazzle.com](http://tcfholidazzle.com)
- [The Minnesota Childrens Museum's](#) current traveling exhibits are "Snowball! Slide into Winter Fun" and "Can You Tell Me How to get to Sesame Street." Don't delay. Sesame Street closes Jan. 19. Coming Feb. 22 are Dinosaurs. Of course, the kid-sized ant tunnels, water science games, Habitot play area and more are always good. Be aware that the big ants inside the tunnels may be scary (only at first) if your small ones have never been through the tunnels. A good time to go are Habitot Tuesdays (Jan. 7, 21) when no school groups are scheduled making it a more comfortable place for toddlers. Want to get in free? Opt for the third Sunday of every month (Jan 19) which is free or check St. Paul libraries for a Passport to Play. Tip! Call ahead to the library to see if the Passport is available. They are a hot ticket. Check [mcm.org](http://mcm.org) for more info.
- [Mall of America](#). Camp Snoopy, Cereal Adventure, Underwater Adventures, etc. Maybe someone wants to do a full review on the Mall sometime? In the meantime, consider [Toddler Tuesdays](#). Snoopy and the gang make appearances from 12-2. Kids eat free at participating restaurants. Special events include Cheerios Spoonful of Stories (10-12, Jan. 7), Biscuit the Dog Storytime (10-12, Jan. 14) and a special screening of 101 Dalmations II (10-12, Jan. 21). If you haven't done the Santa thing, he is there M-F 10am-8pm, Sa 9:30am-8pm and Su 10:30am-8pm until 5pm Dec 24, with photo packages (of course). His reindeer will also be on hand Fri-Sat 12-8pm and Sun 12-6 through Dec. 24. If you are willing to burn more weekend time, there is the Peanuts show "Happy Holidays, Charlie Brown" Saturdays and Sundays plus Dec. 26, 27, 30 (closes 30<sup>th</sup>) at 1, 2, 3, and 4pm at the Wilderness Theater. If Camp Snoopy is a regular destination, consider an annual pass for \$69.95 for the under 48 inches. More info [mallofamerica.com](http://mallofamerica.com)
- [Twin Cities Model Railroad Museum](#) at Bandana Square offers a state of the art scale model railroad representing railroading in the U.S. from the 30's, 40's and 50's. Admission is \$2 for ages 5 and up, free for 4 and under. Operations run from Tues-Thur 11am-3pm, Fri 11am-7pm, Sat 10-6 and Sun 12-5. Special events include the Holiday Express Dec. 23, 26, 27, 28 with expanded hours 11am-8pm and Night Trains 6-8:30pm Dec 21, 28 and Jan 4, 11 (also Hobby sale day), 18, 25. More info at [tcmmr.org](http://tcmmr.org)

### BASKETBALL ANYONE?

If you would be interested in a regular MDAH basketball night, contact Dave Weiss at [weissdave@attbi.com](mailto:weissdave@attbi.com). We are currently looking into potential locations.

## HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS FOR TODDLERS

With lots of distractions, lights, candles, new toys and all, be sure to keep the small ones safe this holiday season. Find some toddler holiday safety reminders and tips in this iparenting.com article. (<http://toddlerstoday.com/resources/articles/holidayhazards.htm>).

## CHECK OUT THESE BOOKS!!

The founder of the national network of Dad-to-Dad chapters, Curtis Cooper, has graciously offered free copies of his “[At-Home Dad Handbook](#)” for MDAH members. Cooper, a resident of Apple Valley, has offered MDAH valuable advice as it plans to build its network of at-home dads. Copies are limited. To get yours, contact Dave Weiss at [weissdave@attbi.com](mailto:weissdave@attbi.com)

The Parents Guide Press has just published a new book by Josh Roberts, resident of St. Paul, titled “[A Parent’s Guide to The Twin Cities and Minnesota](#).” You already know many of the ideas Josh has included, but you may be surprised by others. Check it out. Copies are available for \$16.08 at Articulture, 3745 Minnehaha Ave S, 612-729-5151. If you or your child are art-inclined, Articulture also offers art classes for all ages.

## ONE GUY’S TOP 10 DIAPER TIPS, by PeePee PooPoo PaPa

1. To help keep small butts dry, keep a small hair dryer near the changing table. The PeePee PooPoo PaPa picked up this tip from a new parent class and has been using it since day one. Means no messy baby powder inhaled dust. Ours is looped through the changing table so it can’t be pulled down. Just be mindful of small ones climbing up and turning it on by themselves (or leave it unplugged if you have easy access to a plug). But we’ve never had a problem.
2. PeePee PooPoo PaPa’s mother saved all the old cloth diapers she used on PeePee PooPoo when he was young. At first we thought, “for crying out loud, you’ve got to be kidding”! Like we would use cloth diapers. Tried it once. Have newfound respect for my parents. BUTT, they are fantastic for using under your small one’s rump on top of the changing table cover to keep the cover from getting messed! No more changing the cover every other diaper change. Fabulous.
3. Another great use for those cloth diapers? Use them to cover the little ones’ pee shooters when changing the diaper. We also used them as burp rags. We do recommend keeping those separate from the butt rags.
4. Ever had your kid blow his or her mess out the top of the back of the diaper? Thought you were pretty clever by pulling the diaper more up the back when putting on the diaper? Yeah, that works for a while. Butt, get over yourself, Mr. Clever, and get bigger diapers.
5. Watch out for diapers with velcro tabs. We know one small person that was very good at getting these off herself, even with her pants still on. Figure that out. But, if it works for you ...
6. Carry extra plastic bags in your diaper bag for soiled diapers.
7. Carry extra wipes in tupperware in your diaper bag. Those little portable packs sold at stores get expensive quickly (unless you find one that is refillable) and barely hold enough for one outing.
8. Tired of spending money on diaper genie refills? We keep plastic bags next to the diaper genie for the pee pee only diapers. No need to put those in the genie. The bag pretty much keeps the pee pee odor contained even if not shut tight. Another bonus is not having to empty the genie every day. Save the genie for the bombs.
9. Kind of a pain opening those big diaper packages and pulling out the diapers? For the double row packages, I stick my fingers in the middle and tear the whole package into two pieces. Rips very easily and both rows are exposed.
10. Try not to think about diapers as much as PeePee PooPoo PaPa.

## NATIONAL CONVENTION REVIEW, by Dave Weiss

Seventh Annual At Home Dads Convention at Oakton Community College in Des Plaines Illinois. This years theme: “Exploring The Creativity And Talents Of At-Home Dads And Their Families.” Here is my report.

With my daughter Jordan really really ready to turn five this month I’m amazed it took me that many years to attend a convention. I can’t remember the excuses over the years but I can tell you that it was worth going. On a scale of one to ten I’ll say 6 or perhaps 7. The best part . . . 100 plus guys in one place who can relate. The worst part . . . there just wasn’t enough time. It was a terrifically diverse group of guys from all backgrounds and ages. The casual atmosphere made it easy for even the rookies to feel plenty comfy. The keynote speakers were very casual as well, for some perhaps a little too casual.

Marshall Cook, writer, editor, and instructor at UW-Madison was our first keynote. Mr. Cook discussed creativity and how to nourish it in our kids. Some key thoughts/ideas out of this session: Open-mindedness, sense of humor, persistence, playfulness, willingness to fail and much more. He says provide the environment and tools, then step back and let them go for it. **THERE ARE NO MISTAKES IN CREATIVITY.** One of Professor Cooks most powerful statements for me to hear was that we should all learn to “. . . walk your kids walk . . . not yours.”

The “All Group” playshops consisted of brainstorming ideas of how to become more creative as parents. We discussed everything from networking to what some labeled “hell hour.” We talked about how to get out in the community and feel better about what we do as At Home Dads. Ideas on play groups, business cards, on line email lists and other ideas were tossed around most of the day. We also wrote some songs with the musicians in the group. We were supposed to get the lyrics from the three songs created that day, I’ll try and get those for you all to look at

Our second keynote was Carlos Alden from Seattle. His presentation focused around his family and he and his wife's decision to have their kids be fluent in at least one instrument by the age of 18. The presentation led to some good discussion, but I left with little more than music is a great way to allow creativity to just happen within a family. Mr. Alden suggests having instruments available in your house so the kids can always pick them up and make some music regardless of the skill level. We also discussed the thin line between encouraging and forcing your kids to take part in extra curricular activities.

The "Storytelling" session was less than five minutes from lack of time. I personally would have liked to hear and share more favorite At-Home Dad anecdotes.

I was fortunate to share the ride down to Des Plaines with Tom Vytlačil. If I got nothing out of the conference, my conversations with Tom to and from easily paid for the trip right there. Thanks Tom for our conversations. At least I think I let him talk from time to time. Tom and I also ran into Myron Hovda at the convention. It was nice to have at least a few familiar faces in the crowd.

So there you have it, one person's perspective on the convention. If you have any questions about the convention and would like to talk more about it with me, just let me know! Perhaps we can get together and talk more about it. Will I go again next year? I think I will. Then again, perhaps we'll have such a large following here in Minnesota by summer that we'll create our own convention. Perhaps a weekend up north with some fishing, golfing, biking, hiking and good conversation. And Tom, I'll hitch a ride with you any time.

#### [MDAH EVENTS CALENDAR](#)

MDAH events are events with a committed leader/organizer. FYI listings are for your info, not official MDAH events. If you wish to attend an FYI event, want company, and will commit to being the event leader, we will happily make it an official MDAH event. We hope to see a lot of these. And don't forget, for spontaneous field trips, you can always send an invitation out via the MDAH email list. If you have a calendar submission, please send it to Paul Johnson, [pjohnson@goldengate.net](mailto:pjohnson@goldengate.net)

#### December

Thur, 26 FYI. Holidazzle Parade, 6:30-7:00pm. See special events above.  
Fri, 27 FYI. Holidazzle Parade, 6:30-7:00pm. See special events above.  
Sat, 28 FYI. Holidazzle Parade, 6:30-7:00pm. See special events above.  
Sun, 29 FYI. Holidazzle Parade, 6:30-7:00pm. See special events above.

#### January

Thur, 2 MDAH. White Bear Lake YMCA Playgroup, 9:30-11:30am. Contact Dave Weiss, [weissdave@attbi.com](mailto:weissdave@attbi.com)  
Tue, 7 MDAH. Minnesota Childrens Museum Habitot Tuesday (no scheduled school groups). Contact Dave Weiss, [weissdave@attbi.com](mailto:weissdave@attbi.com), 651-351-2851 (h), 612-414-3930 (c)  
Tue, 7 FYI. Toddler Tuesday at Mall of America. See special events above for more info.  
Thur, 9 MDAH. White Bear Lake YMCA Playgroup, 9:30-11:30am. Contact Dave Weiss, [weissdave@attbi.com](mailto:weissdave@attbi.com)  
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Wed, 29 MDAH. Twin Cities Model Railroad Museum at Bandana Square in St. Paul, 11:00am. Pack a lunch. For more info, see special events above and watch the email list. Contact Paul Johnson, [pjohnson@goldengate.net](mailto:pjohnson@goldengate.net), 651-695-9853 (h), 651-285-2970 (c)  
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mid-late Watch for web site launch!

#### [SEND YOUR SUBMISSIONS](#)

If you have news, articles or ideas for the MDAH newsletter, please send them to Paul Johnson at [pjohnson@goldengate.net](mailto:pjohnson@goldengate.net)