

Carol's Corner

I had some difficult moments when writing this newsletter issue. At a time when we as a nation, no, we as a people, have suffered greatly at the hands of terrorists, I was sitting at my computer attempting to write about the beautiful experiences with my Surrogate Moms and their Couples. It felt inappropriate to write about things that fill my heart with joy and bring tears of happiness to my eyes. But then I decided that sharing these stories with you would be a step in the right direction in the healing process not only for me, but for many of you as well. So, I hope you enjoy the many stories in this issue as I enjoyed writing them very much.

Our experiences this past year includes exposure to media with Tara's surrogacy experiences beautifully told in the October 2001 issue of Chicago Magazine. And in June, a television program from Spain came to interview several surrogate moms. They also followed Jackie around until the birth of her Couple's son. I wish to thank all of the Couples in Spain, the surrogate moms, their husbands and children for their participation and for taking the time to show the world what surrogacy is truly about.

September 11, 2001 will certainly be a day that the world will remember for the senseless tragedies we suffered in New York

(Continued on page 2)

Tara's surrogacy journey began in 1999. Quinton was due in late October, but he knew he wouldn't get any Halloween candy unless he stayed in Tara's tummy so he decided to wait. But finally, Tara issued him an eviction notice and he was born on November 4, 1999 weighing 8lb 1oz. Their surrogacy experience was so beautiful and many were fortunate to read about it in the February 2000 issue of O.C. Family Magazine where their faces graced the cover and inside their story was told.

Then, only 9 months later,



Shared Expectations
Surrogacy and the American Family



When I met Samantha's Couple, I knew who their Surrogate Mom would be. The similarity in these two women's personality was uncanny. And the husbands had



an instant connection too! Chris took them out to dinner for their initial meeting and after several hours she excused herself to go home. This group was having so much fun, she was sure it was not going to

Early Arrival

Quin's parents decided they would like to have a brother or sister for him. Tara and her family were only too happy to help them in this special way again. Mom, Dad & Quin came out for the medical process, but Dad couldn't stay the whole time. When it came time for Tara's embryo transfer, Quin's Mom assumed my role. She took Tara to the clinic, took pictures and got Tara all tucked in at the hotel afterwards. What was I doing?? Having the time of my life! Quin needed a sitter and I was thrilled to be able to spend a couple of days with him. I can't say it was the easiest time, but it was one of the happiest times in my life.



Johnny & Quin

My husband and my children enjoyed him very much too. Things were going so smoothly that I decided to invite some surrogate moms and their kids to join Quin and I at the Wild Animal Park. It obviously has been a while since my children were young like Quin, because I forgot a very important rule. You cannot confine a 9 month old! We got on the tram, which is an hour long, and after 5 minutes he was done with it. I tried to give him some crackers and even though the signs clearly stated not to feed the animals, well, let's just say Quin was in charge and he decided the animals would be fed crackers, fruit and everything else in our goodie bag that day. I was sure

(Continued on page 3)

Who is this??

end soon. And it didn't! The fun continued for many, many more months to come. I didn't realize until later, that another similarity these two girls had was their voice! I always got it wrong. "S a m ?" "No, it's Pam" and vice versa. So, I would always have to ask, "Who is this?" And then wonder for a moment if they were pulling my leg!

The good times continued and before we knew it December was upon us. As we neared

the due date, December 18, the Couple and their families became so eager for the baby's arrival. Pam's sister & mother decided to come out and wait for the delivery as it would be at any moment.....right? Well, no. As that date passed and Christmas was approaching quickly, the extended family had to travel home and await the news of the birth by telephone. We were sure we would be in the hospital on Christmas, but that day passed too. We all finally gave up on trying to figure out when the delivery would occur and resigned ourselves to being induced

(Continued on page 3)



Mommy checking her baby's heart rate

Dr. Rad's News and Views



"The Aftermath"

Wherever you were on that horrible day of September 11, 2001, you were affected by the terrorist attack on New York City and Washington, D.C. The initial impact as I watched it unfold on television was one of denial and shock. For most of us, Americans and others around the world, we were in total disbelief that this was actually happening. Carol Weathers called me immediately to report that she had made contact with all of our East Coast Couples to make sure that everyone in our "community" at Building Families was safe. Indeed, we were blessed that all our Couples and Surrogate Moms, home and abroad, were safe.

That is an interesting term today; "safe". You may not feel safe as of right now. I believe this is a normal reaction to this most unusual trauma. While we stand united against terrorism, as a nation and with our allies worldwide, we continue to learn more about people that "hate" our way of life. We are suffering from the aftermath of witnessing four of our planes, filled with our loved ones, get hijacked and crash into civilian buildings and the Pentagon. I suspect that this will be a lengthy process of psychological recovery that could take years. The levels of trauma are beyond the usual and expected stress of life. Many, if not all, of us around the world are and will experience some form of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder consists of difficulties in sleeping, waking up early, fear of planes beyond the fear of flying, fatigue, feelings of depression and recurring thoughts of the trauma we experienced. I wanted you to know that these symptoms are expected and I encourage you to talk about it. The importance of having a sense of control and ability to share your feelings is embraced by all of us at Building Families in our everyday life and is especially important now.

As a psychologist who promotes well-being and resolution of conflict, I find myself at odds with rampant thoughts of getting back at those who performed this horrific act. Yet, when you have been victimized and terrorized, it is normal to go through a mourning process that also includes feelings of anger. This mourning process may include waves of denial, anger, bargaining with God (e.g. "I'll change if you make this go away, God"), depression and finally acceptance. I have yet to figure out what "acceptance" actually translates to in this situation. Perhaps acceptance is getting back to being productive and living our lives.

So if you find yourself acting angry, frustrated or scared; be patient with yourself. Allow us or someone close to you to help you through this healing process...talking can be curative. Remember that our children have to live their lives too, even when their mothers and fathers are scared. I've allowed my 18-year old to stay in San Francisco as she embarks on her college career,

when I truly wanted her to come home so I can be assured that no one will hurt the baby I've been raising for 18 years in freedom to become independent, "SECURE" and a contributing citizen.

We all have to overcome our deepest fears now. Remember that we are all safer today in this country than we were several weeks ago. We have more information, we have more safe guards...IGNORANCE IS NOT BLISS. Some strategies to assist you in coping with this trauma are:

- Don't isolate yourself. Learn to relate to others.
- Don't become addicted to the television news channels. It can become immobilizing.
- Continue with any plans you had prior to September 11, 2001.
- Resolve to live our life as planned.
- Listen to and enjoy your favorite music.

May God bless all of you and your families and God Bless America. Until we meet again. Dr. Rad.

Vesna Radojevic, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist who directs the psychological component of Building Families Through Surrogacy, Inc.



Pregnancy Update

Here are our pregnant surrogate moms and their due dates:

Tracy W.	November 2
Melissa L.	January 29
Rachel	February 4
Melissa D.	May 6
Leticia	May 14

And we are waiting for several results, so keep your fingers crossed!!!



WELCOME ABOARD!!!

We welcome these surrogate moms and wish them speedy success!!!

Angelic, Melissa M., Tina, Monica and Rosanna

Carol's Corner

(Continued from page 1)

and Washington, D.C. For many it will also be an event that triggered world unity. The support that I felt when I received calls from all over the United States and many other countries were tremendous. I will forever cherish every e-mail and fax and the memories of every phone call I received that day and the weeks following. My heartfelt thanks to all of you for your thoughtfulness in these difficult times.

We, at Building Families, offer our condolences to those who lost loved ones, we offer our support to the many military families affected at this time and we continue to pray for our nation, our world and its' leaders. May God continue to bless us all and God Bless America.

Twin Trek

Even before the pregnancy test was positive, Rochelle knew she was not only pregnant, but was sure it was twins. Her pregnancy test results indicated that there *might* be twins, but she was sure of it. And she was right!! (Hey Rochelle, any ideas on the lotto numbers for next week??) There was a brief time when the doctors weren't certain that Baby "B" would continue to thrive. Rochelle knew otherwise and she went on to prove herself right again.

The pregnancy seemed to fly by. Before we knew it, we were in the last trimester and were amazed at how incredibly well Rochelle had been carrying this pregnancy. It was surely due to the wonderful support she received from her husband, kids and her mother. The entire experience felt like a family event.

As we approached the final month, Rochelle was ready for the twin trek to be over. She didn't think it would be possible to go beyond her 36th week. There couldn't possibly be anymore room for these girls to grow, right? For the first time in this pregnancy, she was wrong. The girls were happy to stay in for 3 more weeks! But finally, on June 29, 2001, it was time to deliver and no one was more relieved than Rochelle and no one was happier than Sally & Grace's parents and their big brother, Alex. Sally weighed exactly 7lb and her little sister, Grace, came in weighing 5lb 12oz.



A big part of Rochelle's Support Team Her kids and her Mom!



Early Arrival

(Continued from page 1)

we would be removed from the park as I lost count of how many rules we broke. But, somehow, we managed not to. I must say that I have a renewed respect for mothers of young children.

Anyway, back to Tara's story. This second surrogacy experience was just as beautiful as the first. Mom, Dad and Quin were able to visit a few times before the anticipated birth date. As Tara had a history of delivering a little late, I decided to go to Texas to visit my parents on March 20, 2001, almost 3 weeks before Tara was due. As I arrived to the airport in El Paso, my pager went off. I was sure it was my husband checking to see if I had arrived safely. But to my surprise, it was Tara! She was in the hospital and the delivery was about to happen! It wasn't possible for any of us, including Mom, Dad & Quin, to make it in time for the birth. So, they did the next best thing. Jay kept them on the phone so they could hear everything in the delivery including their son's first cry. When I spoke to Mom on the phone that night while she was in Chicago waiting for a morning flight, she was sad to have missed the birth, but was completely at peace. She said, "Tara has taken care of him for the last 9 months and I haven't needed to worry for a moment. And I know she will take care of him a little longer until I can get there. He was always in the best hands and he still is." So the next morning, Tara introduced Taran Jeffrey to his Mommy, Daddy and big brother. This little cutie weighed in at 5lb 14oz.

This special group of people has done a great deal to share their story with the domestic and international media. They are a beautiful example of what surrogacy is truly about and I am so proud and feel so blessed to have shared in these incredible experiences with them. Last May, Tara and Jay were kind enough to welcome into their home a film crew from Spain documenting a Surrogacy Story in our program. Then these past few months they interviewed with Chicago Magazine and you can read all about their incredible journeys in the October 2001 issue.



Quin & Ty Easter 2001

Who is this??

(Continued from page 1)

later that week. We spoke on Christmas Day and Samantha said she was disappointed as she wanted to call everyone in the wee hours of the morning and exclaim that labor had begun.

Well, on December 26 in the wee hours of the morning, I got a call from Samantha and she said, "Guess what??" I couldn't believe it! She sounded so excited on the phone, but she didn't sound like she was having much labor pain so I thought I had plenty of time to get to the hospital in San Diego. I took a shower, did my hair (I knew there would be a camera!) and as I was driving down to San Diego I get a call from Samantha's husband, Tristan, asking where I was because Samantha was desperately trying not to deliver without me.



Again I was shocked, not only did her labor begin on its own, but it

progressed quicker than any other labor she had had before! Needless to say, I raced to the hospital, parked in the emergency room physician's parking area and ran upstairs. With only a few minutes to spare, I made it in time to capture the intense emotion of the delivery experience on film. I still get tears in my eyes when I think about that day or look at the pictures.

So, finally on December 26, Chase Maxwell was born weighing exactly 9lbs!



Is this a happy baby or what?!!

Prayer's Answered

When I met Tawnya's Couple, I was amazed at their determination to become a family. Their story was not dissimilar to others who had come into the program, except that they had been on their journey for 18 years by the time they reached me. They couldn't stop. Their dreams of having a family wouldn't let them.

Tawnya was a perfect match for them. She wouldn't even consider the possibility of the embryo transfer not working. Her determination to help them achieve parenthood did not waver. So, on December 1, 2000, Justin's parents were rewarded for their endurance. Tawnya delivered a healthy baby boy and he weighed a whopping 8lb 9oz.



Justin Then and Now

United Nations

Amy's Couple spoke German, French and English and their daughter often spoke French (I think!). When we would spend the day together, it was always quite humorous because the confusion was massive. But the emotion felt between them was clearly beautiful.

After traveling to California a couple of weeks before their son was due to be born, the Mom & Dad thought they would have time to recover from their long trip and then take their daughter to Disneyland. Well, their son would not be left behind so he arrived just a few days after his parents did! On January 21, 2001, Alix Caylus was born weighing 7lb 3oz.



Jackie's Journey

Jackie first came into the program in 1999 with the high hopes of helping a Couple achieve their dream of parenthood. Success would not come for this unfortunate Couple and after a year of attempts, it was clear that this would not happen. Jackie's commitment and dedication throughout that year was incredible so it did not surprise me when she decided to continue her dream of becoming a Surrogate Mother. I will share with you some of her words about her journey.

Let the Journey Begin.....I received the call from Carol, saying that she found the perfect Couple for me. I was very excited and could not wait to get their profile. When I received their picture, I instantly thought what great parents they would be. I was so excited to contact them via e-mail, and I was overjoyed when I received their first letter. They seemed to be as happy as I. When they arrived from Spain, I was very nervous. I didn't know what I was going to say to them or how I was going to react to them being here in person. It was clearly evident that after the first five minutes at my house, they were comfortable enough to kick off their shoes and curl up on the couch. Ruth and Angel touched a place in my heart that I thought would take months to reach. And, they were so wonderful with my children, Taylor and Tyler, I knew that they would be wonderful parents. After that first night, they were no longer thought of as "My Couple", they were referred to as part of our family.

ThePhoneCall.....Ring...Ring....As I heard the phone ring, my heart skipped a little beat. At first I thought it was the pregnancy test results, but then I looked at the clock and realized it was too early. As I picked up

the phone and said hello, there was a brief moment of silence. Then I heard Carol and she was crying. I braced myself. I knew the news could not have been good. I started to reassure her that I was going to be fine and I was all right. Then she says, "It's not that, you're pregnant!" Instantly, I thought I had not heard her correctly. I said, "You're lying. You're lying." After reassuring me that the test was positive, I had to sit down and breathe. I always thought I would scream and jump when I got the positive results, but all I could think of was how happy Ruth and Angel would be. I started to cry tears of happiness. I never thought I would hear those words. It has been a long journey for me, but I have finally arrived. Now, if I could just remember how to breathe L a m a z e style.

Jackie, her family and her Couple all participated in a television program for Spain that documented their story. It beautifully described the surrogacy process and the relationship that develops between each family. Baby Angel was nearly 10 days late in making his arrival, so he almost missed his opportunity for his first television debut.

But Baby Angel had a special date in mind for his birth....Father's Day!! So on June 17, 2001 Jackie's dream as

well as her Couple's dreams came true when Baby Angel was born weighing 8lb 9oz.



Big, sassy for a little Angel



Visit with Dr. Garzo

World's Longest Pregnancy

Chandra's pregnancy wasn't really that long, but it sure seemed that way. Unfortunately, from nearly the beginning, this pregnancy was complicated. The chances of miscarriage were so great and until we got closer to the delivery date, the final outcome was uncertain. Every appointment we were more hopeful that everything would be fine.

I remember attending an ultrasound appointment with Chandra and when I

saw the baby on the screen and how perfect she was, I just started to cry. I leaped out of my chair and ran over to get a closer look at the screen. As tears streamed down my face, I turned to Chandra and said, "This is what it is all about. Because of all of your efforts, this perfect little baby is looking back at us and is growing bigger and healthier everyday. If a moment comes when you're feeling discouraged, just remember this image." As we were hugging and crying, the ultrasound technician asked if I was the baby's mother. I explained our situation and told him that I was the Mom by Proxy, because I knew if the Mom was able to have been there she would have reacted the same way.

As the delivery date approached, Mom decided to come out earlier than planned as she had a feeling

(Continued on page 5)



Crush on Dr. Blake

Desiree must still be pinching herself, wondering if this past year really happened. There was a time when she wondered if she would ever be able to help someone achieve what she already knew was the greatest thing, parenthood, because success would not come. Fortunately for all of us, she didn't give up and now her Couple have two beautiful daughters. All thanks to Desiree.

Desiree's pregnancy went so smoothly. We don't usually have such a smooth ride when twins are involved. Dr. Blake took all of the necessary precautions to ensure that Desiree and the twin girls were doing fine. Near the end, Desiree would go in twice a week for non-stress testing which would record the babies' heartrates. After a few visits, we noticed that each time Dr. Blake



Desiree manages to smile even when Dr. Blake says no delivery today

would enter the room and speak, the babies' heartrate s would quicken.

Tracy said she thought the girls had a crush on Dr. Blake as they seemed to respond every time he walked into the room! How cute!!

As Desiree entered her 39th week of pregnancy, we made plans to induce her labor only to discover that the girls had flipped which made a C-Section necessary. After the delivery, Desiree was wheeled by the nurse's station and heard them whispering rather loudly. She

(Continued on page 5)

Hospital Food, Yum!!

Long ago (1997) and in a land far away (San Diego), Lady Carrie brought limitless joy to a very special Couple when she delivered their baby girl, Brielle. Sound like a fairy tale? Well it wasn't. It was a beautiful and true story. Carrie had such a wonderful experience that she said she would call me again one day to help another Couple in this special way. After a few years, she did indeed call and she went on to have another fairy tale surrogacy experience with a lot of comedy. Those who know Carrie, know that she has quite a comedic side to her.



Here's Carrie, ready to receive the embryos!

It was a funny discovery when we realized that Carrie's Couple were serious when they told us that they loved hospital food. We were frequent diners at Pomerado Hospital after Carrie's OB visits. Near the end of the pregnancy, Carrie had a dream that her Couple were in the hospital cafeteria when she delivered their baby. We were sure this wouldn't happen as the Couple arrived to the hospital before labor had even begun. As dinnertime approached, Carrie was dilated to only 4cm and she was about to get her epidural, so it seemed like a safe time to go to the cafeteria. Well, shortly after her epidural, Carrie began to feel pressure. The nurse

was sure it was too soon, but quickly discovered that the birth was imminent. Carrie grabbed her mother by her collar, pulled her close and said, "Go get my Couple from the cafeteria. Their baby is coming NOW!" Her mom rushed out of the room and found them right away. They all made it back in time for Kalani Sylvia's grand entrance. As did Kalani's grandparents, aunts, cousins and extended surrogate family. Whew!



Carrie marveling at the miracle that lay in her hands

I was so moved by a story about these new parents and their baby that I wanted to share it with you here. At Kalani's first visit at the pediatrician's office, the nurse asked the new Mom, "What is your daughter's name?" She paused for a moment and looked at her husband with tears in her eyes and said, "Honey, did you hear that? She wants to know *our* daughter's name!" It was at that moment that they realized this little girl was theirs forever.



Dr. Katz showed us the baby's heartbeat!

Dr. Katz showed us the baby's heartbeat!



Thank You, Dr. Kirkman!!

The nurse

Grandpa's Smile

Michelle's pregnancy history always had a rough beginning with morning sickness and always ended with a long labor and delivery. But she absolutely wanted to help a couple achieve their dream of parenthood. To her surprise, she had no morning sickness and on June 3, 2001 she delivered Baby Grant, who weighed in at 8lb 4oz, in only a couple of hours! She exclaimed, "It is, literally, much easier to have a baby for someone else!"



Dr. Harsh gave us some exciting news!



There were many touching moments throughout Michelle's surrogacy experience, but when I



saw the picture of Grandpa seeing his grandson for the first time it took my breath away. The feelings this man had in his heart for this child were visible to all. How lucky Grant and his big brother, Gavin, are to have such a loving Grandpa!

Crush on Dr. Blake

(Continued from page 4) assumed they were discussing her role as a Surrogate Mom, but actually they were in awe as Desiree had just delivered the biggest set of twins they had ever seen! On August 20, 2001 she delivered Maielen first who weighed in at 8lb 1oz and shortly after Antia was

born weighing 7lb 10oz. Way to go, Desiree!!



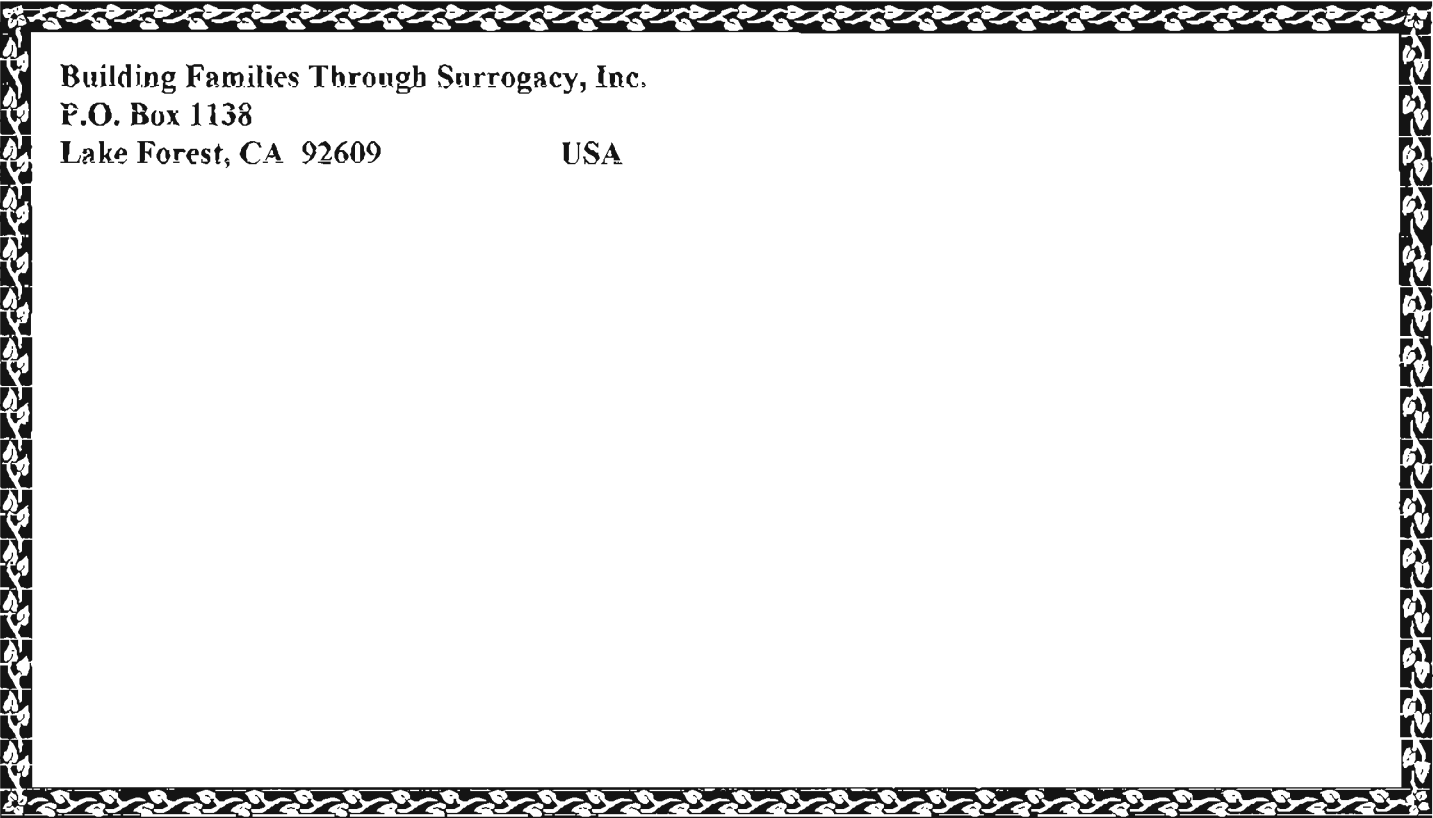
A group photo of Dr. Garzo, his staff and many supporters of Desiree and her Couple

World's Longest Pregnancy

(Continued from page 4) that she should. Her instincts were good, as her baby was born on the day she arrived. But, her flight was due to arrive the evening of March 9 and Charlotte Ailani was born that morning weighing 8lb 7oz. So, I, the Mom by Proxy, was there and took care of Charlotte until her Mommy walked through the door and immediately and happily assumed her role. The grandparents were due to arrive later that night and since Charlotte had already made her entrance, the new Mom could not go to pick them up at the airport. Tracy generously offered to go and bring them to the hospital. Not knowing what they looked like, she made a sign and stood at the gate showing it to everyone who came off the airplane. No one responded to the sign. She saw a Couple who she was sure had to be them and kept running to get in front of them and showing them the sign without saying a word. They continuously walked by without acknowledging Tracy. Finally, when they reached the Baggage Claim, Tracy, feeling desperate at this point decided to approach this likely Couple. And, of course, it was they and they were so impressed on how Tracy was able to find them that they suggested she become a detective.....McHugh, P.I. Hmmram?!



A Thank-You Visit to Dr. Garzo and his Staff



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