



# **NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2011**

## **FROM THE ICOMBO BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **Greetings to all multiple-birth associations around the world!**

This Newsletter is being sent to as many national multiple-birth associations as we have contact information for to bring you up to date on the work of ICOMBO at the international level. For those of you receiving an email for the first time – ICOMBO is a working group of the International Society for Twin Studies and consists of ISTS organizational members worldwide – representing (for the most part) the national organizations supporting families in countries all over the world. While membership to ICOMBO comes as a result of a paid membership to ISTS we believe as an organization that it is important to correspond and share information with all national parent support organizations.

Unfortunately we have not been communicating as regularly as we like over the past year or so, but we have been working behind the scenes. With only 6 Board members at present, all with very active positions within our own multiple-birth communities, professional lives and family activities, we are often stretched for time – so please forgive our lack of communication.

The following newsletter will not only highlight the work of the ICOMBO Board, but will bring you up to date on other international events and highlight the work of other national organizations. Please make sure to help ICOMBO get to know your organization and its volunteers better by participating in the survey mentioned later in this newsletter.

We are excited to launch our new logo with this newsletter – representing multiples around the world. We are also close to launching (still under construction) the ICOMBO website ([www.icombo.org](http://www.icombo.org)) – we will forward further details when available.

Should you have any questions, comments or information you would like to share, please feel free to forward them to Kimberley Weatherall, ICOMBO Chair at [chair@icombo.org](mailto:chair@icombo.org).



The ICOMBO Board would like to thank Harold Sikkema, Web Developer and Visual Artist (<http://www.nsitu.ca/>) for working with the ICOMBO Board to produce our new logo and develop a new look / branding for the ICOMBO website.

We would also like to thank Kristin and Stephanie Weatherall for their financial contribution that made it possible for this very important work to be completed.

## REPORT FROM CONGRESS, 2010 SOEUL, SOUTH KOREA

The 2010 COMBO meeting was held as part of the triennial 2010 ISTS Congress. At the Congress, researchers (scientific and medical) spoke of their research activities involving multiples. Some of these studies are of direct benefit to multiple-birth families and some are studies where the twins have been used in order to identify particular characteristics, for example that addiction to nicotine is an inherited characteristic.



### **Proceedings of the COMBO Meeting (*COMBO to change name later to ICOMBO*)**

COMBO delegates in attendance came from the following countries: Australia, Finland, Japan, United States, Switzerland, Germany and Canada. There were also interested people from Portugal, Malaysia and China who attended the meetings.

### **A number of presentations were given from the various representatives:**

- Gail Moore from Multiple Births Canada (MBC) spoke of their annual awareness day for multiple births. MBC's National Multiple Births Awareness Day is held on May 28th each year, the birthdate of the Dionne quintuplets. Every year, a theme is chosen and various activities and media releases are planned around this theme. Some of the themes over the years have included: classroom placement of multiples, what it is like to be a twin, parental leave issues for multiple birth parents.

More information can be found at:

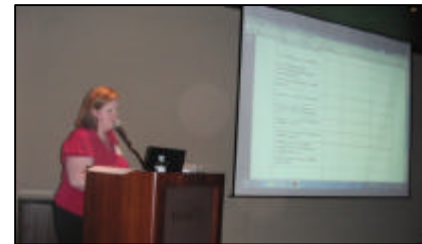
<http://www.multiplebirthscanada.org/english/awareness.php>

- The representative from Japan spoke of the current situation for support for multiple-birth families in Japan. There are 2 organisations – Japanese Association of Twin Mothers (JATM), which is a self-help group consisting of about 200 clubs and the newly formed Japanese Multiple Birth Association (JAMBA).
- Sabine Herbener spoke of the current situation in France and Switzerland. Amongst other things, she told of the media frenzy of all things twins, with the birth of Roger Federer's twins last year.
- Mari Kaihovaara gave a presentation on the psychological well-being and financial surviving of multiple birth families in Finland. Her talk gave us the results of a recent survey that was conducted in Finland with multiple birth families. The results were very telling – showing financial and psychosocial issues facing multiple birth families that were different to families with a number of children of different ages. The results of the survey are being used to lobby the government for more funding for multiple birth families.

- Monica Rankin spoke about the structure of the Australian Multiple Birth Association, how it differs from some other national associations due to the size and population of Australia, and how many of the challenges are the same – lack of funds and shortage of volunteers.
- Gail Moore (MBC) presented the updated version of the ***Declaration of Rights and Statement of Needs of Twins and Higher Order Multiples*** for membership approval, thanking Donna Launslager, MBC Health and Education Chair for leading the effort on this modification. The update features many new and relevant rights and statements; these have now been officially approved and added to the document that was originally produced in 1995 (updated most recently in 2007). It was decided that The Declaration would be the focus of International Multiple Births Awareness Week to be held in late November 2010. A copy of the document is attached to the newsletter.

### COMBO Business Meeting

During the COMBO meeting, the main focus was on updating the members present of the past and current projects being completed by the COMBO Board with a focus on making changes to the way that COMBO was functioning as an organization. Kimberley Weatherall (MBC and COMBO Chair) led the discussions on the work completed since the last Congress in Belgium in 2007 and outlined the work needed going forward, including the goal of becoming an independent organization.



An important item for discussion was the proposed changes to the COMBO structure. The following points / suggestions were made:

- COMBO is currently working group of ISTS
- All membership fees stay with ISTS, no funding to COMBO
- COMBO could be doing much more if there were additional resources
- Suggest we become an independent organization, fees directly to COMBO and COMBO pay a portion to ISTS to maintain the relationship that COMBO feels is important
- Have COMBO meeting piggyback onto national conferences – providing the opportunity to attend a national conference in another country, more benefit than attending some of the scientific ISTS sessions but to also encourage attendance still at the ISTS Congress in addition to these conferences where possible
- Have individual membership as well as multiple-birth groups and organizations with similar interests, professional organizations, etc.

A decision was made for the Chair to take the proposed new structure to ISTS Board where they agreed it would be



possible to move forward with this plan. It was agreed that COMBO members will register directly with COMBO; COMBO will then pay to become affiliated with the ISTS. This will provide ICOMBO with financial resources to produce a website and coordinate communications between countries.

It was originally intended for this to occur immediately, with 2011 memberships being paid directly to ICOMBO. Unfortunately it has been more complex than originally thought and has had to be put on hold for the moment, but the plan for the future still remains.

#### **Other Notables:**

COMBO will now be identified as the International Council of Multiple Birth Organizations or ICOMBO to allow for immediate recognition as a global organization.

- The ISTS is moving to a two-year cycle for meetings and have recently announced that the next meeting will be held in Florence Italy in April 2012.

- **ICOMBO Board Members (2010 – 2012) are:**

- **Kimberley Weatherall** (Canada) - Chair of ICOMBO and will continue on the ISTS Board of Directors.
- **Mary Adcock** ( United States) – Past Chair
- **Terri Gillis** (United States) – Vice-Chair
- **Mari Kaihovaara** (Finland) – Editorial Director
- **Monica Rankin** (Australia) – Co-Membership Director
- **Christine Disselkamp** (Germany) – Co-Membership Director



**Christine, Kim, Monica and Mari**

- **New ISTS Board includes:** President – Tim Spector, Vice-President – Nils Lambalk, Past President – Matt McGue, Secretary General – Gonneke Willemsen and Board Members Meike Bartels, Kaare Christensen, Catherine Derom, Nancy L. Segal, Dr. Jon Barrett, Jane Denton and Kimberley Weatherall.

## **2011 MEMBERSHIP**

As we go to print, there are 11 officially paid members of ICOMBO/ISTS for 2011. We welcome 2 new members – the Czechoslovakian Association of Twins and Multiple Birth Clubs and Twins Plus Singapore. We are concerned that of the 43 organizations we have contacted, we have heard from only 15 associations. If you have not yet contacted Monica, could you please do so as soon as possible, so that we know if the contact details we have are correct. Membership renewal notices for 2012 will be coming out soon. If your association is unable to maintain a financial membership, please let us know as we maintain a mailing list of interested parties. For more information please contact Monica at [membership@icombo.org](mailto:membership@icombo.org)

## INTERNATIONAL MULTIPLE BIRTH AWARENESS WEEK 2010

The first ever International Multiple Births Awareness Week was held November 1-7, 2010 with the support of many countries around the world.

A special thank you to Gail Moore (MBC) for leading on this very important initiative and to those who assisted in updating the **Declaration of Rights and Statement of Needs of Twins and Higher Order Multiples**, which was the main focus of the 2010 Awareness Week Celebrations. Donna Launslager of Canada and her international team of reviewers inserted additional rights and needs then supported the entire document with dozens of new references. It was an extensive project with phenomenal results, and ICOMBO proudly released the update as part of International Multiple Births Awareness Week.

Additionally, words of appreciation go out to author Alessandra Piontelli, M.D., who provided endorsing commentary for the Backgrounder. Using photographs from her book **Twins in the World**, Dr. Piontelli provided a vivid pictorial emphasizing the importance of drawing international attention to the **Declaration of Rights and Statement of Needs of Twins and Higher Order Multiples**.

Finally, we recognize the countries who joined in the awareness activity – translating and posting the newly updated **Declaration of Rights and Statement of Needs of Twins and Higher Order Multiples** online, completing the national report card, and networking with other organizations with the objective of drawing attention to the importance in having the Declaration adopted in every country around the world.

## INTERNATIONAL MULTIPLE BIRTH AWARENESS WEEK 2012

*It is essential that this work continues...*

We must build momentum for spreading the message so that it reaches the ears of those who can make a difference. We should continue to encourage the translation of the **Declaration of Rights and Statement of Needs of Twins and Higher Order Multiples** in other languages. We should reach out to our governments and ask them to endorse its content.

And, we should start talking about what ICOMBO will do to celebrate the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Multiple Births Awareness Week in November 2012.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED** - If you are interested in leading this initiative or working as a committee member to help move this initiative forward, please contact ICOMBO Chair, Kimberley Weatherall. Without dedicated volunteers wonderful initiatives such as this will have to be put aside.

## ICOMBO MULTIPLE-BIRTH ORGANIZATION SURVEY

The National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc. (NOMOTC) has partnered with ICOMBO to conduct a survey on organization structure and member services.

The purpose of this survey is to learn about national multiple-birth organizations' structure, how they function and what services they provide to their members. The knowledge gained from this survey will help ICOMBO better understand how national organizations support families in their countries, and provide opportunities for countries to share best practices with one another.

NOMOTC's research department focuses on conducting internal research surveys each year in addition to partnering with outside researchers. The 2010-2011 Research Team ended their year by authoring a survey that will surely benefit all multiple-birth organizations. A special thank you to Tiffany Wimberly, 2010-2011 Research Vice President at NOMOTC who worked with her Research Team and ICOMBO to design the ICOMBO Multiple Birth Organization Survey.

**The survey will be open until December 31, 2011.**

**Please join our research efforts.** We are asking that **one** Director/Officer of each multiple-birth organization complete this survey by clicking on the following link.

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ICOMBO\\_Multiple\\_Birth\\_Organisation\\_Survey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ICOMBO_Multiple_Birth_Organisation_Survey)

Survey results will be shared with all participating organizations.

Questions? Please contact Terri at: [vicechair@icombo.org](mailto:vicechair@icombo.org)

## FOCUS ON AUSTRALIA



AMBA is an Australia-wide organization, consisting of approximately 56 clubs for multiple birth families throughout Australia. Clubs vary in size (from perhaps 10 members to over 350) and each one is an independent organization affiliated to AMBA. This club affiliation enables the members of local clubs to be members of AMBA. As at March 2011 there are almost 4,000 member families of AMBA in Australia.

The first multiple birth club in Australia was formed in Newcastle, New South Wales in 1969. Over the next few years, a number of other clubs formed and in 1973, the first national convention for multiple birth clubs was held. The national association – the Australian Multiple Birth Association – was formed in 1974.

## ***AMBA Fast Facts***

- Approximately 4,000 members, 55 clubs throughout Australia. Clubs can be very different in size – from 10 families to over 500 families.
- The first club was formed in Newcastle, New South Wales in 1969
- The first national convention was held in 1973
- The Australian Multiple Birth Association was formed in 1974
- There are no paid employees, all workers are volunteers who are members of their local club
- Clubs – local groups that offer support to families in their local area.  
The following activities are usually offered: coffee groups, playgroups, antenatal information evening, newsletters, facebook page, information evenings for school age multiples, social events for fathers, breastfeeding support, bereavement support, picnics, weekend holidays, care packages for new families, home visiting for new families and telephone support.
- AMBA – a national association, offers the following:
  - Lobbies government bodies regarding issues relevant to multiple births
  - Represents multiple birth families in the media and internationally
  - Produces a magazine, twice a year to all members
  - Sources and sells literature relevant to multiple birth families, for a small profit
  - Has written the following literature –
    - *Parenting Boy/Girl Multiples*
    - *Parenting Twins*
    - *Parenting Triplets*
    - *School-aged Multiples*
    - Bereavement leaflets
  - Holds a national convention each year. Approximately 100 – 200 members attend the convention.

Each club offers different levels of support, depending on their size and capabilities. Some clubs offer lots of functions and activities and other clubs can only offer a small number of items. Typical club activities may include: coffee groups; playgroups for young children; antenatal information evenings; regular newsletters; a Facebook page; information evenings for parents whose children are almost ready for school to discuss school readiness issues for multiples; social events for fathers; breastfeeding support; bereavement support; social events for families such as a parents night-out; picnics and weekends away; care packages for new parents; home visiting for new families; telephone support for new parents. All support and contact is done as a parent-to-parent and not as professionals in a particular area.

AMBA, as a national association, is able to lobby government bodies regarding issues relevant to multiple birth and represent Australian multiple birth families in the media and internationally. AMBA produces a high-quality magazine, currently twice a year, for all member families. AMBA sources literature relevant to multiple birth families and sells these items for a small profit. We have also written literature of relevance to multiple birth families – *Parenting Boy/Girl Multiples*, *Parenting Triplets*, *Parenting Twins*, *School-aged Multiples*, and leaflets to assist families dealing with bereavement. A national convention is held each year where, amongst other activities, the Annual General Meeting takes place. As Australia is a large country, it can be difficult to get large numbers of members present, and there are usually approximately 80 – 150 present over the 2-day event. This event is the only time that the AMBA family gathers together and is the opportunity for AMBA club representatives to assist in making decisions on the future direction of the organization.

There are 8 states and territories in Australia and there is a state/territory committee of AMBA in each state or territory to assist the clubs within that area.

All people who hold positions, or assist within AMBA (at the national, state or club levels) are volunteers. All AMBA board members are also members of a local AMBA club (as are the state/territory committee members). There are no paid positions and there is no funding to assist in the running of the organization. All money is from membership fees, sales of publications

and advertising in the magazine or AMBA website. Local clubs also conduct fundraising activities to assist their finances.

The 2011 AMBA Convention took place in Sydney's Darling Harbour in October and was attended by almost 100 AMBA members. Among the highlights of convention was the networking and sharing between the AMBA clubs and the address by the AMBA Patron, Dr Mark Umstad, on the topic of "***Epigenetics and multiple births (why aren't my identicals identical?)***". AMBA is fortunate to have such a highly regarded and passionate patron.

2012 will see a major event on the AMBA calendar with a **Twins Plus Family Festival** being celebrated nationally in Melbourne, Victoria. This promises to be a huge and fun event – we are hoping to attract over 2,000 attendees from all around Australia gathering together to enjoy all things multiple. Please review the flyer for this event at the end of this newsletter.

*We would like to highlight a different organization each time we send out a newsletter. If you have a project, program or event that you would like to share with national organizations please feel free to send your submissions to ICOMBO for an upcoming newsletter.*

## CONGRESS 2012 – FLORENCE ITALY



ICOMBO would like to welcome and encourage you to attend the ISTS Congress. Congress 2012 is to be held in Florence, Italy from the 1st – 4<sup>th</sup> of April. You will find relevant information and the

preliminary program at <http://www.mcaevents.org/twins2012/>.

Now is the time to start planning and budgeting to send a representative (or two) from your association to this important event. In addition to attending the Congress you will have an opportunity to network with other delegates from national organizations supporting families with multiples from all over the world.

During the ICOMBO sessions, it is important to hear from as many associations/organizations as possible. Already a few groups have expressed an interest in making a presentation, so think about whether there is anything occurring in your country that might be interesting for others to hear about and contact us to express your interest in presenting.

Please feel free to contact Kim Weatherall with more questions, comments or suggestions at [chair@icombo.org](mailto:chair@icombo.org).



## 1<sup>st</sup> International Czech Conference “Life with Twins” - OCT. 20 – 21, 2011 by Gail Moore (Past Member of ICOMBO Board of Directors)



Gail Moore

My experience in Prague, at the 1<sup>st</sup> International Czech Conference “Life with Twins”, held October 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> 2011, began with a dinner hosted by conference organizer, Klára Vitková Ruliková. Without a doubt, the Czech Republic is fortunate to have such a dedicated person managing its national organization – Ceskomoravská asociace Klubu dvojcat a vicercat (CAKDAV).

Klára became involved because there was no such organization in her country when she had her twins. Consequently, she established CAKDAV 17 years ago, according to the model of the British Association TAMBA. She chaired the group for a long time and is now the Chairwoman of Twins Club Association. Klára is the author of three books on the development and parenting of twins. She is also the mother of four children and works at the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.



Klára Vitková Ruliková

Being asked to present at this conference was truly an honour, and I will treasure the experience forever. It gave me an opportunity to share what we do in my country through Multiple Births Canada (MBC) and present the work we have put into updating the **Declaration of Rights and Statement of Needs of Twins and Higher Order Multiples**, leading the 1<sup>st</sup> International Multiple Births Awareness Week, and directing the efforts of the International Council of Multiple Birth Organizations (ICOMBO).

More about the conference and its presenters in a moment - I must interrupt here by encouraging you to put a visit to Prague on your bucket list. Without a doubt it is steeped with history and is truly an exquisitely beautiful city. The buildings are stunning, the views breathtaking, and the people gracious. It was an as I said, five days that will be forever etched in my memory.

The conference itself started at 1 p.m. on a Thursday and ended 24 hours later. It is amazing now to consider how much they packed into those few hours! There were 14 presenters who provided interesting topics in an international style of delivery – three 20 minute presentations followed by a 30 minute discussion period. Five of the 14 presentations were in English, the other nine in Czech. They had translators and headset systems in place so all delegates could hear the speakers in their native language, be it Czech or English.

Topics covered included – prenatal risks, breastfeeding and its benefits, loss in the multiple birth situation and bereavement support, school issues for multiples and the importance of parental involvement, scientific research on the scent of monozygotic twins as it relates to dog tracking, behavioral and physical development of twins, the nature of twins’ social relationships, tandem hypnotherapy, relationships and communication between monozygotic twins, and the roles multiple birth organizations have in offering support to multiple-birth families.



**Dr. Nancy Segal**



**Dr. Pat Preedy**



**Lynda P. Haddon**

Three internationally known speakers that may be familiar to ICOMBO members were – Dr. Nancy L. Segal of California State University, the author of over 120 scientific articles and book chapters and of several book on twins – Dr. Pat Preedy, an Education Research Consultant for the Twins and Multiple Births Association (TAMBA) and Executive Principal for Sheffield, a co-educational day and board school in the UK – and, Lynda P. Haddon a Canadian educator teaching multiple-birth specific prenatal classes and Chair of MBC’s Loss Support Network.

Of special note is that this conference was free to all delegates as it was financially supported by the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. In fact, the event was held at the Czech Parliament building, yet another beautiful historic building.

Klára’s efforts to make this conference possible are commendable. She capably introduced the Czech professionals and parents of multiples in attendance to an excellent learning program that will hopefully set the stage for many more in her country. Well done Klára!

***The ICOMBO Board would like to thank Gail Moore for representing ICOMBO in Prague!***

## **ICOMBO VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

ICOMBO is looking for dedicated volunteers to assist the Board of Directors. ICOMBO is currently limited in its ability to work towards its objectives due to a lack of human (and financial) resources. Volunteers are needed to fulfill a number of positions that will better help connect and support national organizations worldwide.



Ideally ICOMBO is seeking volunteers who have experience volunteering at a national or international level, preferably with a multiple-birth organization, has a passion for multiple-birth issues and who are comfortable working on their own (seeking assistance when needed) and taking initiative where necessary. Working internationally can be a challenge, but it can also be an exciting opportunity to meet others with a similar passion for multiple-birth issues who want to make a difference. Volunteers must have Internet access and access to email.

***Positions Available*** – In addition to there being positions on the ICOMBO Board available, there are a number of other areas that need your help. ICOMBO needs volunteers who can assist in the areas of research, newsletter writing, website management, Facebook monitoring, the International Awareness Week Committee, and a whole lot more.

If you are interested in helping at the international level and would like more information on how you can help – please contact Kim at [chair@icombo.org](mailto:chair@icombo.org).

## ICOMBO BOARD MEMBERS

### **Kimberley Weatherall (Canada) – ICOMBO Chair**



Kimberley Weatherall is the current Chair of ICOMBO and is also a Past Board Chair for Multiple Births Canada (MBC).

Kim began her volunteer career for the multiple-birth community with the Multiple Births Families Association of Ottawa in Ontario Canada (formerly OTPA), a Chapter of MBC where she held many different positions before moving to the national level in 1998, to begin serving on the Multiple Births Canada Board of Directors. On the MBC Board Kim took on a number of different positions including Director of Volunteer Management and Director of Funding.

Kim took on the role of Chair for the International Council of Multiple Birth Organizations (ICOMBO) in June of 2007 (and again in 2010) and sits on the Board of the International Society for Twins Studies (ISTS) representing ICOMBO members.

Kim lives in Orleans, Ontario in Canada with her husband Steve and their 24-year-old monozygotic twin daughters, Stephanie and Kristin. Kim recently stepped down from the MBC Board of Directors to take on the position of Acting Executive Director, moving the MBC office to her home and managing the day to day business for the organization. Her background is in Human Resources, Administration and Finance – having most recently worked for an international volunteer sending organization for 9 years. Her university background is in Sociology/Anthropology and she has recently completed the Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Management Program in addition to partially completing her HR Certification.

### **Mary Adcock (United States of America) – Immediate Past Chair ICOMBO**



Mary lives in the state of Kansas, USA. She is a past president of the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs (NOMOTC), and of the Kansas Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs (KOMOTC). While serving as a volunteer with parents of twins organizations, from local to international, for more than 18 years, Mary has additionally worked in many roles, including Editor, Feature Writer, Nominating Chair, Grant Writing Committee Chair, Endowment Committee Chair, Secretary, Research Chair, and Treasurer.

Mary co-presented sessions at two ISTS Congresses, focusing on results from NOMOTC research studies about premature multiples and reading difficulties in multiples, and on NOMOTC's Guidelines for the Education of Multiple Birth Children. Mary also served as chair of the ISTS Mid-Congress Conference, held in Los Angeles, CA, in 2005.

In her day-to-day world, Mary currently works as an Instructional Coach/Reading Instructor for the Hutchinson School District. She provides grant writing services to school districts on a contract basis, and she is the Publications Coordinator for the Kansas Staff Development Association.

Mary and her husband, David, are parents to 19-year-old identical twins, Holly and Noel, and to a 21-year-old, singleton daughter, Rachel. She is also "mama" to three adorable pets: two dogs, Tax and Macy, and a cat, Donny.

#### **Monica Rankin (Australia) – Co-Director Membership**

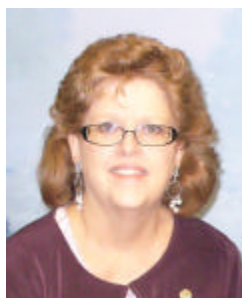


Monica lives in Melbourne, Australia. Until recently, she was the Publications Officer for the Australian Multiple Birth Association (AMBA) and has completed 2 two year terms as a Director of the national association. Monica has been a volunteer with multiple birth associations in Australia for 21 years, at local, state and national levels, working in many roles including Treasurer, local and state President, representative to Australian Twin Registry and Secretary.

Monica represented AMBA at the ISTS/ICOMBO Congress in Seoul last year and was appointed to the Board at that time. Monica is also on the Planning Committee for the 2012 Twins Plus Festival, a national event for families and friends of multiples, to be held in Melbourne in March 2012. This will be the third time that such an event has been held in Australia and the organizing committee are hoping for a large number of people to attend, from across the globe.

In her other life, Monica is a teacher of Mathematics, currently working with 15 – 17 year old students. She and her husband, John, are the proud parents of 21 yr old identical twin boys, Chris and Anthony, a 17 yr old singleton boy, Luke and a 15 yr old singleton girl, Alison. With the older boys becoming mature adults (??), she and John are looking forward to travelling to many places in the coming years.

#### **Terri Gillis (United States) – Vice-Chair**



Terri Gillis is the immediate Past President and current Advisor of the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc. (NOMOTC), where she has been a volunteer for 19 years. She has served in the Finance, Education, Convention, and Publicity Departments as well on several special committees. In her current role as Advisor, she oversees two committees; The EDGE (Endowment) Committee and the Nominating Committee.

During Terri's tenure as President of NOMOTC, she is most proud of the work accomplished to deliver more online services and increase communications to the local clubs. *"Our team*

*of Board of Directors and volunteers focused on making it easier to do business with NOMOTC. In return we reduced expenses and further met the needs of our members."*

In addition to her National work, Terri continues to serve as a member of the Board of Directors for the Florida State Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs. She is a Past President of this organization as well as her local club, Greater Orlando Mothers of Twins and Triplets Club, where she has been a member for 37 years. In addition to her local club, Terri is also a founding member of the Flamingo Mothers of Multiples.

Outside of her volunteer efforts, Terri is wife to Charles, mom to Tricia and Tara, and a new grandmother. In her "spare time" she continues to lead a Sales Administration team at SunTrust Banks, Inc. where she has been employed for 41 years. She manages a diverse group of teammates that support bankers across 14 states in the United States. Terri resides in Orlando, Florida.

Terri will be attending her first ICOMBO meetings next year in Florence Italy and is very much looking forward to meeting ICOMBO members from around the globe.

#### **Christine Disselkamp (Germany) – Co-Membership Director**



Dr. Christine Disselkamp is a Psycholinguist from Germany who represented the German ABC-Club at the last three ISTS/ICOMBO Congresses in Denmark, Belgium and Seoul. As a Board member of the ABC-Club Christine is responsible for research and international contacts.

Some years ago she wrote a thesis about triplets, because she wanted to know what it really means to be a triplet. Her research investigates various areas of the development and contains questions about the social and emotional development, about the speech, the identity development, the physical likeness and about the advantages and disadvantages of being taught together or separately in school. Two hundred and seventy six families with triplets from Germany, Austria and Switzerland have taken part in her study.

Christine chose her topic for her dissertation based on her personal experience as a proud mother of 15-year-old triplet boys.

#### **Mari Kaihovaara (Finland) – Editorial Director**



Mari Kaihovaara lives in Nummi-Pusula, which is a nice countryside town outside Finland's capital Helsinki. She is a currently part time project manager for the Good Start-project with the Finnish Multiple Birth Association. She sits on the Board of the Finnish Multiple Birth Association and is the founder and

Chair of the Finnish Triplet Association. Mari has been involved with the Multiple Birth Associations for almost 20 years.

Mari attended the ISTS congress in Helsinki and in Seoul where she was appointed to the ICOMBO Board.

In her other life, Mari is a planning officer for First Aid Training in the Finland Red Cross. She is a proud mother of 21 yr old triplets, Hanna, Jaakko and Emilia and 15 yr old twin boys Lauri and Matias.

Now that the triplets have moved out, Mari is wondering if she will have more time for herself. At the moment work with the Multiple Birth Association seems to take all of her spare time, but she is enjoying all of it and would not change any part of her life.

***We look forward to getting to know you all better.***

***Thank you for all you do for multiple-birth families in your local communities, nationally and internationally!***