

Welcome to the second issue of USC Fertility Success News, a newsletter we created to reach out to our patients and physician partners—to connect, communicate, and educate.

Much has happened since our inaugural edition made its debut last Spring. We've welcomed many new patients with dreams of parenthood, and have bid a fond farewell to women, men, and newborns going off to forge new families. Many of these individuals attended the *First Annual USC Fertility Baby Reunion* last May. It was an honor and joy to see so many new moms and dads finding their way along the journey of new parenthood!

As our new and improved Web site—USCFertility.org—has continued to receive an increasing number visitors, the content likewise has grown. Visit the site often for updates and information on ongoing research studies for which patients may be eligible. Inside this newsletter you'll also read about our continued efforts to remain pioneers at the forefront of innovative technologies. We've been in the news, we've attended conferences and other events... Read on within these pages for those details.

Perhaps the most exciting news of all is the fact that USC Fertility has played an integral role in the development of the *Stem Cell Program* at the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine. Having established several new research facilities and recruited some of the best stem cell scientists in the world, the school is highly committed to this promising technology. USC Fertility continues to contribute to these efforts by collaborating with basic scientists, developing training programs for gifted young stem cell biologists, and providing

consultation and expertise about donated embryos. This work holds hope for many common human diseases and will also help to bring a fuller understanding of early embryo development so that we can better treat patients with infertility and recurrent pregnancy loss.

As 2006 nears its end, we reflect on the joyous achievements of the last few months and look forward to all that 2007 has to offer. We thank you for the confidence you've placed in us and we look forward to helping you build your family.

**Warm Regards,**

*Richard J. Paulson, MD*

*John K. Jain, MD*

*Karine Chung, MD*

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<b>INSIDE THIS ISSUE</b> .....	
CUTTING EDGE: Egg Donation .....	2
IN THE NEWS .....	2
HOUSE CALL .....	3
EVENTS .....	3
BIRTHS .....	3
Profile in Courage: Brenda Strong .....	4

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# Hot Topic: Egg Donation in Women of Advanced Reproductive Age

Richard J. Paulson, MD



Human fertility is well known to be dependent on the age of the female partner. In population studies, a decline in infertility is first noted when the female partner reaches approximately 30 years of age, and the rate of decline increases progressively with each

advancing year. Delivery rates in the United States demonstrate that babies born to mothers over the age of 40 represent less than 1% of total live births. By age 47, this proportion decreases to a mere 0.01% of all deliveries. Furthermore, this age-related decline in fertility does not appear to be reversible by fertility treatments which utilize the patient's own eggs.

In contrast, oocyte donation produces pregnancy rates in older women that are essentially the same as those of younger women. Several reports have confirmed the efficacy of oocyte donation in the older group, and subsequently it has been demonstrated that pregnancies can be achieved in women over the age of 50.

As oocyte donation to older women has become a more commonplace event, society has become increasingly accepting of this practice. However, some ethical questions continue to be raised. These include the increase in difference in age between the parents and children, and the potential for the child to be orphaned at an early age. But in many societies, grandparents traditionally assume the bulk of responsibility for the raising of their children's children. It seems doubtful that the wisdom and experience that accompany age would be a detriment to parenting. Finally, age is but one factor in the prediction of longevity, and healthy women at age 50 have a life expectancy that is more than sufficient to raise the child to adulthood. It should be noted that relatively few women over the age of 50 are seeking fertility care; to date, it is estimated that fewer than 500 pregnancies are estimated to have been reported in this age group worldwide.

It is now established that oocyte donation is a successful strategy for overcoming the age-related block to conception in women of advanced reproductive age. As life expectancy increases, pregnancy in women of advanced reproductive age may become less controversial, and accepted by society as a normal process.

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## IN THE NEWS

National and international media regularly turn to USC Fertility physicians for expert information and commentary on reproductive health issues. A complete list of press releases, interviews and media coverage is available in our Web site "Press Room" at [USCFertility.org](http://USCFertility.org). A few of the summer/fall media highlights include:

### September 5, 2006:

**Not Your Mother's Mother.** Dr. Paulson appears on CBS News, The Early Show discussing issues faced by women of advanced reproductive age.

### July 8, 2006:

**Too Old to Give Birth?** Dr. Paulson interviewed by the Indianapolis Star.

### June 14, 2006:

**Pregnancy and Parenting After 35.** Dr. Paulson interview appears on Palo Alto Online.

### June 7, 2006:

**The Male Biological Clock Ticks Too.** Dr. Paulson on ABC News.

### May 3, 2006:

**Companies Forge a New Option in Fertility.** Dr. Jain discusses Egg Freezing with the Associated Press.

## NEW ON THE WEB:

Checkout [USCFertility.org](http://USCFertility.org) for updates including:  
- Medication Information Sheets - New physician Dr. Marc Kalan  
- More Babies in the Hall of Fame - New Testimonials

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# House Call

With Karine Chung, MD



In each issue of USC Fertility Success News, we will answer patients' questions related to a specific fertility-related topic. Today we focus on age & fertility:

**Q.** My husband and I have been trying to get pregnant for the past 6 months

without any luck. How many months should we keep trying before we see a fertility specialist? I am thirty-eight years old and have never been pregnant before.

**Dr. Chung:** Because there is a well-known decline in fertility with age, time is of the essence for older women. In women over the age of 35, it is best to seek the help of a fertility specialist if pregnancy has not been achieved after 3-6 months of trying. Fertility treatment may or may not be necessary immediately, but it is better to know sooner rather than later. Regardless of age, if you have irregular or infrequent periods, a history of pelvic infection, pelvic surgery or endometriosis, or if your husband has any reason to suspect poor sperm quality, you should be seen and evaluated by a fertility specialist without delay.

If you would like to submit a question to USC Fertility Success News, please send an email to [Doctor@USCFertility.org](mailto:Doctor@USCFertility.org).



## BIRTHS

1. **Adam Frederick**, born September 26, 2005 to Wayne and Sharon Frederick
2. **Braeden Beglinger**, born in 2005
3. **Felicity and Martin Panicacci**, born December 8, 2004 to Roger and Roxanne Panicacci
4. **And two more cuties...** George and Jade!

If you would like your newest arrival to be pictured in an upcoming issue of USC Fertility Success News, please send an email to [Reception@USCFertility.org](mailto:Reception@USCFertility.org).

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## EVENTS:

### Los Angeles, CA, October 28, 2006:

USC Fertility sponsors the 15th Annual Fall Infertility and Adoption Symposium, a daylong event hosted by the Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Diego chapters of **RESOLVE**: The National Infertility Association. Dr. Paulson, Dr. Chung and Dr. Jain will participate.

### New Orleans, LA, October 21 – 25, 2006:

The American Society of Reproductive Medicine Annual Meeting, where USC Fertility physicians present research findings including:

**Motherhood after age fifty:** An evaluation of parenting stress and physical functioning (Dr. Steiner).

**The endometrial explant culture system:** A promising model for the evaluation of endometrial receptivity (Dr. Fogle).

**The clinical utility of the measurement of hyperglycosylated human chorionic gonadotropin:** Early pregnancy following assisted reproductive technology (Dr. Allen).

### Los Angeles, CA, May 7, 2006:

First Annual USC Fertility Baby Reunion. Held at Lacey Park, over 250 current and past patients with their spouses, partners and many wonderful children attended. We hope you will all join us next year!



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# “Desperate Housewives” Actress Brenda Strong, National Spokesperson for The American Fertility Association, Shares her Fertility Story

Brenda Strong – known to many as Mary-Alice Young, the narrator and dearly-departed Wisteria Lane neighbor on ABC’s hit “Desperate Housewives” – wrestled with infertility and turned to the practice of yoga to manage and alleviate the associated stress brought on by the diagnosis. She will use her spokesperson platform with the American Fertility Association (AFA) to educate infertile women and men on how they can re-connect with their bodies, reduce stress, and increase self-esteem through exercise and complementary medicine.

“Brenda’s holistic approach to fertility teaches us to treat the whole individual – mind, body, and spirit. We have to balance the elements we can control with those that we cannot. That’s an important message that too often gets relegated to the sidelines,” said AFA founder and executive director Pamela Madsen.

“It’s difficult to love your body when you feel like it’s failing you. Yoga reduced my stress and bodily tension. It allowed me to bring my body back into balance, to emerge from my fertility struggle with my sense of self-esteem and self-worth intact, and to forge a stronger bond with my husband,” said Ms. Strong.

Ms. Strong has led a high-visibility media campaign to support the AFA and women and men on the journey toward wholeness and acceptance in their reproductive capabilities. She will again serve as Mistress of Ceremony at this year’s AFA Kokopelli Ball at the Chelsea Piers in New York City, where last fall she presented the Lifetime Achievement Award to Dr. Paulson.

“Having met Brenda last year, I am impressed with her strength of mind and spirit. She has found her own way to address her fertility struggles and come out a stronger woman for it” said Dr. Paulson.

Ms. Strong has taught at UCLA’s Mind-Body Institute and produced and starred in “Yoga 4 Fertility,” a video series designed to help infertile couples through yoga therapy ([www.yoga4fertility.com](http://www.yoga4fertility.com)). She and her husband designed a system of yoga postures for women and couples experiencing infertility, which reduce stress, increase coping mechanisms, deepen awareness, increase relaxation capability, and improve circulation and muscle tone. The yoga practice enhances and supports any protocol treatment suggested by a fertility doctor.