

## OH, BABY!

Does your new baby frequently look like this? Are you puzzled, confused, concerned? Then it's time for you to turn to "Baby: An Owner's Manual." This helpful new guide by West Deer resident Julie Long and Bend, Ore., photographer Steve Tague provides complete information for the successful operation, cleaning and maintenance of your new unit.

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Steve Tague

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## COVER STORY

# Special instructions for your bundle of joy

By Virginia Linn  
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

There comes a time in the lives of most new parents when they want to scream out in exasperation: "Why don't babies come with instructions?"

Well, now they do.

A new guide, "Baby: An Owner's Manual," is the brainchild of Steve Tague, a dad in Bend, Ore., who came up with the idea in one of those frustrating moments with his firstborn.

He became a hands-on dad when his wife slipped into postpartum depression shortly after the birth of their son, Dakota, eight years ago. The idea for the book took shape as he was installing a washer and dryer and saw how easily instructions for babies could fit into the format used for appliance manuals.

"We took what could be an overwhelming experience, bringing home a new baby, and approached it with humor," says Julie Long, a free-lance writer in West Deer, who developed the book with Tague, a commercial photographer. "We had a blast working on it."

The two, who have known each other since attending high school in Southern California, started looking through car and stereo manuals. They developed sections on features and functions, getting started, basic operation (such as changing rear cover), cleaning and maintenance, troubleshooting (baby won't refill) and important safety precautions (what to do if you smell gas). The handbook is for baby models XX-G and XY-B.

"It was amazing how easily appliance instructions could apply to babies," says Long, 39. "You could replace 'leaf blower' with baby: Don't operate under the influence of drugs or alcohol ... Keep baby free of dirt, dust and debris."

As a new dad, Tague, 40, had the added challenge of dealing with his son's colic. "The only thing that would calm him was when I would



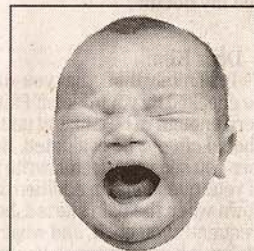
Unit requires refilling. fig. 49a



Unit overheating. fig. 49b



Unit requires handling. fig. 49c



Unit should be stored. fig. 49d



Unit's rear cover should be changed. fig. 49e



Unit self-testing audio alert system. fig. 49f

A page from "Baby: An Owner's Manual"

Steve Tague photos

carry him and do what my wife at the time called the 'stork walk.' I had to take long, exaggerated steps, going up on my tip toes with each stride. I would have to do this for

hours."

On outings with his son, Tague often ran out of diapers. "I would end up in the men's room making Origi-mi-style diapers out of paper towels."

### MORE INFO

"Baby: An Owner's Manual," (Broadway Books, \$9.95) is expected in book stores this week. The authors will be giving a portion of proceeds to charities that promote infant health. Long will be donating money to Family Foundation, which helps fund Head Start programs. For more information, visit [www.babyownersmanual.com](http://www.babyownersmanual.com)

Although he purchased several baby books, he says none covered the topic from his perspective.

With men taking a more active role in child care, the manual "speaks in their language," Long says. Fathers who have seen the proofs for the book, she said, laugh louder than women do.

Tague now has two boys, ages 7 and 8. Long and her husband, Brian, decided not to have children; she is aunt and godmother to a dozen youngsters instead and has two very spoiled English bulldogs. Not having babies of her own gave her the advantage of an "objective fresh eye toward the oddity of babies."

Long believes the book will be helpful to all new parents, many of whom don't have family close by. "They're on their own. I have a lot of friends having children in their mid to late 30s. They're comfortable in the boardroom, but they're out of their element in the baby room."

"They're willing to laugh about that, about stumbling through."

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