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It takes a family ...

Mother recounts raising Down syndrome child born in 1953

By **LEIGH ANN LAUBE**
 lalaube@timesnews.net

When Billy Schulz was born in 1953, his facial features were quite distinctive. But nobody recognized that the third son of Bill and Jane Schulz had Down syndrome.

It wasn't until Billy was 18 months old that a doctor made the diagnosis: "Your little boy is Mongoloid. You can tell from the slant of his eyes, the shape of his palms, and the over-flexibility of his limbs."

The Schulzes were told to take their son home and love him.

Thus began a journey that continues today and is chronicled in "Grown Man Now" (in2Wit Publishing; \$19.95), Jane Schulz's story of the first 50-plus years of Billy's life.

Armed only with the pediatrician's simple advice, Bill and Jane took Billy home and did the best they could. There were no services available to Billy or their family in caring for him. They had no idea what their future would hold, nor the struggles they would have raising their son.

"Not knowing what to do was the hard part. Not having anyone to ask," Jane said. "Wondering if we were doing the best for Billy. Being totally on our own with no support, no advice, no direction. It was, among other things, a lonely time. A time without confidence. A time of frustration."

Eighteen months after Billy's birth, the family welcomed their only daughter. As Mary grew, she and older brothers John and Tom doted on Billy.

"It worked out pretty well," Jane said, with a smile. "We gave him more attention and the other kids poured attention on him."

As a child, Billy was raised as much by his siblings as by his parents. John, Tom and Mary taught Billy to walk and talk. They sang with him, played with him, led him around the neighborhood, took him to church. It was a family effort then, and it's a family effort today.

"As Billy and I age, it has become so important to have family assistance," Jane said. "My son-in-law Jos de Wit frequently picks Billy up from work. The boys have encouraged Billy in so many ways, and you can see how important Mary is to our well-being and production. Raising a child and promoting an adult with disabilities is all about family cooperation."

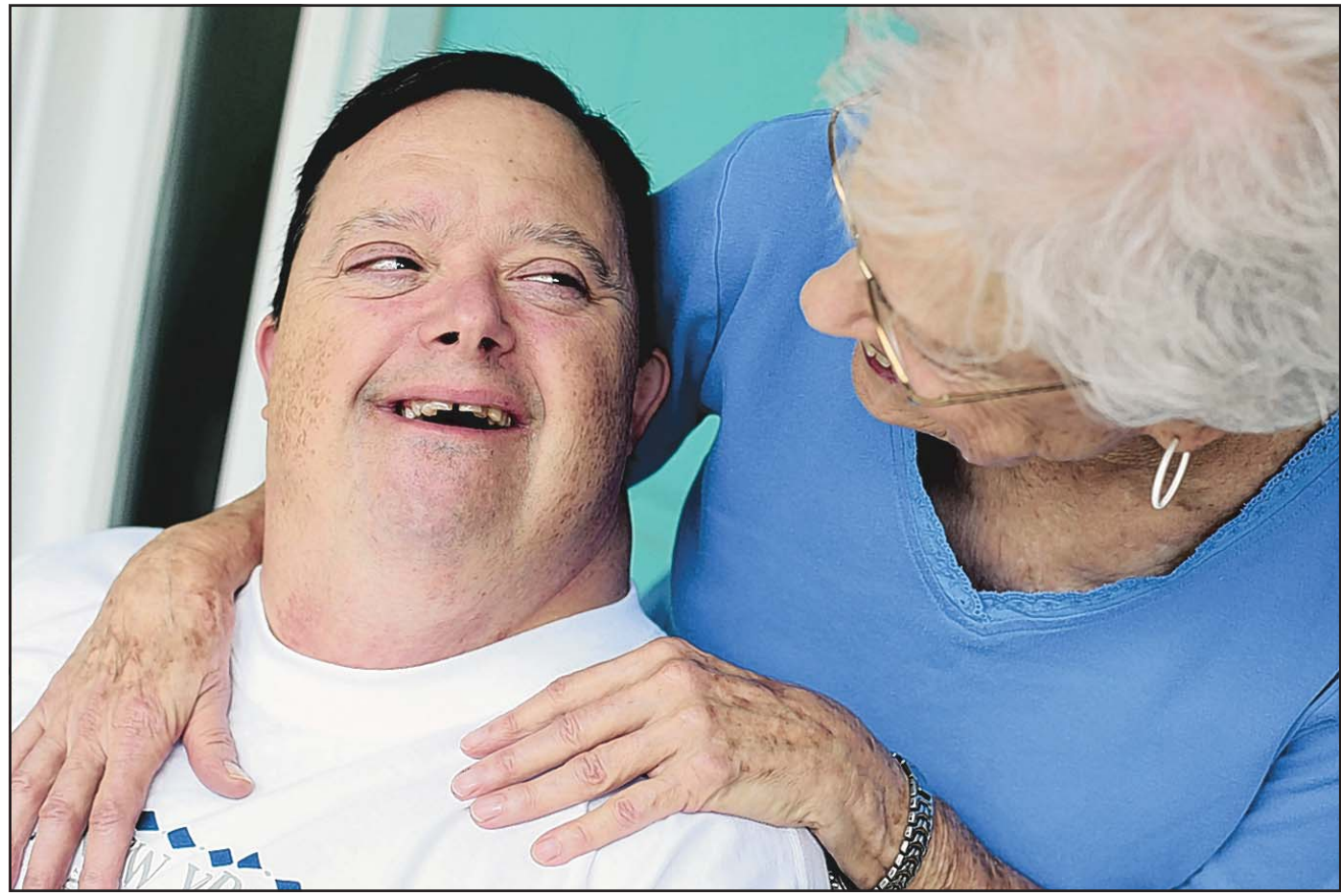
The family lived in North Carolina and Georgia during Billy's childhood, as well as in Auburn, Ala.

Jane had attended Woman's College of the University of North Carolina for a year as an art major, and in Georgia she enrolled in night classes at Columbus College to earn a teaching degree.

When she took a job as a kindergarten teacher at an elementary school in Columbus, Ga., Billy enrolled as a 6-year-old student in an adjacent kindergarten classroom.

"He learned to take his turn, to behave in the lunchroom, stand in line, and to go to the bathroom on schedule. It was one of his best school years. We became pioneers in the mainstreaming process, a concept that was to become my mission," Jane wrote in "Grown Man Now."

After her sophomore year at Columbus College, Jane quit her teaching job to enroll full time at Auburn University to become a special education teacher. She graduated



With the continuous support of his family, especially his mother Jane, Billy Schulz has been able to live a full life, despite being diagnosed with Down syndrome as an infant in the mid-1950s, a time when support services for children and their families were minimal.

with honors, then earned a master's degree and a doctorate in education.

She taught elementary and special education in public schools for five years and at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, N.C., for more than 20 years, receiving a number of awards for teaching and winning the Distinguished Service Award by the Exceptional Children's Division of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

While in Cullowhee, Billy graduated from high school, which was a much celebrated event. But after that, things got hard.

"Up until that time, there were battles to be fought, but at least there was a structure where you could address those problems," Jane said. "After high school, there was nothing. It was as if we thought his life would be over after high school."

Billy's job at a lumberyard, obtained through the Smoky Mountain Center for Mental Health, didn't last long. After working all summer stacking boards, Billy one day refused to go to work and refused to discuss his decision.

Months later, they learned that a co-worker had threatened to push Billy off a high place where the lumber was stacked and to beat him up if he told anyone.

The family began to consider alternatives for employment.

"We had to look and make our own solutions," Jane said.

Billy was admitted to a group home and a sheltered workshop, but he began to rebel. Jane drew up a contract — a technique she had resorted to in situations before — and Billy agreed to work hard at the workshop until Christmas, do his work at the group home, and come home one weekend a month. They also agreed that during Christmas, if he didn't want to return to the group home, he could move home and work. Billy eventually left that setting for a job at the WCU library, where he worked for 21 years.

Bill Schulz died in April 1996, ten years after suffering a stroke. In May



Courtesy of Mary de Wit



Courtesy of Mary de Wit

Billy Schulz is a familiar face at Food City on Eastman Road in Kingsport (above) where he works bagging groceries. He also serves as an usher at his church, First Broad Street United Methodist Church.

2001, Jane and Billy moved to Kingsport to be near Mary, her husband Jos and their sons. They joined First Broad Street United Methodist Church, and Billy landed a job at Food City.

Jane's house was designed to include a downstairs apartment in which Billy lives. The apartment has a bedroom, bathroom, living room and a big screen television so Billy can watch his favorite movies and his fa-

vorite actress, Jane Fonda.

They spend their mornings enjoying coffee and looking at the newspaper, with Billy reading the day's weather forecast. As much as Billy has learned from his mom, she's also learned from him.

"He's taught me that you can slow down and sometimes you have to slow down. To really be open to people, not to make judgements about people. To

Please see 'GROWN', page 10E



After Billy Schulz was diagnosed with Down syndrome at the age of 18 months, his doctor told his parents to take him home and love him. That they and Billy's siblings did, giving him as normal an upbringing as possible, including kindergarten pictures, a toy gun for his 10th birthday, and a high school graduation portrait when Billy received his diploma at age 21. (photos courtesy of Mary de Wit)

SAVE TIME AND MONEY

Combination of hot water and ice may free stuck plate from bowl

Dear Heloise: When stacking dishes in the sink, I accidentally had a small plate become **STUCK IN A BOWL**. Do you have any advice to free the plate from the bowl?
 — Ellen, via e-mail

Ellen, give this a try: Place the bowl in some very hot water (use care) and put plenty of ice cubes on the plate. Let it sit until the plate is cold, and then carefully attempt to remove it. Or dribble lightweight oil around the plate, let sit overnight, then use a putty knife or metal spatula to see if you can budge the plate. Good luck! — Heloise



Hints from Heloise

carpet. Reusing plastic grocery sacks solved the problem.

I sit in the vehicle and put a bag over each boot before placing my feet in the vehicle. I then can take off the boots in the sack. I always carry a clean pair of slip-on shoes to put on. — Rhonda R., Manhattan, Kan.

Easy-find recipes

Dear Heloise: I have a large collection of cookbooks. Most of them have spiral

bindings. To locate my favorite, I have tied a piece of colorful yarn at the top of the spiral. I am so excited about this idea that I am going to color-code several others, with a list of them on the inside of the closet door! — Joan Adkins, Maren-go, Ohio

Vacuum care

Dear Heloise: May I suggest at this time of year to take your vacuum out on your porch, deck or steps. Change the bag, turn it on its side and wipe the top, bottom, handle and sides with a damp paper towel lightly sprayed with a cleaner.

Check the brush bristles and remove built-up hair, string and thread. Your

vacuum will work better after this sprucing.

I really enjoy your column in The Star-Ledger. — Irene of Point Pleasant, N.J.

Chandelier cleaning

Dear Heloise: In your article regarding chandelier cleaning, you failed to remind people to not turn the chandelier. I have had two neighbors who have actually unscrewed the chandelier from the ceiling because it was easier to stand in one place and turn it.

In one instance, it crashed onto the dining table, and the other crashed onto a marble floor. — B.E., via e-mail
 Boy, these chandeliers must not have

been anchored in the ceiling very well.

Folks, be sure the chandelier is turned off, and don't turn it round and round while cleaning. Check the anchoring before doing anything to the chandelier! Thanks for the reminder. — Heloise

Handy belt use

Dear Heloise: I take old belts that are too big on me and hang them using a curtain hook in my laundry room.

I hang my measuring tapes and different sizes and types of scissors on them. This keeps me organized. — Anna Victoria Reich, Stafford, Va.

Mail a money-saving or timesaving hint to Heloise, P.O. Box 795000, San Antonio, Texas 78279-5000 or e-mail Heloise@Heloise.com.

Keep mud at bay

Dear Heloise: As a construction worker, mud poses a threat to my vehicle's



Erica Yoon — eyoon@timesnews.net

Billy Schulz and his mother Jane enjoy starting their day by reading the newspaper together. Jane has written "Grown Man Now," a story of her family and raising a child with Down syndrome at a time when minimal services were available.

'Grown Man Now' family story

Continued from page 1E

be aggressive when I have to be, to be concerned about all people, particularly those who have been disenfranchised," she said.

Jane and Billy, who will be 53 in January, speak to civic organizations, at WCU, and most recently at the 2008 National Down Syndrome Congress Convention in Boston in July.

They also speak in the high school students in the SHOUT! youth leadership program.

"Our thrust there starts with tolerance, but my theme is celebrate diversity. Tolerance is just the beginning," she said.

Jane said she's known for a long time that she would write a book about her family.

"I want to let people know, first of all, that Billy has been a plus in our family, and he has a life he feels is a good life, which is not to say I would have chosen this, but it has special joys and benefits as well as challenges," she said. "The message is that it takes a family to raise a child who has a disability. I believe all of our experiences add to who we are and help us deal with our challenges and our victories."

Most people, Jane writes in "Grown Man Now," are kind to and appreciative of her son. Many recognize Billy outside of Food City.

"They know who he is," she said. "You know who I am? I'm Billy's mom."

In addition to the paperback "Grown Now Now," the book has been produced in MP3-CD format so listeners can experience the book in the author's voice, with

The message is that it takes a family to raise a child who has a disability. I believe all of our experiences add to who we are and help us deal with our challenges and our victories.

—Jane Schulz

chapter accents in Billy's voice.

A Web site, www.grownman-now.com, has been created to provide an easily accessed source of interaction for parents and others who wish to enter the dialogue in celebration and support of those who have handi-

caps.

Books are available online and at the First Broad Street United Methodist Church office.

The Schulzes will sign copies of "Grown Man Now" at 1 p.m., Oct. 11, at Food City on Eastman Road in Kingsport.

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October 18-19
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The Hook the Book Contest returns as part of **Women's Expo 2008**, along with a host of wonderful authors, from local favorites to New York Times' Bestsellers. Submit your Hook the Book Entry (see rules below) by **October 3**, and make your plans now to visit these authors at **Women's Expo, October 18 - 19**.

Hook the Book rules:

- Must be an ORIGINAL opening line -- no plagiarism!
- Open to everyone of all ages. Family oriented event, so no offensive language.
- Opening line must be one sentence only.
- Open to ALL fiction genres: Mysteries, Thrillers, Horror, Sci-Fi, Paranormal, Chic-Lit, Southern Fiction, Romance, Manga, Children's, etc.
- Limit five (5) opening lines per person. Must be hand-printed or computer generated. Please write legibly if hand-printing.
- Include name, address, phone number and signature on the same paper as the opening lines.

Mail to: **Hook the Book Contest, 1417 Hickory Street, Kingsport, TN 37664.**

The Top Ten picks will be chosen by an independent panel and be displayed at the Authors' Booth at the Women's Expo. The Opening Line that receives the most votes from the Women's Expo attendees will be declared the winner on Sunday, October 19.

Winner receives a Goody Basket from the Authors!

Past Hook the Book Winning Lines:

- It all began with the turnip greens.
- She should have screamed.
- It's a real pain to wake up and find the County Coroner banging on your front door.



ORDER YOUR TICKET

today for the Meet the Authors dinner -- "Motivation & Inspiration for the Body & Soul", sponsored by the Bays Mountain Park Association on Friday, October 17, from 7 pm - 11 pm, at Bays Mountain Park. Authors will be Joanna Campbell Stan (Chicken Soup for the Soul, Chocolate for the Soul) and author/model Valerie Ramsey (Gracefully). Please see www.baysmountain.com for more details and a complete list of attending authors.

Coming to Women's Expo 2008*

Julia Quinn	Kay Stockham	Trista Ann Michaels	Lisa Hall
Teresa Medeiros	Jennifer Estep	Jessie Verino	Elizabeth Barker
Lora Leigh	Mary Wine	Tammy Robinson Smith	Gayle Trent
Shirley Damsgaard	Beth Williamson		Daphne Matthews

*Subject to change without notice

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You might also be the winner of weekly prizes from Belk of Kingsport! Segments will be aired on News Channel 11 at noon on Fridays, beginning September 26, and prizes will be given away each week leading up to Women's Expo 2008, to be held October 18 - 19 at MeadowView Convention Center in Kingsport.

Simply fill out the application, attach a small photo, and mail to Kingsport Times-News c/o Belk Totally Stylin' Makeover, 108 East Main Street, Suite 201, Kingsport, TN 37660. Applications received by 5 pm Tuesday of each week will be eligible for prize drawings on News Channel 11. (Applicants must nominate only themselves. Photo must be attached to application. Photo will not be returned.)