

real Diaper news

Volume 1, Issue 1

Advocates for cloth diapering

By Lori Taylor

The Real Diaper Association opened last August. After years of dreaming this, it is hard to believe that we finally have available an organization to advocate for cloth diapering.

I have seen a lot of positive energy in the Diaper Underground, a lot of potential to share with others what diaper users and small business owners have learned over years of experience and detailed discussion. These women are experts. They really understand cloth diapers. They have a strong presence online, but they don't begin to reach the numbers of people they should. I wanted to create a solid structure to support and inspire them in local activities. I wanted to help these talented women teach others in their own communities.

As long as I've been in the Diaper Underground, people have been saying, "Someone should create an organization..." I kept saying, "Yea, I would join." But no one did create an organization, so I just kept slowly moving along. I gathered people with good ideas and energy, and together we created something that amazes us all.

I am a social and cultural historian by training. I became involved in the diapering community when I was pregnant

with my second child, as relief from the work of my doctoral dissertation. It didn't take long until I started applying what I know of American history and of the way communities work to what I saw before me in this dynamic community and to the history of cloth diapers in general. What happened? I wondered. Where did the diapering knowledge go? Why are so many looking for answers so far from home?

In the last half century, parents have looked for support from experts, from books, from the internet. Sources closer to home have been neglected. Parents, grandparents, friends, and neighbors have been bypassed. Knowledge of how to use cloth diapers has been lost to many people.

In the last two decades, there has been a slow revival of cloth diapering, particularly since the advent of the internet. At the Real Diaper Association, we think those sources closer to home still have the best support to offer. We want to see people face-to-face, talking about what works for them and why. We want to revive cloth diapers by encouraging experienced parents and small diapering business owners to be the local diapering experts.

These local diapering experts will show others that cloth

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Diaper services: a convenient option

By Angelique Mullen

A generation ago, when a woman got pregnant, she might expect a really helpful gift at her baby shower: a paid diaper service. Often, families and friends of a mother-to-be would each contribute a small sum of money towards the gift, paying for a week or perhaps a month of the service. This would be a welcome gift, often supplying the new parents with fresh, clean diapers for the first several months of a baby's life.

Alice Lucas of San Francisco remembers getting such a gift when she was expecting her third child in 1975. Her aunt, mother, and in-laws pitched in and paid for three months of a diaper service. She said that gift was, "... very helpful, especially considering that I had two children in diapers and one in kindergarten."

Today, while this kind of gift is still popular

among cloth diaper users, giving the gift of a paid diaper service is not possible in places where services no longer exist. Once a booming business in the United States, diaper services are on the verge of becoming extinct. Diaper services have dwindled so much in the last fifteen years that there are fewer than 90 businesses left in the United States. Jack Shiffert of the National Association of Diaper Services (NADS) says they had 400 diaper service members in 1989 but now have only 15.

In today's market, diaper service companies are shutting down in high numbers. In many states, there are only one or two diaper services left. As just one example, in Minnesota fifty years ago, there were eight diaper service companies in the Twin Cities (Continued on page 4)

Diaper covers: Why Wool's Cool

By Heather L. Sanders

My first reaction to wool as a choice fabric for diaper covers was less than informed. I was considering an old scratchy sweater my grandfather had graciously given me. He had worn it years back when living in Germany. The colors were beautiful, but the 'feel' was itchy, heavy and altogether uncomfortable. I could not don it without first pulling on a turtleneck undershirt beneath it - one with arms that extended beyond the sweater's arm length. Yes, it was THAT BAD! There are many that feel their reaction to wool extends beyond discomfort to a definite allergy. I do not believe this was my case as I have since found wool that does not cause a reaction. Rosemary Brock wrote that she has known "many people who thought they were allergic to wool and what they were allergic to was either the wool processing or the type of wool."³

Since then, however, I have learned and experienced that just as with nearly every other fiber, wool has many variations. Select wools can provide a soft, lush, highly effective waterproof layer that is surprisingly easy to maintain and launder.

Choices . . . choices . . . choices! Just as I did, many begin cloth diapering without a clue as to the vast array of choices available on the market. Few are fortunate enough to be introduced to cloth diapering from family members or friends. Over and over we hear of how mommas *just knew* they wanted a more natural choice for diapering and so, they went looking. Most local communities lack knowledgeable cloth diapering educators and/or advocates. In addition, not all are aware, nor have the resources available, to read/inquire within the cyber cloth diapering communities on the world wide web. No matter how the information is gained, once acclimated to the idea of cloth diapering in general, the next step is making decisions about the specifics. What type of cloth diapers to use? What kind of covers? What are the benefits of one over the other? Here I will list some of the attributes of wool. Being informed is the key to deciding whether or not wool needs be a component of a baby's cloth diapering system

Why choose wool? Wool covers are just more proof of what those making natural parenting choices already know - that nature is no less than perfect. Nature's gift of wool can maintain three seemingly contradicting qualities simultaneously. First, a wool cover is thermal - "it can store water vapor up to 35 per cent of its own dry weight yet it remains dry to touch and speeds up the body's own cooling system."² To attest to this fact, wool is most regularly suggested for night-time usage when leaks most often occur in abundance, although certainly can extend to everyday wear. Second, while absorbent, they still remain breathable, allowing for a maximum amount of circulation around baby's bum. This helps prevent diaper rash, but also alleviates the health concerns of trapped heat within a diapering system. Finally, wool contains natural lanolin, which creates a natural waterproof barrier or repellency. For more information on the benefits and structure of wool as a workable natural fiber for cloth diapering systems, read Marc Pehkonen's "Diapering Articles: Right Down to the Fibers", at www.fuzbaby.com.

Wool through the ages. Though it is unknown the exact moment the revelation of wool as a choice textile *came to* mankind, "the earliest dated surviving textile, found in a Danish bog, originates from 1500 BC, while the oldest fine woolen fabric dates to the fifth century BC and was found in a Greek colony."¹

Wear and tear of Wool. Before going any further, let's talk about the 'wear' of wool. After all, our concern is that baby be completely comfortable and cool, right? Wool boasts of the finest comforts - "its elasticity means garments fit so well and yield to body movement, it absorbs moisture, allows your body to breathe, yet never feels damp and clammy."² Baby can bend, stretch, crawl, pull-up easily and get the added benefit of a completely breathable diapering system. Cloth diapering enthusiasts often veer away from choosing wool because of a common misconception that wool products are not easy to care for and/or maintain. First, I would like to point out that wool need not be washed as regularly as synthetic diaper covers. Wool is "dirt resistant - the crimp and the scales prevent dirt from penetrating the surface of the wool fiber and the static resistance also helps to resist dust and lint from the air."² That, in and of itself, makes it a more agreeable diapering item for those wanting ease of use because it will cut down on the amount of time dedicated to diaper laundry. Wool is also known for its longevity and durability due to "the interlocking protein molecules . . . wool fibres have the power to elongate, stretch and recover, creating an extremely robust fabric that will last for years."²

Naturally antibacterial. Shortly following diaper changes, wool covers may smell of urine, however a system of rotating and airing them out will cause the smell to dissipate completely. Why is this? The same natural properties of lanolin that allow wool to be virtually waterproof pull double-duty as an anti-bacterial, thus killing germs. One way to know a wool cover needs laundering (outside of being soiled with fecal matter), is if the urine smell does not fade after an airing. This means the lanolin has worn thin and most likely the wool diaper cover is losing its waterproofing as well.

So how DOES wool wash up? As with any cloth diapering system, it is important to read the wash and care information given by the WAHM (Work-At-Home-Mom) or manufacturer who produced the specific wool item purchased. Some wool does require a simple hand washing system, while others can be placed on a gentle cycle in a washing machine. It is important to pay attention to these details lest one end up with a doll size wool cover for their life-size baby. However, in general, the following applies.

Do an initial rinse in cold water to cleanse away any surface urine or solid waste. Then fill the sink with warm water, adding the wool wash. The amount of wool wash needed is directly in proportion to the amount of covers being washed and the amount of water being used - the brand of wool wash that you use will stipulate teaspoon per gallon increments.

To simplify, we choose to use Eucalan® No Rinse

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Circle Leader Profile: Maya Keithly

By Angelique Mullen

We are pleased to announce that western Washington has a dedicated new Real Diaper Circle Leader, Maya Keithly. This busy mother of three, who resides in Woodinville, an outlying community in the Seattle area, has been eager to spread the word about cloth diapers. She had her first Circle meeting on January 8th, with five people in attendance, including one expectant mother. The meeting went well, and the attendees were excited about coming back. Maya happily reports that she has 12 people signed up to come to the next meeting, on February 19th. She said that it was wonderful to see the mother-to-be listen to what Maya told her and take all the provided information about cloth. "She seemed eager to give it a try," says Maya.

Advocating and encouraging other families to try cloth diapers has been something Maya has been excited about since she diapered her oldest son nine years ago. "Cloth diapering was a breeze back when my son was born, and it made even easier now by the new choices in diapering", Maya says. She finds that choosing cloth is not only a good choice for the environment but also a part of her responsibility as a role model to her children. "As a mother, I have seen what amount of conservation education has stayed with my son. He refuses to litter, will pick up trash left by others, and looks at the world around us as a 'living thing.' I want him to see his new siblings doing their part, even in infancy." Maya is currently cloth diapering her twin sons who are not quite two years old.

In addition to her job as an on-air DJ, Maya also makes and sells specialty diapers on her website, Sumobaby. She does not advertise her business and only makes and sells just a few diapers at a time. Always the advocate, she says her website is "mostly to encourage people to cloth diaper."

Becoming a Circle Leader is thrilling for Maya because she loves to get involved with beneficial causes. A seasoned political organizer, she's had experience leading parenting groups and large professional groups in the corporate world, as well as fundraising for the Breast Cancer Research Foundation and other political causes. Working as a Circle leader allows her to maintain the activist side of herself. She

says, "We live in a very wasteful society. I know that cloth diapering is best, yet on television there are disposable diaper commercials every ten minutes, while there is a widespread lack of education about our wastefulness." Maya wants to educate her local community about these issues and get parents excited about making smarter environmental choices. Acting as a Circle leader is just one more way of promoting cloth diapers. "I talk to people all the time. I have gotten a good response from talking to people in line at Whole Foods," she says.

To find out more about Maya's Real Diaper Circle, please email her at twopeasinpod@hotmail.com.



Maya Keithly's twin sons, Orion and Quinn at 7 months

Real diaper facts

- Disposable diapers contain traces of Dioxin, an extremely toxic by-product of the paper-bleaching process. It is a carcinogenic chemical, listed by the EPA as the most toxic of all cancer-linked chemicals. It is banned in most countries, but not the U.S.
- Disposable diapers contain Tributyl-tin (TBT) - a toxic pollutant known to cause hormonal problems in humans and animals.
- Disposable diapers contain sodium polyacrylate, a type of super absorbent polymer (SAP), which becomes a gel-like substance when wet. This chemical can cause skin irritations and severe allergic reactions including vomiting, staph infections and fever. SAP was banned from tampons in 1985 due to links to toxic shock syndrome.

Diaper Services (continued from page 1)

area alone. Now, there are only two services in the entire state. In some states, there are no diaper services left at all. Not only does this reduce choice for the consumer, but it is a big change for business owners and their local economies as well.

Diaper services, even the larger ones, are often family-run businesses, and some of those that closed had been around fifty years or more. In addition to the closing of these larger businesses, Shiffert says there are probably a lot of smaller, family-owned businesses with only a handful of customers, and his statistics do not keep track of these smaller operations. There is no information available about how many of the smaller operations have been able to remain in business.

Only 15 years ago, things seemed quite different in the cloth diaper industry. The environmental movement was at its peak in popularity, with a greater cultural emphasis on recycling and reusing. Disposable diapers became the symbol of gross, excessive waste. Diaper services then were experiencing a surge in business, and the owners of those services were buying extra equipment and supplies to keep up the demand. With so many new customers, the late 1980s was a prosperous time for cloth diaper services.

Then, a swift backlash occurred in the early 1990s, one that the industry has not completely bounced back from. Procter and Gamble, a major manufacturer of disposable diapers, sponsored an analysis on the lifecycle and waste of both types of diapers, and showed that manufacturing cloth diapers wastes 6 times more water. The study was highly criticized at the time as being flawed and full of scientific and mathematical errors. One important criticism was that the data used in this study was not independent data, but rather, was collected by disposable diaper companies. NADS and various environmental groups did similar, even more comprehensive studies looking at the entire lifecycle of both types of diapers, from production to disposal. One of these studies, the Landbank Consultancy Report, showed that 2.3 times more water was wasted in the manufacture of disposables.

It was during this time that Procter and Gamble, the makers of Pampers and Luvs, launched a very effective advertising campaign that targeted the cloth diaper industry and confused the public. In one of their ads, they claimed that their diapers were partially biodegradable and could be used as composting fertilizer, even though most states did not have diaper-composting facilities for single-use diapers. In other advertisements and press releases, they questioned all aspects of the reusable diaper industry: for example, the chemicals and pesticides that were used in growing cotton, the water used to wash diapers, and even the gasoline used by diaper delivery trucks. This media attack greatly harmed the diaper service industry. Says Shiffert, "Disposable diaper companies had money to conduct research and promote their product, and the diaper services could not fight them".

This backlash has had a lasting impact on the mainstream consciousness in the U.S. As a result of this continued

campaign by the disposable diaper industry to create the illusion of equality, most parents in the U.S. do not think there is a difference between cloth or throwaway diapers when it comes to environmental impact.

The market has changed, and diaper services are not as popular a choice. There are many reasons for this. The throwaway diaper industry has a massive advertising budget, while surviving diaper services usually have no budget for advertising or promotion. Disposable diaper makers have television spots, print ads, and access to new parents in hospitals, doctors' offices, and supermarkets. Very few hospitals encourage new parents to use cloth diapers, and it is unheard of for supermarkets to carry them. Also, because so many diaper services have gone out of business, it is often a challenge for the remaining services to adequately meet the needs of their existing customers. When diaper services go out of business, the delivery areas for the remaining services get larger. This can often mean that prices increase to those outlying areas.

Unfortunately, it is possible that the main reason diaper services have lost popularity is that most people do not see an environmental difference between cloth and disposable diapers, and they view disposable diapers as the more convenient option. According to Judy Aagard of



Every week, fresh, clean diapers are delivered to the doorsteps of happy diaper service customers.

Tiny Tots, the biggest challenge facing diaper services today is a misconception that single-use diapers are more convenient. "Many consumers seem to think that because a diaper is more absorbent and can be thrown away, it is easier. Disposable diapers need to be rinsed prior to disposing since it is unsanitary to throw human waste in landfills and it is unsanitary for babies to sit in a solid diaper through several urinations, but they tend to because of the super absorbency of the chemically induced disposables", Aagard says.

The throwaway diaper industry has soared, which means the price of disposables has gone down, making them more affordable to the average consumer. Of course, the price consumers pay does not cover the whole cost. There are long-term social costs from waste, short-term social costs from environmental devastation at the site of manufacture, and other costs are borne by all of us in a variety of ways. Each year, there are 27.4 billion disposable diapers that are consumed in the U.S. alone.

Diaper services are a convenient gem in the cloth-diapering world, and there are many benefits to using a diaper service. Mark Stief, owner of Baby Diaper Service in Seattle, says, "We keep one million diapers a year out of landfills. I don't know what industry does more for the environment". He describes his eco-friendly washing formula, which he spent eight years perfecting. He uses industrial washers and dryers, and natural chemicals. Although bleach is used, he says it is only about two cups for every 250 pounds of diapers. "It's not much," he says.

Laundry and sanitation are checked by NADS on a regular basis. Jack Shiffert says that diaper service members of NADS follow high standards of cleaning specified by NADS. These include random bacteria checks, meticulous laundering procedures, and high temperature dryers. Shiffert believes diaper services, "... get the diapers cleaner than someone who washes diapers at home."

For parents who want to use cloth, diaper services can be very convenient. For people like Julie Tonroy of San Francisco, washing her son's diapers was not an option. "Unfortunately, our 100 year-old flat in San Francisco is not equipped with a washer and dryer." Not wanting to wash the diapers at a laundromat and not wanting to use disposables, Julie looked for a local diaper service and was pleased to find Tiny Tots. She likes using the service not only because they deliver fresh diapers each week, but also because they have other helpful services. "The video library has been invaluable. Upon my request after having my son, the diaper service sent (for free) video tapes on nursing and diapering which were extremely informative," Tonroy says.

Another benefit to diaper services is that diapers usually do not need to be dunked, soaked or washed. Diapers from a service can go through as many as fourteen stages of cleaning before they are dried. At Tiny Tots, they use a cleaning "tunnel" that is divided into ten modules, each with a unique function in the cleaning process. All of these steps make discarding a soiled diaper more convenient than using a throwaway diaper. As Julie Tonroy says, "Diapers simply get put in the pail, they are taken away once a week, and we receive our new delivery of fresh

clean diapers. How convenient is that?"

Unlike Julie Tonroy, most people across the U.S. have no diaper service available to them. But this can change if the demand for cloth diapers increases. Shiffert says in order for cloth diapers to gain popularity, "There needs to be either a reawakening of environmental awareness or something bad to happen as result of using disposables." While we hope this is not the case, it is nevertheless important for parents to be educated about all of the options available to them, and to understand the benefits of cloth diapering. All supporters of cloth diapers can be part of this educational movement and work together in making new parents aware of their choices. Diaper services are our partners in this mission. Judy Aagard says, "We're always happy to hear of people who do their own diapers! We don't think of them or other diaper services as competition but rather allies."

What can you do to support diaper services? Find the nearest diaper service to you and voice your support for them! Recommend diaper services to local parents so that they can be aware of all their diapering options. Find out if the diaper service has literature, brochures, or business cards to distribute. Sometimes, diaper services have monthly or quarterly newsletters that you can subscribe to and share with others.

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RDA Business Member Directory

California

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Granola Mamas
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Peachie Baby Company
Danielle Stein
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Rancho Santa Margarita, California
(860) 736-8684 fax

Pipsqueak Diapers
Brit Montrella
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Long Beach, California

Sierra Babies
Megan Goldstein
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Walnut Creek, California

Snoogie Snaps
Heather Tremblay
www.snoogiesnaps.com
Los Angeles, California

Colorado

Little Earth
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Righteous Baby
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Lyons, Colorado
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In Our Forrest
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Sunshine Diapers
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Georgia

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Ella's Diapers
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Illinois

Diaperco.com
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Humanity Infant and Herbal
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Mother of Eden: Make a Difference
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Zannadu
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Michigan

Tree City Diapers
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Minnesota

Tots and Bottoms
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Nevada

Little Lamb Organics
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Firefly Diapers
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(716) 833-9337 fax

Fuzbaby
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Terra Cotton Diaper Services
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Ohio

Mother and Child Creations
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Time For A Change
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Baby Naturale
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DiaperWare.com
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Moylan, Pennsylvania
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(888) 848-8740 toll-free

Jack's Magic Beanstalk
Heather Meyer & Jenni Tellers
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(877) NurseMe toll-free

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Tennessee

Cloth Diapers N More
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clothdiapersnmore.com
Knoxville, Tennessee
(877) 231-9735

Utah

One Stop Diaper Shop
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Murray, Utah
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(866) 264-1656 fax

Vermont

Green Mountain Diapers
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greenmountaindiapers.com
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(800) 330-9905 fax

Washington

Baby Diaper Service
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(206) 767-0179 fax

Cloth Diapers by Sara
Sara Thompson
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This list is current as of 2/20/05.

To see more complete descriptions of our business members online, go to:
www.realdiaperassociation.org/directory



Advocates for cloth diapering (continued from page 1)

diapers are real diapers. In our mission statement, we emphasize that we need to make cloth diapers both accessible--by sharing ways to buy, make or find diapers--and acceptable. There are some prejudices to overcome. We need to shift the cultural understanding of diapers. Parents will learn that cloth diapers are real diapers.

The Real Diaper Association philosophy emphasizes local solutions, supported by the central organization.

First, we need to train local organizers to be leaders in their own communities. We have begun this work, with dozens of RDA members in training to lead local Real Diaper Circles. Now, local leaders will tell us what they need in order to build their Circles and reach out to diaper users and others who have the power to make sustainable diapering choices. RDA is creating for them educational and publicity materials. We will follow with national campaigns, and even national gatherings to keep the inspiration high. Meanwhile, the Real Diaper Association will engage media, government and industry in a conversation about cloth diapers. All of this moves toward a goal of putting more U.S. babies in cloth diapers.

Our statistical analyses lead us to believe that about 10% of U.S. babies in diapers are currently using cloth diapers at least part of the time; that is about 820,000 babies. We need reliable data to confirm this number. We need current life cycle analysis of diapers, cradle to grave. We need an analysis of the environmental footprint of all

diapers. We need broad-based scientific research of various kinds to show the environmental, health, and social costs of diapers. In order to make informed choices, parents need reliable information. We will help those parents by compiling and sponsoring research. We will approach local governments to talk about their solid waste disposal. We will make alliances with environmental organizations to help them see why cloth diapers should be on their agenda.

Since we opened, women have been sending us stories both inspiring and wrenching. To hear how the new Real Diaper Circle Leaders envision their local Diaper Circles makes me want to go to every meeting. When I read the testimonials members have submitted on "Why We Choose Cloth," I see the range of choices people made and also the common elements of those choices. These testimonials can be found at our website. Beyond that, to have so many women say, "I've been waiting for you. I knew you would come," inspires me. The Real Diaper Association is not just my dream anymore, it belongs to all of our members.

[Adapted from an interview for the Diaper Hyena, August 2004. http://www.thediaperhyena.com/lotp_august2004.htm]

Real Diaper Association is the dreamchild of Lori Taylor, who wrote this story. She is RDA Chairperson and owner of Fuzbaby and Firefly Diapers.

Diaper Covers (continued from page 2)

Woolwash. As the name stipulates, it does not require a rinse, which cuts down water usage and makes the process easier. It is a non-phosphate gentle cleaner that contains lanolin for waterproofing and conditioning wool. More often than not, I have found that it is suggested/recommended and/or sold by those that sell wool products.

Once the wool wash is added, soak your covers in the mixture. I usually get busy with tasks around the house and tend to leave it in the soak for 15 to 30 minutes. Once it has soaked, gently squeeze out all excess water. It is unnecessary and counterproductive to wring and wring the cover. I usually lay the covers out flat on a towel, and roll it up for a bit to absorb a bit of the moisture, then unroll and place on a fresh/dry towel or hang to dry. Our covers are normally washed about once a month. We have several wool covers in our rotation, which extends the washing routine.

Machine washing is much the same - again, read the washing guidelines that come with your wool item as some specifically state NOT to machine wash. Fill the washing machine with tepid/warm water FIRST before adding wool wash, gently agitate the wash to 'mix.' ALWAYS utilize the gentle cycle when washing wool covers. Add wool covers once wool wash has been agitated to mix well with the water. Allow the washer to agitate. Remember, if using Eucalan® No Rinse Woolwash, the rinse cycle is

unnecessary. Either way, pull from washer and hang to dry. If 'no rinse' . . . follow the same steps used when soaking in the sink (above).

[Here's a little humor for you](#) - I came across a Terms & Definitions list for textile people and fiber producers. The term **Blowout Factor** means, "The rapidity with which an animal's fiber diameter thickens with age. (A bad thing.)"⁴ Here in the Diapering World the term Blowout Factor has a slightly different slant, however it does still deal with rapidity and possible thickening with age (a bad thing) as well.

Other products can be used to wash wool as well. Some prefer to use baby wash for cleansing and lanolize with melted lanolin. Lansinoh® is a commonly used brand. To use Lansinoh®, dissolve a teaspoon or so per diaper cover into very hot water, adding just a tad of natural soap to maintain a fluid consistency to the Lanolin. This HOT mixture can then be added to warm water already drawn in a sink. Add the wool covers and soak. With this system, if the 'soak water' does not stay warm, the lanolin may begin to harden and clump in the water and/or on your covers. So watch the water temperature carefully. Pull out and gently squeeze, roll in towel to absorb excess moisture and hang or lay flat to dry.

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NATIONAL QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Real Diapers for Real Babies.

Diaper Covers (continued from page 2)

Variety of styles, hues and textures. Wool is a very versatile fiber used to make a wide range of products from upholstery to, well, the baby's diaper covers! Wool diaper covers can be found in any shape or form that a synthetic diaper cover can take and more - from front hook and loop (velcro/aplix) or snap closures to side snapping or pull-on soakers, there is a broad spectrum. Wool is also recognized for being "easy to dye", the scales on the surface of the wool fibre tend to diffuse light giving less reflection and a softer colour and wool holds its colour well as the dye becomes part of the fibre."² Many WAHMs in the diaper sewing industry are experimenting with all sorts of methods of hand-dyeing wool for their custom creations. Everything from Kool-Aid dyeing to basic Vegetable Dyes are being utilized to add vibrance, or as Lori Taylor of Fuzbaby would say, to create 'Diaper Art' on wool diaper covers. For Helpful Tips on using natural plant dyes for your own wool dyeing experiments a very informative site is: www.joyofhandspinning.com.

Last Thought: Storing your wool diaper covers for the next baby. With the onslaught of plastic storage containers that can fit anywhere from between your washer and dryer to under the bed or stackables for your closet, you may not think twice regarding storing your wool (or any other textiles) in that manner. However, due to a lack of air circulation within plastic containers or bags, it is not a choice environment. Fabric "needs to breathe and storing it in vinyl airtight containers causes fiber deterioration from chemical interaction and imparts awful odors over time."⁵ "Any moisture remaining in the container will result in a musty smell at best, and possibly even mold or mildew damage."¹ So what do you use? To protect your wool covers from mold, mildew and moth larvae, try storing them in cedar

wood, wicker baskets with cedar chips, cotton bags or any other type of container that will allow the textile to breathe.¹ For the best protection, choose acid-free products, as well as boxes containing rag content or linen stationery (you can get these from printers - just ask for their empty boxes). Do not store in cardboard shoe boxes as they are produced from less than 'friendly' products. However, cardboard shoeboxes can be lined with acid-free tissue so that fabric will not touch cardboard if it is your only alternative. Another suggestion is to store your wool covers in newspaper. Yep, you read right! Moths do not like newspaper, so simply wrap your wool covers in tissue and then in newspaper and store them in dresser drawers, closets, cabinets or wherever there is space. Remember to store away from direct sunlight, damp basements, hot attics and/or dusty garages.⁵

Notes:

1. Pang, Amy. "A Brief History of Wool." Vintage Voice. <http://pix.popula.com/items/0224/vintage3/wool.html>
2. *Wool Fibre: Natural Properties*. Australian Wool Innovation Limited. <http://www.wool.com.au>
3. Brock, Rosemary. "Wool and Allergies." TextileLinks. <http://www.textilelinks.com/author/rb/990227.html>.
4. Brock, Rosemary. "Terms and Definitions." TextileLinks. <http://www.textilelinks.com/author/rb/bl/terms.html>
5. Kiplinger, Joan. "Storage - where and in what." Fabrics.net. March/April 2000.

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