

# Christmas baby following mother's lead

By Lee Strong  
Staff writer

SCOTTSVILLE — Last year, the Gruschow family had to wait until Dec. 27 to open their Christmas presents.

But Michael Gruschow said that opening the gifts was "was nothing compared to what happened (Christmas Day)."

What happened on December 25, 1988, was the arrival of Lyndsey Gruschow, born at 2 p.m. at Strong Memorial Hospital.

Being born on Christmas would seem to set a child apart, but Lyndsey was simply following family tradition.

After all, her mother, Jill Gruschow, was born at Strong Hospital on Dec. 25, 1959.

Jill acknowledged that the fact of sharing a Christmas birthday with her daughter didn't hit home at first.

"You don't really think about it being Christmas until after," Jill said. "I guess it was after she was born and (the nurses) stuck her in a big stocking that it hit me, 'Wow, we had a Christmas baby.'"

The Gruschows hadn't expected Lyndsey, their second child, to be born on Christmas. She was due Dec. 11.

But as the due date came and went, Jill recalled hoping that the baby would come on Christmas, rather than just before or after.

"I thought if the baby came on Christmas, that would make it special," she said. "Not just close to Christmas, but on Christmas."

A part-time activities director at St. Mary's Hospital, Jill actually went into labor Christmas Eve. She called her midwife to let her know that labor had started.

"I said, 'I'm going to ruin your Christmas,'" Jill recalled. "She said, 'No, I'm Jewish.'"

Lyndsey's debut date turned out to be a blessing in at least two ways for the Gruschows.

Michael, who works at Bausch & Lomb as a product planner, had been saving vacation time so that he could spend a week at home once the baby arrived. Last Christmas, however, the plant closed for a week, so he was able to use his vacation time and stay home an extra week.

In addition, Michael and Jill had not yet chosen a middle name for the baby. Inspired by the day, they chose "Noel."

Of course, they were simply following the example of Jill's parents, who gave their daughter "Merrie" as a middle name.

The one negative aspect of Lyndsey's birth date was that, while Michael and Jill were at Strong Hospital delivering their baby, the couple's first child, Laura, was unable to celebrate Christmas Day with her parents.

Laura was two, her mother observed, and for the first time was able to understand what Christmas was about. "We were really looking forward to opening presents with her," Jill said. "I was kind of disappointed."

This year, the family will not only enjoy celebrating Christmas with Laura, but also two birthdays. The Gruschows plan to have relatives over on Dec. 23 for a birthday party.

"We're going to celebrate (Lyndsey's birthday) each year," Jill said. "I'm definitely going to give her birthday presents —

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Babette G. Augustin-Staff photographer  
Jill Gruschow kisses her daughter Lyndsey underneath the mistletoe, as they prepare to celebrate the feast of Christmas and their mutual birthday — all of which transpire on Dec. 25. Jill was born Dec. 25, 1959, at Strong Memorial Hospital, and Lyndsey made her debut at Strong on Dec. 25, 1988. Appropriately, mother and daughter were given middle names of Merrie and Noel, respectively.



Babette G. Augustin-Staff photographer  
This year the Gruschow family — (from left) Jill, Lyndsey, Laura and Michael — looks forward to celebrating both Christmas, and the birthdays of Jill and Lyndsey.

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