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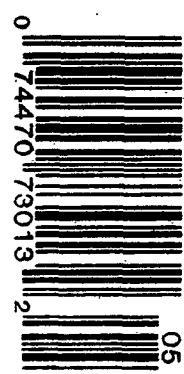
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Scott and Sandy Saxton proudly hold (from left) Zachary, Anthony, Philip, 3-year-old Kyla, Bianca, and Maria. The quintuplets will celebrate their first birthday this Sunday, Feb. 13. S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

## Saxton family marks quintuplets' first year

**W**ATERLOO — Jan. 31 was an average evening in the Saxton household. Anthony was bouncing in his walker in the living room. Zachary was sitting in his walker, playing with a stuffed animal and his cousin, 11-year-old Natasha Saxton. Bianca was swinging back and forth contentedly in an automatic swing next to a large fish tank. Maria was cuddling in the lap of her uncle, Bill Saxton. And Philip was being fed by Terry Frey, a health-care aide from Genesee Regional Home Care.

The five infants all seemed like typical 11-month olds. But the Saxton family is hardly typical. On Feb. 13, Anthony, Zachary, Bianca, Maria and Philip will celebrate their first birthdays, marking their first year as the most recent quintuplets born in the Rochester area. As if five infants were not enough, the quint's parents, Scott and Sandy, also have a 3-year-old daughter, Kyla. And the babies' cousin, Natasha, lives with them much of the time. Scott, 35, and Sandy, 25, seem remarkably peaceful amid the noise and activity. "You've got to be patient," Scott observed. "That's what I pray for every day, 'God, give me patience.'" But he added, "They're pretty good babies. One colicky baby would throw the whole thing off." The Saxtons apparently have adjusted well to their suddenly large family. Their living room is a virtual play pen, the couch piled high with toys and stuffed animals. The kitchen is filled with bottles of baby food and cans of formula mix. A clipboard on the dining room table holds check lists to keep track of feeding schedules. Nor are Scott and Sandy alone in taking care of their children. In addition to family members and health-care aides, volunteers from St. Mary's Parish often stop by to help. Sister Mary Christopher and the parish's pastor, Father James Cosgrove,

*'It's hectic,  
but it's  
fun, too.'*

Sandy Saxton

have been particularly helpful with sending volunteers their way and with overseeing gifts that come in for the infants, Scott noted. Meanwhile, the town has planned a Feb. 12 celebration at the Main Street Shop Centre to mark the quintuplets' first birthday. "It's going to be kind of a community celebration, giving people a chance to come down and see the babies," Scott said. "We want to use it as a chance to thank people for their love and prayer and support that got us through the year."

The Saxtons have needed that support since the quint's birth last year. The babies, born by Caesarean section 10 weeks premature, all weighed less than three pounds. Now, all weigh in the mid-teens. The quint's were conceived after Sandy took a fertility drug to help regulate her period following Kyla's birth. When she became pregnant, a doctor had recommended that they consider aborting several of the children to increase the chances that the others would survive. The Saxtons refused because of their faith. Following their births, the babies remained in the hospital until April, traveling home in stages. Zachary was the last to arrive, making the trip April 26. The babies were baptized at St. Mary's July 11 by Father Cosgrove, after whom Zachary James was named. The five are now exploring their home — with Philip taking his first steps Jan. 31. Natasha is constantly watching for any infant who is out of his or her walker to make sure no one gets into mischief. "We've got to keep an eye on them all the time," Scott reported. Such responsibility can be tiring. Sandy estimated that on nights when they don't have an aide, they have to get up six to eight times to change diapers or to feed the quint's. Because Scott has to get up every morning for his drive to work at Geneva's Zotos International, Inc., she provides most of this nocturnal care. Scott pointed out that his employers have been understanding

Continued on page 14

By Lee Strong, Senior staff writer