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FEATURE

First year

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about his occasional need to take time off when the children are sick or Sandy needs extra help.

Fortunately, the children have been fairly healthy during their first year. Sandy, however, had to have gall-bladder surgery Dec. 8 — cancelling a scheduled appearance on the "Oprah Show."

The hospital stay did give her time away from the babies. The only other lengthy separation from them came at the beginning of September when the owner of Geneva on the Lake treated the parents to a free hotel stay to celebrate their fourth wedding anniversary Sept. 2. But even during their stay, they made several trips back to Waterloo to check on the babies.

During the day, when volunteers or family are there, the two also try to steal away for some alone time. That time could mean just a few minutes to go upstairs to talk, or a trip alone to the store.

"I'd like to plan a vacation when we can get away for three or four days," Scott said.

Getting more time together would be welcome, Sandy noted. "It's not easy," she acknowledged.

The two also have to keep Kyla in mind, so that she doesn't



Saxton birthday party

During a 'typical' day at the Saxton house, the quintuplets are cared for by Scott and Sandy Saxton, various relatives, health-care providers, and volunteers from St. Mary's Church in Waterloo. The quints are beginning to pull themselves up on furniture and explore the living room that also doubles as a playroom for the five curious tots. Clockwise from bottom photo: Bianca (left) objects to Anthony's choice of toys; Scott Saxton takes time giving Zachary some attention after work; Phillip, who recently took his first steps, pulls himself up on his big sister Kyla's carriage filled with baby dolls; Bianca hams it up for the camera, as her grandmother, Beverly Fuller (left), feeds Maria; and Sandy makes Maria smile with a game of peekaboo. Sandy, who says she's careful to make sure all the children get the attention they need, spends a few moments with Maria. The quints celebrate their first birthday Feb. 13.

Photos by S. John Wilkin, Staff photographer



get lost amid so much focus on the babies.

"We make sure that we cuddle with her, play with her, take her places," Sandy said.

They have also enrolled her in the pre-kindergarten program at St. Mary's School, Scott said, noting, "That gives her a chance to be with kids her own age."

As for the quints, they serve as their own peer group, consisting of five distinctly different personalities.

Sandy noted that Maria is currently cranky, perhaps because she is teething. Zachary is very busy; Anthony loves to eat and play; and Phillip is a loner. "He's different," she observed.

Although it's been a year, the parents are still sometimes amazed that they that have six children, Scott acknowledged.

"In the beginning, we were pretty tense at different times," he said. "But we both realized it doesn't do any good."

Father Cosgrove has been a help during tense times, Scott said.

"He can't do enough for us," Scott remarked. "He's always asking if there is anything he can do. He's been a tension relaxer. Even now if I get hyper about something, I call him up and he calms



me down."

With the children on the verge of walking, Scott and Sandy are looking forward to the completion of an addition to their small home.

Work on the addition is scheduled to get underway Feb. 21, paid for in part by money from the Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation. The project will add two bedrooms, a family room and a bathroom. The family room will be baby proofed, allowing the quints to explore, Scott said. The addition will also allow more room for storing clothes, diapers and other supplies.

The family has received help from companies and local groups with obtaining those supplies. Dy-dee Cotton Diaper Service, for example, has donated diaper service, while the Huggies com-



pany has provided disposable diapers.

In addition, the Knights of Columbus and the Veterans of Foreign Wars have held benefits to raise money for the family. Occasionally, people bring over dinner for them. And at Christmas, the family received a number of gifts from St. Mary's and from St. Francis DeSales Church in Geneva.

Still, the family has many bills to pay.

"I work a lot of overtime," Scott joked.

And Scott and Sandy are hoping for donations and volunteer help to complete the addition project beyond what will be covered by the Bishop Sheen Foundation funds.

Nevertheless, the effort of caring for their six children is worth it, Sandy acknowledged.

"It's hectic," she said. "But it's fun, too."