# Babysull

## Surviving and Thriving

### 10 essentials for new parents

by Roy G. Miller

my and I bolt out of bed, slapped out of our sleep by the screaming "siren" snugly wrapped in the bassinet near our bed. Our new baby boy, less than two days old, is requesting room service again.

It's 3 a.m. I change his diaper. Amy manages his meal.

Here we are. Firsttime parents. Just days before, we were driving away from the hospital with a beautiful, breathing, blueeyed responsibility strapped to the car seat. Pulling out of the parking lot, I peeked in the rear-view mirror, glanced at our new son and stared back at the hospital and its buzz of nurses and doctors. It was a moment of silent despair. By driving away, we had instantly sliced away the institutional umbilical cord, that lifeline of immediatelyavailable baby experience and expertise

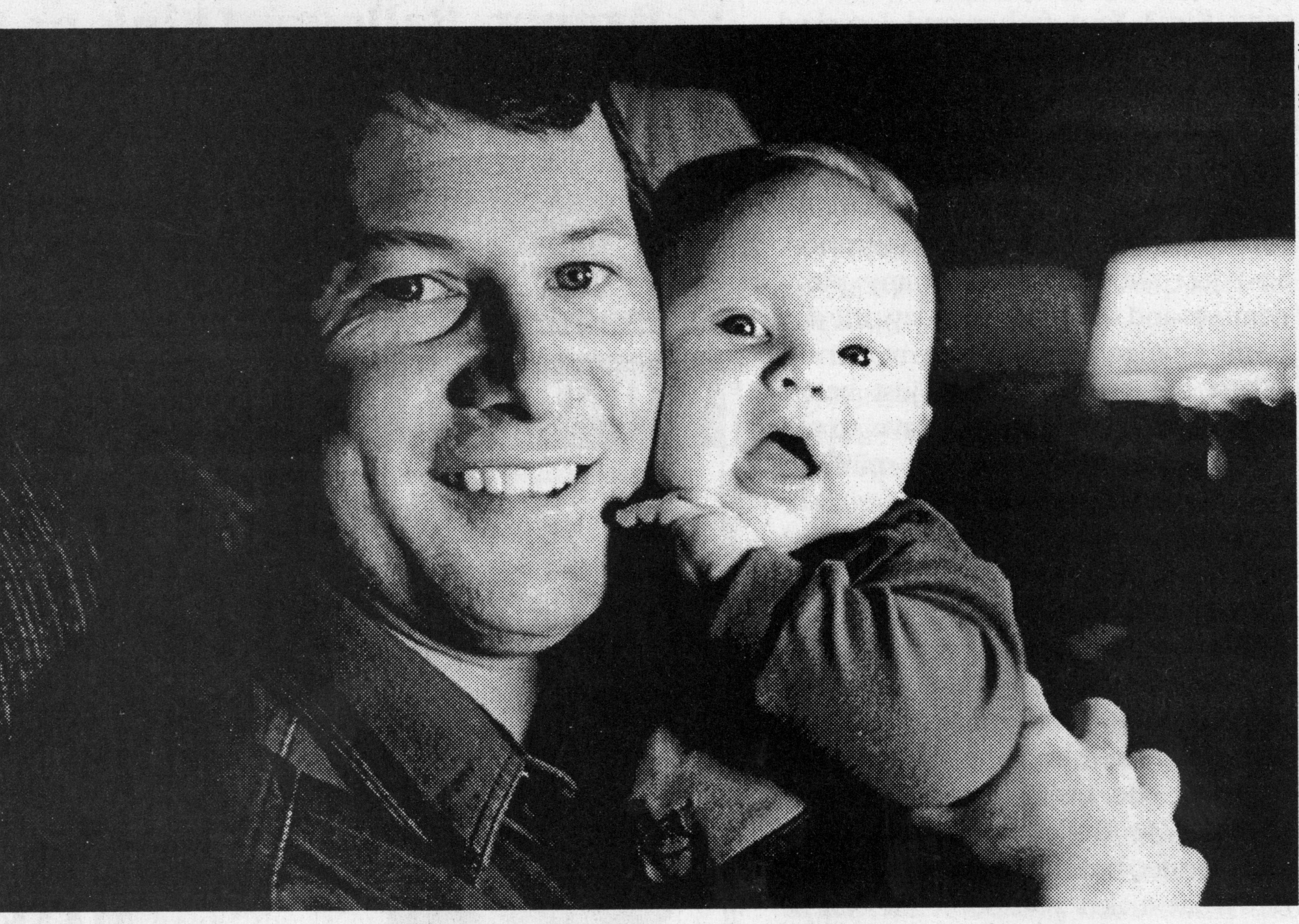
that sustained us for two full days. Could we go it alone? Could we survive? It took about four days to gain some confidence, but we survived. And today, we're not just surviving, we're thriving!

#### The 10 essentials for new parents

• The Bassinet. Get one, and make sure it has wheels. We didn't think a bassinet was necessary since we had a crib. But that first night, you'll want your new

son or daughter next to your bed so you

can hear every snort and sigh. My mom, Grandma Jo, found a used bassinet at a vide us with some calm reassurance. garage sale for \$10. It's been invaluable. Joel spent his first six weeks in the bassinet near our bed.



New father Roy Miller & the screaming "siren" Joel Miller share some product ideas for new parents.

- The Beach Towel. A beach towel is the perfect way to save \$10. Instead of buying a baby positioner to keep your baby on his side, roll up a big beach towel and use that to prop your child on his side. It's just as effective. And a lot cheaper.
- The Flavored Pacifier. It was a free give-away as part of our hospital experience. Today, three months later, our son still chews and sucks his vanillaflavored pacifier. He loves it. Now,
- rock your child to sleep, keep them entertained and provide you with one more alternative for that late night when colic hits and nothing seems to help. When evaluating chairs, think about chairs that wind up, are electric or run on batteries. If you plan on traveling, make sure you get a chair that's easy to dismantle.

when the squawks and screams sur-

face, we try "Mr. Vanilla." It works. The

• Immediate Experts. Joel, during his

first night at home, cried so hard he

choked, gasped and, seemingly,

stopped breathing. It was parental ter-

ror all night. Fortunately, we were

seven telephone digits from tried-and-

true experts: the infant nurses at our

local hospital. They always answered

the phone, always gave good advice,

and most of all, were just there to pro-

Make sure you have one or two imme-

• Swinging Chair. Get one. Period. They

diately accessible experts.

pacifiers are made by

Laboratories (800) 227-5767.

• Mylicon Drops. This pink substance is the river of life. Every parent I know talks about it religiously. It's pretty expensive, but this over-the-counter liquid performs miracles for infants being tortured by excess gas. Our pediatrician recommended it. Check with yours just in case.

- Personal Lullabies. From, There's Something about That Name and Amazing Grace to Edelweiss and Rainy Days and Mondays, our repertoire of lullabies keeps growing. From The Carpenters and Johnny Paycheck, to Julie Andrews and The Bill Gaither Trio, we've sung them all. Brush up on your tunes, you'll need them.
- Rocking Chair. This is third only to food and clothing. We recommend a glider rocker (especially if you have three cats like we do). When we went rocker hunting, we found chairs ranging from \$150 to \$600. We ended up paying \$500 for a glider rocker and ottoman. We paid through the nose, but were amazed at the quality difference between low-end and highend rockers (the latter included stronger, thicker wood, and larger padding with heavy, durable material). If you have the money, swallow hard and go high quality. It's an investment that will last through every kid you have and beyond.
- Care Group. Cultivate your friends. Let them know you care. In return, you'll reap unlimited rewards. In the first four to six weeks, we were bombarded with the generosity of family and friends. They extended their love to us in 100 different ways, from encouraging telephone calls to providing full-course, drop-off meals. Grow your friends, demonstrate your love for them and return the favor when they need you.
- Video Camera, Cameras and Film. I remember the left ear. It was the first fully-defined feature I saw at 4:10 a.m., November 22, 1994, when Joel Nathaniel Miller entered the world. Then I saw a flop or two. It was a boy! And the entire experience is captured on videotape. Don't miss the miracle of life. Make sure you capture the genesis of your next generation on tape. Have loads of film. And keep the cameras rolling and clicking.

Roy G. Miller is a Dallas free-lance writer.

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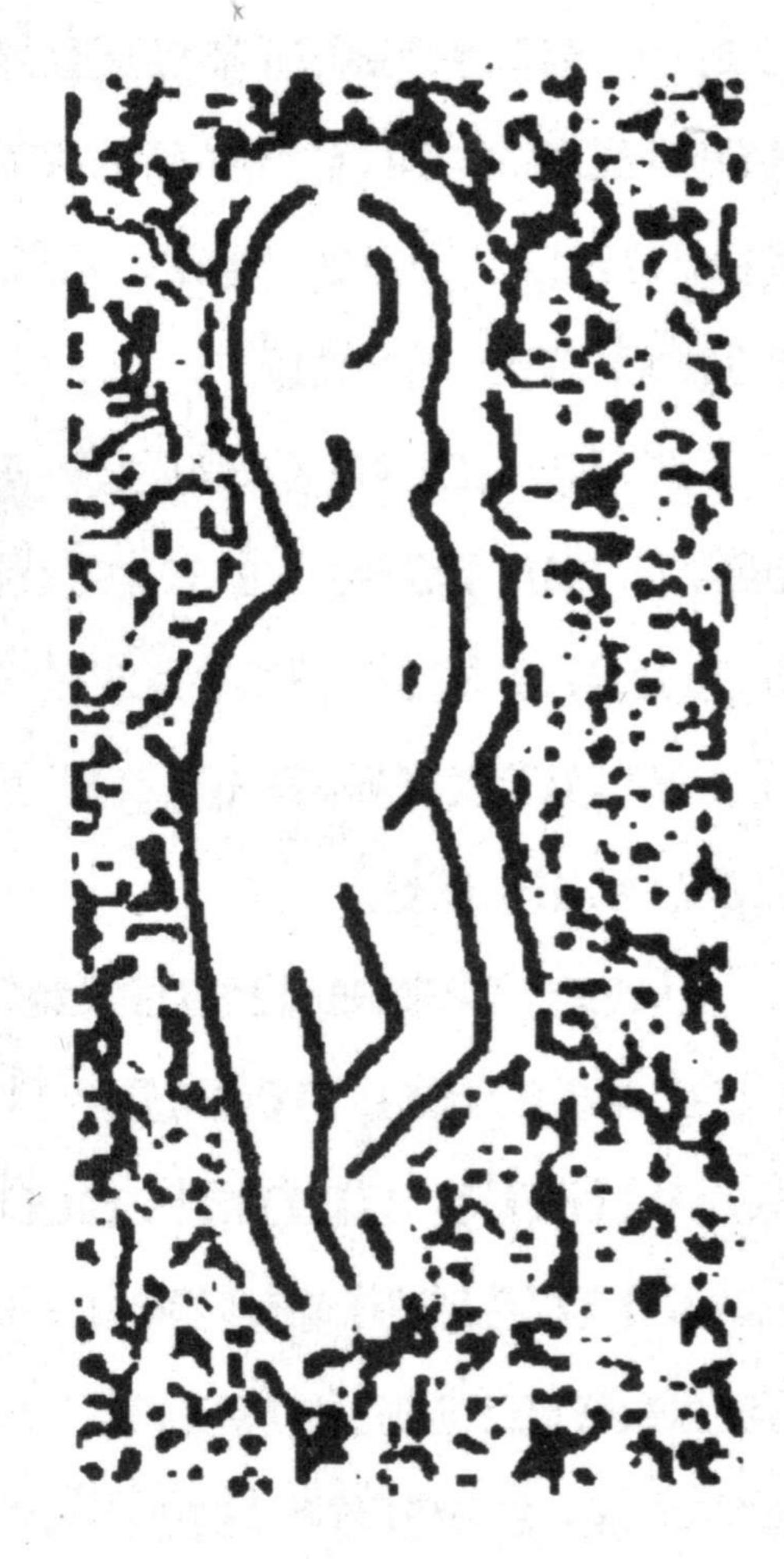
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