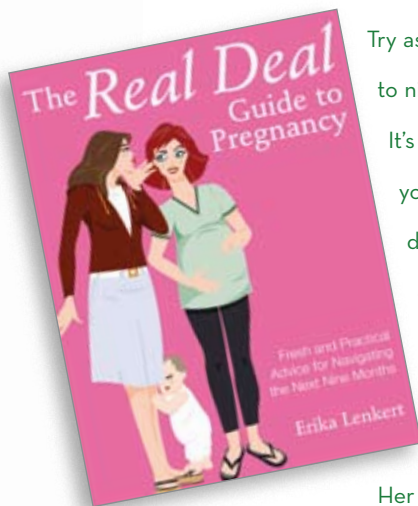


# Mom's the Word

## THE REAL DEAL



Try asking your Facebook posse for solutions to nipple blisters, diaper rash or baby acne. It's virtual social suicide. Unless of course, you find yourself on a mom-friendly website devoted to such issues. One of the newest such sites, [therealdealguide.com](http://therealdealguide.com), was spawned by the newly published book of the same name by mom and lifestyle writer Erika Lenkert of Lucas Valley.

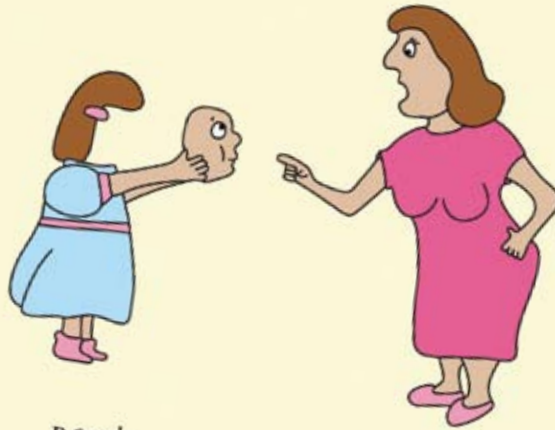
Her candid and sassy handbook, written almost entirely at the Starbucks in Terra Linda, combines medical how-to and pregnancy humor with essential info on nutrition, exercise, fashion, preparation for the big birth day and beyond, and rarely addressed clinical realities that Lenkert calls "hormonal heresy." Its chapter organization by topic rather than trimester integrates never-before-seen statistics on maternity fashion preferences, sex, and relationships with shockingly honest quotes from more than 100 mothers from Marin and all over the world. Vetted for accuracy by a practicing ob-gyn and written like a heart-to-heart with an expert friend, *The Real Deal Guide's* tell-all style and valuable insight make it one of the most compelling, well-rounded contemporary pregnancy guides on the market today—not to mention a very fun read.—M.T.



## LOVE IN A LOCKET

You can't go wrong with a gift that comes inside that classic blue box with a white ribbon. Tiffany & Co.'s release of its Mother's Day heart and oval locket charms is perfect timing for dads seeking a timeless gift. Each charm can be engraved with initials or a name and date and can hold a miniature photograph or message inside. 415.781.7000, [tiffany.com](http://tiffany.com). —S.F.

THANKS FOR KEEPING MY  
HEAD ON STRAIGHT  
*Happy Mother's Day*



DON'T *give* ME THAT FACE,  
LITTLE MISSY

## She's So Funny

Local graphic designer Stephanie Orma's new company She's SO Creative, whose greeting cards have been selling out all over Marin, has unveiled its first line of cheeky Mother's Day cards, printed on premium 30 percent post-consumer waste recycled paper. Available at Two Neat in Mill Valley, Pinestreet Papery in Sausalito, Popapery in Greenbrae and Fig Garden in San Anselmo. —S.F.

## Cocoa and Cookies

As if mothers' lives needed any sweetening, Sausalito chocolatier Stephanie Marcon, founder of Coco-Luxe Confections, has created a cocoa mix called HOT. This all-natural version of an all-time favorite recently earned rave reviews at the Fancy Foods Show. The striped retro-looking tin contains four to six servings and retails for \$19.95 online at [coco-luxe.com](http://coco-luxe.com). And what better way to serve cocoa than with a plate of local handmade cookies and biscotti? The Graceful Cookie's trans fat-, preservative- and artificial flavoring-free delights come in versions like oatmeal raisin, peanut butter and Meyer lemon, some specially decorated for Mother's Day. Priced from \$10 to \$89 at Mollie Stone's, Whole Foods or [thegracefulcookie.com](http://thegracefulcookie.com). —S.F.



# Moms helping Moms: The Mothers' Clubs of Marin

BY MIMI TOWLE

**T**hought about joining a mothers' club? Even for non-"groupies," these organizations can offer helpful tips on everything from breast-feeding to summer camp. Most aim to be a supportive community during early motherhood, which can be an overwhelming and isolating time in a woman's life. The potential for lifelong friendships is another draw. Nine years ago Corte Madera mother of two Lianee Gioia and seven other women began meeting on Wednesdays with their newborns. Some were transplants from elsewhere now living in Marin; all eight of them had had a baby in 1999. Their group is now the Southern Marin Mothers' Club, and "while three of the original eight families have moved out of state," Gioia notes, "the other five have remained good friends." Once their kids went to kindergarten, the mothers' meetings evolved into monthly and then quarterly get-togethers. "The best part is how close our kids have become; it's almost like they're siblings," she adds.



These days Gioia works in real estate, but a particular passion has brought her full circle back to moms and newborns. Gioia regularly writes about emergency preparedness for the club's monthly newsletter and serves as a countywide trainer for the volunteer disaster-

readiness program Get Ready Marin. "I really enjoy teaching parents about safety, self-reliance and survival tactics they can use in case of a natural disaster," she says. "Once we become parents, our level of responsibility shifts: instead of one life, we become responsible for two, three or more."

Besides emergency preparedness info, the SMMC offers groups for single moms, mothers with one child who are "due with number two,"

**Once their kids went to kindergarten, the mothers' meetings evolved into monthly and then quarterly get-togethers. "The best part is how close our kids have become; it's almost like they're siblings."**

and moms over 40. The Novato Mothers Club has special groups on running a home-based business, healthy cooking and creative writing. The Marin Parents of Multiples Club helps parents navigate the world with twins, triplets or more.

Marin County's six organized mothers' clubs include Southern Marin Mothers Club, [southernmarinmoms.com](http://southernmarinmoms.com); Ross Valley Mothers' Club, [rvmc.net](http://rvmc.net); Novato Mothers Club, [novatomothersclub.com](http://novatomothersclub.com); Corte Madera Larkspur Mothers Club, [cmlmc.org](http://cmlmc.org); San Rafael Mothers' Club, [srmoms.org](http://srmoms.org); and Marin Parents of Multiples Club, [mpomc.org](http://mpomc.org). —M.T.