

scene@CLOTH DIAPER WORKSHOP

PEACE & JUSTICE CENTER, BURLINGTON,
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 10:30 A.M.

The average baby goes through 7000 diaper changes. As a single male, I've only changed one diaper in my life . . . and it was messy. So I was apprehensive as I descended the stairs to the Peace & Justice Center for Saturday's cloth diaper workshop.

Who else would be there? Expectant parents fresh from birthing class? Experienced moms and dads eager to debate cloth versus disposable and to divulge their worst diaper experiences? Mostly, though, I worried that there might be a diaper actually in need of a change.

As it turned out, attendance was intimate: just me, one single mom, a lot of diapers, and "Diaper Bear," which, according to Kathleen Landry of Vermont Diaper Company, never fusses and *never* dirties diapers. That made me feel better.

Landry has held four similar workshops in and around Montpelier, where more than 80 people attended. This was her first Burlington workshop. She was surprised, but undeterred by the turnout. "One has to have a sense of humor when one is in the diaper business," she said. "Besides, I'm not just in the diaper business; I also carry menstrual products."

Then she dove right in, explaining why cloth is better for babies and the environment, and giving cloth diaper how-to. "You do not have to hand-scrub your cloth diapers in the toilet," she said. "That would be gross!" I agreed. And so far, I hadn't even had to touch a diaper. But my luck soon ran out. Landry began handing out cotton diaper products. They looked just like regular diapers, with snaps or Velcro in front and elastic holes for a baby's legs. I imagined what they would look like after a couple helpings of Gerber's Sweet Potatoes and Turkey dinner.

Finally, Landry showed her wool diaper covers. "Wool is anti-microbial," she said, "so it won't give your baby a rash or smell." To illustrate the point, she held a cover to her nose and inhaled deeply. "See?" she said, handing the cover to me. I took it and studied it. It was soft and seemed clean. I examined closely, until she finally looked away. Then I immediately returned it to the table. I think I'll postpone the smell test until I have kids of my own.

MARK AIKEN

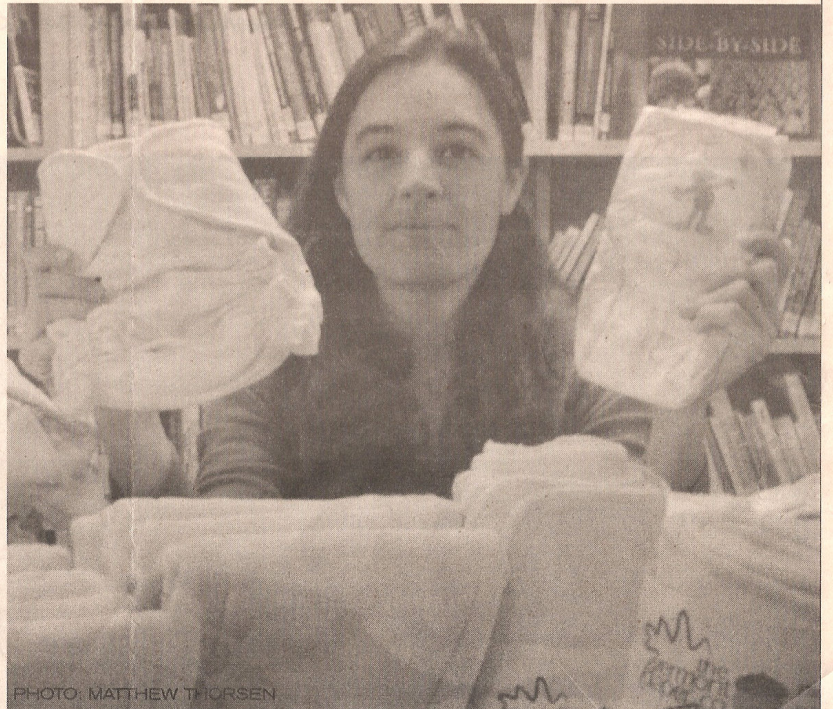


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