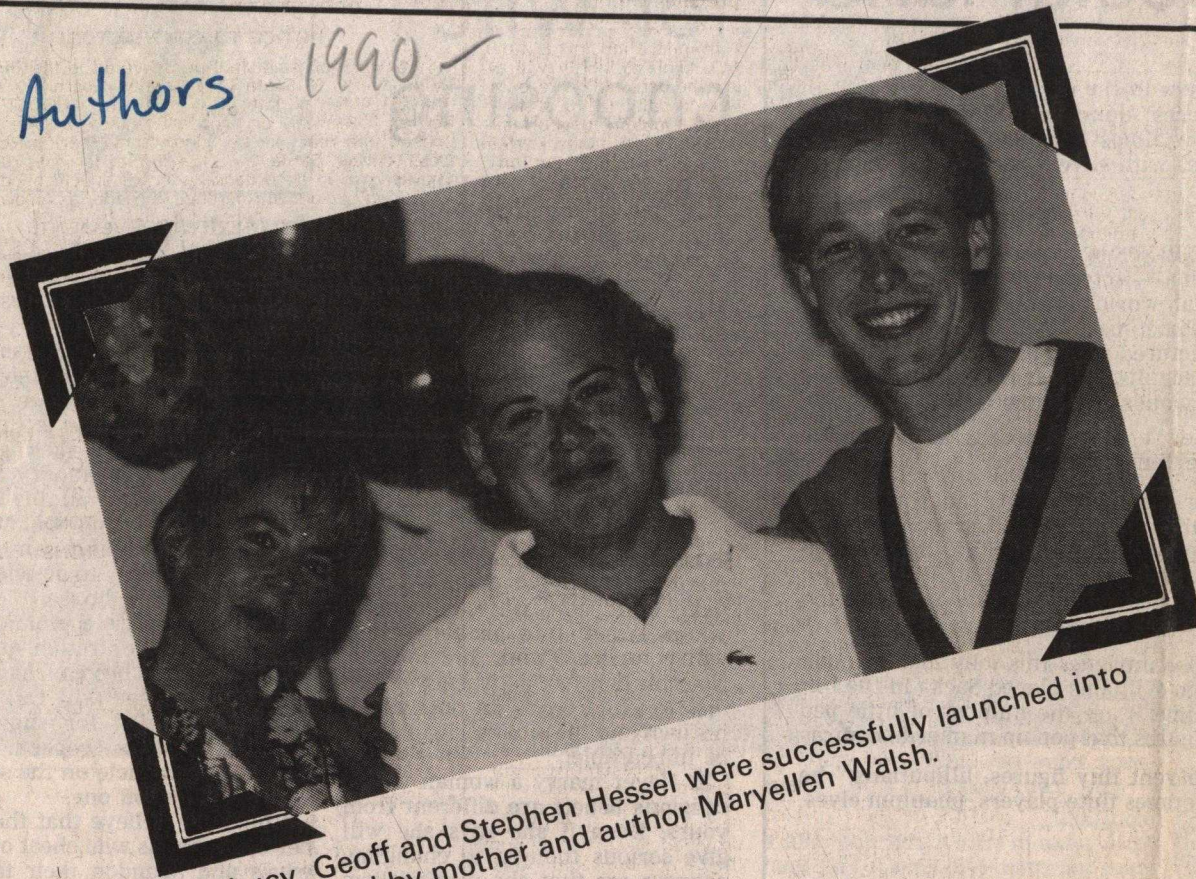


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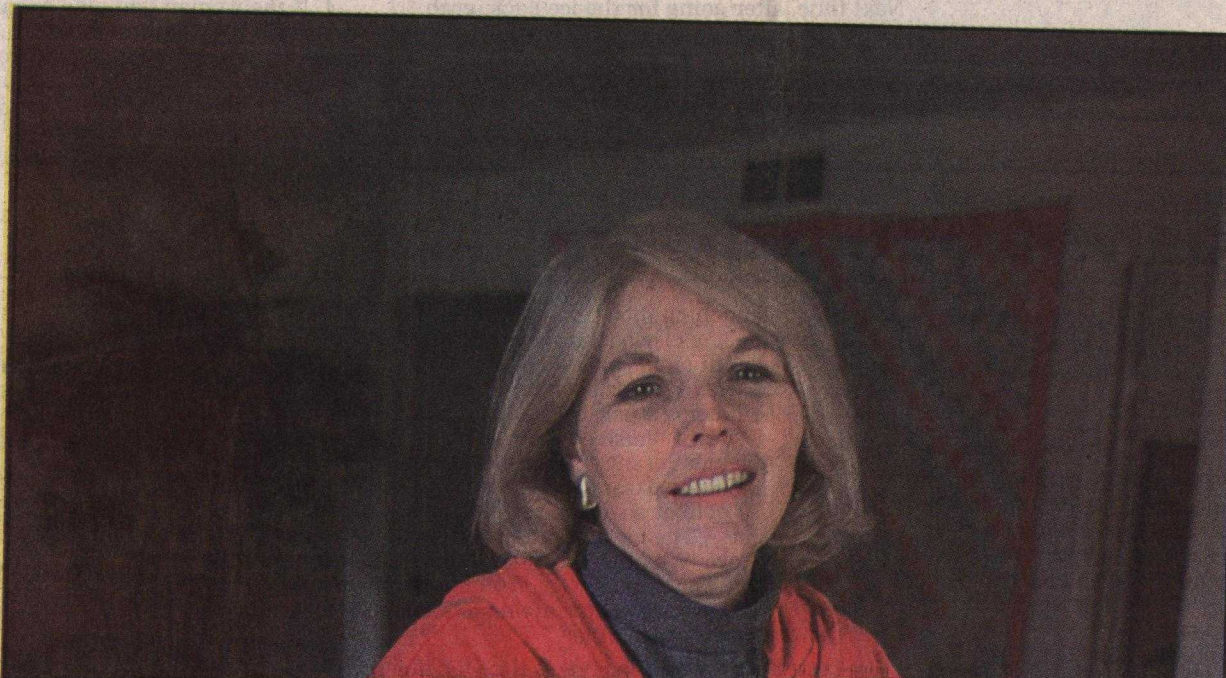


Lucy, Geoff and Stephen Hessel were successfully launched into adulthood by mother and author Maryellen Walsh.



Walsh's son Doug Hessel shows off granddaughter, Sydney.

When kids return to nest



Aptos author tries to bridge generation gap

By KAREN SCHMIDT
Sentinel staff writer

EVERY CHILD has heard it, and every parent has said it. "When I was a kid ..." Parents reminisce about days long gone and wish the world hadn't changed; children sigh with boredom and try to interject, "But things are different now." It's a conversation born out of the rapidly changing 20th century, when every generation experienced something new.

Aptos author Maryellen Walsh listened to her four children as they approached adulthood and realized that the world had changed so much, she couldn't

'When each one came back, after raising them, it was like I was getting a present back,' Aptos author Maryellen Walsh said.



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

It's a conversation born out of the rapidly changing 20th century, when every generation experienced something new.

Aptos author Maryellen Walsh listened to her four children as they approached adulthood and realized that the world had changed so much, she couldn't answer many of their important questions.

"I didn't want to just give them old-fashioned information," she said, "because that really turns kids off."

Walsh realized that the "When I was a kid ..." approach just doesn't work. So when each of her children moved back home after college, she helped them learn the best ways to look for jobs these days. But they also had lots of fun cooking great meals together.

"We were getting along great," said the bubbly Walsh. Sitting comfortably on a sofa in her now empty nest, she said, "When each one came back, after raising them, it was like I was getting a present back."

HOWEVER, she frequently heard parents complain about adult children who moved back home. She discovered that 22 million young American adults live at home — 50 percent more than in 1970. Walsh wondered about this growing trend and about how parents might better prepare their children for a world different from the one they knew as young adults.

After compiling information from 60 parents across the country, doing historical research and interviewing university sociologists, Walsh wrote a book called "Emptying the Nest: How to Launch Your Adult Kids into the World and Stay Friends." Like her first book — "Schizophrenia: Straight Talk for Family and Friends" — this latest one blends professional research with practical experience from raising four children and two stepchildren.

Walsh said she wanted to help parents get along with adult children who return to the nest. Peppered with humorous anecdotes, Walsh's book gives advice on money matters, manners for the modern parent (e.g. what to say about your son's new earring), how to help your children find their first jobs and how to spot symptoms of drug abuse and mental illness in your children.

Surprisingly, rather than telling parents how to get