

Tennent boasts 14 sets of graduating twins

By Gary Weckselblatt Staff Writer | Posted: Monday, June 9, 2014 1:00 am

Sanchit and Savan Patel are quick to admit they have taken advantage of being identical twins.

Either by trading places to avoid something one of them might not like, whether it be a certain food at the dinner table or a class at school, the pair have used their looks to fool others.

It might be missing math and science in favor of dance and acting, the twins had no problem trading places. Of course, at some point their luck would run out and they'd eventually get caught.

More often than not, the result would be Sanchit's gain to the detriment of Savan.

"Yeah, whenever we got caught, I'd get the blame every time," Savan said.

The Patel brothers are not unique as seniors at William Tennent High School. They are among 14 sets of twins who will graduate later this month.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, these numbers should not be surprising. From 1980 through 2009, the twin birth rate rose 76 percent, from 18.9 per 1,000 births to 33.3.

That means one in every 30 babies born in the U.S. was a twin, compared with 1 in every 53 in 1980.

Dennis H. Best, the school's principal, isn't surprised by the numbers.

"I am reminded of this on a daily basis while walking through the hallways and wondering how did I just walk by the same student twice?" he said.

While twins may share a special connection beyond that of ordinary siblings, there's no scientific evidence of a twin telepathy.

"You can't read each other's mind," said Cassie Baner, who along with her twin brother, Mark, are in the National Honor Society and among Tennent's 485 graduates.

However, she did recall one time being at a friend's house and "feeling ill, like something was wrong." Turns out Mark was home alone "terrified being by himself," she said.

"You're born with somebody who understands you. We get along really well."

For Mark, being a twin means a "deeper connection on a certain level. If you don't fight, it can be the best thing in the world."

Cassie gives him a high-five. “Mom’s going to like that one,” she said.

Tennent’s Class of 2014 includes five sets of male twins, seven sets of male/female twins and two sets of female twins. The twins have turned in impressive academic performances with eight sets graduating in the top 10 percent of the class and two sets in the top 5 percent.

It also includes some top athletes, like Matt (baseball) and Nicole (softball and basketball) Alden.

Nicole said being a twin brings social advantages as your sibling has friends the same age. “It’s the best of both worlds,” she said.

Matt said “There’s always knowing someone is there for you because they’ve been with you your entire life.”

Nicole Teeter, a biology teacher at Tennent, praised the twins as being “some of the best kids in the school. They’re a really nice group. They’re polite, they’re active, they’re involved in the community and the school.

“They’re personable and just a great group to be around.”

The twins, however, don’t see what all the fuss is about.

“People are like, ‘Oh my God,’ ” Mark said. “To us, this is no surprise. We’ve been doing it our whole life.”