

childbearing

The newsletter of the Lower Mainland Childbearing Society

Birth Stories Issue

We love your birth stories! Sadly, we often run out of space to print them. So this issue, to celebrate Spring with all its flowers, new growth, ducklings, lambs and, best of all, babies, we have decided to devote the entire issue to birth stories. For those whose birth stories still didn't fit into this issue, hang in there: we'll get yours in eventually. And keep them coming, along with those gorgeous baby photos!

For those of you who haven't yet welcomed your babies into your arms we hope you find these stories encouraging, inspiring, and reassuring and we offer you all our best wishes for your own births. ☺

☺ Letters & Announcements ☺

We love to hear from you! Keep sending your comments on our newsletter, our classes, our doulas, your birth and parenting experiences, and anything else related to the childbearing year that you'd like to get off your chest to: registrar@childbearing.org or 8540 Elsmore Road, Richmond BC, V7C 2A1

Please join us in welcoming to the world baby Omar James Alfred Henderson.

He was born at 2:23 pm on June 15, 2006, weighing in at 8lbs 3oz and measuring 56 cm top to toe. He's a happy little sucker; born slippy, and cackling like a cockatoo. We are not sure if his first noise was actually a cry or was it maniacal laughter? It is possible we have an evil genius on our hands.

Julia was brilliant, lovely and courageous. She sang like a Rhine maiden



Julia and Omar

through the 13 hour labour, and delivered without drugs or medical interference, thanks to our lovely midwife. We were all home 4 hours after Omar slipped into the world. Now on his third day we lounge and suckle, and suckle and suckle. He is voracious, though very good tempered. We are tired and ridiculously proud.

Adam & Julia Henderson

Editor's note: This letter made into my inbox after the Winter deadline, and by now Omar is nearly a year old. However, better late than never. Happy Birthday, Omar!

Lower Mainland Childbearing is: Aleksandra Henderson, *President, Doula Rep.*; Jennifer Landels, *Treasurer, Newsletter Editor*; Stephanie Ondrack, *Registrar, Secretary, Marketing Director*; Mary Coll, *Teacher-at-large, Volunteer Coordinator*; Susan Woodhouse, *Packages*; Diane Donaldson, *Past President*

Instructors: Mary Coll, Aleksandra Henderson, Stephanie Ondrack, Susan Woodhouse.

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Welcome Babies!

These are some of the new faces we met at postpartum classes this winter and spring, and their birthdates:

Abigail	16 Dec 06	Jaxon	21 Feb 07
Alex	11 Mar 07	Jeanne	1 Dec 06
Aurel	7 Mar 07	Jemila	8 Jan 07
Austen	24 Dec 06	Kate	18 Jan 07
Braeden	26 Sep 06	Katelyn	13 Feb 07
Braeden	12 Feb 07	Kayla	16 Oct 06
Brooklyn	30 Dec 06	Kayla	18 Jan 07
Caitlyn & Andrew	15 Jan 07	Keon	17 Dec 07
Cameron	29 Sep 06	Kerensa	25 Jan 07
Chantal	22 Nov 06	Kira	1 Feb 07
Clement	23 Feb 07	Mackenzie	10 Feb 07
Devon	27 Oct 06	Maia	24 Oct 06
Dominic	6 Sep 06	Marina	8 Jan 07
Eleanor	20 Sep 06	Max	13 Nov 06
Elias	21 Dec 06	Max	8 Jan 07
Elizabeth	16 Oct 06	Michael	11 Jan 07
Ella	16 Jan 07	Nicholas	28 Sep 06
Ellis	1 Aug 06	Noah	?
Emiliano	5 Jan 07	Olivia	15 Jan 07
Francesca	30 Sep 06	River	20 Oct 06
Graham	31 Dec 06	Sam	?
Hannah	1 Feb 07	Uku Zoltan	19 Jan 07
Jack	9 Mar 07	Violet	?
James	11 Feb 07	Xavier	27 Nov 06

If you attended postpartum classes during January through April and your babies are not here we apologize. Just send us their names and birthdays and we'll add them next issue. (And please forgive us if we've got the spelling or date wrong!)

Hi Aleks,

What a great weekend. Thanks for all of the good information and for creating such a safe and enjoyable atmosphere. I loved meeting the expectant parents and your plainspoken style was very refreshing. Scott really enjoyed your class as well and his level of engagement (he's normally a quiet guy, a bit reticent) was a testament to your gift for teaching.

I look forward to the reunion and thanks once again for all of the great tips. This prenatal course exceeded my expectations. I hope that all those I care for who will become first-time moms get a chance to attend a class like yours, and I'll definitely recommend it.

Cheers

Carolynne Robertson

Hi all,

Just wanted to let you know that Derek and I missed the last class for good reason. I went into labour on Monday Feb 12th in the evening and we welcomed our baby girl [Katelyn Michelle Shick] on Tuesday Feb 13th at 3:00pm. She was born 9 days early and weighed 6 pounds, 11 ounces. We are all doing well and the birth itself was a wonderful experience. We are looking forward to meeting the rest of the new little ones when we get together for the post-partum classes.

Best wishes to all of you!

Take Care,

Steph, Derek, and Katelyn



Dear Jennifer and Stephanie,

Andrew and I are ecstatic to tell you that our daughter, Serafina Bo-Peep Shin-von Nordenflycht, was born at BC Women's on March 15 at 11:51 p.m. She weighed 2.79 kgs (6 lbs 2 oz.), and measured 49.5 cm (19.5 inches) long at birth. We're nuts about her! I was hoping to exclusively breastfeed, but apparently my milk is taking a long time to come in (as we speak, on day 5, it's still very yellow in colour), notwithstanding frequent and long feedings and pumping (and sore sore everything!). Much to our chagrin, Serafina got dehydrated on Sunday/Monday, and we ran out of donor milk and the milk bank also ran out on Monday, so we had to give her 60 ml of formula on Monday afternoon. But we now have a new supply of donor milk, which I hope will tide us over until I start really making my own and in the last 24 hours, she's peed and pooped more times than I could've believed, so I think she's really turned

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the corner. Also, though her weight dropped down in the hospital after birth to 2.58 kgs (5 lbs. 9 oz.), which is what got us on the supplemental donor milk in the first place, she weighed 5 lbs. 11 oz yesterday. So we are very very relieved.

Oh! and even though she's a bit small, was still very breech before delivery, had to be delivered by c-section and came earlier than we were expecting, she got an 8 on the 1 minute apgar and a 9 on the second! The amazing thing is that Dr. Woo let us watch him delivering her, and Andrew got



Serafina

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incredible pictures of the whole thing (those OR lights are good for something after all....)! It literally only took Dr. Woo about 10 minutes to deliver her after the spinal was administered, and the first thing he did was hold her to my face. She had her eyes wide open!

Sorry to write such a long email and I know I've sent an excessive number of pictures, but the long and short of it is: We just LOVE her! She is amazing and we are so happy that she came out healthy notwithstanding all the complications along the way!

Take care,

Haeryung and Andrew



Above: Late Autumn 2006 Grads



Left: June 2006 Grads in their Hallowe'en gear

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Focus on:

Brooklyn's Birth

by Rebecca Reykdal

Well, Brooklyn Paige Ama Brunson came into the world at 10:47 a.m. on Saturday, December 30, 2006. She was three days past her due date. She has a full head of black hair and the most beautiful smile. She weighed in at 6 lbs 15 oz and was 20 cm long. We decided to have a home birth and it made the experience very comfortable and it felt so natural. In retrospect, it was a beautiful labour and birth, there were some very memorable moments, and I feel like a stronger person. There were no complications and everything moved along fairly quickly. Mothers all around the globe are amazing people to go through childbirth not only once but multiple times, I have a newfound respect for women's capacity to listen to their bodies and create such amazing miracles.



I started having early labour throughout the day on Friday, December 29 but was sceptical that it was actually labour because I had been feeling these menstrual like cramp/contractions for the past two weeks. My midwife had said that my cervix was 90% effaced and 1-2 cm dilated a week before my due date, 10 days before Brooklyn was born. So I went about my day like any other. My brother was visiting from Whitehorse with his daughter and we decided to go and see the Surrey Eagles Hockey Junior team play. When I went to bed that night the contractions started to get a lot more uncomfortable and I couldn't sleep so I got up and looked for something to eat. They started to get closer together but I was still sceptical because I had had a false alarm a week ago. We decided to draw a bath and Roger began timing the contractions, to my surprise they were 60 seconds long and 5 minutes apart so we decided to call our doula and midwife to let them know that we thought labour had begun. This was at about 12:30 a.m.

At 1 a.m. our doula arrived. I was very jovial, talking up a storm in between contractions, which were still very mild at this point. I enjoyed the bath a lot but was starting to shrivel up so the doula suggested the birthing ball. I loved it. It felt sooo good to bounce and relieve some pressure. I actually started getting a little bored and suggested to Roger that maybe we should read a book together or something. Of course as soon as I suggested this, the contractions got stronger and took more of my energy and concentration to relax in between. I started to move within myself becoming less cognizant of my surroundings and what was happening. I can easily see how suggestible women in labour can be. I tried almost everything that my doula and Roger suggested to find some relief. I went into the shower, which felt really good, and

Roger joined me for a while. The doula started filling up the birthing pool while Roger applied counter pressure on my sacrum. The poor guy did this for many hours. I was really tired at this point and the doula suggested some side lying with loads of pillows to help me get some rest. I tried this for a little while but it was useless, I had to be on either hands and knees or squatting. The pool was a nice change but my contractions were starting to feel unbearable. Roger and the doula encouraged me to make low tonal groans, this helped me to focus

on something and give release during contractions.

Roger called the midwife again and when she checked me I was 7-8 cm dilated so that was extremely encouraging. I dreaded every time Roger told me to go to the bathroom because unlike many women I found sitting on the toilet painful. The sun was starting to rise and I was surprised to find out that it was already 6:30. I had been so focused on letting each contraction go, relaxing in between, and focusing on the next that I didn't realize so much time had passed. I decided not to re-enter the pool but use the birthing ball again. They say transition is the shortest part of labour but it felt like eons to me. I told Roger that I thought active labour was bad but I would give anything to go back to it now. The contractions were so close together I had very little rest in between. I started saying that it hurts, and started making high-pitched noises. My doula suggested that I blow out with loose lips to make a vibrating sound; this helped a bit. My water hadn't broken yet so my midwife suggested breaking it and said that it might move things along. I was really concerned about lying on my back during a contraction but she promised it would be really quick. After she broke my waters she also announced that I was 10 cm and could push whenever I wanted. I was excited that it was about to end but had some trepidation about the pushing stage. Pushing did relieve the pain of the contractions but it hurt in a different way. Every time the head pushed through my pelvis and then slipped back in again I thought "no, don't go back in, you're going the wrong way." The pushing stage seemed to last forever but in reality was only 45 minutes. Once the head started crowning I heard everyone in the room exclaim "Oh my, look at all that hair!" I was mildly interested in this comment but also slightly vexed that they seemed to be enjoying themselves while here I was wrestling with labour pains.

Roger was awesome, he was my rock throughout the whole experience, talking to me reassuringly and

encouraging me to push, and congratulating me after every one, and holding me in his arms. He was sitting on the birthing ball with me on hands and knees, lying in his lap. We were both slightly disappointed that he was unable to catch the baby as we had planned but I needed him where he was. I don't know how I would have managed without him. As the baby started crowning I felt a burning sensation in my labia and said that I was tearing. The midwives were providing perineal support and said that I wasn't tearing. I ended up getting two stitches in my labia. I slowly pushed out the head and the midwife told me to push again on the next contraction for the rest of the body. So I waited and waited, I felt pretty good right about now, the head was out, there were no contractions, but it was a bit weird having a baby partly inside of you and partly outside of you. The midwife realized that I hadn't had a contraction for a while so she told me to push, I pushed one more time and out came our beautiful baby girl. I heard her crying, the midwife passed her to me through my legs and I sat back against the couch on the floor and held her for the first time. When I came to my senses I realized that it was a bright and

Emiliano's Birth

Orlando and I are proud to announce the birth of our healthy baby boy, Emiliano! He was born on Friday, January 5, 2007, at 1:05 am. Weighing in at 7 pounds, 8 ounces.

We survived the first week just fine and Emiliano and I are doing fabulously. Emiliano now weighs 7 pounds, 11 ounces.

Throughout my pregnancy, I had a feeling it was a boy. Orlando was sure it was a girl. It's funny how my instincts just took over and everything worked out. Ladies, do trust your instincts, no one knows better than you. Trust that your body knows what to do and that everything happens for a reason.

My due date was December 29, 2006, but I had a feeling baby would come later so I worked until that very day. I felt great besides experiencing Braxton Hicks for the three weeks before the birth. I was thankful that I had a few days of rest and sleep before the birth and I was able to meditate. I mentally communicated with the baby that we'd be a team in labour and it was going to be quick, natural and uncomplicated. I think the meditation part helped to relax



Autumn 2006 Grads

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sunny day, as the sun was streaming in through the blinds, it was a wonderful moment.

The rest is a bit of blur. She had a hard time latching on properly for breastfeeding but she has come around very well and actually gained 11 oz. in the past two weeks. One of my nipples is REALLY sore. I'm using lanolin, but I cringe every time she latches on, she has a hard time flanging her lips wide enough. Once she starts nursing it feels better though. Hoping this nipple soreness will pass soon. We are doing very well, tired, but happy getting to know one another.

Congratulations to all of you that have entered motherhood and fatherhood. I have enjoyed reading all of your birth stories. Roger and I send out our regards to all of you that are patiently, or not so patiently, awaiting labour. For me, I took each contraction one at a time and rested as best I could in between. By ignoring the clock and trusting those around me to take care of me and the small details, time went by faster than I thought possible and before I knew it I was holding my baby in my arms. Trust in yourself and you will rock it!

Rebecca Reykdal

by Julia de Sousa Rojas

me about the birth ... I wasn't feeling anxious at all.

On the morning of Thursday, January 4th, I was feeling cramping and I thought it might be Braxton Hicks again but I had a feeling that the baby was going to be born that day or the next. I took the dog out for a walk and felt better. Later that day, the contractions became regular at around 4:00pm.

At around 7:30pm we called our midwife to let her know that the contractions were three minutes apart lasting for about a minute. I told her that I was hoping to sleep that night and have the baby in the morning. She was hoping the same since she just came back from vacation in England. So she suggested that I take a warm bath to relieve the discomfort and to call her when the contractions were one minute apart, lasting for about two minutes. This occurred at around 9:00pm and there was the bloody show (mucous plug), so I called her back to inform her and she arrived in our home at around 9:30pm. She checked my cervix and it was dilated to 4 cm. She advised that it was time to go to the hospital! Orlando was shocked. He thought it wouldn't be time until tomorrow because I seemed to be dealing with it so well and I wasn't complaining.

The midwife called St. Paul's where we were registered but they were full so we had to go to Women's. It actually worked out better this way because I wanted a water birth and, after registering with St. Paul's, I later found out that they do not allow water

births. Orlando wasn't sure where Women's was and this made me a bit nervous so in the state of mind I was in (a bit of panic), I said I would go with the midwife. However, Orlando assured me he knew where it was and I went with him. I later found out that the midwife was shaking her head at Orlando when I had said that because she didn't want my water to break in her car. I totally understand this! Orlando put a towel on the car seat just in case. The midwife would meet us at the hospital.

My mother (who lives with us) decided last minute that she was coming. She wasn't going to because she didn't want to see me in pain. However, she figured if she didn't go, she would just be at home worrying and wondering. I was glad she decided to come, as it would be wonderful for her to be present at the birth of one of her grandchildren for the first time.

We arrived at Women's at around 10 pm. The midwife signed us in and guided us to our very nice and big room. Orlando gave our midwife my birthing plan. I tried the birthing ball but it wasn't helping. I remember thinking to myself that I never want to go through this again but I kept it to myself (however, later on when I saw the baby, I changed my mind as it was so worth it). I asked to go in the bath. When I entered the bath, it was instant relief!!! The warmth made the contractions more bearable. I was lying on my side at first then instinctively moved to my knees and asked for a pillow to lean on for comfort. My midwife told me to be careful not to soak the pillow in the water as the midwives had gotten in trouble by the hospital before for ruined wet pillows! I told my midwife I wanted a water birth.

All my wishes in my birthing plan were honoured. The lights were dimmed; we had relaxing reggae music playing, with no drugs and no epidural offered, as I wanted to have

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the birth naturally (if my mother and sister did it, I could do it too!). When the water cooled off a bit, more warm water was added. Orlando put warm wet wash clothes on my back to keep me warm. In between contractions I was cold and shivering but during contractions I was very hot. I coped with the stronger contractions by concentrating on my breathing and listening and swaying to the music. Swaying to the music seemed to make the time pass quicker. I pictured relaxing on a beach in Barbados. I kept telling myself that I was strong and could get through it and that it would be over soon and I will finally get to meet my baby.

The urge to push happened at around 11:30 pm. While I was pushing, I thought that I was screaming very loudly and was concerned that I would be heard throughout the hospital; however, Orlando later told me that I was surprisingly very quiet and was not screaming. My mother decided to sit at the other end of the room and wait, as she could not bear to see me in pain.

Our midwife kept assuring her that I was doing great because she was so concerned about me. Orlando was great and was with me the whole time saying that I was doing great and that I'm so strong. He called me "superwoman". The reassuring words helped get me through it. What also would've helped was if Orlando could have fanned me because I needed air in the stuffy bathroom. He couldn't find anything to fan me with so I put the shower curtain over my head so I could breathe better. I heard the midwife commenting that I was hiding and making a cocoon for myself. Maybe subconsciously I was but I really needed air (guys: keep this in mind and have a fan ready just in case as body temperature rises during contractions). Both the midwife and the nurse kept saying positive things to me

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and it also helped (you're doing great, you are amazing, you are so strong).

At around 12:45 am, the baby was crowning and I remember feeling the "ring of fire". I had a feeling that the baby would come very soon, however, the midwife thought it would be another few hours and informed my mom of this. However, it was only 20 minutes of pushing and the baby was out. He was born with his right hand on his face. As a result, I needed a couple of stitches and his poor little hand was a bit bruised. Ever since then, he prefers to have his hand near his face. The midwife later mentioned that I almost delivered the baby myself because she wasn't expecting it to be so quick.

The midwife passed our beautiful crying boy to me and I consoled him saying "Hello my beautiful boy! You're with mama now. It's OK. We did it! We make a great team. Good job!" He immediately stopped crying. When the cord stopped pulsating, Orlando cut the cord. He was very nervous about poking the baby accidentally. But he did a great job cutting. We moved to the bed and the baby lay on my stomach. He seemed very alert and was searching for the nipple about 15 minutes later. He is a natural at feeding. Grandma was ecstatic. She was helping me with feeding. Both the nurse and midwife commented

Pella's Birth

Well, we are ecstatic, and very proud to announce the birth of our healthy and happy, baby girl. Her name is Pella Westh Bergstrom (Westh pronounced West, my mom's maiden name). She was born 8 lbs 1 oz at 10:04 pm on Friday December 8th at Women's Hospital.

Wow, what an experience!!! Incredible, surreal, draining, heart wrenching ... and that doesn't even start to describe it!! From Kendall's perspective I think it would be more like... painful of course, surreal, exhausting, mentally bizarre, ... and "you just can't describe it", ... but hugely rewarding at the end!

OK so here is our story (paper back due on shelves in February) from my perspective, since I was more *cognoscente* than Kendall.

It all started on Wednesday morning (our due date) when Kendall went in for a visit to the doctor. The doctor offered to do a membrane sweep to get things started, and Kendall agreed. About 8 pm Kendall started getting some cramps, which we figured right away to be early contractions. They were coming about five every hour, and lasted about 10 to 15 seconds. That night we went out for a walk and to get some Thai food for dinner (carb loading).



move around relatively easily but had to stop for a breath or support herself on me during them. We went for a walk in the afternoon and made sure to have some more pasta for dinner (carbs).

That night at around 8:00, Kendall started getting stronger contractions. They were at a point where she could still sleep through some of them but woke for many of them. At 5 am they were stronger yet again, and she could not sleep.

So she got about 6 hours of sleep. During the contractions that night I gave hand massages (breaking the popsicle, and that other weird one where you intertwine your fingers), and also some back and leg massage. I also did some tandem breathing, but it didn't do much for

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that it was great that my mom was so supportive of breastfeeding as their moms are not so. The nurse commented that it was one of the most beautiful births she had witnessed and she was going to write about it. She commended me on my strength and said I inspired her. I felt very proud and happy. All the nurses at Women's were great and very helpful.

Emiliano is great at feeding, however, it's been very painful for me. He latches on OK but he sucks vigorously and I'm very sensitive. I've decided to tough it out for his sake. I'm hoping it gets better. I'm sure it will as it feels like it's not as painful as when I was in the hospital. This was something I was not expecting. I found that it is better when I've had some rest.

Take care and good luck to those who are going to give birth.

✂ Julia de Sousa Rojas

by Hans Bergstrom

That night Kendall slept through many contractions (she is an amazing sleeper by the way) but woke for others. The following day I took the day off work considering that the contractions had become a bit more severe. Kendall fired up the kitchen and started baking X-mas goodies (I got to lick the bowl), and I did some work from home, and did some last minute preparations (note by the way guys that making a "last minute things to grab list" is VERY IMPORTANT). The contractions now were at a point where Kendall could still

Kendall (she also scolded me for breathing into her face ... oops). For Kendall, breathing was key – not to be under estimated – this totally got her through to the finish line!

Kendall had two bowls of cereal for breakfast and some pieces of pineapple, but the pineapple was giving her some trouble. For lunch we had a bowl of tomato and veg soup. We took a walk to the doctor at about noon, stopping to cope with the contractions, this time; Kendall would put much more weight on me, and could not walk during them. The timing was still about the same five per hour, 15 seconds each, some 30 seconds long. The doctor did an exam and low and behold we were 2 cm dilated. Kendall got a Demerol / Gravol shot to help with the pain a bit. Back home we went ... on the way stopping at a store so Kendall could buy a Christmas present (where she proceeded to have a contraction at the cashiers' desk), and at the movie store to get a movie (Nacho Libre) and stopping at an alley sewer grate to have barf (hello again pineapple). We fired up the movie while in bed, and Kendall got in some more sleep. I paused the movie during contractions to work through them with her (in retrospect a comedy was a bad film choice because I felt guilty for laughing at the funny parts, and also felt guilty for resuming the movie when the contraction had passed). At the end of the movie Kendall felt not too great, and threw up a few more times, now having trouble keeping anything down. I suggested an old faithful, booster-juice – it had rarely let Kendall down before. So off I go to get the

smoothie. 15 minutes later I come home to find Kendall standing at the bottom of the stairs holding onto the handrail, in a much more severe contraction than I had seen before. I took her back upstairs and we tried working through the contractions, and did so on the bed stacking some pillows for Kendall to put her chest on and letting her knees rest on the bed (basically on all fours). I tried giving her the smoothie, and almost as quick as it went in, it came out. The contractions now started happening every minute for about a minute.

I was getting terrified. I called the doula, who recommended getting her into the tub to slow the frequency of the contractions. I did so; Kendall would only go in on all fours – on her back was out of the question. The tub didn't do anything for slowing the frequency of the contractions, but it did make Kendall's knees sore because I didn't think of putting towels or anything in the tub for padding. The doula showed up at about 3:00. Kendall stayed in the tub for a while as the Doula observed and asked questions and as I did the pelvic squeeze (as learned in class – this for Kendall made a huge difference and would do so the entire birth). The doula then took over for me for a bit and then we moved Kendall to the toilet, to make things progress. Kendall basically put both hands on the toilet seat between her legs and leaned forward while supporting some of her weight on her hands ... this seemed to be bearable. Then we moved back to the bed with the birthing ball taking the place of the pillows (as mentioned previously). After a while of this we decided we should head to the doctors before she closed for the day (5:30). We then tried getting ourselves organized to leave -- which felt frantic for me, especially since Kendall could only go about 10 steps before having to stop to have a contraction. So we finally get to the doctor's office and same deal getting into the office, 10 steps at a time. Getting onto the exam table was a bit of a challenge also because it required Kendall getting in that lying back position which she just couldn't manage. So the doc did the exam and said that we were at six centimetres and that we should head to the hospital, and that she (the doc) would call ahead to let them know that we are coming.

So back into the car we got, and Kendall was totally dreading this part, because it entailed a 20-minute drive in a sitting position, and a somewhat bumpy road in my truck. When we got into the car Kendall started crying and saying that she didn't want to have to "go through this", meaning the birth ... this was heart wrenching for me ... so I tried to calm her while starting to drive. The timing was also terrible, because it was rush hour. Kendall was wailing almost the entire way ... her position seemed to make the contractions overlap, without much rest between them. I was sure we were going to have the baby in the car. We got to the hospital and signed in. The hospital was basically full, they were turning away women who were 4 cm and less. So fortunately we got in, but it took 20 minutes to get a room. Meanwhile we stood at the check-

Some helpful hints for the guys out there

- *make a last minute list for things to grab before you leave the house.*
- *remember to tell your partner that she is doing great (Kendall says this made a big difference).*
- *remember in the confusion to give the birthing plan to the nurse (we did but it could have easily been forgotten)*
- *the hip pressing during the heavy labour was essential (to Kendall)*
- *the massage in the early labour was essential (to Kendall)*
- *we gave our camera to the doula for taking photos and video, which was great because it let me attend to Kendall.*
- *giving water after every contraction was important.*
- *I forgot to give Kendall lip balm during the labour, which she wished I had given (without asking her).*
- *it was very difficult for Kendall to answer questions because she was so engrossed in the contractions, which is why giving water / lip balm is important rather than asking if she wants it.*

☞ Hans Bergstrom

in desk labouring, Kendall gripping the desk with white knuckles during each contraction.

When we got in the room we got Kendall into the shower with the birthing ball right away (now about 6:30). I got my swim shorts on and got in with her to push on her hips and massage her. At this point I had started humming along with Kendall during the contractions, as this seemed to make her moaning sound less lonely (in my mind). Kendall (in retrospect) said it was appreciated, but didn't really help make the pain any less, though it did feel like a form of support. The nurse had proposed checking the progress, but we chose not to since we knew we were progressing and that checking the progress might just demoralize Kendall, if we weren't as far as we thought. The doula now wanted to move her to a sitting position in the shower which Kendall refused (in a voice filled with fear and tears) saying that it was too painful. Moving to the toilet was doable though. After some time we then went to the birthing bed with the ball again and checked the progress, it was 8:00 and she was 8 cm ...

Kendall says that this made her realize "oh my god I have to do this for another 2 hours!!). Her moaning was now changing to more of a grunt. This was a sign that it was soon time to push. Kendall was getting so tired that between contractions her eyes would roll upwards so I could only see the whites, and she would flop on the ball almost not moving (this worried me since she had only really had breakfast and thrown up her lunch). When the contractions came she would grip my hands so hard that my fingers would go white.

Once it was time to push (an hour later) she positioned on her side with a lifted leg, and started pushing. The nurse would now monitor the baby's heart rate between every contraction. As the pushing progressed and the baby started moving into the birth canal, the pauses between the contractions got longer apart, and Kendall sometimes got up to three minutes between contractions (which for Kendall felt like a vacation). They moved Kendall onto her back for the final delivery, which at this point did not bother Kendall like it had previously, and they put a birthing bar on the bed to put her feet onto. The top of the baby's head finally appeared, and each push got it a bit further. The baby's heart rate was dropping, and the doctor said to Kendall "this baby wants to be born now" (obviously something was not right). This happened three times (contraction / pushing) with the doctor repeating the comment with more seriousness each time, and on the last time saying that she would need to perform an episiotomy (to which we agreed to). On the next push Kendall didn't hold back, and pushed the head out before the doctor could make the cut (although Kendall did tear). When the head was out the doc told Kendall to stop pushing because the cord was wrapped around the baby's neck twice. The doc grabbed a clamp and went to clamp the cord, but the clamp broke. She said "crap" and threw the broken clamp to the floor (in my head I'm thinking I hope she has another one of those). She grabbed another two, and put them on the

In Kendall's words...

I actually don't have much to add to Hans' epic account of Pella's birth as he consulted me while he wrote it. I didn't want to discuss the pain involved for those who haven't experienced it yet, because it's not really describable. It's something you just have to experience in order to understand. My feelings about going through it drug free are mixed. I am proud that I did it, but am unsure of what decision I would make next time. I do know that if someone offered me drugs during the labour I probably would've given in. However, I would like to think that Pella is as healthy as she is and my recovery as quick as it has been because of my choice. I would recommend to those readers who want to document the birth that they do it within a couple of days. It's amazing what your mind forgets and how quickly. I found it very difficult to make any decisions during labour. In fact, supposedly I said about two words throughout. I also did not feel the relief that people describe when finally given the go ahead to push. I actually found that to be the most difficult/toughest stage. Having Aleksandra there (our doula) was well worth the investment. She guided both Hans and I every step of the way and in the end was able to take most of the photographs and video. I never thought I would want to watch her being born but it is the coolest video to have. Makes me cry every time I watch it.

The doula was also able to assist me in getting Pella to latch within minutes of her delivery and that was really cool. Breastfeeding has certainly been a trial and error experience, but as everyone says don't give up - it will get easier. Its day 10 and I am just getting the hang of it.

In closing, I would just add that during the entire experience you do rely almost completely on those around you, so surround yourself with people you know have experience and will give good guidance - sisters, mothers, friends that have had babies. Don't rely on hospital staff or your doctor, who is really only there for the final stage. And if you can afford it, hire a doula.

✎ Kendall Cross

cord, and then told me to cut the cord with a pair of scissors, which she handed me. I did it immediately, and the cord fell away from the baby's neck and the rest of the baby came out. Kendall asked "what is it" and I looked and announced that it was a baby girl.

We already knew her name would be Pella. We put her on Kendall's tummy, and she cried and cuddled. It was fantastic!!!

✎ Hans Bergstrom

Business Directory

Baby & Maternity Wear
Wee Ones Reruns Consignment 612 Kingsway, Vancouver 604 708 0956
Room For Two Maternity 1409 Commercial Drive, Vancouver 604-255-0508 Bamboletta Dolls www.bamboletta.com
Pregnancy & Birth Services
Birthing Buddies TENS & Pool Rental 604-928-2334 www.birthingbuddies.com
Health Care
Abrams, Caroline , Family Osteopath 604-730-5950 info@vancouverosteopath.com
Acubalance Wellness Centre 604-678-8600 www.acubalance.ca
Aurora Massage Therapy 210 – 2233 Burrard, Vancouver 604 734 4030
Lalande, Linda RMT 3623 W 4 th Ave, Vancouver 604 562 0612
Kalef, Dr Mia , Craniosacral Therapist 604-908-1214 www.emergingfamilies.com
Soma Studio Massage 213 / 303, 1529 W 6 th Ave, Vancouver 604-738-1502

Yaletown Chiropractic 604-688-1500 www.yaletownchiropractic.com
Photography
Michael Ford Photography 604-730-6170 www.michaelfordphotography.com
Yoga
Balance Healing Yoga Studio 390 Howard Ave. Burnaby BC 604 298-0600
Lyne Lantaigne Yoga 604-767-6242 ekayoga@creativite.com
Urban Yoga , Janice Clarfield 604-739-6664 urbanyoga@uniserve.com
Yoga West of Vancouver 2662 W 4 th Ave 604-732-9642

Safe Start Programme	604-298-2755
ICAN Vancouver	604-875-3458 604-734-4226
Post Caesarean Birth Support	604-433-5827
La Leche League	604-736-3244
Newborn Hotline	604-737-3737
Pacific Postpartum Support	604-255-7999
Parents in Crisis Line	604-669-1616
Support for Grieving Parents	
Rob & Jill Mullen	604-986-5012
BC Children's Social Work	604-875-2345 Ext 7358
BC Women's Social Work	604-875-2424 Ext 6161
Twins and More Club	
	www.vancouvertwins.com
Vancouver Breastfeeding Clinic	604-738-1912
Volunteer Grandparents Assn.	604-736-8271
Westcoast Family Resource	604-255-9568
Prenatal Classes	
Lower Mainland Childbearing	604-878-1031
Doula Referrals	
Doula Services Association	604-515-5588
Lower Mainland Childbearing	604-878-1031
Vancouver Coastal Health	
Vancouver Health Department	604-875-6381
Evergreen Health Centre	604-872-2511
North Community Health Office	604-253-3575
Pacific Spirit Health Centre	604-261-6366
Raven Song Health Centre	604-709-6400
South Health Office	604-321-6151
Three Bridges Health Centre	604-736-9844
<i>Note: Your Community Health Nurse has further information on local resource</i>	

Community Resources

Information and Counselling	
BCW Breastfeeding Clinic	604-875-2424
BCWLactation Consultants	604-875-2282
Breast Milk Bank	604-875-2345 Ext 7607
Dial-a-Dietician	604-732-9191
Family Place (Westside)	604-738-2819
Family Place (Eastside)	604-872-6757
Family Services of Vancouver	
1616 West 7 th Ave	604-731-4951
202-1193 Kingsway	604-874-2938
Infant and Child Seat Information	
BCAA Consumer Service	604-298-2122

Prenatal Class Schedule (updated May 2007)

This is a partial list of our classes. For the full schedule, see our website.

Weekly Series	7 Evening classes (2hrs ea) 2 Healthy Pregnancy sessions 1 Postpartum Reunion 4 Postpartum Classes <i>(option: 8 additional postpartum classes for \$60 more)</i> Cost: \$220 (\$280 includes full PP series) Time: 7:00pm – 9:00pm	Location: <u>Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House</u> 800 East Broadway Early Summer Th 31 May – 12 Jul Summer T 26 Jun – 7 Aug Mid Summer W 25 Jul – 6 Sep Late Summer Th 23 Aug – 4 Oct Early Autumn T 11 Sep – 23 Oct Autumn Th 11 Oct – 22 Nov Mid Autumn T 30 Oct – 11 Dec
Weekend Workshops	2 Weekend days (5hrs ea) 1 Breastfeeding Night 2 Healthy Pregnancy sessions 1 Postpartum Reunion 4 Postpartum Classes <i>(option: 8 additional postpartum classes for \$60 more)</i> Cost: \$220 (\$280 includes full PP series)	Time: 9:00am - 2:00pm Location: <u>3285 Victoria (at 16th)</u> June 23 & 24 Jun July 21 & 22 Jul August 11 & 12 Aug August 25 & 26 Aug September 29 & 30 Sep October 20 & 21 Oct December 8 & 9 Dec
Another Birth: refresher class	1 session: Saturday Afternoon 4 hours Cost: \$75* \$65 for Childbearing Grads Time: noon – 4pm	Location: <u>Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House</u> 800 East Broadway June 9 Jun September 8 Sep November 17 Nov
Healthy Pregnancy, Breastfeeding, and Postpartum class schedules listed on our website.	To register, or for more information: (604) 878-1031 www.childbearing.org	Private classes and Low income rates also available.