

childbearing

The newsletter of the Lower Mainland Childbearing Society

Happy New(born) Year!

Once more, we've been presented with so many wonderful birth stories, we just had to devote a whole issue to them.

Each one of these stories, like every birth, is unique and amazing. The first, by Dr Sophie Low-Ber is beautifully written journey through fear and doubt engendered by *too much* knowledge – including the ironic but very real statistic that medical professionals are prone to more interventions than the general population – to the literally eye-opening discovery that she could, and did, give birth without complications.

Next comes Elizabeth Cain and Muthanna Subbaiah's story: not only jointly written, but a testimony to teamwork, with each other, and with their doula and midwives, throughout a gruelling labour, ending in the triumphant home birth of a sunny-side-up baby!

By contrast "Marco's" birth, described by a father who would like to remain anonymous, was fast and furious, and the parents both had to fight – the father by advocating, the mother by sheer pushing power – to keep their birth normal.

And finally, with Edmund's birth story, a second time mum finds herself in the unexpected situation of a precipitous and nearly unassisted birth in the wake of long pre-labour. In all these stories the progress of labour and birth did not go as expected. This is common to most births. And yet, all these stories had happy endings. Thankfully, this too, is common to most births.

Our previously scheduled issue on handling fear and risk surrounding pregnancy and birth will appear in the spring issue, but for now we're going to celebrate and stand in awe of the wonderful courage and strength of birthing women.

✉ Jennifer Landels, Editor



"Oh no, Godzilla!!!" cry the graduates of the **May 2007 workshop**

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Next Issue:

- ☞ **Handling Fear**

Lower Mainland Childbearing is: Aleksandra Henderson, *President*; 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.

childbearing childbearing news

Welcome Babies!

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

<i>Aesa</i>	15 Aug	<i>Liam</i>	26 Jun
<i>Alec</i>	11 Jul	<i>Maceo</i>	30 Aug
<i>Amelie</i>	1 Jul	<i>Maeve</i>	20 Jun
<i>Anabel</i>	4 Jul	<i>Maia</i>	28 May
<i>Avery</i>	24 Aug	<i>Margaret</i>	28 Aug
<i>Chloe</i>	20 Jul	<i>Mateo</i>	13 Aug
<i>Cooper</i>	31 Jul	<i>Mateo</i>	9 Aug
<i>Dafia</i>	2 Aug	<i>Max</i>	6 Jul
<i>Dane</i>	28 Jul	<i>Nicole</i>	20 Aug
<i>Ember</i>	22 May	<i>Nolan</i>	17 Jul
<i>Finn</i>	23 Jul	<i>Quinn</i>	14 Sep
<i>Frances</i>	6 Jun	<i>Rio</i>	13 Jun
<i>Ivan</i>	8 Aug	<i>Ruby</i>	29 Jun
<i>Jona</i>	18 Sep	<i>Voya</i>	19 Jun
<i>Joshua</i>	22 Jul	<i>William</i>	13 Aug
<i>Keira</i>	12 Aug	<i>Zara</i>	7 Aug
<i>Kian</i>	15 May		

If you attended postpartum classes during September and October 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!)

Oops!

- In the Spring 2007 issue we listed **Elizabeth's** birthdate as 16 Oct – it is actually 16 Sep.
- **Frances**, whom we missed last issue, is included above.

New and Experienced Teachers Wanted

If you are or want to be a childbirth educator; enjoy working in a supportive environment with like-minded colleagues; and have a desire to help parents in the exciting journey of the childbearing year; we want you. We're looking for dedicated people with a passion for pregnancy, birth and parenting to train with our experienced teachers. Give us a call at 604-878-1031 or email Stephanie at registration@childbearing.org

Acupressure for Labour

Acubalance Wellness Centre is sponsoring a workshop on perinatal acupressure with Debra Betts of New Zealand, on March 10th 2008. For more information on this rare educational opportunity contact 778-861-3826, www.pro-d.ca or acubalance.ca.

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✎ Letters & Announcements ✎

We love to hear from you! Keep sending your comments on our newsletter, our classes, 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

Hi there

I just wanted to say THANK YOU for all that you do. I continue to get wonderful reviews of your classes among our participants. I feel very thankful that women in Vancouver have choices for birth preparation, support and recovery. Although we still have miles to travel, we should feel proud of what we have built.

Thank you ,

Melanie Osmack
Director, Fit 4 Two Inc.
melanie@fit4two.ca
www.fit4two.ca

And thank you, too, Melanie, both for your kind words and the great fitness classes and training sessions you offer in our community! -JL

We feel so lucky that we stumbled upon the Childbearing Society for our prenatal classes. We looked so forward to our weekly sessions and felt so empowered going into the birth of our child. As an instructor, Stephanie had such a beautifully calming effect on us, and really put our minds at ease about all topics. She made (and continues to make) herself totally available, which has allowed us to feel so very supported. We will be recommending the Childbearing Society (Stephanie in particular) to friends. Thank you so much.

Kerry Slater

✎

Thanks so much again for allowing me to audit the series towards my

DONA certification. I learned so much (despite having already had a child and completed prenatal classes) and was really inspired by your extensive knowledge and friendly delivery. I know the participants learned a lot from your class, and I hope they have better birthing experiences because of it. I look forward to working with you, and mothering with you, in the future!

Jill Beamish, Doula

✎

Hello, I just wanted to write to the Society to say thank you for a great prenatal class. Stephanie Ondrack led our class and my husband and I really appreciated both her expertise and the supportive, inclusive approach she

Acupressure for Labour

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Debra Betts is the author of "The Essential Guide to Acupuncture in Prenancy & Childbirth"

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took to teaching us. We felt very free to ask whatever questions we wanted, and were impressed by the knowledgeable answers we received. We both feel much better prepared for what is ahead. So thanks again and keep up the great work!

Johanna Wright & Del Surjik



Fantastic article on crying and colic in the latest newsletter. I totally agree with everything you said.

Isabel had colic, though it seems to have subsided by now, but we never once left her to cry. It was



Isabel

really harrowing at first, but got easier as we figured out how best to comfort her.

As I attend baby/mummy groups and talk to other parents I am always shocked to hear how prevalent the attitude that it is ok to "let a baby cry it out for 15-20 minutes" is. I have heard several parents talking about how they let their babies cry themselves back to sleep at night so they don't have to get up to nurse or bounce them because they are trying to put them on schedules!!!! It makes me crazy. Hopefully one day this attitude will not be around so much.

Anyway, take care.

Cheers,
Marina Stamboulieh

Hello all,

Ava, Alyson and I are doing really well. We are sitting here with Ava in Alyson's arms and me writing to all of you and the world seems pretty perfect.

I had a long active labour (12 hours) and because my early labour began at 12:30 am (12 hours before active labour) and included a lot of cluster contractions and quite strong contractions.... well; I was tired before there was even a hint of a push. By midnight of Jan. 4th I was thinking I was almost done, my waters still hadn't broken and I really couldn't imagine getting to the "hard part" of pushing. My waters broke when our fabulous midwife Jane was checking my cervix. Well, this brought on contractions like no other (as many of you know). What was amazing about all this was that after about 4 strong 'transition' contractions – one that did make me throw up – I was ready to push and I was in the bathtub (my favourite place) and this gave some relief. I pushed out the baby, while sounding a little like Xena the Warrior Princess (says Alyson) in 15 minutes which was miraculous on so many levels and quite surprising to the midwives and our doula – the baby had remained high through my labour so they had thought I would go another 2 hours to get the baby down and out.

Ava was perfect through it all with a strong heartbeat from start to finish. Alyson was a phenomenal partner and our midwife and doula and Grandma Diane just finished off the team.

No tearing which makes me happy and Ava was looking at me and Alyson and wanting the breast immediately - she latched wonderfully once I was dry and not so slippery!

So, all is well and now we'll see if we can all get a little sleep!

much love,
Lex, Alyson & Ava



Lex, Alyson & Ava

Focus on:

Ella's Story

by Sophie Low-Beer, MD

From the moment I discovered I was pregnant, I became cynical about the outcome.

As a physician who has delivered hundreds of babies all I could think of were the few unfortunate experiences: the miscarriages, the stillbirths, the unanticipated birth defects, the odd metabolic abnormalities, the 3rd and 4th degree tears and the list goes on and on and on. I was particularly aware of the perhaps over exaggerated complications that seemed unfairly increased amongst medically inclined individuals. I also thought of how many of my colleagues were choosing elective Caesarean sections in order to have more control and to stave off any surprising poor outcomes for themselves and their baby. I was jealous of those without my knowledge. Of those in our prenatal class who expected only the best and most blissful of labour experiences. Those who hadn't seen bad things happen suddenly at the last minute and, therefore, could comfortably and confidently have their babies at home. I was sure after being somehow blessed with a perfectly uncomplicated, non-nauseous and healthy pregnancy that all would spiral downwards when it came to labour and delivery. All the above is particularly interesting because I am thrilled to say I was wrong – so wonderfully, so unexpectedly, so perfectly wrong.

My partner Drew and I awoke on Saturday, December 1st to a beautiful blanket of snow. As I lay in bed enjoying a lazy weekend morning I thought how nice it would be to give birth in a quiet and rare Vancouver snowstorm. After rising, I noticed that my underwear was damp, could this be amniotic fluid? Drew seemed quite sure it was unlikely to be anything else, I, on the other hand, was convinced that as our due date was still a week away that this pitiful amount of fluid couldn't possibly be the "waters" breaking. So off we went Christmas shopping and then to a friend's house all the time discussing "it"... could it be?? Finally at around 2:30 pm, at my good friend Katrina's house with the snow

still falling with conviction, I felt my first contraction and became somewhat convinced that labour was beginning.

Things continued to go in an unexpected yet promising direction: my obstetrician was on call that day. With a 1 in 10 call schedule I had been sure that he wouldn't be part of our birthing experience. After chatting with the OB briefly on the phone Drew and I drove through the snow to St. Paul's Hospital. We confirmed that 1) my membranes had ruptured and 2) that I was having contractions. Convinced that my labour was likely to go on for days, even though my contractions were strong and about 7 minutes apart, I went against Dr. Anderson's advice and headed home. I was undoubtedly in very early labour. I decided to fuel up with Thai food, tried to distract myself with a DVD and then, with the contractions increasing in intensity, tried to get some rest ...

It was obvious to everyone except me that I was well on my way to having this baby and as the blizzard progressed and the pain caused me to throw up and drive my nails into my and my partner's palms, I finally accepted that our baby would be born on December 2nd. We persevered at home until 2:30 in the morning. I had been on the birthing ball and in the bath. I had used my rented TENS machine and, in the midst of a wave of nausea, had angrily torn it off. I had thrown up at least a dozen times and my eyes were squeezed shut more often than not. So, at 2:30 am we drove through horizontal snow to the hospital and with each contraction now about 4 minutes apart, and gripping me with unimaginable waves of pain, I slowly made it down the quiet empty hallway to room 10.

I was four centimetres dilated. "Not great", I thought to myself, "Certainly not ten, but on the upside, clearly a good distance from not dilated at all." I answered "no" to the offer by Rob Anderson and our nurse Lindsay for medication, yet, not really knowing how I would cope with these unbearable contractions. Drew and I were then alone except for the odd check of the baby by Lindsay. I paced



around our dark room, eyes shut holding tightly to Drew and tighter with each wave of pain. I remember feeling far away not knowing why I was tolerating this inimitable discomfort. I remember finding any sound other than my own moaning maddening, and any requisite intervention (listening to baby, taking blood etc) infuriating. At around 6am the pain between the contractions was building and preventing me from getting the relief that was my sanity. I was still vomiting and could feel the effects of dehydration setting in. Lindsay recommended an intravenous for hydration and some Gravol and I agreed. As the intravenous was placed in my left forearm, I decided that conceding to some Fentanyl, a fast acting narcotic, would be a good idea and one unlikely to lead to the dreaded "cascade" of ever increasing interventions.

I knew that agreeing to Fentanyl meant I would have to be checked again. I dreaded being on the bed particularly on my back and more than anything I dreaded the potential disappointing information: how would I be able to continue if I hadn't progressed or if I had only gained an extra centimetre? I prepared myself for bad news. Once again though, I was pleasantly surprised. The gruelling 3 hours of pain had not been in vain: I was now 7 centimetres. Suddenly, the light at the end of the tunnel was becoming visible and, as the Fentanyl flooded through my veins allowing me a small but critical amount of distance from my physical self, I allowed myself to accept that I was going to have a baby sooner rather than later. About an hour later, Rob Anderson came to check me before going off shift. The pains had turned to bursts of agony despite the Fentanyl and I could feel myself slipping even further away from possessing any capacity for rational thought. He said something about rupturing my membranes, which between screaming moans I vehemently agreed to and then, within

the hour, I was fully dilated.

Our new nurse, Jane, instructed me to push and I could feel hysteria take hold and myself becoming one of the women I had attended to who, in the last hours of labour when asked to do this last thing, gave up. Somehow, I managed to tap into the only thread of rational thought that had survived and determined for this pain to be over I pushed and pushed and pushed. Within a few contractions Jane said she could see the head, which I, stubbornly pessimistic, took to mean a nanometre of hair was visible and instead of being reassured became disappointed. I also, apparently, took this opportunity to bite Drew's hand. Amazingly, what seemed like seconds later the magic words "Stop pushing – Pant, Pant" were uttered and suddenly a flood of exhausted delirious excitement and acceptance washed over me. I was moments away from having my baby. Determined to stave off tearing, I panted and panted and panted while I heard Rob paged overhead. He arrived in his street clothes, having been off for almost an hour and on his way out of the hospital. He threw on a gown and, after taking one loop of cord off around her neck, delivered our baby.

For the first time since I had arrived at St. Paul's, I opened my eyes. She was perfect- pink, strong, wriggling on my belly, eyes already roving for the breast. The snow was still falling outside, the winter morning light filling the room and Drew, the perfect coach, partner, friend and father to our beautiful girl was standing strongly by my side as he had been for the past nineteen hours tears running down his face.

So, exactly one month later at our kitchen table at our cabin in the middle of the forest on Galliano Island I write this and reflect on how lucky we were. How despite my cynicism everything worked out perfectly. It can happen:

the uncomplicated pregnancy and labour and delivery. Drew and I are the proud parents of Ella Elise Stewart-Lowbeer, a baby who arrived in the middle of a rare and beautiful Vancouver snowstorm, who continues every day to exceed all my expectations.

☞ *Sophie Low-Ber, MD*



She was perfect: pink, strong, wriggling on my belly, eyes already roving for the breast.

Our Birth Journey

by Elizabeth Cain & Muthanna Subbaiah

The story began with what we thought were early labour contractions. We were, of course, incredibly excited but decided to go to bed and rest.

Interestingly enough, it happened on the eve of the baby's due date so we considered that we may be in the rare 1%! Around midnight Elizabeth experienced a gush that we thought may be the water breaking. The cramping had not changed, so we again decided to go to bed.

We were disappointed to wake the next morning to cessation of the cramping but notified the midwife of a

potential water break. She instead suspected that it might just have been cervical mucus. So we did the inevitable and just waited. Cramping resumed in the afternoon and persisted at around every 10 minutes throughout the night. In the morning, Elizabeth experienced what was most likely the bloody show. Now certain this must be the start we prepared the home for delivery and called the midwife again the next morning (now more than 36 hours into the excitement) and she came over to assess changes. Much to our disappointment, the cervix was not even effaced.

Tired and disheartened, we decided that the best thing to do would be to enjoy a couple's day out so we went out for a nice meal and a movie. Low and behold, walking out of the movie, the breaking of the water made itself apparent (we always figured it would happen in a public place so thank goodness for long coats). We again notified the midwife and our doula and proceeded with more waiting.

We awoke the next morning to a beautiful day, anticipating a full moon and hopes of lunar impact on delivery! And circadian rhythms did not fail. More intensive contractions started on Saturday (now over 60 hours from the start of it all) at noon. They were pretty regular at every 6 minutes and lasting about 20-30 seconds. Elizabeth ate her last full meal for the next little while and we hunkered down ready for whatever came next. At around 3:00pm we decided to invite our doula over. At this point contractions were averaging every 5-6 minutes apart and lasting a minute. Muthanna and our doula Amanda practised massage and ensured that Elizabeth was well hydrated and fed. The contractions seemed to localize in the lower back.

The midwife visited at around 4:30pm and proceeded to perform a baseline exam. Neither of us wanted to know the results but she told us she would stay only if the cervix was over 6cm. Unfortunately, the midwife decided to leave (we learnt later that Elizabeth was only at 1cm dilated at the time). The midwife also informed us that she suspected the baby's head was posterior (this was unexpected as the baby had been positioned with feet on the right side – a very rare situation). The news made sense since Elizabeth was experiencing back labour all along but we did not give it a second thought and tried to stay in the moment (non-focussed awareness and toning rock!).


Labour continued: the frequency and intensity of contractions increased, bringing much more intense back labour. We decided to fill up the pool and it provided some relief. Based on the midwife's suggestion Elizabeth proceeded to lie on her side to attempt turning the baby's head. Amanda also suggested trying some lunges during contractions. Both made things much more uncomfortable and around midnight we decided

With support of the fantastic birth team Elizabeth remained strong and insisted on continuing at home.

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to give the midwife a call.

Upon arrival the midwife did another inspection. Good news: the cervix had dilated to 8cm! Elizabeth was enduring some intense contractions (though the water was assisting in relief) and the news rejuvenated everyone. Bad news: the baby was definitely posterior and had not turned, the midwife informed us that it was very rare that a first time mom could successfully push out a posterior baby but she was very supportive and was willing to attempt the birth at home. With support of the fantastic birth team (Amanda and Muthanna took turns massaging and providing breathing coaching) Elizabeth remained strong and insisted on continuing at home.

More intense contractions followed as Elizabeth fought with an intense urge to push for over an hour – at 1:15am on November 25th the midwife gave the green light to start pushing – the relief on Elizabeth's face was obvious and we all braced ourselves. After 2 hours of pushing in the pool, little Ava popped out looking up at the ceiling and weighing 8lbs 4 ounces. She was placed immediately on mom's belly and proceeded to open her eyes and check out the new world. Dad cut the umbilical cord when the pulsing ceased and a new chapter had begun.

✂ Elizabeth Cain & Muthanna Subbaiah

Marco's Birth

The parents in this birth story requested their names be changed. In their words: "We don't wish to offend anyone as they were incredibly kind." –JL.

On Sunday, October 14th at around 5:30am, Kelly woke up with some pains in her back, which she immediately recognized as contractions from what we've learned and read. These contractions were about 18 minutes apart and lasting between 30-60 seconds each. I woke up around 6:00am to Kelly in 'Child's Pose' in bed which seemed to help her handle each contraction and which she had hoped would help her sleep at least a few more hours.

From what we had learned in our course, seen on TV, and read about, I honestly figured this labour would last a long while and we'd still have time to go to the market (together) and pickup some breakfast. By 7:30am the contractions were more intense and about 10 minutes apart. I ran a warm bath for Kelly and that seemed to help. Once she got up she was hit with another more intense contraction and she knew (but I was still oblivious) that this labour was going to happen fast. By 8:45am her mucus plug had come out and by 9:00am her water had broken. This is when we had been told by our doctor to page her. When the doctor returned my call we were advised to head to the hospital immediately.

Kelly's contractions were now about 1-2 minutes apart. We were admitted to hospital by 9:45am and were sent to an 'assessment' room. It seemed to us that everyone was taking their time and figured that we'd be there for a while. As soon as Kelly lay on the bed she was ready to push. The nurse didn't believe her but once she examined Kelly

we were whisked into a birthing room. Our Doctor arrived and tried to get a heart beat using not 1 but 2 monitors (similar to the Doppler devices but I was told they were different). Our baby was on the move and the monitors couldn't get an accurate reading.

The doctor (who actually wasn't our doctor, but one on the call rotation and who had no idea about our birth plan) called the nurse to deliver a vacuum system. I was horrified. We had only been at this hospital for 30 minutes and already they wanted to vacuum my baby. I asked to try a few more contractions and 'wait and see' and I was told about the importance of knowing the babies condition. I understood and thankfully the doctor compromised by letting us have a few more contractions to see if we could give birth naturally.

Kelly, of course, was unable to speak for herself throughout this experience but was able to hear what was going on. The next contraction came and from the corner of my eye I could see a little head poke out. The contraction ended and the head went back in. The next contraction quickly arrived and I could tell that Kelly was giving it her all. I had to keep reminding her to breathe as I could see veins popping out of her head and a shade of red reserved for roses and fire trucks. She later told me that

I had to keep reminding her to breathe as I could see veins popping out of her head and a shade of red reserved for roses and fire trucks.

there was no way they were going to vacuum our baby so she pushed as hard as she could and it worked. Marco was born at 10:35am weighing in at six pounds three ounces. Our initial due date was November 7th.

We were allowed to stay for 2 nights at the hospital and it was a tremendous help since we were first time parents and didn't know what to expect. The first night we had a small scare (thankfully in the attendance of a nurse) when Marco suddenly vomited quite a bit (hours after feeding) and we learned how to handle such a situation. Kelly's recovery, like her labour, has been remarkable. No

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stitches, no painkillers, a shower less than hour after giving birth (on her own) and she was able to feed Marco almost immediately.

When we initially entered into this course we thought we knew how were going to handle the labour. After this course we became very educated in the process and came up with a new plan. As we had been warned, no matter how much you plan, it'll never happen the way you plan it. Hopefully our story will help others in their labours to come.

CR

Edmund's Birth

by Alexandra Straccini

I always love a good sequel. Alexandra and Travis took the Late Autumn 2005 series prior to the birth of their daughter Arbutus, whose story was published in the Spring 2006 issue of the newsletter. It was great to hear from them again, from all the way across the country! JL.

Hello Stephanie,

We moved to Halifax this summer. It was the best decision we could have ever made. We love it here! Unfortunately, midwifery care is not yet legislated so midwives do not have all the same privileges as the midwives in BC. We have a midwife and a doctor. The system is not ideal, but we are satisfied with the level of care we received from both. Anyway, I wanted to share with you Edmund's birth story:

Edmund Fricker

Born: November 9th, 12:49 am

Location: Newcastle Street, Dartmouth Nova Scotia

Weight: 6 lb 2 oz

Another home birth, but with a twist. Edmund was due on November 25th, and once again, another early baby. In fact I had been having early labour contractions since October 27th and at least two false labour starts following Hurricane Noel on November 4th/5th. In fact on the 5th, my midwife determined I was 5 cm dilated and hauled in all her equipment and called her back up because she was very confident it would happen within a few hours. But active labour did not progress. I was growing increasingly agitated and irritated with these contractions. On Thursday, I thought I had a hind leak and called my midwife who called the doctor to set up an appointment for me to get tested to see if amniotic fluid was indeed leaking. It was

not. But, the head had dropped even lower; it had about 2 inches to go. I really liked this doctor. She really respected our wishes to have a home birth attended by midwives.

Anyways, I talked to my midwife later that day about using castor oil because of my frustrations. She said to go ahead. I wasn't looking forward to the castor oil experience because of how bad it was with Arbutus, but surprisingly, it wasn't as bad. I did get diarrhoea but it didn't last very long and there was no vomiting. By 8:30 pm, everything was all over. I was frustrated that I wasn't experiencing regular strong contractions. I called my midwife and asked her if she would consider breaking my waters. She said no, as she felt that if labour did not start within a few hours, we would have to go to the hospital where I would be induced. (I was GBS positive). Anyways, she offered to come the next morning to sweep my membranes to see if that would get things going, which I agreed to. She then advised me to take a bath and some Tylenol so to get some rest if the intermittent contractions were bothering me.

By 10:30 pm, the contractions started up again, but nothing very serious. In fact, I was continuing on conversations and joking with my sister-in-law, Heidi and Travis about the contractions. They felt like the ones I had on Monday and I was disappointed. I took a long hot bath and continued on with my regular bedtime routine. Travis and Heidi thought perhaps things might be different, but I kept telling them the pain wasn't that bad. I was talking through everything; I was just frustrated. Travis and Heidi were timing my contractions, which didn't seem to advance further than 1 minute long and 2-3 minutes apart. We all



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No. 15, Winter 2008

I said, no, I was falling asleep and I didn't think anything would happen till maybe the morning. Within seconds of saying that, my water broke ...

bed rubbing my back. She asked me again if I was sure that I didn't want to call the midwife. I said, no I was falling asleep and I didn't think anything would happen till maybe the morning. Within seconds of saying that, my water broke and the head dropped. This was 12:15am. Heidi quickly called the midwife who told her to tell me not to push and someone had to guide the head out. Travis quickly got out of the shower and held my leg up while Heidi held my hands and coached me with my breathing. The urge to push was overwhelming but everyone was concerned about me tearing again. So I held on as long as I could to not push, but 15 minutes of holding off was very

decided to turn in for the night. Travis went to take a shower and Heidi was about to go downstairs when she heard me moaning. She came up to my room and was sitting by my

difficult and I slowly started to push out the baby while Travis guided the head. The midwife arrived just as Travis delivered the head and shoulders.

I was frightened and scared about the well being of the baby. I never thought that I might be in this predicament where we would have a partially unassisted birth. I just kept expecting that this labour would be much the same as with Arbutus. I thought I would be able to determine the transition between early labour and active labour and know when to call the midwife; but having had so many contractions and false starts I was beginning to doubt whether I was actually going to have the baby anytime soon.

Edmund was born perfectly healthy and we are both fine. I had a few tears, nothing like I had with Arbutus. I didn't experience the same level of pain that I did with Arbutus either, probably because my tears were so minimal. The only pain I have to complain about are the after pains. They were worse than some of my contractions!

✎ *Alexandra Straccini*

childbearing



Edmund, 4 weeks old, in the lap of big sister Arbutus, 23 months.

Business Directory

Baby, Child & Maternity Gear

Little Earth
778-737-7004
www.littleearthvancouver.com

New & Green Baby Company
604 323 4145
www.newandgreen.com

Room For Two Maternity
1409 Commercial Drive, Vancouver
604-255-0508

Fitness

Runners & Booties Fitness
604-461-7827
www.runnersandbootiesfitness.com

Yoga on 7th
604-879-YOGA
156 East 7th Avenue

Yoga West of Vancouver
2662 W 4th Ave
604-732-9642

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 4th Ave, Vancouver
604 562 0612

Kalef, Dr Mia, Craniosacral Therapist
604-908-1214
www.emergingfamilies.com

Soma Studio Massage
213 / 303, 1529 W 6th Ave, Vancouver
604-738-1502

Yaletown Chiropractic
604-688-5437
www.bonnchiropractic.com

Parenting

Mamaspeak
604.266.8124
meralon@mamaspeak.com

Westcoast Moms
www.westcoastmoms.ca

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) 604-255-9841
www.eastsidefamilyplace.org

Family Services of Vancouver
1616 West 7th Ave 604-731-4951
202-1193 Kingsway 604-874-2938

Infant and Child Seat Information
BCAA Consumer Service 604-298-2122
604-298-2755
Safe Start Programme 604-875-3458
ICAN Vancouver 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
Note: Your Community Health Nurse has further information on local resource



See How they Grow ...

Left: **Cayden**, now two years old

Above: **The Late Autumn 2006 class** gathers at **Little Nest** restaurant for a nine-month reunion

Prenatal Class Schedule (updated January 2008)

<p>Healthy Pregnancy Classes Content: <i>Mums only class.</i> Covers nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle choices for pregnancy; screening & diagnostic tests; foetal development; pregnancy discomforts & remedies</p>	<p>2 sessions 2 hours each Cost: \$75* <i>*Included free of charge with weekly series or weekend workshops.</i> Time: 7:00pm – 9:00pm</p>	<p>Location: <i>Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House</i> 800 East Broadway</p> <p>March W 19 & 26 Mar May T 20 & 27 May July Th 3 & 10 July</p>
<p>Weekly Series Content: Normal labour & birth; relaxation, positions & coping skills for labour; medical pain relief, interventions & procedures; postpartum; breastfeeding; early parenthood; newborn care. Includes handbook and CD.</p>	<p>14 sessions: 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 <i>(\$280 includes full PP series)</i> Time: 7:00pm – 9:00pm</p>	<p>Location: <i>Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House</i> 800 East Broadway</p> <p>Late Winter W 30 Jan – 12 Mar Early Spring Th 21 Feb – 3 Apr Spring T 25 Mar – 6 May Mid Spring W 16 Apr – 28 May Late Spring Th 8 May – 19 Jun Early Summer T 3 Jun – 22 Jul Summer W 25 Jun – 6 Aug</p>
<p>Weekend Workshops Content: Same as for weekly series; slightly condensed format: breastfeeding not covered, but cost includes Friday night breastfeeding class. Handbook & CD included.</p>	<p>10 sessions: 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> Time: Friday 7-9pm, Sat & Sun 9am - 2pm OR 3-8pm</p>	<p>Cost: \$220 <i>(\$280 includes full PP series)</i> Location: <i>3285 Victoria (at 16th)</i></p> <p>January 18-20 Jan March 14-16 Mar April 18-20 Apr May 2-4 May Late May 30 May-1 Jun June 20-22 Jun</p>
<p>Breastfeeding only Content: <i>Mums only class.</i> Partners welcome if space permits. Covers breastfeeding basics; troubleshooting; breastpumps & returning to work; special needs; colic</p>	<p>1 session: Friday Night 2 hours Cost: \$40* <i>*Included free of charge with weekend workshop</i> Time: 7:00-9:00pm</p>	<p>Location: <i>3285 Victoria (at 16th)</i> As above, Friday nights only</p>
<p>Another Birth: refresher class Content: finding ways to honour this pregnancy and celebrate its distinctness; what worked last time... and what didn't; recalling old birthing techniques and learning new ones; how to prepare your first baby for sibling-hood; connecting with your new baby while maintaining the bond with your 1st.</p>	<p>1 session: Saturday Afternoon 4 hours Cost: \$75* \$65 for <i>Childbearing Grads</i> Time: noon – 4pm</p>	<p>Location: <i>Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House</i> 800 East Broadway</p> <p>February 16 Feb April 12 Apr June 28 Jun September 6 Sep</p>
<p>Postpartum Classes Content: <i>For parents with babies who are not yet walking.</i> Covers infant feeding, sleep, safety, colic & crying, attachment, and infant development, and many other topics.</p>	<p>12 sessions: 1 ½ hours each Cost: \$150* <i>*Free for expectant parents; 4 sessions included free with prenatal class series.</i> Time: 12:30 - 2 pm</p>	<p>Location: <i>Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House</i> 800 East Broadway</p> <p>February W 6-27 Feb March W 5-26 Mar April W 2-23 Apr *note: no class 30 April May W 7-28 May June W 4-25 Jun</p>
<p>Private Classes Cost: \$20 + \$50/hour Minimum 2 hours. Does not include materials (optional: \$25)</p>	<p>To register, or for more information: (604) 878-1031 www.childbearing.org</p> <p>Low income rates available.</p>	<p>Our Instructors, all health professionals and parents, add their extensive training and reading on subjects related to pregnancy, birth and parenting to their personal experience. All instructors hold Childbirth Education Certificates from VCC / Douglas College, and are members of ICEA, the International Childbirth Education Association. All have a love and passion for the childbearing year.</p>

Note that schedule changes may occur. See our website for the most up-to-date class schedules.