

BIRTHING

A NEWSLETTER OF ALTERNATIVE BIRTHING PRACTICES

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

MAY/JUNE 2001

THE FARM

Julie Samms

It's nice to be back in Bellingham.

I left here February 20th with my husband and two small children in our Honda Civic headed down the coast and across the country. Our final destination was Summertown, Tennessee and The Farm. Along the way we witnessed the beginnings of spring from the coast of California through the deserts of Arizona and New Mexico across the barren southern border of Texas right into the mouth of the Gulf Coast and up into the quiet serenity of rural Alabama and Southern Tennessee. What a trip it has been!

I'm still trying to integrate everything that I experienced. Traveling to The Farm was a personal journey for me in many ways. I traveled through my past, saw many relatives that I hadn't seen since I was a teenager. And as we crept across the country I was also embarking on my dream of becoming a midwife. Headed to the most famous groups of midwives in the US. I didn't know what to expect but I anticipated something wonderful. The Farm is also a community that my family group was hoping to emulate in some ways. To what extent and in what ways we were about to find out. All of these questions led to a small gate at the end of a county road in the middle of Tennessee. The Farm.

The Farm started as a spiritual community in middle Tennessee in 1971. Founded by a group of about 300 people from the Bay Area who had come together to attend open meetings held by Stephen Gaskin. These three hundred settlers spent several months accompanying Stephen on a national speaking tour that later came to be known as the caravan. Many of the women who set out from San Francisco were pregnant, Stephen's wife Ina May among them. And no one had very much experience with birth. Many of the women had birthed in the hospital and were looking for a better way.

They rambled across the country, mostly in

Each child is an adventure into a better life—an opportunity to change the old pattern and make it new.

converted school buses and vans. Eleven babies were born on the road and the beginnings of the Farm Midwives group had formed. After being on the road together they decided that they wanted to start their own community and thought Tennessee was a friendly state. After settling in Tennessee in the middle of seventeen hundred acres of oak trees, the midwives set out to learn all they could about natural safe birth at home. Meanwhile the community began building and farming.

Spiritually, they were a church. They organized on a communal basis according to the *Book of Acts* of the New Testament, Acts 2:44, 45:

And all that believed were together and had all things in common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all as every man had need.

The midwives had a policy that any woman who did not want to have an abortion could come to the farm and have her baby for free. They extended this offer that if that woman did not want her baby she could leave it on the farm and it would be taken care of and if at any time in the future she wanted that baby back she could

(Continued on page 2)

YOUR THOUGHTS?

Birthing is looking for submissions from all of you out there in the birthing community. I would love to hear from you, whether you are a midwife, doula, childbirth educator, or one of the mothers and fathers we serve.

Anything is acceptable and everything may be published, from letters to articles to poems. Send submissions to...

**BIRTHING: SUBMISSIONS
C/O JULIE SAMMS**

P.O. BOX 3107

BELLINGHAM, WA 98227

or E-mail us at...

BIRTHING@HOTMAIL.COM

(Continued from page 1)

have it, no strings attached.

At their peak the midwives were delivering 25 to 30 babies a month. They developed a natural method of family planning combining the rhythm, basal temp, and mucus methods. All the while their community was growing. I heard stories of days where 200 people would show up at the front gate. So they adopted a policy of two days or the rest of your life. If you liked it after two days and were willing to throw in all your possessions, then you stayed. If not, no extended visits.

The Farm's population swelled to its peak in the early eighties of somewhere near twelve hundred and then shrunk again with the decision to privatize. There was unrest among the Farm folk and as a community they had racked up a sizable debt. As a result of a combination of political pressure from the Regan administrations monetary policies and the aging energy of their original mission, the decision was made to basically perform a mass divorce. At this point many families left. Those who stayed managed to pay off the debt through liquidation of assets and time. For many the dream had died and life in normal society went forth. Those who stayed started working off the Farm and the midwives started charging for their services.

There are two hundred and fifty or so on the farm today and they still hold the land in common but take care of their individual expenses separately. There is a wide range of feeling around the current state of The Farm. Among many of the original settlers there is still the feeling that the energy will cycle back and The Farm will reclaim its place as a spiritual center. Some of the younger generation feel that The Farm is stagnating in energy and has lost some essential component of cohesiveness. But of all the children I talked to who grew up on the farm, many of whom have since left, no one wished they had grown up anywhere else.

The community that they created was certainly more loving, more balanced and more real than most of the communities I've been a part of. And the overall feeling and energy on The Farm was really good. I sat down with Ina May the day before I left and spent some time talking with her. I was looking for an overall feel for where The Farm is now and where it's going. What I realized is that there is so much going on there that I don't know about. That I couldn't know about having spent only a month with them. These people have been together for years, some since the beginnings in the late sixties. The cycles of life run so

deep among people who have spent years in community together that there is no outside viewpoint that can assess it. It's like an intimate relationship that you can't really understand unless you are in it. This overview of The Farm can't even begin to touch on the entire story.

There's a saint who said, "It is easier to live a good life than to think good thoughts." We have the gift of intelligence and consciousness to a level where it's a controversy whether we're the highest of the apes or the lowest of the angels. But a part of us is ape. Ape thoughts are going to come up now and then, and you can't think you're a bad person or anything like that. Don't get strung out about your thoughts. You don't have to do what you think. Your thoughts are like a drawing board. Draw better stuff. Don't worry about it. Be nice. If you be nice, it will be easier to think nice, because you won't be using that other stuff and it will wither away from not being used.

Integrity is something you have to work at every day; it isn't something you naturally have forever. I know a day doesn't go by for me that I don't have to think, "I have got to get it together."

Do what you know is right. Look at a situation and, without being attached, decide what is right and do it. Never mind your head trips. Decide what is right and do it. When you learn how to do that, it's a great refuge and a great peace.

Stephen Gaskin

This Season's People

I knew that I wanted to learn from The Farm midwives but I didn't really know why. It was a feeling I had from reading *Spiritual Midwifery* and learning about their community. I have to say I was not disappointed. The group of midwives on The Farm, past and present, were instrumental in forming the national structure that we have today. They helped to form MANA (Midwives Alliance of North America) which in turn spawned NARM (North American Registry of Midwives), MEAC (Midwifery Education Accreditation Council), and CFM (Citizens for Midwifery). These are the groups that teach, certify, monitor, advocate and defend midwifery practices as we know them.

This alone was impressive and I have to admit,

(Continued on page 7)

BULLETIN BOARD

EVENTS MAY/JUNE 2001

Date/Time	Event	Location	Contact
May 15th / 6-7pm	Hypnobirthing® info night	1155 N. State St. Rm 417	Aryn Whitewolf @ (360) 758-9854
May 19th / 11am-3pm	4th Annual Doula Day Picnic!	Meridan Park (see below)	(206) 634 2912
June 8th / 7-9pm	Birthing Discussion Group	Co-op Connections Building	Julie (360) 715-1795
June 16th / 7-9pm	Women's Group	Co-op Connections Building	Julie (360) 715-1795
June 19th / 6-7pm	Hypnobirthing® info night	1155 N. State St. Rm 417	Aryn Whitewolf @ (360) 758-9854



\$25.00 off Hypnobirthing® Classes

With this coupon!
Contact Aryn Whitewolf for
more information
(360) 758-9854
Good until 6/29/01



Looking for a doula?

I am trained by DONA and working
on certification. Looking for clients
in the Bellingham area.
Reasonable rates/Barter/Flexible
Julie @ 715-1795



*4th Annual
Doula Day Picnic!*
Saturday, May 19, 2001
11am to 3pm
Meridian Park
N. 50th St. & Meridian Ave N.
(Behind the good shepherd Center)

Bring a blanket, food to grill, and a dish to
share. We'll provide the rest!

*Family Drum Circle at 1pm
Face Painting! Tarot Card Reading! Treasure
Hunt!*

For more information call (206) 634-2912



DOULA TRAINING!
Seattle Midwifery School
Labor Support Course
In Bellingham
@ The Co-op Connections Building
Nov. 30th & Dec 1st

&
Dec 7th & 8th
Four day course fulfills training
requirements for certification with DONA
Tuition is \$450
Deadline for registration is Oct. 29th,
2001

Contact Julie @ (360) 715-1795
for registration information

**If you would like add something to the bulletin board
please contact Julie @ 360-715-1795 or e-mail
birthing@hotmail.com**

RESOURCES

ADOPTION		CLASSES		CHILDBIRTH	HEALTH CARE	ACUPUNCTURE
Adoption Resource Library	733-6714	Apple Tree Childbirth Education	676-2526	Christian-based	David Adich	(DC, LAc)734-9555
Adoption Support Group	671-3093	Becoming Parents, Staying Partners	676-2443		Paula Brown	(LAc) 734-9500
Bethany Christian Services	733-6042	B'ham Technical College	738-0221		Darcy Elliot	(LAc) 647-0228
International Child Adoption Ntwk.	738-8251	Deborah Craig	738-9015		Mystique Grobe	(ND, LAc)715-9010
Nancy Berg, Atty	714-6188	Tricia Griffin	733-8086 (Bradley)		Heidi Hawkins (pediatric & allergy)	676-5477
Debra A. Lev PS	671-7065	Brooksana Raney	758-2555		Dennis Littleton	(ND, LAc)676-5337
BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT		Transitions	734-1414		Jack Shupe	(LAc) 733-1693
BREASTFEEDING		Judie Zersen	715-2020 (Bradley)		Michele Siemion	(LAc) 715-9010
La Leche League	595-2403 Terry 988-4086 Angela 592-5052 Pam 647-3507 Heather 715-2020 Judie 354-8278 Suzanne	Aryn A. Whitewolf aidU2relax@aol.com	758-9854	Hypnobirthing@	HEALTHCARE CHIROPRACTO	
Women, Infants & Children (WIC)	738-2505 or 384-1633	Markaye Mionczynski hypnobirth1@aol.com	647-8601	Hypnobirthing@	Robert B. Bates, DC Free Cranio-Sacral Therapy <1month old	398-7466 kvr@b@aol.com
BREASTFEEDING LACTATION CONSULTANTS		CLASSES EXERCISE			Advid Adich, DC, LAc	734-9555
Kathleen Auerbach, IBCLC, PhD	384-1755 The Parent Center	Prenatal Yoga-Plus & Yoga Moms	647-0712	Maureen Braun	Jim Ballif, DC	650-0997
Jeanne Brotherton, RNC, IBCLC	758-9561	Whatcom Family YMCA	733-8630		Will Cummins, DC	715-9010
Barbie Jimenez, RN, IBCLC	647-1544 Mother/Baby Homecare	CLASSES PARENTING			Lindon Keeler, DC	715-9010
Holly Telfer, RN, IBCLC	715-4170	B'ham Parks & Recreation	676-6985		Cherrellyn Seegers, DC	715-9010
Judie Zersen, IBCLC, CLE	715-2020 Breastfeeding Success	B'ham Technical College	738-0221		HEALTHCARE COUNSELORS	
CHILDCARE RESOURCES		Ferndale Parks & Recreation	384-5113		Catholic Community Services	676-2164 or (800) 300-2493
B'ham Community ChildCare Center	676-0950 (Sliding Fee Scale)	Infant & Child Massage	733-6560	Christin Nelson	Anji Citron, MSW, CSW	676-2443
The Birches Headstart & Childcare	734-8396 or 384-1470 x 415	Partners in Parenting	676-2443	Anji Citron	Alexandra Hall Coy, M. Ed.	650-1591
Opportunity Council Childcare Resources	734-5121 x 227	<i>If help and salvation are to come, they can only come from the children, for the children are the makers of men. Maria Montessori</i>			Melinda Creed, MSW, CSW	650-1690
Dept. of Social & Health Services	714-4000			Jillian Froebe, MA, ATR	738-4805	
Parent Cooperative Preschools	676-2170 x 338			Djuna W. Harper, ARNP	714-9574	
				Naomi Rudo, MA, MFT	734-0592	

RESOURCES

HEALTHCARE	DOULAS	HEALTHCARE	MASSAGE CONT	SUPPLIES	BIRTH BALLS
Melissa Denmark Langley	221-4181 mdenmark@langleywa.com	Catriona Munro	734-1560	Sharon Souders	738-6915
Janna Sanabrina Bellingham	647-3604 lionessjds@gte.net	Cheryl Roberts	734-1560	SUPPLIES BIRTH TUBS	
Julie Samms Bellingham	877/576-3038 toll free juliesamms@hotmail.com	Cindy Sabol	715-9495	Deborah Craig	738-9015
Holly Schutzta Friday Harbor	378-3316 schutzta@interisland.net	Joanna Schmidt	715-9010	Pamela Aube	592-9018
Megan Bottomley Everson	988-6704 risingmoonfarm@msn.com	Sharon Souders	738-6915	Birth & Beyond	206/324-4831
Amy-Emler Shaffer Friday Harbor	378-9426 denamorg@interisland.net	MEDICAL MIDWIVES		Aqua Doula	800/882-7864
Charity Cook Bellingham	756-2337 unitedonelove@hotmail.com	Ann Tive, LM	734-2182	SUPPLIES DIAPER	
Laurie Gallo Orcas Island	376-4490 opalclt@rockisland.com	Winni McNamara, ARNP, LM, CPM,	734-9500 or 766-6686	Cascade Laundry	734-4200
Sharon Souders Bellingham	738-6915	Judy Edmunds, CH, RNC, CPM, LM (OR)	647-1220	SUPPLIES HERBAL	
Nancy Simmers Bellingham	671-5685	Leslie Gesner, LM	966-0314	Community Food Co-op	734-8158
Brooksana Raney Bellingham	758-2555	Barbara Schickler, CNM, ARNP	671-4944	Good Earth Nutrition	733-2211
Jessica Wight Bellingham	738-3536	Susan Willis, CNM, CFNP	671-3345	Terra Organica	715-8020
Sharon Avolio Bellingham	738-1776	Peggy Franklin, CPM	856-2161	Wonderland Teas & Spices	733-0157
Anna Fernandez Bellingham	398-9951	MEDICAL NUTRITION		SUPPLIES LACTATION	
HEALTHCARE HERBALISTS		Apple A Day Medical Nutrition Therapy	676-1585	Sonia Enterprises Ana Pillow	647-1979
Judy Edmunds	647-1220	Tracy Delaney, PhD, RD	738-2830	Mother Baby Homecare	647-1544
Suzanne Nagler	354-6334	Judy Edmunds, CH, RNC, CPM, LM (OR)	647-1220	SUPPLIES SLINGS	
Linda Quintana	733-0157	St. Joseph's Hospital Nutrition Therapy	715-6420	Mother Baby Homecare	647-1544
Amy Sothman	715-8123	PHYSICIANS NATUROPATH		Sharon Souders	738-6915
Bonnie Sprague	756-9793	Mystique Grobe, ND, LAc	715-9010	Judie Zerzen	715-2020
HEALTHCARE MASSAGE		Dennis Littleton, ND, LAc	676-5337	<p>I would like to thank Sharon Souders and the <i>Birth in Bellingham</i> group for making their database available to me and making this wonderful resource directory possible!</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"> <p>If you provide a birth related service and would like to be listed in this resource directory please call Julie @ 360-715-1795 or e-mail birthing@hotmail.com and I will contact you.</p> </div>	
Susan Adich	734-9555	Laura Shelton, ND	734-1560		
Elizabeth Brown	676-8274	Mark Steinberg, ND	738-3230		
Judy Edmunds	647-1220	Joseph Wessels, ND	734-9500		
Sarah Love	733-0887				
Claire Lynam	733-4011				

DO YOU DOULA?

JULIE SAMMS

I am a doula.

When I was newly trained I didn't really know what that meant. There are two sides to being a doula, what you are trained to do and what you learn to do. I thought that being a doula seemed relatively easy. It's not. It's hard work, not just difficult but really soul wrenching. The privilege of being with a woman during labor and birth is an experience that changes your perception of the world every time you experience it. If you are open to change and willing to really search the depths of your heart and dredge the murky waters of your preconceived ideas about birth then doula work may be your calling.

I knew that the work I was doing would change other peoples lives but nothing prepared me for how much my own life and ideas would change. The ability to set aside your set of values and beliefs about how birth should be and adopt those of the family you are serving is not a skill I learned during my training. Working in the field of birth is something you are either drawn to or not. But those who are drawn do sacred work.

I wanted to sit down and write an article for you about the advantages of having a doula attend your birth. And there are many advantages. But what I really want to say is that there are so many women out there having birth experiences that they aren't happy with. So many medical interventions, so little empowerment and so much intimidation.

I became a doula because I had a beautiful birth with my first son. He was born at home with no medication, no interventions and no fear. So I charged into the birth field determined that every woman should have a birth like mine. What I didn't realize is that every woman's idea of a perfect birth is different. And to some women, my idea of a perfect birth is unfathomable. During the last day of my training the twenty or so women in the course sat in a circle and talked about where they would be practicing and why. Many women were only interested in assisting homebirths calling up visions of dimly lit rooms with tapestries and incense. This saddened me at the time but I couldn't put my finger on why. Upon reflection I realized that many times the women who really need us are not in the most ideal circumstances. More often than not, when I talk with a woman who doesn't even know what the word doula refers to, the standard reply is "...that sure would have been nice during my labor." And why not?

Many of the women that need doula support

don't even know we exist.

So what is a doula? The standard definition is "a woman experienced in childbirth who provides continuous physical, emotional, and informational support for the mother before, during, and just after childbirth." (Klaus, Kennell, and Klaus, in *Mothering the Mother*) According to DONA (Doulas of North America) a birth doula...

- recognizes birth as a key life experience that the mother will remember all her life...
- understands the physiology of birth and the emotional needs of a woman in labor...
- assists the woman and her partner in preparing for and carrying out their plans for birth...
- stays by the side of the laboring woman throughout the entire labor...
- provides emotional support, physical comfort measures, an objective viewpoint, and assistance to the woman in getting the information she needs to make good decisions...
- facilitates communication between the laboring woman, her partner, and clinical care providers... perceives her role as one who nurtures and protects the woman's memory of her birth experience.

A strong resurgence towards non-medical birth is happening across the country. Slowly but surely women are taking back the power to birth their babies in any way they chose. The challenge that those of us in the *alternative* birthing field face is the willingness to accept that what some women want is a medically managed birth. These women are no less deserving of labor support than those who want nothing to do with the hospital. We each have separate realities and to our own circumstances so our lives must be tailored. Informed choice does not mean informing people what they should chose.

I personally hold many strong beliefs about labor and birth. But they are just that, my beliefs. As a doula I leave my beliefs and my baggage at the door, enter with only my love to give, and like a chameleon take on the beliefs each family needs me to uphold.

I am constantly amazed that I can be paid for the work I do. After all the time and energy spent during labor I truly feel that I am the one who should be grateful. Each birth allows me to live in someone else's reality for a little while. I gain perspective. I gain experience. And for just a moment, amongst all the tears and sweat, I am allowed to glimpse pure beauty.

(Continued from page 2)

a little intimidating. As I walked into the clinic for my first day of intensive (7am to 9pm) midwifery study, I felt good energy radiating from everything and everyone involved. The midwives were wonderful wise women really in touch with the process and spirituality of birth. I learned so much from these ladies.

Not only did I learn about midwifery and gain knowledge and skills but, more importantly, I learned about myself and grew as a partner with life. I realized that letting the energy flow naturally was most important, in birth and otherwise. Not to push your will on the world. It's a kind of letting go that seems hard to do only because it is so simple.

It's really appropriate that this article fill the space normally reserved for birth stories because the experience was like a rebirth for me. I feel more strongly connected to myself and to the world energy around me. I found a place of great sisterhood with those women which is something that I'd never experienced before. I mentioned to them on the last night how amazing it was that we were there together. Women from all walks of life who normally wouldn't say more than hello to each other. Yet there we were, communing, and we really did have a lot in common.

I think that the most important thing that those workshops taught me was how to be with women. Really connect and be together. And as a midwife, being with women is your primary role.

I left there energized and ready to bring the women of my community together in a similar fashion. Because there is so much power there. Power to heal, to love, to change lives. As women we have veered away from the traditional woman groups that formed an integral part of our history. We must reclaim that power, to connect and to be with each other.

So for all you ladies out there interested in being part of a circle of women we will be meeting for the first time at the co-op connections building (across the parking lot from the community food co-op) in Bellingham on Saturday June 16th from 7pm to 9pm. Children are more than welcome. Bring poems, songs, musical instruments, refreshments or just yourself! Women can bond this community together in so many ways.

For more information about The Farm and the

midwives...

Spiritual Midwifery by Ina May Gaskin

This Season's People by Stephen Gaskin

Voices From The Farm edited by Rupert Fike

or visit their website @

www.thefarmcommunity.org

or www.thefarm.org

Children are our guides to the higher spiritual planes. They serve to remind us of what we may have lost or forgotten in our efforts to cooperate with our culture. They remind us that all human minds, young and old, are tuned to the same fundamental wavelength, and that we can all read minds - we just pretend that we can't, as we get older and find that our culture demands duplicity.

The child's state of consciousness is not to be rejected or replaced, but supplemented by the growing knowledge that you can't get what you want by force - physical or psychical. This is what we have to teach children, with the utmost patience we can muster, for the pain they may cause us is nothing to the revelation they offer at every moment.

-Stephen Gaskin



Send me your birth stories! 800 words or less will fill this space. If you are a birth attendant and would like to send other peoples stories please send your name and association with the birthing woman (ie doula, midwife, etc...), parents names should not be included. Send stories to...

BIRTHING:BIRTH STORIES

C/O JULIE SAMMS

P.O. BOX 3107

BELLINGHAM, WA 98227

or e-mail us at...

BIRTHING@HOTMAIL.COM

BIRTHING

P.O. BOX 3107
BELLINGHAM, WA 98227



Birthing is published bi-monthly in Bellingham, Wa.
Editor : Julie Samms
Contributors : Deborah Craig / Robert B. Bates, D.C.

© Copyright 2000 Julie Samms

Subscriptions to Birthing are available. There is no set price but donations are appreciated. Why subscribe to a free newsletter? Your subscription sends a copy of each newsletter directly to your address and your contribution helps me to continue producing them for the general public. Send subscription requests to : *Birthing* P.O. Box 3107 Bellingham, Wa 98227

✂

BIRTHING

A NEWSLETTER OF ALTERNATIVE BIRTHING PRACTICES

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

CHECK ANY THAT APPLY...

<input type="checkbox"/> Massage Practitioner	<input type="checkbox"/> Chiropractor	<input type="checkbox"/> Acupuncturist
<input type="checkbox"/> Nurse	<input type="checkbox"/> Herbalist	<input type="checkbox"/> Nutritionist
<input type="checkbox"/> Doula	<input type="checkbox"/> Childbirth Educator	<input type="checkbox"/> Mother/Father
<input type="checkbox"/> Midwife	<input type="checkbox"/> Lactation Consultant	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____