

EDITORIAL

Dear Home Birth Families,

I was thrilled when Jo asked me if I would be interested in becoming the new editor of Birthplace magazine, as it is something that I have always wanted to do and home birth is such a worthy cause to support. I have a PhD in Clinical Biochemistry and 10 years Biomedical Research experience, however, I have also always had a very strong interest in complementary and alternative therapies, and was always planning on having my children at home! (see Birth Story, Volume 39, July 2003).

I was also thrilled to see a recent issue of Woman's Day magazine (September 22, 2003) which featured a cover photo and a six page spread of local celebrity Petra Bagust's home birth. The article was great in that it was very frank and positive and made home birth sound like an ordinary, every day type of occurrence - which it should be and can be!



I recently went to one of the Novalis House Parenting Group talks as it was about "TV/computers - are they of value to your child?" by Shona Tupper and Dr David Ritchie. According to David, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) have issued statements saying that TV viewing under two years of age can cause brain damage! This is a very strong statement for the normally very conservative AAP to make. David said that between two and ten years of age, TV should be limited, the parents should sit with the children and then "debrief" them afterwards as they are not able to conceptualize for themselves until after ten years of age. One of my other concerns is computers in the children's sections of the city libraries, the problem being that the young children would much rather play on the computer than read a book!

Do remember to come along to the social/playgroup meetings held every fourth Friday of the month at Helen Brown's home (6 Heberden Ave, Sumner). I have been going along to these meetings since I heard about them - it is a great location and a nice informal way to meet and talk with people of a like mind - the children love getting together too - I highly recommend going. Also, if you would like to learn more about the Home Birth Association and/or contribute to the organisation and running of the Association, feel free to come along to the business meetings held every second Monday of the month at Reb Fountain's home (76 Birdwood Ave, Beckenham). After attending my first home birth business meeting I felt compelled to write something about the experience:

"To the casual observer this would have appeared a group of mothers getting together for a chat, afternoon tea and playtime for their children. However, present were two practicing midwives, a midwife graduate, a sexual health doctor, two Ph.D.'s and a graduate student. If we had been men I am sure that we would all have been dressed in business suits and we would have been meeting in a board room in some tall corporate building down-town; instead we were casually and comfortably dressed and sitting in a member's cosy family room in her suburban character home. Since each woman had one or two children present with her I was very impressed with the level of multi-tasking exhibited by each woman; talking with her own and other's children, nursing babies and feeding toddlers, changing nappies and taking children to the toilet, as well as discussing high powered association business at a national level (all voluntary, I might add). Keep up the great work ladies!"

Finally, I would like to extend a personal invitation to all readers to contribute letters, birth stories, articles, poems, etc - this magazine exists for you and because of you (see page 2 for postal and email addresses). The website is now up and running - check it out - Julie has done a great job (although there are no links yet, these should be functional by the time the next issue of this magazine comes out). On behalf of the committee members, I wish you all a very happy Christmas and we will be back again in the new year.

Anitra Carr

The opinions printed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Canterbury Home Birth Association or its members. Quite often we include articles giving an "alternative" perspective, however, we do this with the knowledge that the "mainstream" position is very readily available to our readers.