

FRIENDS OF MICHIGAN MIDWIVES

educate • promote • support

From the President

Melissa Ryba

Volunteering for an organization, as many of you know, takes a lot of time and effort. It can be frustrating work which at times leads to me ask myself, "Just why am I doing this?" My desk that I typically work at is surrounded by dozens of pictures of my children. I just have to look up and see my daughter Nora's baby pictures and I am reminded again of exactly why.

About seven years ago when I was pregnant with her, I sought out support to have a VBAC (Vaginal Birth After Cesarean). I didn't realize what a controversial world I was about to delve into. Despite being an ideal "candidate" for a VBAC, after visiting with several obstetricians, I felt that a repeat cesarean was becoming my only option at that time. Anyone who has faced attempting a VBAC in the last 7-8 years knows exactly what I am referring to. It started to become clear to me that home is where I wanted to be for the birth of this baby. I interviewed a Certified Professional Midwife who was recommended to me at about the 6th month of my pregnancy. Here I met someone who really believed in women's bodies and my ability to give birth naturally.



I lived 1½ hours away, yet she was willing to travel this distance just to assist ME. I had never encountered this type of support for a pregnant woman before. I was hopeful, but didn't want to get my hopes up TOO high just yet.

Fast forward to birth day! After months of preparing mentally and physically for the birth of my daughter, she decided to begin her journey into this world with a blue moon. I will save my birth story for another time, but it was an amazing experience. As I held my daughter in my arms and was able to be the first person to hold her and gaze into her eyes, I felt like the luckiest mother on the planet. I felt so fortunate to find a provider who trusted birth and was educated about the actual, uninterrupted birth process. Not many people today see or know what a natural birth actually looks like and the awesome strength of a what woman's body is able to accomplish if left to work the way it was intended.

This experience of course has left a lasting impact on me. One reason I became a part of Friends of Michigan Midwives in April 2010 is because I feel that the goal of licensure of CPMs is important to continuing as well as expanding the option of out of hospital birth for women in Michigan. Licensure has proven to increase the number of out of hospital birth midwives. In Wisconsin, when licensure first passed in 2006, there were only 26 CPMs in the state. Now there are 101 CPMs! On the opposite end

Mission

Statement:

To educate and inform the public about the profession of midwifery and the Midwives Model of Care; to promote and support the profession of midwifery in the state of Michigan; to support local chapters of FoMM in providing hands on services and assistance to the midwives in their area.

Inside this Issue

Regional Coordinator Update	2
<i>Lattes for Licensure</i>	2
Midwife Spotlight	3
Legislative Update	4
Board Members	4
Birth Story	5
Board Member Bios	6

Continued on page 2

FROM THE PRESIDENT, continued from page 1

of the spectrum, in Ohio and Illinois, homebirth with a CPM is illegal and midwives have to practice "underground." There have been cases of parents who upon transferring from a homebirth to a hospital, have had the state remove their children from their custody. Michigan is in between those two worlds right now, and I think the safer world for midwifery is one where midwives are licensed and recognized as the professionals they are.

Yes, the work is overwhelming at times, but I keep thinking of what the world of midwifery may look like when my daughter might decide to have children. I hope that it is a world that supports midwives and that she can also receive the loving care of a midwife. That's what it is all about.

Regional Coordinator Update

Melissa Waterstripe, Northern Michigan Regional Coordinator

The regional coordinators around the state are pleased to report that we have set in motion our plans to begin holding local chapter meetings around the state. We have also set up some exciting educational events for families around the state. We hope to grow a well-established presence in our communities so more and more people will know what FoMM is all about.

In the Traverse City area FoMM has partnered with the TC Natural Parenting group and the Family Wisdom Conference to offer families opportunities to gather and discuss topics such as nutrition, attachment parenting with older children, and gentle discipline, to name a few. We will have some guest speakers at some of the bimonthly meetings. If you live in the Traverse City area, please join us on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at Grace Episcopal Church at 10am.

Beth Hawver has set up a partnership between FoMM and Birth Matters In Kalamazoo. They have already held one successful event, "Choosing/Interviewing Your Care Provider" in early February and now have another planned

called "The Midwifery Model of Care/ FoMM" on Wednesday March 2nd. These meetings will take place at the Parkview Hills Clubhouse from 12pm - 1pm on the first Wednesday of each month.

Our new Detroit Area Regional Coordinator, Cynthia Jackson, will be hosting an informational booth at the "Tummy to Toddler" expo on March 20th in Shelby Township. This event runs from 10 am to 4 pm. If you are going to be there, please stop by and get the latest information about what FoMM is doing. You can find more info about this expo by going to www.tummytotoddlerexpo.com. Welcome, Cynthia!

Finally, we also wish to graciously welcome our newest member, Jennifer Salowitz, to the regional coordinator team. We are grateful for your willingness to assist as the Saginaw Region RC, Jennifer!

For more details about the above mentioned events please visit our website!

www.friendsofmichiganmidwives.com/events.htm

"Lattes for Licensure" Pledge Drive

FoMM is holding a pledge drive to cover the direct costs of lobbying for the 2011/2012 legislative session. Do you think you could give up a latte a month and support FoMM by donating \$5 a month? Our strength is in our numbers, and our goal is for 100 people to sign up for recurring donations during the month of February. Win a chance at some great prizes as well!

- Monthly drawings of FoMM gear, slings, cloth diapers, coffee or chocolate gift baskets, and more. Just keep donating each month for a chance to win!
- Once we reach our goal of 100 people, we will give away a \$100 gift card.
- If you donate for 12 consecutive months, you

will be entered in another drawing to win a \$100 gift card. Drawing to take place in February 2012.

For every \$5 a month you donate, a raffle ticket will be entered in your name for a chance to win a prize. For every person you refer and they sign up, you receive a raffle ticket as well. Just email us with their name and we will confirm their donation.

There is nothing to lose! Become a part of the future of midwifery in Michigan today by supporting FoMM!

Visit www.friendsofmichiganmidwives.org/pages/donate.htm today to sign up!



Midwife Spotlight - Patrice Bobier, CPM

When did you know you wanted to become a midwife?

From a young age, I wanted to be a nurse or doctor. I think I found out about midwives in the mid-70s and met some for the first time in 1978. It was an 'aha' moment - and changed the course of my life.

Where and how did you train to be a midwife?

After I met midwives in 1978, I started going to their pregnancy information workshops in Grand Rapids and attended a La Leche League series. I volunteered to do labor support for friends having babies. I started reading everything I could get my hands on if it was about birth and body physiology.

In 1979, the midwifery practice in Grand Rapids trained me to attend postpartum visits after home births. It wasn't long before they also trained me to assist them at births. In 1980, we set up an apprenticeship guideline. For about 3 years I went to Grand Rapids (150 mile round trip) 2 days each week, plus attended births, and did home-study at a set time each week. Because of their busy-ness and distance, I ended up as the primary midwife at about 12 births out of the 65 births attended in the apprenticeship.

In June of 1982, I was on my own and attended my first birth as a planned primary midwife. In order to bring more experience to those early births, I usually attended them with the midwives who also apprenticed at the same time. We 3 travelled long distances to be support to each other.

I also attended an 8 day intensive at Shari Daniel's Midwifery Center in El Paso, Texas in 1984. I was certified by the Michigan Midwives Association in 1984, took the NARM written exam in 1994, and became a CPM in 1997. I have always attended as many workshops and conferences as possible, plus have subscribed to most midwifery journals.

What do you like to do when not catching babies?

I love to get my hands in fertile dirt and make things grow. I've been an organic farmer and gardener all my adult life. We still grow most of our own food, plus can, freeze and dry it to provide for ourselves and others year-round. I also really enjoy spending time with family, traveling, cooking, and being outdoors.

What is the most rewarding part of being a midwife?

Many things:

- It is a privilege to see the love outpouring from parents enveloping the new baby.

- Witnessing the strength of women giving birth.
- Witnessing first-hand, again and again, why we need to trust in the body process for normal pregnancy and birth.
- Having wonderful friendships with families choosing midwifery care.
- Assisting the births of my grandchildren at home.



How long have you been in practice and how many wonderful babies have you caught?

I attended my first home births in 1977 and 1978 without midwives present. I attended births as a student from 1979 till June 1982, and have had my own practice since then. I've personally attended about 1330 births, mostly at home.

Do you have any advice for expecting parents thinking about choosing homebirth?

Interview providers. Get references. Don't be swayed one way or the other by sensational stories or statistics. Search out your own truthful information and make up your own minds on what will be best for you.

What book would you recommend everyone read based on midwifery or childbirth?

Anything by Sheila Kitzinger, the Sears's, or Ina May Gaskin.

When you're exhausted what gives you that burst of energy to keep going?

Good food, fellowship, and a good night's sleep! Oh, and organic fresh-ground brewed coffee!

Become a Doula!

DONA International
Birth & Postpartum Doula Workshops
From Passion to Profit ...

check out our
Discounted Business Builder Training Packages

www.center4cby.com

Legislative Update

Kathi Mulder and Kelly Drake

2011 has arrived. We will be introducing legislation this year to license Certified Professional Midwives in Michigan. FoMM and the Michigan Midwives Association's Legislative Committee continue laying the foundation for the bill's introduction. Recent efforts included:

- ◆ A new database of healthcare professionals who support the licensure effort, healthprosformidwives.org.
- ◆ Training sessions for consumers to learn how to talk to their legislators.
- ◆ A well-attended public update meeting in Lansing last October.

We also continue to communicate with legislators and will be starting a new round of visits to Lansing to meet with legislators at the Capitol.

There are several things that you can do right now to help support the effort:

1. Recruit healthcare providers for the new group Healthcare Professionals for Michigan Midwives at healthprosformidwives.org. Please ask healthcare providers (doctors, nurses, chiropractors, and other licensed professionals) who you know are supportive of midwife-attended out-of-hospital birth to join. Providers can sign up through the website, or with their permission, you can sign them up yourself.
2. Volunteer to help with a series of fundraisers that FoMM has planned for the spring. We are looking for individuals or pairs to serve as Marketing Chair, Food & Beverage Chair, Sponsorship Chair, Finance Chair, and Venue/Entertainment Chair. In addition, we need people to serve as contacts in Lansing and Kalamazoo. If you are interested in helping, please contact president@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org.
3. Stay informed about the licensure effort and ways you can help by signing up for email updates at action@michiganmidwives.org.

Woven-In-Love Maternity Services, LLC

Homebirth Services & Hospital Labor Support
20 years experience

Macomb, Oakland,
St. Clair &
Lapeer Counties

586 337 0933

www.michiganmidwife.com



FoMM Board Updates & Members

- learn more about new Members on page 6

Our vice-President (and long time past President) Melissa Hale had a baby late last fall and is taking time off from FoMM to take care of her 4 children. We thank her for all her hard work she has put into our organization! Ronessa Butler is also expecting a baby soon and is taking a break from the Secretary and Membership Chair position, but will be helping with the Northern Region Chapter Meetings held in Traverse City. Ashley Oomen is coming on as new Secretary/Membership Chair. Welcome Ashley! We are grateful for all the long hours these volunteers put into FoMM!

Melissa Ryba, *President*

president@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org

Vera Davis, *Treasurer*

treasurer@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org

Ashley Oomen, *Secretary & Membership Chair*

secretary@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org

Kelly Drake, *MMA LCG Liaison*

mma@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org

Janelle Beeman, *Events Chair*

events@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org

Lauren Murphy, *Fundraising Chair*

fundraising@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org

Janine Tryban, *Marketing/PR Chair*

marketing@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org

Beth Hawver, *Southwest Regional Coordinator*

kzoo@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org

Cynthia Jackson, *Detroit Area Regional Coordinator*

detroitarea@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org

Jennifer Salowitz, *Saginaw Regional Coordinator*

jdowell2@yahoo.com

Melissa Waterstripe, *Northern Regional Coordinator*

northernmichigan@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org

Open, *Ann Arbor Regional Coordinator*

Open, *Grand Rapids Regional Coordinator*

Open, *Lansing Regional Coordinator*

Harrison's Birth Story

Jennifer L. Salowitz, Mother

Harrison was due to be born on February 18, 2010. That day, I had a prenatal appointment with my midwife and it seemed my body was preparing for labor. Later that night after brushing my teeth, I decided to turn on some soft music and rock on my exercising ball. I glanced at the clock – 12:02 am – and had a contraction. Immediately, I knew this one was different. I looked at my husband and said, “Okay, I think we **might** be having a baby soon!” We both decided the best thing to do would be to go to bed and wait to awaken with contractions.

Throughout the night, the contractions were patchy at best, definitely not consistent, but definitely not Braxton Hicks-type of contractions. By 9:00 am, I realized that they were getting more consistent. I pulled out a pad of paper and notated the contractions: they were about six-eight minutes apart. After watching for nearly an hour, we gleefully determined this was it and called our family (they had a two hour drive from downstate) and our midwife.

About 2:00 pm, my family showed up as did our midwife. When she arrived, I was only about 1.5 - 2 centimeters dilated, though I was about 80% effaced and the contractions were fizzling out. Before my midwife left, she said, “Just wait. I’ll bet you will go to bed tonight and once everyone is in bed, it will pick back up again. You’re just in early labor, not false labor.” With our family present, we decided to have a “birth” party. We had a delicious dinner, and we all hung out, watching my little nephew and my three children (two by birth, one by foster care) play. I went out for a walk in late afternoon, and although I had to stop often to breathe through contractions, I didn’t believe it was happening. Later in the evening, my mom and two sisters all left, leaving us alone with our three children and my negative attitude.

As soon as I laid down for bed, the contractions picked up. By 1:30 am, I could no longer sleep through the contractions so I got up and online, and every 8 minutes flipped over onto a pillow on all fours growling my way through a contraction. By about 4:00 am, I decided I would sleep between the contractions. I remember looking at my family during one contraction and thinking, “I am so grateful to be birthing beside these beautiful sleeping people. This is exactly how I wanted this!”

At about 7:00 am, I decided it was time to get up and woke my husband up. As soon as I stood up and started moving around, the contractions got a lot closer together. The intensity also increased quite a bit. By about 7:20am, I started to realize the contractions were probably 3-4 minutes apart. I had my husband wash his hands well and check my cervix internally, since my water had not yet broken. The look on his face was priceless as he said, “Uh, I can’t really feel your cervix. Maybe a tiny bit on one side, but that’s it. And I can’t even be sure about that. It’s just really mushy.” Yup, that’s my bag of waters, and that probably means we are nearly fully dilated! Even then, I didn’t comprehend in my head that it would be soon – I was still in denial!

We called the midwife at about 7:30am and gave her the update. I moaned through a contraction or two while my husband talked to her, instructing her to just casually get ready and make her way over. She only lives 15 minutes from us, so we figured there was no rush. By about 8:00 am, I made my way downstairs. From our phone records, I called my best friend at 8:10 am and pled with her that I couldn’t do this much more, it was so awful, I couldn’t handle it anymore. My 4 year old came downstairs and looked at me and said, “It’s okay, mommy. You just have to breathe and relax!” I called my mom and said, “Hurry up! I think you might miss this!” She was staying nearby.

Suddenly it seemed the contractions were on top of each other, and it was all I could do just to walk from our kitchen to the living room. I yelled for Steve and tried leaning over my exercising ball, but I quickly realized it was time to push. I ran to our downstairs bathroom, screaming, “Help! Steve! He’s coming!” I made it to the toilet, and my husband grabbed the phone. At 8:38 am, my husband called our midwife to say I was “in transition,” though I could be heard screaming and pushing in the bathroom. She reports that she **knew** by the sounds of the screams that it wasn’t transition! I screamed for Ben, my oldest child, to grab towels, which he quickly did. The pushing came uncontrollably, and I knew we were having him right that minute. I remember thinking, “Okay, here we go!” I squatted over the

continued on page 6

Harrison's Birth Story, *continued*

toilet as, with the first two pushes, my water broke. Within seconds, his head slid out. One short push later, and his body slid out into daddy's arms. "The cord's around his neck twice!" my husband cried. "THEN TAKE IT OFF!" I shrieked back. After unwinding our baby, he laid him in my arms. For a moment, we just sat there, dumbfounded! We had just delivered our baby! Steve grabbed a couple of clean towels to wrap around the baby and we just sat there breathing in the gravity of what had just happened. The next record on our cell phone was 8:40 am, just two minutes past the last call. At 8:40 am, my husband called our midwife and

said, "Well, he's here!" From there, we just waited for our midwife and my mom to arrive, and held him close to us. Our midwife examined Harrison, who had passed meconium, but still looked great, weighing in at 8 pounds, 10 ounces and 21 inches. The most beautiful pictures I have ever seen are the ones our midwife took of my husband, myself, our newborn baby, my 4 year old Ben, and our 1 year old foster daughter in our hallway after his birth (our 2 year old was still sleeping!). The day that followed was sheer heaven, relaxing on a beautiful Saturday, February 20, with my new baby and beautiful, blessed family!

FoMM Board Member Biographies

Cynthia Jackson

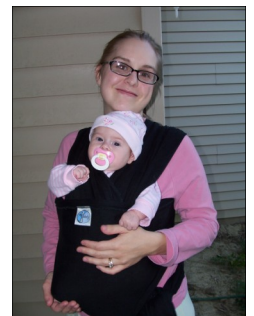
I live in Detroit, MI and I am a birth doula, childbirth educator, and founder of Sacred Rose Birthing Services, where my motto is "Roses are red, Postpartum is sometimes blue, Every pregnant woman deserves a doula, Why not YOU!" At the tender age of 10, I watched a home video of my aunt giving birth and it struck an interest with me. At that age all I knew was that I wanted to have a career assisting pregnant women birth their babies. After many years of researching how I would assist women in childbirth, I discovered the profession of midwifery. I knew then that midwifery was my calling because their philosophy supported my personal beliefs about natural childbirth. My plan is to become a Certified Professional Midwife and open a birth center in the future, but for now I am confident that I will be successful as the new Detroit Area Regional Coordinator. To FoMM I bring my enthusiasm about educating my community about the midwifery profession and being supportive in licensing midwives in the state of MI. I support out-of-hospital births and plan to have a homebirth when I have children.



a kitchen garden with the help of our barn cats and dog. I am currently working as Postmaster Relief for the local post office, while studying to be a midwife someday. I have lived in Oceana County my entire life I decided to get involved with Friends of Michigan Midwives after giving birth to both of my older children via Cesarean. My husband and I are planning a homebirth with our newest bun in the oven. I have decided to volunteer my time to educate people about out-of-hospital birth, and to make sure that it remains an option in Michigan, especially for women like me who want the opportunity for a VBAC.

Jennifer L. Salowitz

My name is Jennifer, and I am a wife, mother, breastfeeding and homebirth advocate, and homeschool educator. I have been married for 6.5 years to Steve, my husband and best friend. We have 3 children: Benjamin is 5.5 years old, William is 3 years old, and Harrison just turned 11 months old. After my first baby was born in a messy, intervention-laden hospital birth, he had to be hospitalized due to an unknown infection which left him testing positive for meningitis via a spinal tap. When we discovered we were pregnant with our second child, I knew immediately that things had to be different. We ended up having a homebirth in the northern Metro Detroit area, and it was a beautiful, healing experience. By the time we had our third child, we had relocated to the Saginaw area and ended up having an (accidental) unassisted childbirth after working with a fabulous local midwife who assisted after the birth. I enjoy reading, knitting, sewing, cooking, writing, learning, playing with my kiddos, and tandem nursing my two youngest children. I look forward to serving the Friends of Michigan Midwives further advance efforts to legalize midwifery in the state of Michigan and hope to one day become a midwife!



Ashley Oomen

I am mommy to almost 3 year old Jordan, 1 year old Macy and soon-to-be mommy of Jaxson our 3rd child. I have been married to my husband Lee for 4 years this July. Our family resides on a 10 acre hobby farm in Walkerville, Michigan where we raise beef cattle, goats, chickens, and

