



# All in Due Time

## Perspectives on Childbirth from Deaf Parents—Disc 2

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# All In Due Time

## Perspectives on Childbirth from Deaf Parents

### Disc 2

#### Featuring:

**Egina and Jimmy Beldon  
Christine and Roger Kraft  
Melody and Russell Stein**

A creation of the

**COLLEGE OF ST. CATHERINE**

in partnership with SLICES, LLC.

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RSA Region V ITP Award #H160A000008

Layout and Design by **Digiterp Communications**

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### Navigating the CD

You can move through the information on this CD in a variety of ways:

- ✎ Click on the title of any of these pages to go to that page.
- ✎ Open Bookmarks by clicking [HERE](#) or on the tab in the upper left. Use those links to navigate.
- ✎ Click on [Blue Links](#) on the rest of the pages to take you to specified locations.
- ✎ Click on the arrows at the bottom of the page to go forward or backward.
- ✎ Use the arrows on the toolbar at the top of the page.





# All in Due Time

## Perspectives on Childbirth from Deaf Parents—Disc 2

### Using this CD-ROM

#### Software Installation

If videos do not work, see *Begin* file on the CD. This file as links to the web for free downloading of the Software. You need QuickTime 5 or higher. (Mac OS X also needs Acrobat Reader 5.1 for floating windows to work.)

#### Video Instructions

Click on the **Title** to see movie. Click on **Large** to play a larger version of the same video file. Click on **QT** to open the video in the QuickTime application. A dialogue box will appear asking for permission which you should allow. If you have the QuickTime Pro application, this allows you to play the video full screen as if from a VCR.

#### Shortcut Keys:

- ✎ The “*esc*” button in upper right of keyboard closes movie early.
- ✎ Press Space Bar for Pause/Play.
- ✎ Right arrow (→) on keyboard allows you to play video in slow motion. (Mac: Hold button down. Windows users need to repeatedly tap the key to move from frame to frame.)
- ✎ Click on Control Bar at the bottom of the Movie Window to move to different locations in the video. (Clicking here would move to halfway point of movie.)



This information is on the left hand side of all pages with video links.

#### Printing

To print pages, select the page range which you want in your print dialogue box and set your printer to landscape perspective. Some of the page will be beyond your printer’s margin. The information in the margin is only useful for navigation on the computer--not necessary for off screen reading.

#### Troubleshooting

**Large** link is no different from clicking on the title.

The video files all have a resolution of 480 x 360. By selecting Large, it will play that file in the largest multiple of this which fits on your screen. If your monitor is set at 800 x 600, you will not be able to play the larger version. If your monitor is set at 1024 x 768, it will play the movie full screen. See your computer’s control panel or system preferences to adjust your monitor’s resolution.

**Mac OS X:** *Title* and **Large** links do not work.

Acrobat Reader 5.0 did not support playing movies in floating windows. Acrobat Reader 5.1 fixed this problem. Go to *Begin* file on the CD for a link to download this free program.

**When I play the large version of the movie, it is not smooth.**

Playing the larger version of the movie requires more processing speed. Try it on a different computer, or use the smaller movie by clicking on the title.

**When I open the QuickTime player, the video is not smooth.**

Particularly on Windows systems, this option does not always produce clear video quality. Use the Large or Title options to view the video.

For updated support, visit: [www.digiterp.com/support.html](http://www.digiterp.com/support.html)





# All in Due Time

## Perspectives on Childbirth from Deaf Parents—Disc 2

### Overview of this Project

Childbirth is a universal experience –one that is shared by millions of women around the world, regardless of their country of origin, ethnicity, socio-economic background, sexual orientation, ability, disability or hearing status. And while this event is shared by so many, the birthing process and experience is as unique to the parents as the baby being born.

Health care appointments, including prenatal care, birth, and postnatal care, are some of the most challenging for interpreters. Not only do they demand that the interpreter be technically skilled, highly professional, and ethical but they also must be keenly sensitive to the personal nature of the interaction.

The RSA Region V Project at the College of St. Catherine in partnership with SLICES continues to develop innovative CD ROMs in an effort to help interpreters develop and hone the technical skills needed to interpret in these demanding, personal and potentially life-threatening situations. “To the Heart of the Matter” and “Stomach This!” were our first projects of this nature. We are in the process of releasing two more CDs which offer appointment settings and model interpretations in cardiology and gastroenterology so that interpreters may apply the information learned in the first two CDs to “real life” interactions.

When discussing the plans for this CD addressing the birth experience, we wanted to use the same format as the first two: to present the topic in spoken English by a native English speaker, and in American Sign Language by a native ASL user. The original plan to produce one CD has now become a project with several phases. The first phase is this two CD set featuring the birth experiences of six Deaf couples. The stories they share are rich and represent a variety of factors and complications that occurred before, during and after the births of their

children.

We’d like to extend a special thanks to the parents who so generously shared their experiences with us: Heidi and Jeff Branch, Stacie and Scott Miller, Brandi and Tim Rarus, Melody and Russ Stein, Christine and Roger Kraft, and Egina and Jimmy Beldon. We were touched by their willingness to share details of such a personal experience so that interpreters could learn from their stories. Thank you so much! A special thanks also goes to Ann Marie Mickelson, who generously opened her home to us so we could film these parents in a comfortable environment.

Since the perspectives, goals and language use is often different for the medical personnel involved with a birth, the next phase of this project will include filming various health care providers, including deaf and non-deaf doulas, midwives, doctors and childbirth educators.

This CD has the potential to be used in a variety of ways to develop your knowledge and skills in the realm of interpreting in obstetrics. You will find some ideas on page 6 to start your work with these stories. On page 7 you will find a listing of various internet resources that will help you prepare for your work with this material (and with ob/gyn appointments you may be scheduled to interpret.) Many of these websites offer very clear pictures and explanations of concepts you will find useful.

We are thrilled to offer you these resources and hope you find them helpful as you develop your skills for working with health care providers and parents-to-be.

*Staff of the RSA Region V Project*





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### Suggestions for Working with these Texts

**Objective: To prepare for interpreting medical appointments related to pregnancy and childbirth.**

The following series of activities are designed to support you in achieving the objective above.

**1. Do some research on terminology and procedures related to Childbirth.**

The following page has suggested resources for developing a better understanding of concepts and processes related to childbirth. There is a wealth of information on the internet, as well as many books, designed to give future parents a better idea of what to expect. These resources can also be of assistance to an interpreter preparing to interpret for situations related to pregnancy and childbirth.

**2. Watch the video and analyze use of language to describe terms and processes related to childbirth.**

The video from each couple is divided into segments to allow you to watch different portions. Some of the video describes more about the processes of life surrounding childbirth...dealing with accommodations at work or in other arenas of life. Other portions of the video is more focused on the technical processes of birth and dealing with the medical profession. Descriptions underneath the video links give suggestions of topics to look for in each of the video portions. Using these suggestions, watch the video to add to your own ideas about how to talk about childbirth in ASL.

**3. Describe certain processes in ASL.**

After watching the couples talk about childbirth in ASL, pick certain concepts or processes and describe these in ASL. For example, you may choose to describe a C-section as if you were explaining it to a Deaf friend who was unfamiliar with what happens in that procedure. You may want to videotape yourself so that you can watch your rendition and see how effectively you were able to incorporate the language features demonstrated on the CD.

**4. Interpret from ASL to English imagining the setting being a Doctor's appointment asking for past history.**

After all of this preparation and analysis, voice interpret the segments with the imagined target audience of a doctor looking for past history related to pregnancy and childbirth.



### Suggested Resources for

# Preparation and Research on Childbirth

*There is an incredible quantity of information on the web about pregnancy and childbirth. In addition to explanations of procedures and conditions, there are all sorts of perspectives about the pros and cons of certain approaches. Click on any blue word to take you to an internet site with information on that topic. The concepts offered here are not comprehensive, but offer a start to what might be encountered in OB/GYN appointments.*

### 1. Understand physical anatomy related to childbirth.

Two options for Diagrams of Female Reproductive Anatomy from the AMA Atlas:

[Non-Pregnant Anatomy](#)

[Anatomy during Pregnancy](#)

### 2. Understand procedures that might be used during pregnancy, labor and delivery.

A glossary of terms related to child birth.: [Obgyn.net](#)

The following websites offer resources and perspectives on some of the medicines and procedures which might be used during labor and delivery.

[Amniocentesis](#)

[Midwifery](#)

[Analgesia and Anesthesia](#)

[Ultrasound](#)

C-Section:

[Various Perspectives](#)

[Diagrams](#)

Episiotomies:

[Various Perspectives](#)

[Diagrams](#)

### 3. Understand some of the potential complications in pregnancy and delivery.

[A General Description of Possible Complications](#)

[Birth Defects](#)

[Pre-term Labor](#)

[Bicornuate Uterus](#)

[Breech Presentation](#)

[Ectopic Pregnancy](#)

[Infertility](#)

[Placenta Abruptio](#)

[Placenta Previa](#)

[Preeclampsia/Toxemia](#)

[Miscarriage](#)

### 4. Go on to the next page and the perspectives on childbirth.





# All in Due Time

## Perspectives on Childbirth from Deaf Parents—Disc 2

### Perspectives from

# Egina and Jimmy Beldon

#### Playing Movies

Click on **Title** to see movie.

**Large** opens larger scale version of movie.

Click on **QT** to open in QuickTime Player application.

“*esc*” button upper right of keyboard closes movie window.

Press **Space Bar** for Pause/Play.

**Right arrow** (→) allows you to play video in slow motion.

Click on control bar to move to that point in video.

See [Using this CD](#) for details.

#### Meet Jimmy

**Large**

**QT**

[Summary](#)

Jimmy briefly introduces himself. (0:29)

#### Meet Egina

**Large**

**QT**

[Summary](#)

Egina briefly introduces herself. (0:29)

#### Names of Children

**Large**

**QT**

[Summary](#)

Jimmy gives the name and ages of their five children. (0:39)

#### First Delivery

**Large**

**QT**

[Summary](#)

Egina and Jimmy describe the process of their child’s first birth, including their initial desires to have a natural delivery, and how Egina ended up being induced and having a C-section. Processes discussed include: Induction via IV, Epidural anesthesia, C-Section. (12:19)

#### Second Delivery

**Large**

**QT**

[Summary](#)

They explain going for a Vaginal Birth After C-Section (VBAC) for the birth of their son. Processes discussed include: Induction by Stripping; VBAC; delivery with suction. (8:16)



# All in Due Time

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Perspectives from

### Egina and Jimmy Beldon (continued)

#### Playing Movies

Click on  
**Title**  
to see movie.

**Large**  
opens larger scale  
version of movie.

Click on  
**QT**  
to open in QuickTime  
Player application.

“*esc*” button  
upper right of  
keyboard closes  
movie window.

Press **Space Bar**  
for Pause/Play.

**Right arrow** (→)  
allows you to play  
video in slow motion.

Click on control bar  
to move to that  
point in video.

See [Using this CD](#)  
for details.

#### Third Delivery

**Large**

**QT**

[Summary](#)

Egina and Jimmy tell the story of their third delivery which was an attempt at having a home birth that turned into a bumpy ride in an ambulance with a hospital delivery. Processes discussed include: midwifery; meconium; ultrasound; delayed onset of labor; water birth. (10:57)

#### Fourth Delivery

**Large**

**QT**

[Summary](#)

Egina and Jimmy explain how they were finally able to have the delivery at home which they had been wanting. (3:04)

#### Fifth Delivery

**Large**

**QT**

[Summary](#)

They explain about their fifth delivery which happened in the hospital with a midwife. Processes discussed include: breaking the amniotic sac (water). (3:04)

Video requires QuickTime 5 or higher. If video doesn't work, be sure you have the appropriate version of QuickTime installed. See *Begin* file for software installation instructions.



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Perspectives from

## Christine and Roger Kraft

### Playing Movies

Click on  
**Title**  
to see movie.

**Large**  
opens larger scale  
version of movie.

Click on  
**QT**  
to open in QuickTime  
Player application.

“*esc*” button  
upper right of  
keyboard closes  
movie window.

Press **Space Bar**  
for Pause/Play.

**Right arrow** (→)  
allows you to play  
video in slow motion.

Click on control bar  
to move to that  
point in video.

See [Using this CD](#)  
for details.

### Meet Christine and Roger

**Large**

**QT**

[Summary](#)

Christine and Roger introduce themselves and talk about their life and work. (1:12)

### First Child

**Large**

**QT**

[Summary](#)

They describe the events surrounding the birth of their first child--with particular reference to Cal Ripken's baseball career. (4:58)

### Second Child

**Large**

**QT**

[Summary](#)

They discuss the birth of their second child, which happened on Thanksgiving.. (2:02)

### Third Child

**Large**

**QT**

[Summary](#)

They explain the birth of their third child, which happened on Super Bowl Sunday. They also discuss the coming birth of their fourth child. (2:21)

### Complete Movie( First - Third Child)

**Large**

**QT**

[Summary](#)

This link plays the discussions of the three deliveries in a continuous format. View this if you want to see a longer segment of uninterrupted discourse. (9:20)

Video requires QuickTime 5 or higher. If video doesn't work, be sure you have the appropriate version of QuickTime installed. See *Begin* file for software installation instructions.



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## Perspectives on Childbirth from Deaf Parents—Disc 2

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Perspectives from

## Melody and Russell Stein

### Playing Movies

Click on  
**Title**

to see movie.

**Large**  
opens larger scale  
version of movie.

Click on  
**QT**

to open in QuickTime  
Player application.

“*esc*” button  
upper right of  
keyboard closes  
movie window.

Press **Space Bar**  
for Pause/Play.

**Right arrow** (→)  
allows you to play  
video in slow motion.

Click on control bar  
to move to that  
point in video.

See [Using this CD](#)  
for details.

### Meet Melody

**Large**

**QT**

[Summary](#)

Melody gives an introduction of herself including the story of her journey from Hong Kong to Sioux Falls, SD. (2:51)

### Meet Russell

**Large**

**QT**

[Summary](#)

Russell talks about his background, how he met Melody, and introduces an interest in numbers which he expands on related to his children’s births.. (2:52)

### Birth Story

**Large**

**QT**

[Summary](#)

Melody and Russell talk about preparation and events related to the birth of their two children. Processes discussed include: perspectives on working with an interpreter and nursing staff and epidural anesthesia. (6:35)

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[Credits for this Project](#)

Video requires QuickTime 5 or higher. If video doesn’t work, be sure you have the appropriate version of QuickTime installed. See *Begin* file for software installation instructions.



### Written Summaries of ASL Texts

#### About the Summaries

*These summaries were completed by Patty Gordon, a certified interpreter, who worked with the video files and was not present at the filming. You will notice in the summaries that there are some areas where it is unclear as to the meaning in the text. Some of these are due to the intimacy of some of the conversation between two people who know each other well. Some of it is due to the ambiguity of ASL in specifying gender. The important thing to keep in mind is that the summaries are provided simply to support your own comprehension and analysis of the material.*

#### Meet Jimmy:

Jimmy is from an all Deaf family, His children are 4<sup>th</sup> generation Deaf. He’s originally from Ohio. He’s worked in several states including Mississippi, Ohio, Minnesota and now South Dakota.

[Return to Video Options](#)

#### Meet Egina:

Egina is from an all Deaf family. Her children are 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Deaf on her side of the family. She’s originally from California. She majored in child development at Gallaudet. She now lives in South Dakota. Like Jimmy, she’s moved around quite a bit, but has always had the same job: housewife.

[Return to Video Options](#)

#### Names of Children

- Estina, 8 - Deaf
- Jimmy Paul (J.P.), 6 – Deaf
- Emelia, 4

- Ernelina, 2 (almost 3) – hearing
- Jarod, 14 months

[Return to Video Options](#)

#### First Delivery

Jimmy and Egina have 5 children, between 1- 8 years old. Egina explains that they have 3 girls (one of whom is hearing) and 2 boys. Jimmy clarifies the birth order and gender of the kids, explaining that Egina “lost count” of which child is which (understandable error!).

Egina always knew she wanted children. When she and Jimmy married, they planned to wait 2 years before starting a family. They became pregnant on their honeymoon (an “oops” baby, as Jimmy calls it). Egina was worried about what they would do. After Jimmy reminded her that they were married (so having a baby was ok), they started to get excited about the idea of having a baby. Egina was a bit worried about the fact that this was not what they had planned, but Jimmy encouraged her to think

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### Written Summaries of ASL Texts

positively and that they would be ok.

Egina wanted a female obgyn and asked around for some recommendations. When she went to a clinic she'd heard about, they said they had 5 doctors. She was so inexperienced at the time that she thought they meant she'd have to go to 5 different doctors. They found an interpreter who the Beldons happened to know because her husband was deaf. The interpreter didn't have experience interpreting for a birth, but they didn't mind. Jimmy and Egina went to their first appointment ready with a "birth plan". They'd read a book that encouraged them to think about what they wanted to happen during delivery; Jimmy wanted to cut the cord, actually deliver the baby, and Egina wanted a natural birth. When they presented their plan to the doctor, they did not get a good reaction. The doctor said Jimmy couldn't cut the cord or deliver the baby because of liability issues. Egina and Jimmy didn't have any experience with all this, but the book they read was written by a doctor and they had heard from other sources that what they wanted should be just fine. They were totally put off by the doctor's response to their requests, but because they were so inexperienced, they went ahead with her anyway.

Egina was past due. Although she was at 41 weeks, they read that it was ok to go to 42 weeks. Instead, the doctor insisted

they induce at 41 weeks. Both Egina and Jimmy had no real idea what they were doing or what to expect, given it was their first time, but they were very excited. They went to the hospital early in the morning, with both their mothers in tow. They also called Jimmy's sister, who had interpreted for several births. She told them that the IV would start the contractions right away and that they would be fast and hard. The IV drip started...and the contractions didn't. Egina remembers how the nurses were betting on how long the process would actually take. Both of them were so energized and excited – ready for the delivery. Jimmy was in his scrubs and set to go...and nothing happened. Time went by without any contractions starting at all.

They gave her a second dose and the contractions started at last. Jimmy did his best to do everything they'd learned in Lamaze class. He tried to get their breathing in sync, counting the breaths through the contractions. Both their mothers were in the room with them (it was a big room) and monitoring everything as it happened. Egina wasn't experiencing any pain at that point. Jimmy, however, would get distracted and lose count and Egina would have to whack him to bring him back to her and the work ahead. It was crazy – first time through it, managing the breathing, hyperventilating...talking to the parents – just really wild.

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### Written Summaries of ASL Texts

Finally, Egina just couldn't take it any more. She abandoned the whole idea of a natural birth and called for the doctor to give her an epidural. By this time, the whole day had passed and they were well into the night. Now, because Egina had planned for a natural birth, she really had not looked into what an epidural entailed. They told her to bend over; that she would have a shot in her back and that she could not move. For hours and hours she'd been experiencing contractions and not able to be still one moment and suddenly she was expected to not move at all while still experiencing contractions. She was paranoid that they would somehow paralyze her, so she held it together but was sweating buckets and hanging on by the skin of her teeth during the shot. Jimmy remembers how the monitors spiked while it was happening. Egina didn't even feel the needle because the pain of the contractions was much worse. She remembers wanting the pain to go away as soon as they were done. It took a bit, but finally the pain of the contractions subsided.

Suddenly, Egina became happy and smiling – a total 180 degree change from her mood before the shot. It was like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (according to her mother). Labor continued through the night until about 4:21 in the morning. Jimmy says that they remember the time because their doctor was finishing her shift and had suggested a c-section because the baby's heartbeat dropped at one point. It was a very emotional moment for them because they had hoped for a regular delivery.

Jimmy picks up the story from there because Egina doesn't remember a lot about it because she was doped up. He remembers how they strapped Egina on the bed with both arms out (like Jesus on the cross) and put a huge drape in place so he couldn't really even see her face when he was standing by her feet. All she could do was stare at the ceiling – she could barely even sign because her arms were strapped down.

Jimmy watched while the made the incision (through several layers of fat, he says...and gets nudged from Egina in reply). While Jimmy watched the two doctors working on her, Egina was totally oblivious to how vigorously they jostled her abdomen. They were very casual about the whole thing, chatting about their kids while they worked. The interpreter was interpreting everything to Jimmy who wanted them to knock it off and pay attention to what they were doing! After a bit of tussling, out popped the baby's head, just like in "Alien". Jimmy was reporting all of this to Egina who wanted to know if it was a boy or a girl. He told her to wait a sec and finally they got the baby out, turned it around and he could tell her it was a girl.

From that moment on, Jimmy said goodbye to Egina and turned his attention totally to their baby. He followed her into the other room where they checked her over and gave her a bath. He'd heard stories of babies getting accidentally swapped in hospitals

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and he wanted to make darn sure to keep his baby in his sights. He tried to memorize her face while they were working on her – just in case. The doctors stitched up Egina while Jimmy was doing all this and then Jimmy brought the baby back in to her.

For Egina, everything was just turning out to be not at all what she expected. Because she couldn't sign, she was forced to talk in order to communicate with the interpreter. Then the interpreter went off with Jimmy and the baby, which was fine, but it left her stuck there alone, strapped to the bed. So there she was thinking about her experience— she hadn't given birth naturally, she was all alone, she hadn't held her baby yet, and she was stuck waiting to find out if the baby was healthy or not.

A nurse did come in to talk to her somewhere along the way, but without the interpreter, so Egina really didn't know for sure how the baby was. While she was in recovery, she started to shiver and felt freezing cold. She was shaking, clutching warm blankets around her, barely able to communicate and just dying to see the baby. Staff people came and went but she just didn't care – only wanting to see her baby! Finally, they brought the baby to her and she held her at last and just burst into tears.

The next day, the baby had a hearing screening. They remember the doctor coming in with a somber face (with an interpreter) and telling them that unfortunately, their child did not pass the

hearing test. The doc was surprised when both of them shouted for joy at the news. It took a minute for the doctor to realize that to them, of course, it would be good news that their child was deaf like them! Even with that, the doctor asked them (in all seriousness) if they knew how to raise a deaf child! What an idiotic question!

[Return to Video Options](#)

#### Second Delivery

On to J.P.'s birth. Egina talked to a lot of people about the possibilities of having a vaginal birth after a cesarean (VBAC). The obgyn they had for their first delivery did not really allow them to plan for and deliver the baby the way they had dreamed. They had gone along with the doctor's recommendations and lost control of the process. They did not want that to happen again.

The interpreter they had worked with during their first delivery (and subsequently their second) had had a baby after theirs and had used a midwife. Everything about that process was exactly what Egina wanted to have happen for her as well. When they got pregnant the second time (this time it was planned), Jimmy supported the idea of using a midwife. There were 4 midwives affiliated with the hospital who worked on a rotation so that they might not know who their midwife would be when it came time

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### Written Summaries of ASL Texts

to deliver the baby. All of them turned about to be good – there was one who was not used to working with Deaf people, but right away Egina had a better experience. While the first appointments with the doctor were just a quick check, the midwife was willing to hear about everything the Beldons wanted. She was very supportive of the birth plan they originally made outlining how they wanted to do the first delivery.

With this baby, Egina knew what to expect. She was ready for the labor pains; they didn't go to Lamaze class and were very excited about going through the birth process. Egina made clear to the midwife she did not want to be induced again. The midwife said that would be fine as long as the baby came before 42 weeks. After that, the hospital physicians would be the ones managing the delivery. The Beldons did not want that and thought a lot about their options. The midwife told them about some herbs and natural medicines that might help start labor (which they couldn't use as part of their hospital care because of liability issues).

The midwife offered to “strip” Egina’s membranes. That’s a process where the midwife uses her hand to irritate the inside of the cervix. The process does not break the woman’s water, but it can trigger the hormonal shifts necessary to start labor. Egina agreed. At that time they were living in Ohio but Jimmy was

commuting to Indiana to teach and was out of town. They agreed on doing the procedure and he would arrive that night. By this time Egina was at 42 weeks and overdue.

She took the herbs, had the stripping and waited. At last labor began. Jimmy’s sister had flown in and his parents were coming to take care of the baby while they went to the hospital. Egina’s labor progressed and she and Jimmy went to the hospital. The contractions were pretty strong, but they told her she wasn’t ready yet and to go back home. Egina was tired, irritated and wanted to get going so she could have the natural birth she’d planned. But they went on back home. Jimmy remembers how they’d read not to leave for the hospital until the mother really feels “ready” for delivery. Although Egina had felt pretty ready, apparently there was more to come.

Once they got home, Egina tried to sleep while the contractions continued. They both laugh about the fact that during the first labor and delivery, Jimmy was right by Egina’s side every moment. This time, he came in to support her for short periods and spent the rest of the time on the computer playing games. Finally, Egina couldn’t stand it any more and they went back to the hospital but she still was not dilated at all. This time they decided to stay at the hospital until the delivery.

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## Perspectives on Childbirth from Deaf Parents—Disc 2

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Well, all that night, the next day and into the next night Egina's contractions continued. It was almost 30 hours. They had her sit in a warm bath, which didn't help. They gave her some Pitocin to help the contractions get stronger (although they felt pretty strong already to Egina). Finally the pain got to be too much and Egina had an epidural. When at last she was at 10 cm, she started to push. She pushed for 2 hours – it was incredibly hard. She thinks maybe because it was her first vaginal birth her body wasn't used to pushing a baby through the cervix. She was totally dilated, but the baby just wouldn't come. The doctor prepared to use suction to help with the delivery. Jimmy remembers a friend telling him that a baby delivered with suction would have a misshapen head. He didn't want a pointy-headed baby so was hoping that they didn't use suction.

At last the baby came and this time it was a son. Jimmy was thrilled – he had a son and now they had one son and one daughter. With their first baby, they didn't know which they would have and even though they had a good idea this one would be a boy from the ultrasound; they still had to actually see him to be sure.

The labor and delivery had taken so long that Jimmy's parents and sister had actually left. When the baby came, the nurse looked him over, specifically at his skin, and said he looked like

he was 38 weeks old, not 42. That explains why Egina's body was not ready to give birth and why they had to force the process along so much. So, Egina got her vaginal birth, but still not a natural one.

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#### Third Delivery

The third pregnancy happened after they moved to Indiana. This one was an “oops” baby like the first one. The ultrasound was good and everything was going fine. Egina was considering trying a home birth for this baby. A friend had told them about her experience with it. For Egina, it meant she would not be dealing with medicine or have shots to fall back on. She would be forced to truly experience a natural birth. Also, the baby could come at the right time and not be induced just because the pregnancy was at 42 weeks. Jimmy was a bit hesitant and his family was really resistant to the idea. They lived close by and were very concerned about the safety of the process. All their babies were born in a hospital. They gave her a whole list of questions to ask the midwife.

Egina had found a midwife and had gone for a checkup to make sure she and the baby were ok. The midwife did not do home births, however, and that's what Egina really wanted. The midwife gave them the name of someone who used to work at the hospital and now did home births. They were nervous but when they

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met her they found she was wonderful. Very nice, comfortable with working with Deaf people, open to discussion – they were thrilled. The midwife’s office was in the basement of her home. They went with their two other children to appointments, talked about what they wanted and felt comfortable with her. She was very supportive and patient with all their questions. It felt like talking to a friend. She was a certified, trained midwife with experience, so she was very qualified as well.

Egina asked if she could have a water birth (she loves to swim) and the midwife agreed. They borrowed a kiddie pool from a friend and practiced how she needed to be positioned for the birth. It was a lot harder than they thought – took them about 3 hours to figure out the temperature and how Egina should be positioned. Meanwhile, the kids couldn’t help themselves and played in the pool as well. Once they got it figured out, they kept the empty pool at the ready.

Finally Egina told Jimmy it was time. He ran to fill the pool. Really, this time Egina went to 42 weeks and still had not started labor. She asked the midwife what they should do and she said that they would wait until the baby was ready. They wouldn’t induce or attempt to force labor in any way – very different than their last two experiences. 43 weeks came and went. They did tests to make sure everything was ok and that there was

enough amniotic fluid to sustain the baby until the birth. If there wasn’t enough fluid, the baby’s heart could have problems – but everything was just fine. It felt odd to just simply wait for labor to begin after all the effort they went through to induce it the first two times. Finally, at 43 1/2 weeks, labor began. (Which apparently is a record for the midwife...she’s never had a delivery that late before or since.)

During labor, Egina was very restless. She paced the hallway, going from her kid’s bedroom to her bedroom, back and forth around the house. Jimmy was running around – helping her some, making calls and both of them were a bit nuts. Egina’s parents were there ready to take the kids. Jimmy thinks her parents weren’t there but Egina reminds him that that was for J. P.’s birth. It’s understandable how he, too, would get confused after so many deliveries. They called the midwife. Jimmy took care of it because Egina was totally focused on managing the contractions.

Their first two children were born in the middle of the night and Jimmy was really hoping that this one would be born during the day. Alas, there they were again, in the middle of the night ready to deliver the third. It seemed they never managed to get a good night’s sleep before their babies were born. When the contractions were the right amount of time apart, they called the

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midwife and the interpreter. Both came over to the house.

The midwife said that things were progressing just right. Egina remembers how she was vomiting and that the midwife said that was a sign that the time was close. It had been about 7 hours since the contractions started. They got everything ready. The midwife also had a nurse with her. So Jimmy, Egina, the midwife, nurse, interpreter and Egina's mother were all in the room together. (Egina's dad was sleeping). Egina was really having a hard time. The nurse, who was a pediatric nurse and focused on how the baby was doing, was monitoring the situation and said that things were getting a little risky because the baby's heartbeat was dropping now and then. Egina tried and tried and the baby just wouldn't come. Egina's only real connection with what was going on was Jimmy. She was oblivious to anything else that was going on, to any conversations happening, to the interpreter—Jimmy was the one person she could focus on during this whole process and he served as her support and interpreter.

Jimmy starts to explain more about their next decisions but Egina reminds him about the pool. Jimmy explains how their plan to have a water birth was not what they expected. Egina was in pain and thrashing around so much in the pool that it became a whirlpool. The pool itself was twisting and rocking, water was going everywhere. She couldn't help it; she was in so

much pain she just had to keep moving. It was hilarious to watch the water go round. Egina found she had nothing to really hold on to, unlike the hospital where she could grab the bedrails while she pushed. Jimmy was right there, ready to help. (All set with shirt off and snorkel on, he jokes). In reality, Egina did not like the whole water and pool experience although she didn't say so at the time.

Finally her water broke and they realized they had a problem. There was meconium in the water and that meant that the baby could possibly choke. They ordered Egina out of the pool. When she said she was glad to get out because she didn't like the water anyway the midwife asked her why she didn't say so before! Once out of the pool, she still wasn't able to deliver and they decided they needed to call the ambulance to take her to a nearby hospital. It wasn't what they planned, but they had to do it. What they expected was the usual ambulance to show up. What they got was a huge truck pulling up in front of their house. They hauled Egina out and up into the truck, closing the enormous doors behind her. Jimmy had to climb up into the cab because there was no room for him in the back. They already had the interpreter, and midwife in there with Egina. So they went bumping along in this enormous truck to the hospital. Egina felt lost because suddenly she didn't have Jimmy next to her to help her through it. She clung on to the interpreter and was hollering

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at the midwife about the contractions, pressure and pain. The midwife was monitoring some of the blood that was already passing and telling her to hold back and not push. It was crazy.

They lifted her down out of the truck and before they even got in the elevator door the baby's head was crowning. They rushed her up to the delivery room where the whole medical team was not quite ready. The midwife and Jimmy went right to work and the baby came right out. The doctor then showed up after the fact and checked the baby, cut the cord and left. The doctor didn't even charge them because the midwife had done the actual delivery. So they didn't get the home delivery they wanted again.

Later, when Jimmy was telling the story of the birth, someone told him that American Indians used to bounce overdue pregnant women in a blanket to help the process along. For Jimmy, it made him think that the bouncy truck ride to the hospital was probably the ticket to complete the delivery! Egina is sure it was the ride that did it too – she was bouncing all over the place. She remembers clearly one thing from her trip to the hospital. When they took her out of the truck, she smelled cigarette smoke from a person standing just outside the doors and remembers wondering why the heck were they allowing someone to smoke there! She remembers the actual arrival of the baby as well. She

was looking at Jimmy who was telling her not to push. She was nodding to him, telling him she wouldn't even as the baby came out. Then she said, "Sorry, I pushed!" Jimmy remembers that as well.

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#### Fourth Delivery

When they got pregnant the fourth time, they were determined to have a home delivery with a midwife. They had come so close the last time, a mere 20 minutes away from a true home delivery. They lined up the same midwife, pediatric nurse and interpreter. Egina reminds Jimmy that actually they had a new interpreter because their other one moved. Jimmy explains that they had an interpreter who'd never done a birth and was actually a former student of Jimmy's. So everything was arranged.

Sure enough, Egina started labor in the middle of the night, just like before. She remembers how they had gone to bed that night, talking about their plans. She was feeling some contractions. Jimmy asked her to please not give birth in the middle of the night this time. They went to bed at 10 and at 11:30 Egina's water broke. That was the first time her water breaking was the initial warning of the delivery. She woke up Jimmy who was totally disoriented and told him her water broke. He couldn't

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believe that one hour after he begged her to wait till morning, her water broke.

Egina took a bath to clean up and told Jimmy to call the midwife. He was taking his time and she really had to hound him to make the call. She felt the baby was coming soon and he was sure they had plenty of time. So again, the midwife and interpreter came. This time they planned to have the baby on the bed. They got everything ready to go. This time, everything worked out smooth as silk. They'd had labors of 24, 30 and 7 hours (with a hospital trip) and this time it was 7 hours and a perfect delivery at home. For the first time Jimmy was able to do the actual delivery, the way he'd wanted to from the very first pregnancy.

So now they had a girl, boy, girl and (even though they thought it might be a boy) another girl. Egina remembers that the baby was born around midnight and she and Jimmy went to sleep soon after. In the morning they work up with all the other kids around the bed asking them where the baby came from. They had slept the whole time everything was going on. For them, it was as if the stork came and just dropped her out of the air overnight. Egina remembers how they all stood around in amazement looking at the baby. Even Emelia stood at the edge of the bed, sucking her thumb and just staring at the new baby. They had both been so tired - it was wonderful to just fall asleep in their own bed.

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#### **Fifth Delivery**

Their first two babies were born in Ohio, the third in Indiana and the fourth in Illinois. They were in Minnesota when they got pregnant with the fifth. They found a midwife, made sure everything was covered by their insurance and arranged for another home birth. They had 10 –15 midwives on call – a real sign of being in a bigger city. Then they decided to move to South Dakota. They weren't sure if they'd have any luck finding a midwife in such a small town. They found out it was against the law to have home births in that state, which was very depressing for them. So they fully expected to have a hospital delivery. They visited the labor and delivery area in the hospital and were pleased to find it very nice and homey. There was only one midwife on staff and she was very nice as well. By this time they were in the 7<sup>th</sup> month of the pregnancy. It was a surprise to the midwife, but really, they were used to being pregnant and so busy that they almost forgot to even schedule an appointment. They had to remind themselves to put everything together, interpreters, appointments, plans and the like. The midwife almost didn't even take them because they got in touch with her so close to the due date. Egina told her all her stories (she loves to tell them) and so the midwife agreed to take them on. Egina

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explained how all the previous babies were late. The interpreter had had a lot of experience interpreting births. They all looked at the calendar and estimated the delivery for around December 25 or so. Things went along and then, around Thanksgiving, Egina told Jimmy she thought she was starting to feel something. They couldn't believe that anything could happen that early. She waited a couple of weeks. She was experiencing some bleeding and although Jimmy didn't think it was a big deal, she went ahead and called the midwife. She went into the hospital to get checked and she wasn't having any contractions and the bleeding wasn't serious enough to worry about.

So, once again, Jimmy begged Egina to try, this time, to give birth during the daylight hours for a change. But it was not meant to be, it seems. Around 9 p.m. Egina was feeling some contractions and some of the restlessness that came with her labor. She packed for the hospital, paced the floor and warned Jimmy the baby would be coming that night. At around 11 she told him they should just go ahead and go to the hospital because she felt the baby could come at any time. She remembers being really annoyed with the nurse that met them and took her to their room. He was walking way too fast for her to keep up. (Jimmy adds that he thought he was out parking the car.) Here she was, walking along, pregnant, in labor, huffing and puffing as the nurse strode down the hall. She had to stop to catch her breath

and it took him a while to realize she couldn't keep up with him. Given that he was a man, he'd never experienced what it was like to be in labor. Egina was really irritated by this time. They got into the delivery room and all set to go. The midwife was very good about communicating everything to them and things were working out well. She was at 7 cm. As usual, there was no way Egina could stay still during the labor process. She had to be constantly moving. So she paced and sat and moved around hoping the baby would hurry up and come. The midwife offered to break her water. For the first time in all the deliveries, Egina talked directly to the midwife. She'd always gone through Jimmy before. Egina asked why the midwife wanted to break her water and she said that it might help the process along. Egina was incredibly restless, unable to sit in one place for more than a few seconds. Jimmy kept trying to get her to settle, but she just couldn't. Her water broke and the contractions became really painful. The baby was really close to delivering so she finally settled down. Everyone sprung into action, ready to help. Jimmy got her to focus on her breathing (something they totally had forgotten about). He had to tell her when to push, how to breathe, when to relax – it was like she had never given birth before, she just totally forgot how to manage the process. But the baby came out just fine, without any epidural or other medication. It took about 45 minutes from the time they got there to the actual birth.

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And, as Jimmy says- that's the story of babies 1-5 – as for #6...  
.to be continued!

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#### Meet Christine and Roger

Roger and Christine have four children; Calvin, 7; Natalie, 5 and Teresa, 2 (nicknamed Tessa) and #4 is due any day now - April 1 (and it's not an April Fool's day joke). They live in Sioux Falls. Christine is a part time assistant professor in a deaf education program with 4 students. She teaches ASL. Roger is a project manager for CSD. They've been in Sioux Falls about 6 years. In that time they've seen the community grow along with their family. Christine reminds Roger that this next baby is their last and Roger reminds her that there's suspicion that something's in the water in Sioux Falls, so you never know.

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#### First Child

When the Krafts got pregnant with Calvin they were living in Wisconsin. They lived in the middle of the state with Roger commuting to Madison and Christine commuting to Milwaukee each day for work. When she got pregnant, they decided to have the baby in Milwaukee, about an hour away from their home. It made things a bit difficult to have everything so far away. When

the due date came closer, Christine got a job in Madison and so they moved there. The only problem was that Christine wanted to stay with her obgyn in Milwaukee. The doctor was one of the top ones in the state and they had been through the whole pregnancy with this doctor so it was hard to think of switching so late in the process. It meant driving an hour and a half for Christine's appointments, which were weekly in the last month. Christine was planning to switch to a local obgyn, but she delivered a week early and never had the chance until 6 weeks later.

The birth itself was not a big deal. They had to drive to Milwaukee at 4 in the morning through highway construction – in the rain. Christine backs up and reminds him of what happened just before all that. She was still working in Milwaukee. Roger was watching baseball because he wanted to see something about Cal Ripken. Roger explains that Cal Ripken used to play for the Baltimore Orioles a while ago. Christine says it was a long while ago, now. On that particular day, Cal was expected to break Lou Gehrig's record for consecutive games. Roger grew up in Maryland and was a big Cal Ripken fan so he was really looking forward to the game. Ripken did break the record, although Roger can't remember the exact number of games like he used to..it was something around 2,000.

The game wasn't broadcast on local TV, so Christine met him

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(like a good wife) at an Applebee’s restaurant to watch the game on their TV. She went back and forth to the bathroom and paced around during the game. Roger did take time out to talk to her, with an eye on the game at all times, of course. Christine was doing her best to leave him to enjoy his game. When they got home, she told him she thought her contractions were starting. Because it was her first pregnancy, she wasn’t really sure, plus she still had a week to go. Later that night they called the doctor who told them to come on in because they were so far away. Roger didn’t want to start the drive until she had some pretty hard contractions. He didn’t want to go all that way for false labor.

When they got to the hospital, the interpreter was there and they went into the delivery room. Christine was fully dilated and ready to go. The doctor offered to break her water to speed up the process and Christine said she’d have to talk to Roger about it first, which makes her laugh now to even think that she somehow needed to discuss this when everything was going along. Her parents got to the hospital around 10 a.m. and the baby was born at 2.

Christine remembers that when she left the hospital with the baby, she experienced some kind of “baby blues” or something. She felt like she had no idea how to be a mother. She’d see

kids playing outside and just cry, wishing her baby was that old already. Now their son is 7 and in school, and Christine still gets sentimental about him.

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#### Second Child

When they got pregnant with their second baby, Roger was working in Fargo, North Dakota. Christine was still in Wisconsin trying to sell their house so she could afford to quit her job and move up with him. Calvin was 1 and Christine had to manage him and the house. She had an agreement with her boss to spend two weeks at work and then two weeks with Roger. It was a crazy time. They would be lonely for two weeks, together for two weeks and she had to keep the house ready for prospective buyers while taking care of a one year-old. When they finally sold the house they celebrated and ended up making a baby. By the time the baby was due, they had left Fargo and moved to Sioux Falls. The baby was born on Thanksgiving day. Christine’s parents came in the day before, knowing the baby was due around that time. Actually, the baby was a week late, which was annoying to Christine. The first one was a week early and she had expected the second to be the same. By the time that week went by she was all over the doctor to explain when this baby would come. The doctors said she was actually just due, not overdue, even though it felt like it to her. At that time, the doctor

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didn't want to induce labor because she was not overdue and because it was a holiday. But it turned out the baby came on the holiday anyway. So they had Thanksgiving dinner in the hospital and then had a real Thanksgiving meal the next day when they went home. Calvin went with his grandparents to a buffet of some kind on Thanksgiving Day. So they all had a bit of a weird holiday that year.

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#### Third Child

Their third child was born on Super Bowl Sunday. The first was born on the day Cal Ripken set his record, the second on Thanksgiving and the third on Super Bowl Sunday at around 6 in the morning. The game was that night and all the women who stopped by to see them fussed over the baby while all the men were glued to the TV watching the game.

Christine was teaching that January. She remembers telling her class every day that she might not be there the next day because the baby might come. And then she'd show up the next day and they'd all laugh. She was very impatient to have the baby all during that last month. Tessa was actually born just one day late. Given that Calvin was a week early, Natalie a week late and Tessa one day late, they figure baby number four should be one day early. Really, it's due any day now. Roger is hoping the baby

isn't born on April 1, but on March 31. He calculates that should be exactly 40 weeks. The doctors agree with Christine that April 1 is much more likely the due date.

One funny thing that just happened was that Christine's clinic was doing a kind of advertising blitz and chose her doctor to be the face on the ads. So everywhere Christine's gone for the past week she's seen her doctor's face plastered in all the newspapers, plus face to face. What she really hopes is that she'll see her doctor tonight or tomorrow for the next baby's delivery.

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#### Meet Melody

Melody Tsai Stein was born in Hong Kong. Her parents didn't know she was deaf until she was 2. Her parents noticed that she didn't seem to respond to sound and they took her to be tested and found she was deaf. Her parents didn't know what to do. They happened to meet Frances Parn from Gallaudet University. They were surprised to find out that a Deaf woman could become a teacher at a University. They asked for recommendations for Melody's education. She recommended that they move to America. They didn't want to move that far, and instead moved to the Philippines because they heard there was a good school there. Melody's brother was born there and this time they were able to identify right away that he was deaf as well.

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Neither Melody nor her parents were happy with her education at Philippines Association for the Deaf. She attended for a couple of years and her parents started looking for other options. Her parents had businesses in Hong Kong at the time and didn't want to give them up and move all the way to the United States. They stayed in Asia. They found another school in Singapore; a private Catholic school with a deaf program, and sent Melody there. Melody was unhappy there as well. The teachers were very strict even to the extent of spanking kids if they didn't have their homework done.

Her father considered transferring the kids to a school in Hawaii and allowing them to stay with relatives there. When he visited the school, he didn't like what he saw and decided to go to Berkeley, California to check out their Deaf School. He met the superintendent of the school, liked what he saw there and decided that he would send the kids to that school. They moved to the United States in the fall of 1980.

When they went to take the kids to school that fall, they found the Berkeley campus closed and locked. The school had moved to Fremont that summer. Melody remembers how Fremont was really out in the country at that time, with nothing around it. She went to the school in Fremont and stayed for 12 years. She graduated and went to RIT for 2 years. Then she transferred

to Gallaudet. Her brother was entering Gallaudet at the same time. She stayed at Gallaudet for 2 years and met Russell there. She was homesick for California and moved back home and graduated from San Francisco State University. She and Russell moved to Sioux Falls about 5 years ago.

They have two children, Taysia Ariel, 3 1/2; and Rylan Blake, 1 1/2.

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#### Meet Russell

Russell doesn't have a life story that's nearly as interesting as his wife's. He's from New York and that should give us enough information to understand who he is.

Russell went to the Lexington School for the Deaf. He's from a Deaf family. After he'd been at the school for a couple of years, his parents decided to leave New York. They had allergies and wanted to be in a different climate. They moved to Florida (Russ explains how he's seen a new name sign for Florida, but he prefers using FLA the way he's always done). He attended and graduated from a mainstream public school. The reason he went to a public school is that the school for the deaf in Florida... well...sucked. After that, he went to Gallaudet and graduated in 4 years. He just wants people to know that he had a great time there and he'd recommend Gallaudet to anyone!

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Russell met Melody after he graduated. He was a Teaching Assistant to several professors in the Business Administration program. He noticed Melody and thought he might want to ask her out. They eventually were set up on a blind date that ended up lasting 12 hours. He's not sure there's enough tape to talk about everything that happened, but he wants to give us an idea of just how exciting that date was.

For reasons he doesn't explain, he and Melody were actually at a restaurant and as part of the date they were handcuffed together. Unfortunately for Melody, her left hand was cuffed to Russ's right – and she's left-handed. It was incredibly frustrating for her and Russ because every time she tried to sign she'd have to use the hand cuffed to him, which was not very pleasant. Luckily for Russ, he's left handed as well so he had no problem signing or eating, but his right hand was always being jerked up and down at the same time because Melody would be signing to him, although she was able to eat with her right hand. To make a long story short, they ended up getting married in San Francisco (not Sioux Falls, even though both places had the same name sign), at the Palace of Fine Arts. Interestingly, the wedding also took 12 hours. They have several incidences of number repetition in their relationship that they'll explain more as they go. One year later, they had their first child in Sioux Falls. They wish it could

have been in California, but unfortunately it didn't work out that way.

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#### Birth Story

When they got pregnant the first time, the Steins were living in an apartment and had a dog. Melody was concerned about their dog, which got all their attention. She learned that dogs can start to bite once a new baby is brought into the house.

The moved into a house with more room for a family. The pregnancy was really awful. She really felt helpless a lot and that was not something she cared for. She had morning sickness for 6 months. She missed a lot of work. Then she went back to California for a friend's wedding and suddenly felt better. She teased Russ and said that it was being back home that did the trick. She continued to tease Russ and told him they had to move back there. Russ thinks it's because she got out of the meat and potatoes Midwest and to San Francisco where she could get some good Asian food. Melody agrees that it's hard to get Chinese food in South Dakota.

Around her 9<sup>th</sup> month, she began to experience morning sickness again. For the first time, she was scared and unsure about what to expect. She wanted to know how she would know when she was ready to have the baby. She asked an interpreter who worked

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nights at relay what she should expect because the interpreter had a lot of experience with labor and delivery. The interpreter was going to interpret for the delivery. Russ explains that the reason they were feeling so uninformed is because they never took Lamaze class. Because Melody went to California, the timing was never right to schedule classes. They did schedule a date and time for a class late in the pregnancy and ironically, that was the day she ended up having the baby. So they ended up not needing it after all. When Melody got to the hospital, the doctor asked her if she'd taken Lamaze class. This was around 11:00 a.m., a few hours from when they had actually scheduled her class. She said she'd not had the chance yet. The doctor gave her some information about the techniques to use – and it turned out to be simple enough that they felt like they didn't really miss anything by not taking the class. And they saved \$50 in the process.

What Melody didn't know much about was how much labor would hurt. The contractions were very painful and she had to have an epidural. She had no idea the needle would be so huge. Luckily she couldn't see the shot happen, but she sure felt the pain. Even after the shot, she felt only half of her was numbed and she could still feel pain. When she complained to the doctor, he asked her if the pain was less than before. Given that the pain was, indeed, less than before, she didn't take it any further. She

was in labor for 6 hours. They didn't want to know the sex of the baby until it was born, so they found out after the birth that the baby was a girl.

They decided to name the girl Taysia for a specific reason. A co-worker of Russ had had a baby girl just before they did. She named the baby Aysia and Russ really liked that name. He thought it was like a combination of an Asian and American name. Melody wanted a name that was different than the other baby. So they took the first letter of Melody's maiden name (Tsai) and combined it to make Taysia.

Russ explains a little more about one part of the event. Most Deaf couples they know have the interpreter in the room with them when the baby is born. They only had an interpreter when they were first admitted to the hospital. The reason they decided not to have an interpreter in the delivery room with them was that Russ could speak well enough to be understood and reads lips very well. He was really used to managing well without an interpreter. They asked the interpreter to leave for the actual delivery. The interpreter was gracious about it and left them willingly. It's not that they wanted to be rude, but Melody really wanted her privacy. It turned out that really, they got along fine without an interpreter. In Russ's opinion, you really don't need one because a lot of what the nurses are talking about involves

*These summaries are offered in support of comprehension and are designed to ensure a general idea of the text, not an in-depth analysis with all of the details.*



# All in Due Time

## Perspectives on Childbirth from Deaf Parents—Disc 2

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### Written Summaries of ASL Texts

demonstration. For example, they could easily understand when the nurse was coaching Melody on her breathing. They were mostly giving instructions on physical behavior and Russ could figure it out as they went along. It was really fun.

One more note about the birth. The baby was born 8/12/99. Back to the number coincidences, Russ explains that he was born on 8/4. If you add 8 to 4, you get 12. Melody was born on 11/12 – once again 12 seems to be the recurring number in their lives. Their dog was born 8/3, and  $3 \times 4 = 12$ . And the mystery of the numbers doesn't stop there, but first the story of baby #2.

Of course they wanted to try to have a playmate for their daughter. Two years later, their son was born. Melody's second pregnancy was easier although she did experience morning sickness again. The doctor who delivered their first baby was a man. Melody wanted a female obgyn for this delivery. They found a female but unfortunately, she had the baby on a Saturday and the doctor on call was male, so she hasn't gotten to experience what it's like to work with a female doctor. The baby was born on Russ's birthday, August 4<sup>th</sup>. So the number mystery continues. November and August seem to be their lucky months. Now they (and all their friends) know that November is a very "interesting" month for them.

Their son's name is Rylan Blake Stein. His name has a story as well. Russ's father's name was Robert Bruce Stein. He passed away about three years ago from a heart attack. His father was only 56 when he died and he and Russ had been very close. They wanted to name the baby after his father in some way but thought the name Robert was too old fashioned (not to offend anyone out there who happens to be named Robert.) So they decided to use the initials RBS instead and that's how Rylan got his name.

Now that Rylan has the same birthday as Russ, Russ knows he'll never have the attention on his birthday again. Everyone will be focused on celebrating Rylan, which he deserves, but Russ knows not to expect to be the center of attention any more.

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