

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE AUCKLAND HOMEBIRTH ASSOCIATION
HELD AT PONSONBY COMMUNITY CENTRE, PONSONBY TERRACE AT 2pm
ON SUNDAY 17th APRIL 1983

APOLOGIES: Gillian McNicoll, Sue Paterson, Lynn Nicol, Brenda Hinton, Yvonne, John Watson, Barry Sharplin.

REPORTS ON THIS YEARS ACTIVITIES BY SUPPORT GROUPS

West Auckland - Main activities for the year were helping to organise the march down Queen Street, stalls in Henderson and Titirangi during Homebirth week, and two series of ante-natal classes of four meetings each.

North Shore - Because there is no midwife on the North Shore, the numbers attending ante-natal classes have fallen. However, the group is very enthusiastic and has been putting its energies into trying to find a midwife.

Auckland Central - Firstly, Ann appealed to more people to become involved in the Auckland Central Support Group. She felt that she had been involved for three years and was becoming stale and that the support person needed to be new and enthusiastic. They have also had to find a new venue which will be at the Youth Resources Centre, near ATI in Wellesley Street.

South Auckland - They have also had problems in that many prospective homebirth mothers have been unable to book with a midwife. Gillian leaves later this year and they have no midwife to replace her. For this reason, they now include in their ante-natal classes talks on positive natural birth in the hospital and have two midwives from Middlemore helping with this.

Waiheke - Rhonda Evans now lives on Waiheke and is hoping to do homebirths but needs the co-operation of a local doctor.

As a result of these reports, there was some discussion on the role of the Homebirth Assn in being involved in ante-natal classes for women who will have hospital births. One view was that rather than helping people to have better hospital births and making hospital birth a better experience, we need all our energy to fight for continued homebirths; while the other view was that some support group organisers didn't like to turn away prospective parents just because they couldn't get a booking with a midwife.

REPORT ON THE NEWSLETTER

Jo Bruce Smith reported on the Newsletter. It is printed four times a year. 600 copies of the latest newsletter printed at cost of \$240 (\$100 of which is for paper). To get it produced as a stapled magazine as had been suggested at committee meetings during the year would cost \$100 more if we typed it ourselves. However, it would also mean that we could accept advertising from acceptable sources and that could help offset the additional cost.

Jo also outlined the various jobs involved in producing the newsletter - Printing, collating (both requiring two people) and addressing and sorting the envelopes which required as many people as were available, and invited other people to become involved so that some of the regulars could have an occasional break.

HOME BIRTH - THE LEGAL SITUATION

Mary Nacey outlined the law relating to a woman's right to have a homebirth if she so desires. Under present legislation, every woman has the right to have a baby at home and if she has difficulty finding a domiciliary midwife, then the Medical Officer of Health is by law supposed to assist her find one, but in practice -

- 1) Dept of Health neither promotes nor assists midwives
- 2) the hours of work, responsibility and poor pay means that there is a grave shortage of midwives leading to many women being unable in practice to have the birth of their choice - an infringement on human rights. It is very important for all supporters of homebirth to write to MP's, Minister of Health, Director General of Health etc outlining these faults and asking what they intend to do. Replies to letters from Minister of Health and Director General will be collated by Barbara McFarlane.

STATISTICS

Deryn Cooper reported on the analysis made on statistics on domiciliary deliveries in New Zealand over the last seven years. Among these were the following: approx. 1/3 all homebirths were 1st births and 2.2% 4th or more baby.

Infant mortality 3.5 per 1000 compared to 12.14 per 1000 for hospital births in New Zealand.

Some discussion arose about the validity of these comparisons. Alison Copeland pointed out that the New Zealand hospital births included all peri-natal deaths including those that occurred prior to 37 weeks. She thought it would be better to compare our statistics with those of babies of 37+ weeks born in hospital. Joan talked about the difficulty in getting accurate statistics of hospital deliveries, but said that Holland and Finland, where deliveries are midwife orientated rather than obstetrician orientated, had much lower peri-natal death rates than New Zealand. Also that socio-economic factors were by far the greatest cause of prematurity and hence infant mortality.

MOTHER AND BABY AT HOME - THE EARLY DAYS

Joan Donley talked on the Maternity Services Commission Report and gave a summary of its findings and the reasons for them. These included:

- * Maternity Services Commission wants midwives to be transferred from Health Department to Hospital Boards authority and this would put them directly under the control of the obstetricians, who want to see them eliminated.

The growing homebirth movement threatens the O & G Society especially with the falling birth rate. The report based its conclusion on:

"That it cannot recommend domiciliary confinement" on specious statistics from the UK, where they had based their recommendations that all births should occur in hospital on the improved perinatal mortality figures in the UK in recent years. These improvements are due to improved maternal health and diet of mothers at risk - socio-economic factors rather than place of birth.

Joan's address will be in next newsletter.

The meeting then passed the motion, "That the Minister of Health be asked in parliament for statistics on causes of obstetric deaths in NZ hospitals". Joan Donley/Alison Jones. carried unanimously.

This question to be put to Aussie Malcolm by Michael Bassett as Shadow Minister of Health.

OBSTETRIC STANDARDS REVUE COMMITTEE

We need to make sure that it becomes a political issue at next elections. All members of Assn should write to MP's for their views. It is vitally important that midwives get increased pay.

Also we must research the proposed role of Area Health Boards re midwives payment. Joan thinks we could come up with an alternative scheme for paying them through being employed by a group of Doctors who support homebirth as Practice Midwives. Currently, Doctors can hire Practice Nurses who are paid by the Department of Health. The Practice Midwives would have to have flexible hours but could also be involved in ante-natal checks.

The meeting felt that it was very important that:

- we stall the implimentation of Maternity Services Report
- we bring greater publicity to the fact that the midwives have been granted a 17% pay rise but that Aussie Malcolm hasn't approved it.
- That we prevent if possible midwives coming under jurisdiction of hospital boards.

Shaneen proposed that we should take more direct political action on the midwives pay and suggested picketting Aussie Malcolm's Auckland house. Considerable discussion on pros and cons of such action. A subcommittee is to investigate this proposal.

People who offered to be on this subcommittee:

Daphne, Jo, Mary, Sian, Carolyn, Shaneen (765-514), Judy, Sue, Julie Foster (654-100), Wendy (602-453), Alison Riley (767-381), David Gibbons (278-7648).

TREASURERS REPORT

1982-83 year. (11 months 1 May 1982 - 31 March 1983)

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Total	\$3,703.75	Total	\$3,717.82
Sub/Reg	2,717.00	Newsletter	658.31
Donations	604.20	S/groups	576.97
Sundry (Badges, T-Shirt, Book)	382.55	Phone/Post/s	514.77
	<hr/>	Books	448.76
	3,703.75	National levy	380.00
		Badges/Posters	362.23
		General exp.	292.66
		Travel expen.	201.00
		Napsac	139.34
		Ads	143.78
			<hr/>
			3,717.82

Therefore, expenditure was \$14.07 more than income. Cash book balance for new year \$1,612.84. Sue Bretherton/Joan Donley, carried. Vote of thanks to treasurer. Mary.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE MAY 7 & 8 AGENDA

SATURDAY - reports from all branches
- hope to build up efficient network

SUNDAY - AGM in morning
- Discussions in the afternoon

Auckland has three remits:-

1st Remit

"That there be no National Newsletter but instead to maintain regular communication each branch send each other branch its newsletter and in addition that there should be a special conference newsletter after each conference produced by the host branch." Deryn/Joan Passed unanimously

2nd Remit

"That we amend clauses 5a & b so that no capitation is paid." Deryn/Sue Passed unanimously

3rd Remit

"The role of National spokesperson is to maintain the vital role of co-ordinating lobbyist in Wellington to speak out in accordance with the philosophy of the Home Birth Assn." Deryn/Alison Passed unanimously.

JUDY LARKIN - CHILDBIRTH TRUST

Judy spoke on the proposed Childbirth Trust - its functions and the way it would operate which is to provide information and support for women in childbirth etc. She needs the help of three more people to get it going. Anyone interested contact Judy, Phone 602-301.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following officers were elected:-

Treasurer Carolyn Mitchell
Secretary Brenda Hinton
President ,..... Ann Ireland

Lists were circulated during the meeting to get names of people prepared to be on the committee, help with the newsletter and support groups.

Meeting closed 4.30pm.

Minutes recorded by Sue Bretherton.
