



EARTHA MAY
Phys-ed graduate
By KAY WILSON
Herald Correspondent
HORNBY - Congratulations to Eartha May of Hornby who received her bachelor's degree from McMaster University in the convocation exercises May 31, majoring in physical education.
She will continue her education at teacher's college in St. Catharines.

Spina Bifida Week

Family teaches on 'Against the Odds'

Herald Staff
When Darlow and David Balsille moved to southern Ontario three years ago after living in Sudbury, they thought it was time to get involved.
When their son Tom, now 11 years old, was diagnosed as having spina bifida, there was no local chapter to turn to. In Sudbury there was no one to converse with, Mrs. Balsille said.
In fact, it wasn't until 1971 that an association in Ontario was formed where parents could join together and talk about the crippling birth defect.
Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association of Ontario has come a long way in the past 14 years.

Spina Bifida Week has now been declared for the period June 10-16.
The Balsille parents have played a key role in helping the association develop. David has been president of the organization since 1984 and his term will continue until 1986.
Darlow is co-ordinator of a program called Parent to Parent which links families together who can learn by each others experience with spina bifida.
Even Tom has become involved in teaching the community about his handicap. He and his mother can be seen June 20 at 5:30 on Halton Cable talking about spina bifida on the program Against the Odds.

Spina bifida is the second most common birth defect in Canada. With this type of defect, vertebrae which usually protect the spinal cord are divided and this causes nerve damage.
The end result is paralysis and loss of sensation in the lower portion of the body. Lack of bladder control presents dangers of infection and back pressure on the kidneys.
The risk of death has decreased considerably and now spina bifida children in over 90 per cent of cases can look forward to living normal, productive lives.
The aims of the Ontario association are to find the causes of spina

bifida and provide better education.
Another stated objective is to educate the public sector, enhance the quality of life for the family and achieve growth in the association.
Bill 82 which is in its implementation year for schools calls for a specially trained person to help the handicapped in their day to day needs at the school.
Previous to this, when Tom needed help at St. Francis of Assisi, a secretary or staff member would have to leave their duties.
The Grade 5 student is an active member of the Georgetown 5th Scout Group and he is on the Variety Village athletic

team as a wheelchair racer.
Through the years Tom's family have made some adjustments in their daily routines.
Sometimes two or three days a week are spent for therapy sessions plus trips to clinics, and to see doctors.
It's also important to keep up with the latest technology and have braces and splints checked or replaced regularly, Mrs. Balsille said.
Tom Balsille is an avid Scout with the 5th Georgetown Troop. Here, he's seen ready for the weekend camp outing which started Friday night. The Weber Street resident recently talked about spina bifida on Halton Cable's Against The Odds. (Herald photo)

There are three families in Georgetown that talk together about spina bifida but Mrs. Balsille said on a per capita basis, there should be more families affected.
Awareness of the birth defect has been on the increase thanks to educational kits provided by the association. The popular puppet show for kids on handicapped children called Kids on The Block now has a spina bifida character, Mrs. Balsille said.



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SECTION 8, THE HERALD, Wednesday, June 12, 1985 - Page 1



Christopher, 4, and Jeremy, 2½ are anxiously waiting for the new child soon to be arriving in their household. Mother Susan Day believes the bonding among family members should occur right away so no one feels left out in the birthing process. (Herald photo)

'Time for the whole family'

Mom wants sibling visits

By ANI PEDERIAN
Herald Staff
Corry Carter has a dilemma.
She'd really like to have her baby, due the end of August at Georgetown Memorial Hospital.
However, Corry is at odds with the hospital's maternity ward policies. That's why she's alternating pre-natal visits between a Toronto obstetrician and Georgetown obstetrician Dr. J.A. Ford.
Mrs. Carter would like her 3½ year old son Ryan to be able to visit her after the new baby is born.
Hospital policy doesn't allow sibling visits unless children are 12 or older.
Mrs. Carter said she was told she could go out to the front lobby to visit her son, but that the baby isn't allowed to go with her because there'd be "too many germs" there.
As for her son coming to visit her in her room, she was told, "you have to consider your roommate's rights," Mrs. Carter said.
"I feel that birth is the time for the whole family to be together," she said. Assuming she hasn't been drugged and

bring it (hospital policy) up to the 1980s," she concluded.
Mrs. Carter has written hospital administrator Fred Morris requesting these changes, and received a reply from him.
Mr. Morris indicates while sibling visiting may be permitted in the future, "it is highly unlikely that 24-hour rooming-in will be approved."
He says the policies of the obstetrical facilities have been stretched to the limit and says current policies are for the benefit and protection of hospital patients.
Mother-to-be Susan Day is expecting her third child in September. She has the same concerns as Mrs. Carter.
"I have a very fast labor. My last labor was only two hours," the

Georgetown woman said. "If there's a half hour, or an hour drive involved, that's cutting it fine."
Mrs. Day said she's written two letters to Mr. Morris and has received one reply so far.
Continued on page B3

Director of nursing Elizabeth Wicklund said the baby is welcome in the nursery.
She said although there usually isn't 24-hour rooming in of babies at Milton District Hospital, it's mainly because there hasn't been a request for it.
"We probably would if someone requested it," Mrs. Wicklund said.
She said the hospital allows brothers and sisters of the newborn to visit and see the baby.
Although the hospital hasn't run into it, the mother can have others in the labor room besides her husband, like a coach or her mom, Mrs. Wicklund said.
"We look at each case as it comes," she said.
About 300 babies are born yearly at Milton District Hospital.

GUELPH
At Guelph General Hospital where many Acton moms go, there's 24-hour rooming in of the baby.
Assistant director of nursing Helen Watson said after birth the newborn is assessed and the mom's condition established. If she's stable and the baby is okay, the newborn is settled into the mom's room.
"We don't want to tax the mother if she's not feeling good," Ms. Watson said.
Brothers and sisters are allowed to visit with the mom and newborn.
"We just ask that the kids don't come in with anything infectious," Ms. Watson said.
The hospital delivers 1,500 babies annually and that's going up each year.

ETOBICOKE
Within four hours of the birth, once the baby has been checked over and found to be okay, and the mom can handle it, rooming in of the newborn starts at Queensway Hospital in Etobicoke.
Obstetrics supervisor Joan Hoare said the hospital gets moms from Georgetown in its delivery rooms. About 1,300 babies are born annually at the hospital.
Queensway Hospital allows 24-hour rooming in if the mother wants it.
As well, the hospital allows sibling visits. "They're allowed to go right into the room and hold the baby," Mrs. Hoare said, after they wash their hands and put on gownsies.

Survey shows

Area hospitals have 24 hour rooming in for newborns

By ANI PEDERIAN
Herald Staff
What kind of maternity ward policies do area hospitals have, compared to those at Georgetown District Memorial Hospital?
PEEL MEMORIAL
At Peel Memorial Hospital, maternal care supervisor Blondina Matheson said brothers and sisters of the newborn are allowed to visit mom and the new baby.
"They (siblings) can cuddle and hold the baby if they want to," Mrs. Matheson said. "It keep youngsters as part of the family unit very early on, so they don't feel isolated."
However, the hospital encourages parents not to have their children visiting for a long time because they can get "antsy".
The maternity wing has no private rooms so moms who want to have 24-hour rooming in of their newborn must first get the okay from their roommate, Mrs. Matheson said.
She said the hospital encourages moms to have 24-hour rooming in. It's on the understanding that if the baby gets fussy in the middle of the night moms can always have them trundled off to the nursery.
"We try to get them involved so it's not as big of a shock when they get home," Mrs. Matheson chuckled. "We think it's important for them to get involved in the care as much as they can handle."
Asked if Peel Memorial has a 24 hour observation period of newborns immediately following birth, as does Georgetown Memorial Hospital, Mrs. Matheson said no.
She said that after the baby is born, the parents are left alone with it for about an hour or so, then, while the mom is getting settled into her room, nurses take the baby to weigh, measure, and take its temperature.
After that's all done, the baby comes back to the parents.
Labor coaches have been present during deliveries, but it's not common, she said.
Last year, the hospital delivered 2,500 babies, with an average of 200 a month.
"We get some moms from Halton Hills, certainly," Mrs. Matheson said. She said most were from Georgetown and not as many from Acton.

MILTON
Milton District Hospital also doesn't have a 24-hour observation period for the baby.



Corry Carter wants a more open approach to seeing her newborn. She is hoping the Georgetown hospital will change their minds about some of their maternity policies. Here she's seen with her son Ryan, 3. (Herald photo)

In Georgetown
Hospital staff observe babies to help mother

By ANI PEDERIAN
Herald Staff
Although Georgetown District Memorial Hospital will be the first choice of most pregnant women in Halton Hills, it may not be the final choice for where to deliver their baby.
Reasons like who is their doctor and which hospital is the doctor affiliated with often determine where pregnant women will have their babies.
Many families still go to their long-time and trusted doctors in another community although they now live in Halton Hills.
For some women, the hospital's maternity ward policies will influence their decision on where to go through the trying hours of labor and delivery.
At Georgetown Memorial Hospital, they deliver between 350 and 375 babies annually, director of nursing L.A. Pace said.
"That figure has been going up increasingly

because of the population (increases)," she said.
The hospital has two labor rooms, each with two beds in them. Usually there are four to seven mothers in the hospital's obstetrics wing, Mrs. Pace said.
"There have been times, about two times a year, when we have more than that," she said.
The hospital allows husbands to be in the delivery and labor rooms with their wives.
"Things have changed a great deal," Mrs. Pace chuckled remembering how she got dropped off at the hospital door when she was due with her children. "Those were the days when husbands weren't allowed to do it and second of all, they didn't want to be there."
Giving birth has become a family affair and many husbands now take part in pre-natal classes and give their wives support in the delivery room.
If a husband hasn't

taken pre-natal classes with his wife, he isn't allowed in the delivery room, Mrs. Pace said.
They're also not allowed in if their wife is having a cesarean section and is under general anesthesia. However, if she's only had an epidural, which is a needle in the spine to anesthetise from the waist down, the husband can be in the operating room.
Usually it's just the husband who goes in the delivery room, but occasionally it can be a mother. However, the hospital limits attendance to one person.
After the delivery, the baby goes to the nursery where it spends the next 24 hours. There, it's under observation, but it's brought to the mother for feedings if the mother is breastfeeding.
"Newborns are very difficult," Mrs. Pace explained. "They can have a lot of mucus on which they can choke. A new mother is not always feeling up to

Continued on page B3

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