

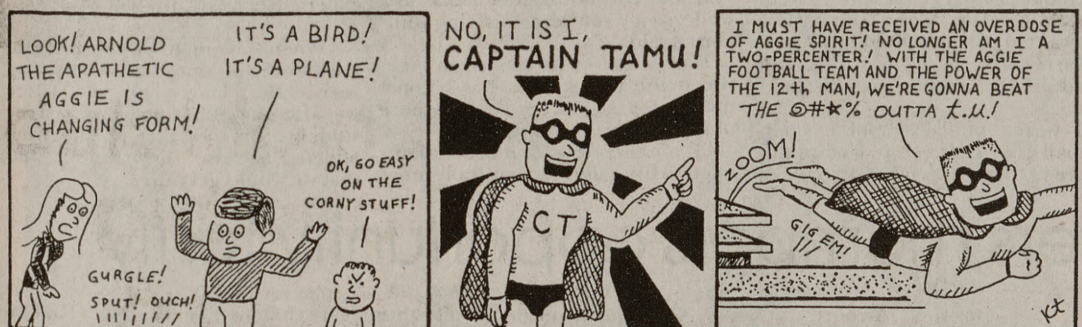
Warped

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Some local women skip hospital, seek midwives for baby delivery

By LEN BRILEY Reporter

After considering her options, Leone Hines, 24, rejected the clinical, impersonal atmosphere of a hospital delivery room and decided to have her first child delivered by a midwife at home...

Hines says, "They don't do a slop job. It's very professional." Before accepting a patient, Paulson, who is a licensed vocational nurse, says she compiles a prenatal profile on the expectant mother.

Paulson says she has three and a half years of experience as a midwife. Rascher says she has been a midwife for seven years, after she apprenticed under a doctor and another midwife.

At home, Hines, a Texas A&M graduate student, was steadied by the presence of her husband, who chose to cut his newborn son's umbilical cord.

Tracey Wilkinson, 18, who recently gave birth with the help of a midwife, says, "The hospital sometimes leaves you during labor. My midwife was always there (during labor). When my back hurt, she was there to rub it."

Many women also choose delivery by a midwife because of affordability, although middle-income patients constitute almost one-half of Paulson's patients, she says.

She is just one of an increasing number of Bryan-College Station area women who are finding the services of a midwife more attractive than a hospital delivery.

Outside the Mexican-American community, the personalized assistance offered by a midwife also influences a woman's choice.

Based on a three-day visit, a patient at St. Joseph will spend an average of \$1,500 for delivery, varying for the type of treatment received. Those prices do not include prenatal checkups before checking into the hospital.

In fact, the number of home deliveries by midwives in Bryan and College Station rose from 19 in 1983 to 49 in 1984, according to the College Station city secretary, who keeps birth records for both cities.

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Paulson says she charges \$295 plus \$15 for each prenatal visit. Hines says she spent \$320, including prenatal visits and delivery, for Rascher's services.

When midwife Donna Ruscher arrived in the Bryan-College Station area there were three to five midwife deliveries a month, she said. Now there are almost eight a month, two or three of which are by A&M students, she says.

Hines says, "During labor and delivery, Donna (Rascher) stayed with me from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m."

Both Wilkinson and Hines say they were referred to the services of their midwives by friends who used one.

Leslie Paulson, Ruscher's partner, says business has more than doubled during the three and a half years she

she says, they are more likely to choose delivery by a midwife because they say it makes them feel more comfortable.

She also says that midwives realize the importance of a birth to the woman.

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