

## Saor Odysseus ~ Birth Story

**Saturday, August 14, 2010** ~ I was thirteen days past my due date but hadn't had one contraction. I did several loads of laundry, cleaned the kitchen floor, walked around the mall (it was a cloudy rainy day) but nothing was working. I went to bed around 8:30 tired and depressed. I knew labor would come soon but I was ready, and I didn't want to go back to work on Monday. I was so tired of telling people, "Yes, I'm still here"; "No, they are not scheduling an inducement for me"; "Yes, the baby is fine".....

**Sunday, August 15, 2010** ~ I was awakened a few minutes after midnight by a contraction, I laid in bed, quietly, waiting to see if there would be another.... quickly there was. I got up and told Dan (who was awake and on the computer) then I went back to bed. It was hard to fall back asleep because the contractions were strong enough to wake me up and frequent enough that I couldn't quite fall asleep in between. By 1:30 I decided to sit up and time the contractions, they were every two to three minutes and lasting from forty-five to sixty seconds; however, I knew I knew I was making slow progress because the pain of the contractions was all in my uterus and not in my cervix yet. After unsuccessfully trying to get back to sleep for a while longer, I decided to get up and move around. I prepped the coffee pot and tea kettle for my midwives, made a list of things I wanted Dan to run to Wawa for, picked up the living room and continued working through the contractions. At 2:30 I woke Dan up (who had been asleep for, maybe, one hour, poor guy) and asked him to run to Wawa. When he got back we sat downstairs, put on Alice in Wonderland to give us a distraction, laid out a few blankets on the floor and I continued to work through the contractions. The entire night they stayed around two to three minutes apart and lasting close to sixty seconds but I could still feel they weren't effective enough. Throughout the night I was feeling nauseous with each contraction, I got sick only twice but was completely turned off to food. I did sip at water and Gatorade when Dan offered but generally I just sat on the floor trying different positions with each contraction and gripping Dan's hand throughout them. Around sunrise I started to feel light-headed and I began to get a little nervous about the nausea and this new symptom. I didn't want to wake up Karen and Katie (my midwives) too early for something that could be normal so Dan and I decided that if I these symptoms hadn't passed by 6:30 we would call even if I still didn't feel progression. At 6:30 I called and talked to Karen, told her when labor started, described the contractions and the other symptoms, told her I knew I wasn't far along but I would like her and Katie to come over. They arrived together in less than an hour. Cadan was still asleep upstairs so they set up in the dining room and we planned on moving upstairs once Cadan woke up. After talking to me for a few minutes and taking some notes Katie and Karen thought I really needed to eat and rest and they made that clear to me. I was still very nauseous and don't remember eating anything but I did try to lie down on the living room floor in between contractions (hardwood floors, even with blankets, are not conducive to rest). As labor progressed I began to lose sense of time, I don't know what time it was but it wasn't long after the midwives arrived when Cadan woke up. Dan went upstairs

with him, helped him get dressed and come down for breakfast. Then I made my way upstairs, with Katie's help, and lay down on my bed. They checked me for the first time and, not to my surprise, I was only about four centimeters but Karen said she had a feeling the rest of the way would go quickly for me. They helped me lay on my left side, propped with pillows and blankets, which was the most comfortable position I found, then they turned out the light and encouraged me to rest as much as I could. By that time the contractions seemed much less in frequency but much stronger in intensity so I was able to rest in between them.

While I was resting Dan and Cadan played. Cadan was aware of what was going on and nervous for me a couple times but Dan was able to keep him calm and distracted. Although I remember hearing them play while I rested I don't remember anything about what I heard.

Katie occasionally came in quietly to check on me and at one point she made the suggestion that changed the tide of my labor. She suggested that I try to relax a bit more through my contractions. When she brought that to my attention I recognized that with each contraction I was tensing up for them, as if to stand strong against the crashing wave. So I made an effort that when I felt a contraction coming I relaxed every muscle in my body from my fingers to my toes. I remember following my muscles down my body, relaxing my neck, shoulders, arms, fingers, back, etc. all the way to my toes throughout each contraction. Instead of standing strong against the wave I began to be washed away with it. During the first contraction after that, I could feel my cervix opening! For the first time this whole labor I knew I was making good progress. Katie continued to quietly come and go checking on me and offering me drinks of Gatorade. At one point I remember telling her that I believed my water was about to break because I began feeling pushes just at the end of my contractions and that's when my water broke with Cadan's birth. I remember three strong contractions that my body pushed at the end of each and I could feel, what I thought was, the water bag emerging. It was quite uncomfortable although not painful and I wondered how long it was going to take to break so we could begin pushing this baby! Katie walked around to check on me and with a calm but excited voice she said Kristi! Your baby's head is coming out! At that moment I knew this delivery was going to be cake, if I had gotten that far without realizing it I knew I'd be fine for the rest. Katie got Karen and someone asked if Dan wanted to be there, then they got Dan and Cadan who situated themselves sitting behind my head. I remember hearing Dan and Cadan converse but Cadan never seemed upset and never talked above a whisper. Karen supported my right leg while Katie supported Saor's head and in two more pushes he was born. They immediately laid Saor on my chest and Cadan quickly climbed up on the bed next to me to see him closer. Cadan held Saor's hand (which he later told us was "slimy") and when Saor began crying Cadan sang Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star to him. After the delivery I asked if my water ever broke, Katie told me that Karen broke it after Saor's head was born in order for them to move the umbilical cord; he came first then the water.

In the end Saor's delivery was 9 total hours from first contraction. He was born at 9:16 am on Sunday, August 15, 2010. He weighed 7lbs even and was 19" long.

