their birth. The findings provide support for the idea of birth preparation and education occurring throughout pregnancy and describe the ways in which women planning to give birth at home develop confidence, plan for support, and make decisions related to the particulars of the labor and birth. Implications of these findings for childbirth education are explored.

In this issue's "Tools for Teaching" column, "What Once Was Old Is New Again," Barbara A. Hotelling suggests that although recently certified Lamaze childbirth educators beginning their teaching careers may have learned of the changes in birth practices over the past 50 years, they may not have heard the personal stories about the locations and conditions in which Lamaze educators first taught. In this column, five childbirth educators share their memories of the birthing climate, teaching strategies, class populations, and other aspects of Lamaze childbirth education 50 years ago and reflect on how the "old ways" compare with today's classes. Their stories provide an important, historical perspective to build on the past and improve future educational opportunities for expectant women and their families and illustrate Lamaze's ongoing efforts to promote natural, safe, and healthy birth practices.

In celebration of Lamaze International's 50th anniversary, reviewers in this issue's "Media Reviews"

column—coordinated by Teri Shilling and Stacie Bingham—share their thoughts on some classic Lamaze resource materials and how their content relates to today's viewpoints on birth and childbirth education. Although some of the material may be outdated, all of the resources offer timeless insights as well as a unique view on the history of childbirth education. Two beloved films that were released during the days when Lamaze International was first known as the American Society for Psychoprophylaxis in Obstetrics are reviewed: *The Story of Eric and Nan's Class*. Marjorie Karmel's seminal book, *Thank You, Dr. Lamaze*, first published in 1959, is also revisited by two separate reviewers who agree that Karmel paved the way toward natural, safe, and healthy birth practices in the United States. Finally, another reviewer discusses Dr. Irwin Chabon's book, *Awake and Aware* (1969), and rediscovers important lessons to be learned from the "old" ways of preparing women for birth.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A Call to Come Together: Why It Matters and Why It Works

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ABSTRACT

This letter to the editor is in response to Barbara Hotelling's column, "Tools for Teaching – The Power of Numbers: Transforming Birth Through Collaborations," published in the Volume 19, Number 2 (Spring 2010) issue of *The Journal of Perinatal Education*. Hotelling's brief overview of the history of birth activism in the United States and of current collaborations among diverse groups and individuals provides inspiration to continue efforts that improve maternity care and promote natural, safe, and healthy childbirth practices.

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(Letter to the Editor – Continued from page 3)

In her column, “Tools for Teaching – The Power of Numbers: Transforming Birth Through Collaborations,” published in the 2010 spring issue of *The Journal of Perinatal Education* (Volume 19, Number 2), Barbara Hotelling gives us a welcome whirlwind tour through the history of birth activism in the United States and a fine accounting and characterization of the earliest nascent birth groups, linking them in purpose even as they sat apart as competitors. Hotelling brings us forward to the creation of the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS), which, at this remove, surely looks as though it was always meant to be. She recounts how common purpose melted the “walls of exclusivity” between groups, how mutual respect grew, and how the increasingly jarring acknowledgment that birthing women need a voice motivated groups to collaborate. She binds us up in her examination of the ultimate common purpose of all birth associations: to make birth safer, more “humane,” and more satisfying for women. With the efforts of such organizations as CIMS and this year’s joint celebration of the 50th anniversaries of Lamaze International and the International Childbirth Education Association at their upcoming “Mega Conference” as examples of the possible, Hotelling calls us with a powerful voice to continue to collaborate and coalesce, with evidence-based maternity care giving weight to her words and purpose to our future efforts.

Hotelling’s article gave me a welcome look back to the years when I fought to give birth to my children without intervention, finding support in the Lamaze education that my monitrices gave. I am grateful for this journey back and for this look forward to the future of birth . . . and especially for Hotelling’s rousing, inspiring call to us all to focus on the “power of working together.” As a birth activist, I have been intent on the women right in front of me, in my classes and when I am with them in labor, trying to change the childbirth experience one woman at a time. Hotelling’s article is a good reminder that forming even small alliances and working together for change is like a gathering wave, and I feel called upon to reset some priorities and rededicate myself to supporting CIMS and its remarkable offspring, *The Birth Survey* (see www.thebirthsurvey.com).

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