Funny Names

Deb Gauldin, RN, PMS

ABSTRACT

In this column, a childbirth educator recalls Sharron Humenick's influence as the former editor of *The Journal of Perinatal Education* and her belief in the power of humor. The author also takes an amusing look at names parents choose for their children, one of Sharron Humenick's favorite humorous topics.

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Everyone laughed at a story about a pregnant woman at a cocktail party declining a vegetable tray for fear she would consume an unsafe amount of folic acid. Turns out the woman turning away broccoli and dip was puffing on a cigarette and sipping a martini. "If I'd only had a 'No Smoking' sign!" said Sharron Humenick to those of us gathered at the table and speculating about how much folic acid was in an olive. "I wish I knew someone who could draw a cartoon of that woman," she continued. Sharron made that offhanded comment during a preconference dinner where we both made presentations. Very late that night, I slipped a cartoon under the door of her hotel room. I never imagined the next morning would bring an enthusiastic invitation from Sharron to write an ongoing humor column for *The Journal of Perinatal Education*.

In addition to her professional accomplishments and esteem as an author and academician, Sharron will be fondly remembered for her good nature and complete appreciation of and belief in the power of humor and laughter.

Sharron's first idea for my humor column, suggested over a decade ago, was a true story about a child whose mother named him "Meconium." It seems, at the time of the baby's birth, the doctor declared, "We have meconium here." Apparently, the family felt "meconium" had a nice ring to it, and it stuck. (Pun intended). Accompanying the column was a cartoon of a child on his first day of school. It depicted the child glancing back over his shoulder and wearing a backpack boldly labeled with his name, Meconium.

Ten years later, I still hear from readers who share interesting baby names. There are the twin boys in Georgia whose names sound like dishes served after a tonsillectomy or funeral. Their names are pronounced "Or-ANJ-ello" and "Yell-OWNJ-ello." Of course, there are the many children with names pronounced "No-NAW-mee" and "Fee-MALL-ee," taken straight from the crib card or ID bracelet.

For more on the life and legacy of Sharron Humenick, see Wendy Budin's "In This Issue" column on pages 1–3 of this journal issue and Francine Nichols's "A Tribute to Sharron Humenick: 1937–2006" on pages 6–8.

Recently, a clinic nurse told of stepping into the waiting room and calling out for a patient. “Liam?” she inquired and waited. She tried again. “Liam?” Still no response. She tried “Lim” and “Leah,” but no one answered. Fifteen minutes later, a woman approached the desk wondering why her child had yet to be seen by the doctor. “His name?” the nurse queried. “Yum,” replied the woman. “Yum?” the nurse repeated. “Yes, Yum,” the mother said, more agitated. It turned out the child’s name was William. His family had dropped the W-I-L and called him Liam (Yum) for short!

I wish I had told Sharron how much I appreciated her one more time. Her passing reminds me to thank you for taking a few minutes from your busy lives and serious jobs to share a chuckle. I deeply appreciate all of your story and idea submissions and the delightful invitations to visit your communities. Contact me any time.

I think a fitting close for this column is to share a name I believe Sharron would have particularly enjoyed. A neonatal nurse told me that, somewhere, there is a child who will one day register for kindergarten with the following, very instructive name:

First name: Nosmo.

Middle name: King.

DEB GAULDIN is a childbirth educator who travels nationally presenting keynotes and workshops. Her CDs and tapes contain humor and songs about pregnancy, childbirth, and the adjustment to parenthood. For booking information or to purchase Deb’s recordings, call 800-682-2347 or visit her Web site (www.debgauldin.com).

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