

The names people play

There is one thing that I will be forever grateful for until my dying days: that my brother was born first.

Oh sure, he got all the perks of being the big brother—the bigger bedroom, the first to get a car and the inherent right to be able to pick on his younger sibling.

(He once tried to give me a Javex milkshake but my mother caught him in the nick of time.)

But, by being the first born, he was the one to get stuck with the bad name—Harry. Do you notice very few kids are called Harry anymore? There's a reason for that. It's cruel.

How many jokes about hair and hairiness do you think a kid named Harry has to endure all his life?

To make matters worse, my father insisted my brother also had to carry the name of my dad's favourite uncle... McLatchie.

Harry McLatchie McGhie. Has a wonderful ring to it, doesn't it? The first name resembles a body condition while the second could be the medical term for a type of fungus.

("Don't get too close to him, Bill. He's got a bad case of McLatchie.")

I got to thinking about names the other day when I noticed the name of young person in this newspaper. The name was simple enough, but the way it was spelled was so unusual I couldn't help but feel sorry for this kid. After all, for the rest of his life whenever he has to give his name to someone for a passport, medical card, driver's licence or any of the other million documents we fill out in our lives, he's going to have to slowly spell his name to ensure it's spelled correctly and then hear, "Oh, that's different."

While we're on the subject, if by chance you've lost the roll of the dice in the genealogy lottery and are living with a last name like Bushyhead, don't compound the prob-

THIS
'N
THAT



John McGhie

lem by naming your kid Bobby. Bobby Bushyhead. Pick something that doesn't roll off the tongue so easily. As well, don't make things worse by being cute and giving your kid a first name like Spike. Spike Bushyhead. If you do this to your child, you should be prepared to sleep with one eye open all your life.

Furthermore, can someone explain to me why some names have all but disappeared? When was the last time you met a young person named Archie, Hortence, Agnes, Edith or Walter? Conversely, when was the last time you met a senior citizen named Britney, Brooke, Tyler, Skyler or Brandi? Just think, 50 years from now you'll be able to walk into a seniors' centre and catch Bambi, Gemma, Candy and Summer playing cribbage. Hard to picture, isn't it?

About 30 years ago the late rock musician Frank Zappa named his kids Moon Unit and Dweezil, names that are not that strange when compared to some of today's monickers. Not surprisingly, both have chosen to go by other names.

People, please, your child isn't a vanity licence plate. Give him/her a name they can live with and, for God's sake, spell it correctly.

They'll be forever grateful.

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