



Lisa Finn-Graznak

A labor in print

What's black-and-white and hurts all over? A newspaper column in labor. Or, should I say, columnist.

By the time you read this, I will have given birth, because as I type this very word, I'm having one big hard contraaaaccctionnnn.

You might think it strange a woman in my condition is seated calmly at her computer while her "anxious" husband pops his head in and out of the room every two minutes asking, "How far apart now?" The answer to that is about 20 minutes. And, as far as I'm concerned, I might as well be productive.

I mean, I could be standing around, pacing the floor, worrying about the baby, the birth, what my hair will look like in the photos and whether or not the names we've chosen will scar the child for life.

Instead, I thought it would be a great idea to see what labor would look like in print. While everyone these days is furiously videotaping the blessed event, I'm not really keen on huffing and puffing my way into the family archives. I think good old-fashioned newsprint is a much more dignified approach to documentation.

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Anyway, pregnancy is supposed to be a time of intense creativity, when some women have used their nine months to write novels or paint works of art. In fact, I have completed a few masterpieces myself. I wonder if anyone at the Smithsonian would be interested in how creatively I fixed the toilet seat using only Super Glue, a very big hammer and only one semi-rude swear word? Or, how about the really artistic way I alphabetized all the spices and condiments during one of my neurotic nesting periods?

7:32, 7:38, 7:44, 7:50 ... Wow, six minutes apart. Now things are starting to get a little more fun around here. The contractions actually are coming more often than the paranoid husband. I wonder how long I can continue to write in full sentences and make seennnssee.

What is my point? Well, I am determined to present a better, stronger image of a laboring woman than that typically portrayed by Hollywood. You know, she's perfectly fine one minute then struck with an enormous, paralyzing pain that eventually finds her screaming her way to a back-seat birth in a taxicab. What a load of you-know-what, enough to fill all the diapers I'll be changing in the next couple of years.

I'm here to say there are a whole lot of us decent, laboring women out there who are perfectly level-headed during our contractions. We're tired of being discriminated against. We can fix toilets, write columns and drive our husbands completely mad with our complacency.

Nothing like a few creative contractions. Yeah, as soon as I finish here, I'm going to start a novel. At this rate, I'll bet I can finish the first chapter in no time. Or, maybe nooooootttt ...

Lisa Finn-Graznak's column runs each Tuesday in the Lifestyle section. Address all correspondence to her in care of the Daily Chronicle, 1586 Barber Greene Road, DeKalb, IL 60115.