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## Naming Hurricanes

By Edward Vella

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Have you ever wondered how hurricanes are named ? This is what we intend to find out with research on the conventions used now and those adopted and discarded through the years of weather watching.

In the old times, hurricanes were given a saint's name, depending upon which saint's feast day did the hurricane happen on. Just before the second world war, another system was introduced that named hurricanes with latitude-longitude positions. However, it proved to be a bit of a problem when communicating because people's names were much easier to comprehend and remember.

Surprisingly, the object that most influenced modern naming conventions is the 1941 fictional novel by George Stewart called Storm. In fact right after its release, weather stations started naming hurricanes after women. The book narrates the exploit of a storm and its victims during its twelve day course after its touchdown inside California. At the start of the story we meet a meteorologist that has a thing of naming storms after women, which he does because it is the only way that helps him to process his job's information. Maria is the name that he gives to the storm in this book.

Ten years after a new proposal started being used which named hurricanes by using a phonetic alphabet (Able, Baker, Charlie) thinking that it would make communications easier, just like with radio. This proved to be also too confusing, so using female names was readopted within two years.

It was in 1978 which finally set the naming method as it is today, which includes people's names from both genders. The names being used, are designated at international meetings of the World Meteorological Organization. These names have an English, French, Spanish, and Dutch origin since hurricanes hit different regions from around the globe and are tracked by the public and weather services of many countries.

The Tropical Prediction Center in Miami, FL keeps a constant watch on oceanic storm-breeding grounds. Once a system with counterclockwise circulation and wind speeds of 39 mph or greater is identified, the Center gives the storm a name from the list for the current year. The letters Q, U, X, Y, and Z are not included because of the scarcity of names beginning with those letters. Names

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associated with storms that have caused significant death and/or damage are usually retired from the list.

For a list of allocated hurricane names visit <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/aboutnames.shtml>.

One final note on the origin of the word hurricane itself. The native Caribs lived in the Yucatan region and worshipped their God of storms which was named Hurican. The Mayans of Guatemala also worshiped Hurican, for them he was the God of the sky and creator of storms. When the region was invaded by the Spanish, violent storms started to be named huracans. Since this type of storm does not occur in Europe, it is after contact with this region that the English finally adopted the hurricane word in their vocabulary.

Edward Vella has been developing and distributing software since 1987. Ten years later he started distribution through the internet. Seeing the positive response for his program named Personaemicon, he began research on people's first names and built a website where he now publishes his articles. This website, called Personaemicon Online, can be found at <http://www.pantera-designs.com/pnec/pneconline.htm>

## **Godparents And The Naming Of A Baby**

**By Jackie Kent**

Remember Cinderella's industrious little 'fairy' Godmother who swept her away from her wicked stepmother, in a pumpkin horse carriage to meet her prince charming? Of course you do. You also remember Marlon Brando, silent and sinister, Mario Puzo's Godfather. The term God 'parent', therefore you see, ranges over a plethora of meanings and indications. Often therefore it is seen as a rather confusing term by new parents.

The God parents have been a traditional a part of the naming ceremony. But whether the term itself is appropriate to be associated with the event remains a point of much disagreement amongst people.

Some argue that the term Godparents is inexorably linked to religious christenings and baptisms, usually sacrosanct events which are viewed as far more significant than an ordinary Naming Ceremony. The word 'God' apparently enlivens in people a feeling of religion, which can be a burden. They thus started trying to replace the word God with far 'simpler' words for the purpose. Everything from the term 'Guideparents' to 'Guardparents' to 'mentor' and 'Sponsors' have been known to be used recently. As the Naming Ceremony itself becomes more popular far more such names are expected to rise up.

Irrespective of what you call them however the primary duty of the 'Godparents' is to take care of the child in case some unfortunate event claims the parents.

The Naming Ceremony and the selection of the Godparent is of course a completely secular celebration and is in no way linked to the ceremonies held in order to induct individuals into a certain

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religion. Nor is the event a precursor of a possible baptism or christening. It is simply an event marking the arrival of a new member of the family which is attended by everyone who belongs to the family as a whole.

The Naming Ceremony therefore is an event marking a welcome of sorts; it's a way of inviting the individual into the world, into society.

Jackie Kent is an author and mother. See more articles at



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