

BABY ALERT

Wednesday starts like any other Wednesday. Alarm goes off at 5:30 a.m., snooze alarm is hit and eight more minutes are cherished until the screeching buzz again says “time to get up.” Shower, get dressed, and down to breakfast. Just before I’m about to leave for school, the phone rings. My wife Audrey says, “That was Jeff and he’s taking Erin (our oldest daughter) to Akron General.” Jeff and Erin are expecting their first child. My wife then says, “Looks like *Critter* is going to make an appearance today.” *Critter* is the name we gave to the child to be. We didn’t know if “it” was a boy or if “it” was a girl, but we didn’t like referring to the baby as “it”. So until we know, we have a little *Critter*.

When I get to school I tell Pat, the secretary, that today is likely to be the day my first grandchild arrives. The school is put on **Baby Alert**. I also write **Baby Alert** on the chalkboard in my classroom. I even have my cell phone and ask my students if it’s okay to leave the phone on so I can receive the call directly. All classes say yes, hoping the call will come during their class period. Periods one through eight pass with no ring on the phone. It’s 3:15 and before leaving for the day, I email Kara, my younger daughter who lives in Boston, telling her that it looks like *Critter* is going to wait another day. I send the email and within a minute I’m paged over the PA that I have a phone call. I go to the office, pick up the phone and I hear Kara’s voice and the words, “Dad, *Critter’s* here. *Critter’s* a boy!” Goose bumps take over. Kara tells me that Evan Robert arrived at 3:00 p.m. and Jeff tried to call me but couldn’t get through. How could that be? My phone is in working order (yes, but cell phones work better when turned on). Still wearing goose bumps, I give the news to all who will listen and to those who will not listen.

It’s now 3:25 and I quickly leave school thinking, how strange, my grandson is born no more than two miles for where I teach, yet I learn about **Critter’s** birth by a phone call from Boston. Had I not emailed Kara, I’d be on my way home still unaware of his arrival. I chuckle to myself thinking, “Baby Alert?” I jump in the car and head toward the hospital to meet my grandson. Gee, suddenly this car feels like it’s riding on a cloud!