A ROSE IS A ROSE

By Alison Brantley

I was trying hard not to impinge on Adam’s decision making, but it was the fifth day and we were packing our bags to go home.  Who knows – as Adam’s sister said, maybe the name Little Eagle would get her a great college scholarship! We left the hospital without a completed birth certificate, wondering what was the pressure really about? How hard could this be?

Weeks rolled by and the birth certificate sat on my desk unfinished; too enamored with the baby herself and with the duties of new motherhood to face the inevitable. One day, we received a call and a brilliant suggestion from Adam’s mother’s good friend to take “L” and “E” from Little Eagle and work with that; we had tried a few “E” names, so from that I created the acronym E-L-L-A, each letter representing a woman from Adam’s family from mother, both grandmothers, and a cherished aunt. That felt right! Now, it was on to the middle name.

Little did we realize by involving Jack in this process, we had unearthed his acumen for naming names, which his parents clearly lacked. At dinner that night, Jack declared her middle name should be Rose. After all, we certainly agreed she was as pretty as one. It sounded beautiful – Ella Rose. Ella Rose Friedson. It all had the right ring. Before we filled out the birth certificate we would need to call the grandparents. A certain pall was cast over us before we dialed the numbers, a nervousness that I recognized every time we tried a new name in the hospital.

First call was to Florida and Adam’s parents. “Ella Rose Friedson….(pregnant pause). That’s a lovely name…(even longer pause). It does sound a little “Southern”, don’t you think?” To counter, we told the story of her rosy face and Jack’s idea, then launched into the acronym story one more time, just to make sure they understood we had honored their family. They seemed mildly, only mildly, content. But, after all, this was the Jewish half of our family, and we knew, no matter what we named her, we would be dealing with the guilt for the rest of our lives.

Second call went to North Carolina. “Ella Rose….Ella Rose…(these pauses were getting ridiculous)…sounds a little “Jewish”, don’t you think?”

THAT WAS IT! So what if Papa Jack from North Carolina thought of Rosie the Riveter every time he thought of her? Or Bubbie imagined parasols and hoop skirts every time she called her? We had succeeded beyond our wildest expectations. Our bumbling process, in the future to be applied to many other aspects of our marriage, had resulted in the exact name which neither side was completely happy with. It was perfect. Congress could not have compromised better.  Our new little family had achieved lift off. We were our very own family, at last.