

PARENTING
WITH SHANNON DU PLESSIS



educating daddy

Fathers in need of some parenting help don't have to look far these days

Since it's Father's Day tomorrow, I thought it appropriate to discuss some of the great resources now available to fathers – no matter what sort of dad you are. The world wide web is a wealth of information, but much of it can be contradictory and confusing. Many fathers with a parenting or relationship problem don't know where to go for help, so they may turn to Google first.

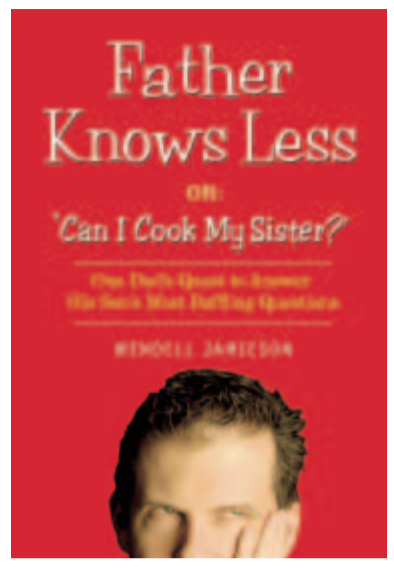
The best places to go for information are Australian sites such as Raising Children (raisingchildren.net.au) and BubHub (www.bubhub.com.au), where there are forums for dads to chat with others, get advice and share experiences, as well as read a multitude of articles. BubHub has now opened a Dad's Info Hub where fathers can go for information, check out new products designed for dads and much more. Fathers can find information about preparing for the birth of a baby, balancing work and family, what to do if your partner has postnatal depression, dealing with separation and other relationship issues, and how to

care for a new baby. Other sites worth a mention include: ■ The Australian Federation of Men's Health & Wellbeing Association (www.mhwaq.org.au) is dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of men and boys. ■ Dads On The Air is a successful community radio show based in Sydney specifically targeted at fathers. It's a mix of news, public information, political commentary, wide ranging interviews and satire, and the website (www.dadsontheair.com) is just as good.

■ There are also plenty of blogs written by fathers and more issue-specific sites such as Mens Line (www.menslineaus.org.au) and Lone Fathers Association (www.lonefathers.org.au). ■ Overseas sites worth a look including www.newdads.com and www.brandnewdad.com So what if you're a computer illiterate dad (like my tradie husband)? There are various publications targeting fathers available from your local library or bookstore. Here's a few examples: *Great Dads: Building Loving Lasting Relationships with Your Kids* by Robert Hamrin; *Becoming a Father* by John L. Hart; *The*

Father's Book by David Cohen; *So You're Going to be a Dad* by Dr Peter Downey; *Dads, Toddlers and the Chicken Dance* by Dr Peter Downey; *You're the Daddy: From Nappy Mess to Happiness in One Year – The Art of Being a Great Dad* by Stephen Giles, Richard Craze, and Roni Jay; *Becoming a Father: How to Nurture and Enjoy your Family* by Dr William Sears; *The New Father: A Dad's Guide to the First Year* by Armin Brott; and finally, *Keeping the Baby Alive till your Wife gets Home* by Walter Roark.

Recently a book landed on my desk that gave me a few giggles, titled *Father Knows Less or Can I Cook My Sister?* The book was written with the aim to answer the barage of questions that kids come up with. In order to do this the author, Wendell Jamieson, seeks out a range of experts from an astronomer, a Buddhist monk, a bra fitter, a rocket scientist and magician David Blaine. In searching for the true reason why the Beatles disbanded, he sends a letter to Yoko Ono, who responds: "Because they all grew up, wanted to do things their own way, and they did." It is somewhat of an almanac with its myriad of Q&As, and while there are some Australian



references, it's written for an American audience. But don't let that put you off, because questions like these are universal: Why do ships have round windows? Why do we have eyebrows? Do elephants cry? And then there's the tough ones like: What does sexy mean? Why is there war? What's a refugee? Now there's no reason for a father to say to his inquisitive child: "Go ask your mother!" ■ *Father Knows Less* by Wendell Jamieson is published by Hardie Grant Books. RRP \$24.95. ■ Shannon is mum to Laura and owner of Berry Baby — visit www.berrybaby.com.au



weekender

writing competition

CALLING all scribes, scribblers and wordsmiths ... weekender's writing competition wants to find the very best writing talent in the Far North. Weekender is also proud to publish your stories in a special weekender supplement in January next year with YOUR byline. This will include the first three winners, as well as judges' honourable mentions. Also, the overall category winners will be published in this year's Tropical Writers anthology. That's not all. Collins Booksellers are also sponsoring a \$100 book voucher and \$50 voucher for the overall category winner and first runner-up.

rules:

- Stories should not be more than 800 words.
- Poems should be no more than 27 lines.
- Entries must be in English, typewritten and double spaced.
- There are two sections: Poetry and Short Story. Writers can enter both categories, but only ONE work for each category.
- THREE printed entries should be submitted to weekender with the official entry form paperclipped, not stapled, to the front.
- ONE Microsoft Word document entry must be submitted on a CD-Rom.
- Please DO NOT include your name on your story.

- Entries must be original, previously unpublished and not have won any other competitions.
- Entries will not be returned. Please keep a copy of your story.
- The judges' decisions are final and no correspondence will be entered into.

new! junior section:

There are also two categories – short story and poetry. The requirements are the same as the open competition. To enter, the author/poet must still be either attending primary, high school or TAFE and be under the age of 18 as at December 31, 2008.

entry form:

Name _____

Email _____

Postal address _____

Daytime Contact no. _____

Mobile no. _____

Send in your entries to weekender writing competition, PO Box 126, Cairns, 4870 by close of business Friday (5.30pm), September 26. Winners will be informed personally by Friday, October 17.