

SLUB GLUB

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Fun and games in a logological family. From time immemorial we have deliberately mispronounced words. An example of this is the word *agenda* where we always emphasize the first syllable and use a hard "g." We use this word often as in "What's today's agenda?" In other words, what are the planned activities for today? I have to remember to pronounce the word correctly when I'm in the real world, lest I be thought ignorant.

We also like to create similar-sounding, but humorous and often apt, names for businesses and institutions. We buy our groceries at *Ship Rot* (Shop Rite) or the *Big Onion* (Grand Union). We read our newspaper *The Daily Wretched* (The Daily Record), and I volunteer at a local nursing home, *Morbid View* (Morris View). We buy our hardware at *Home Despot* (Home Depot), and our daughter graduated from *Fairly Ridiculous* (Fairleigh-Dickinson) University.

We deliberately transpose syllables. We sometimes go to *Merhiker* (Herkimer) which is adjacent to *I Lion* (Ilion). We attend the *Episcolopian* Church, and thereby hangs a tale. My family always said that we were *Episcolopians* and I mistakenly thought that was simply a case of putting the *emPHAsis* on the wrong *syLLAble*. (Remember the old song?) When filling out my application to Swarthmore College, I carefully spelled out *Episcolopian* where it asked for religion. At the very last moment I realized my mistake and had to erase the offending word – no mean task when applications were filled out in pen and ink. It left not only a smudge, but a small hole in the paper. Nonetheless, I was accepted to Swarthmore.

Sensitized to wordplay, our children often come up with accidental examples. At about the age of eight, our daughter Susan went walking with us on a local footpath. Before starting out she cautioned that we could not walk there; a sign said *Presbyterians Only*. In fact it said *Pedestrians Only*. Another time I fell downstairs and banged my knee which rapidly swelled and became quite painful. The doctor opined that I had torn a ligament. With a straight face Susan asked whether, if I had injured my elbow, it would have been a torn *armament*. Embarrassed to think that she had made such a *faux pas*, she insists to this day that she was only being funny.

Another daughter learned to speak at a very young age and rarely used baby talk. However, the two words she consistently mispronounced have become a lasting part of the family vocabulary: *hankerfish* (handkerchief) and *fidgevator* (refrigerator). Another daughter, less articulate at an early age, always wanted to ride the *ahdeticker* (escalator).

Once in a while, we actually coin a new word. One evening when my children were quite small I served for dinner a dish composed of macaroni, hamburger, tomatoes, onions, green peppers, cheese and maybe a few other ingredients. When asked what it was called, I immediately said *slub glub* and the word continues to be used in our family for any dish which contains a varied assortment of ingredients.