

## **Hot and Bothered**

By Brenda Haas

*(previously published Sept. 28, 2016, Penn-Franklin News)*

My husband Mike has always told me I was “hot.” I finally concur.

I’m not just hot. I’m bothered.

Bothered by the night sweats which wake me up at least two or three times a week. Bothered by the occasional urge to rip off every piece of clothing during an episode of the “Big Bang Theory” (not because I’m naturally attracted to geek boys) and stick my head in the refrigerator. Bothered by my inability to remember who a person is two seconds after being introduced, what I was supposed to get at the grocery store, where my reading glasses are (on top of my head) or why I walked into a room.

“The Change” ... It’s a comin.’ And I’m bothered. Oh. So. Hot. And. Bothered.

Oddly, Mike is a little joyous. As is the case with many husbands, he prefers to freeze at night. For over 23 years he slept on top of the covers while I shivered in multiple layers, including fuzzy socks, grumbling about the cold. Even in the summer, air conditioning was always something I could have lived without. Until now. Suddenly, with all these change-of-life hormones raging through me, I’m a huge, sweaty advocate of minimal clothing, no covers and the ceiling fan blasting away at the highest level. The AC has been lowered to 68 degrees from its previous economical 72. For the first time in our marriage, we are equal temperature bed partners.

Mike is also a tinge alarmed.

It’s the rollercoaster of emotions. I’m like that accident you come upon along the side of the road ... something you don’t want to see but can’t stop looking at as you drive by. Romantic comedies are my sweet spot to bring on the waterworks. That and any picture of either of my children when they were babies, or kicking a soccer ball, or blowing out birthday candles, or going to Homecoming, or receiving an award, or performing on stage or ... you get the picture.

Really, I’ll cry for just about any reason at all. Even a sappy book or charmingly sardonic news article about “mentalpause.”

I have a very soft heart.

Which is easily turned to stone. You should see my head spin when I realize someone used my good kitchen towel to, gasp, clean up a spaghetti sauce mess on the counter. Dog prints through the house on a wet day? Head spin. Empty cereal box deceptively left in the pantry? Serious head spin. Political ads and automated spam calls. Serious, serious head spin.

I can just as easily lose control while laughing at a stupid joke or my dog’s flatulence. Rolling on the floor in a fit of giggles until I cry or hyperventilate is not out of the question.

It’s not pretty. Not the spaghetti sauce, not the dog prints, not the cereal box, not the ads, not the calls, not the joke, not the flatulence nor the rolling on the floor.

Hot and bothered mood swings. Really not pretty.

There are times I am, as my teenage daughter might say, a wee bit “cra-cra.” Lord knows, she is the most patient child on the planet. I will ask if she did her homework. She will say “yes.” An hour later, I will ask if she did her homework. She will sigh heavily and say “yes.” The added eye roll is how I know it’s déjà vu all over again.

Lord knows, she is the most patient child on the planet. I will ask if she did her homework. She will say "yes." An hour later, I will ask if she did her homework. She will sigh heavily and say "yes." The added eye roll is how I know it's déjà vu all over again.

I'm sorry. Did I already mention that?

Oh. My. Goodness. Somebody turn on the fan. It sure is warm in here. Excuse me while I remove a layer or two and stick my head in the refrigerator.

Hot and bothered. It's not pretty.