

The new Brady Bunch: Meet Wayne and Mandie Brady

Nancy J Price of www.sheknows.com

When you have an entertainment career on the serious upswing, a spot on one of America's funniest TV shows, your own daytime talk show, and a beautiful and charming wife... well, what more could a guy ask for?

How about the *ultimate* birthday present?

Party quirks

When Wayne Brady, star of *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* and host of *The Wayne Brady Show*, turned 30 last July, his wife, Mandie, gave him the usual birthday gifts. Then, a few days later, she told him she had one more present for him. A surprise. Always one for fun, he wanted to guess what it was.

Wayne: Can I play with it?

Mandie: Yeah.

Wayne: Okay, can I wear it?

Mandie: If you want to...

Wayne: Do I need to plug it in?

Mandie: No.

Wayne: So it has its own power?

Mandie: Mmm hmm.

Wayne: Will it last a long time?

Mandie: God, I hope!

Wayne remembers, "I said, 'It can't be a PS2 [Play Station 2], because I already have one,' and she said, 'Wayne, I'm pregnant. I've been trying to have a baby, and I was waiting for your birthday to tell you.' And I didn't believe her, because she at that point could have just been speaking Arabic. It was so foreign to me that she would say 'I'm pregnant,' because for a couple years she was the one saying 'No, no, no.' Even up to the last time we talked about it last year."

"He's always wanted kids -- ever since we were married," says Mandie. "Almost four years, he's been wanting children. I was kind of like, 'No, let's wait -- there's too much going on.' Not that there isn't anything going on now, but we've stabilized and I kind of convinced myself. I knew how he felt, so it was up to me. I took a chance to see if I could do it," she says. "It was a month before his birthday, and I thought, 'Maybe I'll start now.' Sure enough, I was one month pregnant on his birthday, so it happened the first time we tried!"

"When she said she was pregnant, I was like, 'Shut up, no, you're not!' And I said, 'Mandie, stop kidding me -- that is so mean -- trying to kid me about something like that.' And my sister-in-law said, 'No, no, it's true -- Mandie's pregnant.' And she had water in her eyes." Finally, he believed it. "All of the sudden, I'm crying, because it was just incredible. I ran around yelling to everyone, 'She's pregnant!'"

"I told him I was pregnant, and he cried," Mandie says with a big grin. "Then he ran downstairs -- my mom and my grandmother were staying with us at the time -- and

he hugged them and told them. And we had a contractor at the house; he hugged the contractor and told the contractor."

Newsflash

After the initial joy and excitement, Mandie says, "We agreed that we weren't going to say anything until after three months. We didn't want to get anyone excited, and we didn't want anyone to find out."

The next day, Wayne headed up to Canada for a stage show. "I found out [about the pregnancy] on a Thursday, and Friday I was on a plane, so I never got a chance to really enjoy it," he says. "So Friday during the show, I said, 'Hey, I just wanted to let you guys know: My wife and I are pregnant! And I'm just telling you because I'm happy.' The next thing I know, all the Canadian papers were running stories about her being pregnant."

"So he told everyone," Mandie laughs. "I couldn't be mad at him, but I said, 'Well, Canada knows, so I think we should call the family.' He's a big kid. He can't hold that stuff in."

Wayne says, "It was the happiest news. Ever." After thinking a moment, he adds, "Well, second, I guess, to when she said that she'd marry me."

Positive thoughts

After she decided to go for it, Mandie found herself in "Could I be?" limbo for the very first time. She says, "I took so many pregnancy tests because I felt weird -- I felt tired and I was so hungry." Her early home pregnancy tests were all negative, so she wanted a more definitive result. But that wasn't so easy, because while being the wife of a celebrity has its advantages, there's also a downside. "The nurses at my Ob/Gyn all know me and they all watch the show, and I didn't want them to find out. I didn't want them to know in case they saw him and said, 'Oh I saw Mandie...'" So Mrs. Brady headed instead to a family planning clinic. "They sat me down and I had to watch these abortion videos, and why there are maybe other alternatives like adoption. And I was like, 'No you don't understand -- I want to be pregnant!' I had to sit there and watch and sign forms, and they were asking me questions."

All of that, and the pregnancy test there didn't even give her a positive result. But she persisted. "I knew something was wrong -- something was kind of funky," Mandie says. "I know my body -- something was different... Sure enough, three days after his birthday, I took another home test and it said I was! That was like my ninth test. Wayne would say, 'What are you doing in the bathroom?' because I was constantly checking!"

The rough spots

While now, at eight and a half months, Mandie looks positively radiant, not every part of her pregnancy has been easy. The morning sickness, she says, was the worst. 'I was thinking, 'I'm not going to accept the fact that it's possible that it can be like this for the whole pregnancy.' I'd read horror stories from people about it. At two months, it was the worst -- it was at its peak. I was miserable," she sighs. "I dry heaved a lot -- nothing would come up. Once in awhile, if I was lucky, I actually vomited. It was awful, and it was 24/7. There was nothing I could do about it --

nothing... I did the ginger and everything. I'd just sleep to get it over with. I was counting down the days."

And not only was there sickness: She had some major cravings. "I started eating weird things, like bacon cheeseburgers and curly fries -- things that normally I wouldn't eat, but I had to have," Mandie says. "I love sweets, but when I had morning sickness, I couldn't even look at them. And I wanted mangos. Mangos and lemonade and macaroni and cheese."

At the three month mark, the sickness -- and the cravings -- disappeared. "It was by the book: At three months, it ended." Wayne adds, "She got up one morning and said, 'Oh -- it's gone!'"

"Once it was over, I was just happy," she laughs. "I had a pinched sciatic nerve and thought, 'That's okay -- I can deal with that. Morning sickness, no.' I'm happy. I'm feeling good."

As for the best parts of pregnancy, she's happiest when she can feel -- and see -- the baby move. Says Mandie, "I really love that -- being that close to something, especially when you know that everything's okay. I felt the flutters at four months, but the coolest part is now, when I can feel her shift and I wonder, 'Is that a leg, or is that her booty?' I love that." Wayne gets a kick out of it too. "Now we can see [the baby] through Mandie's skin as she moves underneath. It's like *Alien*."

Ultrasounds have also helped them to bond with their daughter. "We've had so many ultrasounds, just because we're excited," Mandie says. "We've also done 4D, which is awesome. You can see the baby's face... everything."

Helping hands

What's Wayne done to help her through this pregnancy? "The best thing he does is compliment me -- tell me I still look good," Mandie says. "That's the best thing, I think, besides the fact that I know he's excited about the baby. That makes me feel good."

However, Wayne admits, "I have not been a big a help as I've wanted to be. Watching her go through all this stuff, and being so busy with work..." He says, "Next time -- I know it's of no consolation now -- but I think I now understand the enormity of a pregnancy, and the amount of time you have to live with this thing inside of you. I really want to be of more help."

As far as Mandie's concerned, he's doing his part this time around. "He still loves me and still wants us to have a relationship that's not just about the baby. He's so good about that. There are times when I feel sad, and don't feel sexy or attractive... I am a dancer, so I've always been really conscious of my body. It's hard to submit to nature, I guess, so I go through periods when it's depressing," she says. "The hardest thing for me is picture taking. I used to do print [modeling] work before. It's different to accept your body when you're so used to looking a certain way... I'm glad I'm going to get nice pregnancy pictures [with this interview], because I've been avoiding that."

The joy of baby

These last few weeks as her pregnancy comes to an end, one of Mandie's favorite things to do is to daydream about what the baby will be like. So what is she most looking forward to? "Seeing the baby -- but more than that, seeing Wayne with the baby," she says. "I need a picture of the baby with Wayne as soon as we have her. More so than [a photo] even with me -- I want to see him with her, because I've had the chance to be close and to feel the baby... I want to see him to be a father for the first time." She smiles, "Kind of makes your eyes water even thinking about it, doesn't it?"

As for Wayne, he's excited about finally being a daddy. "'Excited' isn't the word. It seems like the experience makes everything fall into place. I've always liked to work, and I've always been very driven, but knowing that I have this other person coming that I have to take care of for a goodly chunk of her life kind of makes my focus change, and it makes something else more important."

Most of all, he says, he wants to wrap his arms around his little baby daughter. "I'm really looking forward to lying down and having her on my chest -- holding her. I've been having dreams about just holding her," he says. "I don't think I've quite wanted anything this much in my life."

Update: Maile Masako Brady was born Monday, February 3, 2003, in Los Angeles. She weighed 6 pounds, 1 ounce. ❁

About the author: Nancy Price is the co-founder and co-editor of SheKnows.com and several other sites. She has also served as the editor-in-chief of two national print magazines, and is an Executive Editor of Cooking Smart magazine. Originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, she now lives in Arizona. Copyright © Nancy J Price.