

CENTRAL TEXAS ■ FATHER'S DAY

What makes day great for dads? Notables weigh in

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

That very first Father's Day.
Fishing with grandkids.
Camping with dad.
Breakfast by preschoolers, with help from mom.

Those are the sorts of memories that many Central Texas dads (and their children) have about Father's Day.

We asked some local newsmakers to share their memories of their best Father's Day.

Here's how they responded:



Jerry Patterson

"I haven't had the best one yet. That will occur when I can have all four of my kids and my grandbaby with me in one place!"

— Jerry Patterson, Texas land commissioner

"My daughters are young enough that I remember all the Father's Days as the 'best.' Fun-filled family days that include a 'meal-orama' because I am fortunate to celebrate both as a father and as a son since my dad lives in Austin.

"Throw in celebrating with my wife's dad, and we always end up well-fed by the end of the day.

"The days leading up to Father's Day are the best, too. The awkward secrecy and excitement

surrounding the making of the homemade cards and gifts is fun to observe. The best gift is always the assemblage of photographs from the father-daughter outings of the year past.

"My best Father's Day? Every one of them."

— Richard Suttle, real estate attorney and partner at Armbrust & Brown LLP

"Our only son was born 13 years ago. Three months earlier, the day after my 43rd birthday,

See **DAY**, B7



Richard Suttle

DAY: Central Texas men recall joys of being fathers – and sons

Continued from B1

I was hit by a car. My wife, Carolyn, and James inside her narrowly avoided being hit. To me, now, every day is Father's Day.

"My Father's Day memory is not my own. It is Jean-Dominique Bauby's. Around the time of my accident, Bauby, a prominent 43-year-old Parisian fashion editor, suffered a stroke that left him completely paralyzed. He communicated by blinking his left eyelid.

"In this way, he wrote a memoir, 'The Diving Bell and the Butterfly.' Of his son visiting on Father's Day, he writes: 'I, his father, have lost the simple right to ruffle his bristly hair, clasp his downy neck, hug his small, lithe warm body.'

"I ruffle my son's hair every day. He may wonder why. Now he knows. I am so grateful he is there and that I can."

— Tom Palaima, University of Texas classics professor

"My best Father's Day was the first Father's Day after the death of my father. As odd as it may seem, it was the first time in my life that I had sat down to truly reflect on the blessing that I received by being his son.

"I realized that I had grown to be the man that I was as a result of my father's nurturing, caring and his willingness to sacrifice for his family. It was at this time that I had first realized that in his loss, I had lost my father, my brother and my best friend.

"And from that moment forward, I have never stopped thinking of him, and I have never stopped feeling the love he bestowed upon me throughout life. And, as a father, I strive to apply his lessons of unconditional love to my family."

— Art Acevedo, Austin police chief

"My two best Father's Days were when my two sons were born. My oldest son is five years older than my youngest son.

"It was an exhilarating experience for me realizing I had these young lives I was responsible for along with my wife. I began to appreciate what it meant to protect and preserve them."

— Sterling Lands II, pastor and founder of Greater Calvary Baptist Church in Austin

"I don't remember any specific event on Father's Day. But what I do remember is just



Tom Palaima



Art Acevedo



Sterling Lands

@ statesman.com

More Central Texas newsmakers describe their best Father's Day with this story online.

important to him in his life and seeing the look on his face and joy he gets out of it, I wouldn't trade that for anything.

"A big joke around our house is that I can remember many years coming home, and as soon as the door opened, all you could hear from upstairs was 'Daddy's home! Daddy's home!' and they come running down the steps and jump up in my arms.

"Over time, that has stopped happening, and now I come in the front door saying, 'Daddy's home! Daddy's home! Does anybody care?' Every now and then I'll get a token 'Daddy's home! Daddy's home!' and then they go back to watching television or doing whatever it is they're doing.

"But it's been fun watching that transition from child to teenager and soon to young adult."

— Alan McGraw, mayor of Round Rock

"I spent my most memorable Father's Day far from home in the mid-1980s participating in a work-related conference in Israel. Staying in touch with family and friends while traveling overseas was a lot harder back then. We had no cell phones, e-mail, text messaging or inexpensive Internet telephony.

"My wife included a present for me gift-wrapped in a small box in my suitcase with strict instructions not to open it until Father's Day.

"Sunday morning in my Jerusalem hotel room, I opened the box and found a small tape recorder and a cassette tape.

"My wife and three young children had produced a 15-minute audio program with songs, stories, Father's Day greetings and multiple expressions of love.

"I never received a more moving Father's Day gift and have kept the tape in a special place over the years."

— Jay Rubin, CEO of the Jewish Community Association of Austin

"Ten years ago ... my very first Father's Day, June 21, 1998, was such an amazing day that I will never forget. My son was 18 days old, and I could not believe the overwhelming feelings of being a father.



Alan McGraw



Jay Rubin



Mike Martinez

