

# THE GEO-SAMPLER

Mow the lawn, fire up the grill and retrieve that darn Frisbee from the roof of the house again - it's the Father's Day edition of the GeoSampler. (By the way, why do you "mow the lawn" but "cut the grass?") Anyway, it's our little tribute to the one best known for teaching bicycle riding, playing catch and scaring the bejeezus out of high-school boy-friends. So, in honor of him, we'll take a look at the history of this day and visit a few Father's Days around the world. What do you say, pop? Sound good to you? Burp once for yes, twice for no.

## IT'S DADDY DAY, DADDY-O

So, you're trying to figure what to get dad for Father's Day this year. You're racking your brain and nothing's coming to you. Well, for that bit of anxiety that you're feeling, you can thank a woman by the name of Sanora Smart Dodd of Spokane Washington, the "mother" of Father's Day. Raised by her father, Civil War veteran, William Jackson Smart, after her mother died during childbirth, Mrs. Dodd came up with the idea after listening to a Mother's Day church sermon. She initially suggested June, 5, her father's birthday, however, she was a bit late on giving the organizers enough time to make arrangements. So, the third Sunday in June was picked as the day of celebration.

But while June 19, 1910 was the first time Father's Day was celebrated, it wasn't a recognized national holiday. Still, the idea of Father's Day grew, and people lobbied Congress to make it official. And things just went as smooth as silk from there. Kidding! Actually the path was quite long and winding.

A bill to nationally recognize the holiday was introduced into Congress in 1913. Three years later, President Woodrow Wilson went to Spokane to speak in a Father's Day celebration and wanted to make it official. However, Congress resisted because they feared it would become commercialized. Really? In America?



Jump to 1924, when President Calvin Coolidge recommended that the day be observed by the nation, but he stopped short of issuing a national proclamation. And two earlier attempts to formally recognize the day were defeated in Congress. As for why, your guess is as good as ours. It wasn't until 1957, when Maine Senator Margaret Chase Smith gave her fellow Senators a piece of her mind in a proposal that accused Congress of ignoring fathers for 40 years while honoring mothers, saying that "to single out just one of our two parents and omit the other is the most grievous insult imaginable." Give 'em hell, Maggie.

Finally— yes, finally— in 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson issued the first presidential proclamation honoring fathers, designating the third Sunday in June as Father's Day. A mere six years later, the day was made a permanent national holiday when

President Richard Nixon signed it into law in 1972. And our long, national nightmare was over. See? Who says Washington can't get things done?

By the way, if you're wondering about the spelling, Mrs. Dodd correctly used "Fathers' Day" on her original petition. But in a time before spell-check - or, apparently, knowledge of grammar - Congress used "Father's Day" on the bill that was introduced in 1913. It was also used when they honored Mrs. Dodd in 2008. And from beyond the grave, she let out a sad little sigh.

*Fatherhood is pretending the present you love most is soap-on-a-rope.*  
~Bill Cosby



### Father knows best

"A father carries pictures where his money used to be." -Unknown

"Adolescence begins when children stop asking questions - because they know all the answers."  
-Evan Esar

"The father is always the Republican toward his son, and his mother's always a Democrat." -Robert Frost

"When I was a kid, I said to my father one afternoon, 'Daddy, will you take me to the zoo?' He answered, 'If the zoo wants you, let them come and get you.'"  
-Jerry Lewis

"When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years."  
-Mark Twain

"Never raise your hand to your kids. It leaves your groin unprotected."  
-Red Buttons



# JOUR DE PÈRE HEUREUX!

Did you know that the United States isn't the only country where dads exist? Turns out, other nations have their own "padres," "Vaters" and "otecs." Not only that, they too have days that celebrate the ol' man. Here are just some little tidbits about Father's Days from around the globe.

First of all, if you find yourself out of the country this Father's Day - June 17 - fear not. You can still celebrate the day because the United States shares this occasion with 71 other countries, each and every year. So, for you dads in places like Canada, United Kingdom, Zimbabwe and Hong Kong, you can still expect that nation's gift equivalent of a cheesy tie.



The next most popular date is March 19, also called Saint Joseph's Day or the Feast of Saint Joseph. Nine countries honor dear ol' dad this day, including Andorra, Bolivia, Honduras, Italy, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Portugal, Spain and Antwerp.

Former members of the Soviet Union celebrate it the earliest with "Defender of the Fatherland Day" every February 23. In Russia it was originally done to celebrate both men and wom-

en who served in the Russian Armed Forces, but is now known as a celebration of men as a whole, and acts as a counterpart to International Women's Day on March 8. Bulgaria's celebration is the latest at December 26, which kind of stinks. At least, for dad, it does.

Much of the Arab world celebrates Father's Day on June 21, the first day of summer, which offers a nice bookend to their Mother's Day festivities on the first day of spring. Speaking of nice bookends, perhaps a gift for him? Just saying.

And if there were a prize for the creepiest celebration of Father's Day it would go to Nepal, whose day is called "Buwaako mukh herne din," which in Nepali literally translates to "day for looking at father's face." I'm sure for most dads in that country, the best gift they could get would be if the kids would just stop with all the staring at him.

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