

# BROWARD Family LIFE

COMPLIMENTARY

JUNE 2008



**MEN'S  
HEALTH  
QUIZ**  
10 WAYS  
TO KEEP DADS  
HAPPY  
AND  
HEALTHY

**GREAT  
SUMMER  
DESTINATIONS**  
ON THE INTERNET

# summer SPLASHDOWN

COOL PLACES TO SWIM & PLAY

**PROTECTING  
YOUR PETS**  
STAYING SAFE DURING  
STORM SEASON

# A Father's Day tribute to a dad who gives all he's got

BY MATT BARON

My father became a dad on the day that John F. Kennedy was slain. That's when my sister, Judi, was conceived.

I didn't learn this historical connection until well into my adult years. And I didn't gather the tidbit from my dad—it was my mom who spilled the beans in one of her TMI (“Too Much Information”) moments.

Mom and I have always been close—so much so that I know where I was conceived (I'll spare you that bit of TMI.)

As for Pops, well, we have a positive relationship that's only improved over the years. But he's someone I don't really feel that I truly know.

This used to really bug me, peaking at something approaching anguish when I began college. It was

the byproduct of my hyper-curiosity, a few introductory psychology classes and my more-than-nutritionally necessary alcohol consumption.

At that point in my life, though I am sure he had done it other times, I could recall only one occasion that he told me that he loved me. It was a most bittersweet memory, coming as it did when I was 11, during the living room sit-down when he and mom told us four kids that they were splitting up.

Then one spring day, when I was a 19-year-old college sophomore, Mom set me straight in a phone call.

“It has nothing to do with you, Matt,” she said. “He can't give you what he doesn't have.”

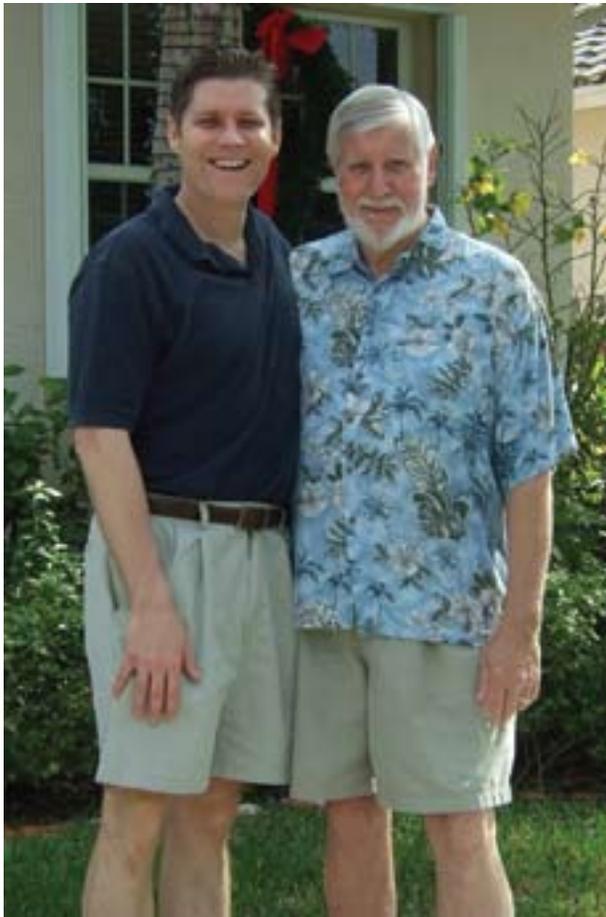
That made perfect sense. In that moment, I was set free of my angst.

And I could then appreciate Dad for what he was able to offer: a reliable, supportive presence when I played sports; intelligent, insightful conversation on a wide range of topics, especially sports and sports trivia; financial support that helped me get through college; a great sense of humor; quirky habits like doling out ice cream after carefully divvying it up with a butcher knife; and unabashed hugs during our farewells.

As I reflect on this list, and as I have grown older and become a father myself, I am even more grateful for the negative, dysfunctional baggage that Dad has not given me.

We may not be bosom buddies, but Dad and I don't suffer from any of the estrangement, resentment and other hurts that exist between all too many parents and children.

Meanwhile, our relationship has gradually gone beyond the surface.



A dozen years ago, I took the bold step, at the end of our phone calls, of telling Dad that I loved him. I could tell I caught him off-guard, but he replied in kind.

My siblings later told me that more frequently he was telling them he loved them, too. Now he even blurts it out to me before I say it.

Another indicator of our deepening relationship: my wife, Bridgett, can no longer detect when I'm talking to Dad.

For years, she would give a knowing chuckle when my chat with Dad would careen toward a familiar theme. Our dialogue would go something like this:

Me: "So we're thinking about starting a family..."

Dad: "Oh, good. Hey, Red Sox have men on first and third, two outs. Here's the pitch, Ramirez hits it up the middle, it's through for a single!"

Me (sighing, resigned to this new topic): "Oh, great. What's the score now?" (Bridgett suppresses a laugh in the background.)

Lately, however, our talks range more frequently beyond the Boston professional sports scene and into the meatier, more

personal terrain of family, work, children, and the stuff of day-to-day life.

Since March, we've been talking a lot more about his health. He's having trouble breathing, among other ailments, and in

been a stickler with his first-in, first-out policy on consuming food.)

I have no idea how many more Father's Days remain for Dad, but this much I do know: the Red Sox are playing the Cincin-

## As I have grown older and become a father myself, I am even more grateful for the negative, dysfunctional baggage that Dad has not given me.

late April he was diagnosed with congestive heart failure. I sent him a letter quoting Philipians, including an encouragement to "rejoice in the Lord always."

I really don't know if he's going to go for that, frankly.

But I've gotten to know Dad well enough that I also included some other material, such as alternative terms for congestive heart failure. One is FIFO (Fibrillation Is Freaking Out) Syndrome, in honor of one of his favorite expressions. (He has always

nati Reds on that particular Sunday this June, and, more than ever before, I look forward to hearing Dad's play-by-play account.

Matt Baron is the father of twin 4-year-olds, Zachary and Maggie Rose. For Christmas 2007, the family had a great visit with Grandpa Phil and Grandma Moe at their Port St. Lucie home.

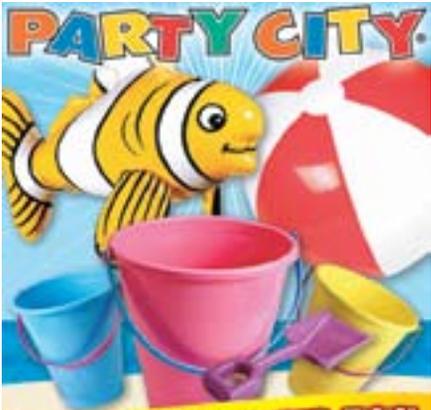
**SUPERSTAR PRODUCTIONS**  
Interactive Stage Shows

- ★ High School Musical
- ★ Hannah Montana
- ★ Look-A-Like Contest
- ★ Holiday Productions
- ★ Storybook Shows
- ★ Interactive DJs
- ★ Game Show Trivia
- ★ The Wizard of Oz
- ★ Grease
- ★ The Wiggles
- ★ Jack & the Beanstalk
- ★ Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary



**(954) 389-1137**  
**(866) 571-9289**  
[www.floridasuperstarproductions.com](http://www.floridasuperstarproductions.com)  
Approved by Miami-Dade, Broward & Palm Beach School Districts

**PARTY CITY**



**DIVE INTO SUMMER FUN!**



For All Your Party Needs Visit Any Party City Location Or [www.partycity.com](http://www.partycity.com)

**Magical Theme Parties**  
from **Kids Fiesta**



**Spa Parties**  
**Princess Parties**  
**Tea Parties**

Ask about our themes for boys | We Come To YOU | Character rentals available

**954-438-4FUN (4386)**  
[www.kids-fiesta.com](http://www.kids-fiesta.com)  
Serving Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties

**PARTIES**



## Miss South Florida Fire Cracker Pageant

June 28th | 5:00 pm

Pompano Citi Centre

*Wear Your Favorite  
Denim Outfit*

### BOYS & GIRLS:

- Under 1 year
- 1, 2, or 3 Years

### GIRLS ONLY:

- 4 - 6 years
- 7-10 years
- 11-13 years
- 14-17 years
- 18-27 years  
(11 Divisions)



QUALIFY NOW TO WIN \$10,000 SAVING BONDS

**For Info: 352-429-4924**

or visit website for entry form  
[www.sunburstbeauty.com](http://www.sunburstbeauty.com)

**July 18-20**

**BROWARD CENTER**  
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

For Tickets Call **954.462.0222**  
or [www.browardcenter.org](http://www.browardcenter.org)

All programs, artists, dates and times are subject to change.  
All special offers cannot be combined with other discounts or previous purchases and certain restrictions apply.

Check out for more details!

**BORN TO PLAY CD and  
THE BACKYARDIGANS DVD's  
in stores now!**

©2008 Viacom International Inc. All rights reserved.  
Nick Jr., The Backyardigans and all related titles, logos  
and characters are trademarks of Viacom International Inc.

# BROWARD Family LIFE

*Our mission is to enrich family life in Broward County  
by offering the highest quality publication and an unparalleled commitment  
to our readers and our community.*

#### PUBLISHER

Michelle Liem

#### ASSOCIATE EDITOR

KiKi Bochi

#### EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Lisa England

#### CONTRIBUTORS

Nancy Collamer • Heather Deeley • Rick Epstein • Debbie Farmer • Carolyn Jabs  
Gregory Keer • Susan Kehl • Kathy Sena • Melanie Snyder

#### ADVERTISING SALES

Cindi Inklebarger • Anina Venuti

#### GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

Susan Rosser – Rosser Marketing

#### PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Toni Kirkland

#### ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Stacey Milch

#### CORPORATE OFFICE

3150 Hidden Hollow Lane, Davie, FL 33328

Phone 954-424-7405

Fax 954-424-8898

[info@browardfamilylife.com](mailto:info@browardfamilylife.com)

#### PARENTING PUBLICATIONS OF AMERICA 2008 AWARDS

Best Overall Writing – Gold Award

Best Service Feature – Gold Award

Best Feature Layout – Gold Award

Best Table of Contents – Silver Award

Rookie of the Year – Silver Award

Best Column/Family Matters – Bronze Award



For information on where to find Broward Family Life, or how to become a distributor,  
call 954-424-7405 or e-mail [info@browardfamilylife.com](mailto:info@browardfamilylife.com)  
Comments and suggestions are welcome.

Broward Family Life is published twelve times per year by Broward Family Life, Inc. It is distributed free of charge throughout Broward County. Broward Family Life is not responsible for statements made by advertisers or writers. We make every effort to ensure the accuracy of information we print, but cannot be held responsible for any consequences arising from omissions or errors. All photography and letters sent to Broward Family Life will be treated unconditionally, assigned for publication and copyright purposes and are subject to unrestricted right to edit and comment editorially. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is forbidden.

Copyright 2008 by Broward Family Life, Inc.  
All rights reserved.