

1994

Dear Children:

We enjoyed the family reunion with everyone, except Tracy. We missed him. Oh, well, next time.

Dad and I are out at the farm being Christmas tree sales persons. Politically correct? Well, it doesn't feel right.

The doctors who are working with Doug's injury decided that the graft done at the time of the accident wasn't working, so they cleaned it all out and started from scratch. I'm sure that Doug and Nancy would appreciate all of you continuing to pray for him until he is out of the woods on this new graft, because a failure of this could be very serious, and might even result in amputation of his foot. A possibility which we don't like to even consider.

He had his operation last Thursday, and the Dr. doing the surgery was pleased. They have to put him on Heparin to thin his blood and to prevent blood clots. The doctor checks regularly at his visits for clots within the graft and in the leg. So far so good. Nancy says they have five different lines going into his IV. The surgery itself took five hours.

They run one of them in for Morphine for pain. Another for Heparin, one for boosting his blood as he lost two pints when he had this last surgery. I don't know what the other two is, but one of them is the usual IV.

Nancy is feeling better now that the morning sickness is gone. Sherlene is hot and heavy into her research and classes.

I cancelled the first Sunday get together for the college age kids. I figured we had had a lot of togetherness recently and since we were out at the farm it was not too convenient. Next month.

I have enclosed another of those newspaper cut outs for you. We always had our meals together, but I doubt if we made the most of them, conversationally, etc. It does give an opportunity to teach table manners, which Tracy resisted vociferously. Teen age stuff, I suppose.

We all seem to carry on the traditions of our own parents. If so, then the break down of the family eating together broke down in my generation, because more and more families do not eat together.

Thank you for coming to our reunion--we realize it was an expense and an effort. Please try to keep it up. I enjoyed the way the cousins had fun together.

Love Ya

*Grandmother Hall*

Grandmother Hall

# Family time can be at dinner table

There was "startling" news about a recent sociological study on TV one night last week. As usual, it told us something most of us already knew — or at least could have figured out for ourselves with no training whatsoever.

The upshot of the study was that children whose families ate dinner together regularly performed better socially and academically than children who did not share regular meals with their families.

My parents and grandparents knew that and I'll bet most of yours did, too. When I was growing up, everyone had to be at the



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table within a minute or two of when dinner was ready. And no excuse save death or serious injury was good enough to be late or missing if you didn't call ahead of time or make arrangements in advance.

Dinner was sacred in my house. That's when we talked about what was going on in school or on my father's job. We swapped family gossip and learned family lore. Often, we discussed religion, politics, world affairs or philosophy. We didn't always agree, but everyone always knew where everyone stood.

We learned a lot about courtesy and respect, too, lessons that carried over into the rest of our lives. No one started eating until everyone was seated. Mom and Dad were served first because they were the oldest. If there was a guest present, the guest went first. No one ate the last pork chop or serving of potatoes unless everyone else had passed on it first. And none of the kids left the table without asking to be excused.

Out of this came respect for elders and for the ideas of others. What's more, we learned how to debate and how to think. If you made a statement, you had better be prepared to back it up with facts and logic. Even then, we could never win an argument with my father. When cornered, he would say, "Don't tell ME!" And that would be that.

Still, when Dad said, "Don't tell ME!" it was as good as saying, "Uncle," because we all knew he had lost.

Unlike many others of our generation, my wife and I continued this tradition, although with variations. We're not quite as rigid, for example. And I'm not right nearly as often as my father was.

When the kids were younger, we sometimes played games. On Amnesty Night, everyone could admit something he or she had done wrong, without fear or reprisal. Then we would discuss it. On Swap Night, we each would pretend to be another member of the family. In that way, we all were able to get a glimpse of how we appeared to the others.

With the children mostly grown, it's more difficult to maintain that tradition. Still, we manage to eat dinner together most nights, even if the meal consists of pizza, wings or Chinese food that has been delivered. For me, it always has been the best time of day.

Is it the secret to raising healthy, happy, well-adjusted, all-around good kids? I can't say for sure.

But it sure doesn't hurt. Ray Recchi is a lifestyle columnist for the Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel.

*good idea here,*  
*good idea here.*