



**JERRY CAMMARATA**  
**FATHERS DIARY**

## A.P.S. to Dad's big day

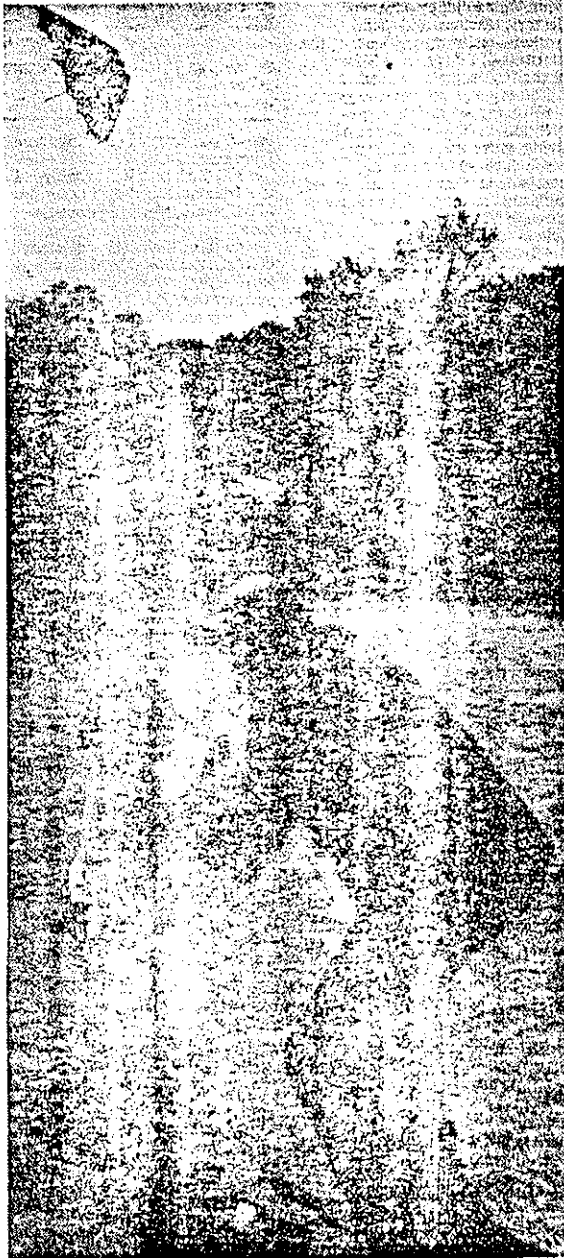
It was a wonderful picnic. It wasn't just a picnic for the immediate or even the extended family. In fact, the picnic wasn't even at my home. This year the parents group at my daughters' school, of which I am the president, decided that our year-end picnic should be celebrated on a parent recognition day. Well, Mother's Day was out because of First Holy Communion exercises and the chanciness of the weather. So, Father's Day was given the honor.

The fathers showed off their strengths and, often without realizing it, their weaknesses as well. Speaking for myself, I exhibited some weakness. Take the baseball game between the parents and the kids. When I got up to bat

and struck out twice in a row I could hear my daughters on the sideline shouting, "Oh, you're really not a superpop, you can't even hit the ball." However, when it came to square dancing, well, they witnessed a dazzling display of foot work and concentration that even I didn't think I could accomplish.

Yes, all the dads at the picnic were on display, showing themselves and their families that gathered that the superpops they are have nothing to do with their athletic achievements or intelligence. Rather, it is a result of their caring and love for their families and a willingness to be a sharing partner.

**Fatherlove is 'in'**  
Just two days before Father's



Day I had the opportunity to be invited on the "Good Morning New York" show, courtesy of a long-time friend and superpop, Ed Greves. I shared the interview on the show with a most outstanding and sensitive dad, D. Bruce Lockerbie, author of "Fatherlove—Learning to Give the Best You've Got" (Doubleday & Co., 1981). His perceptions and thoughts about dads and the family were enlightening and refreshing. It seemed that much of what happened at the picnic on Father's Day was discussed in general terms on the "Good Morning New York" show with Lockerbie.

For example, there was a 4 or 5-year-old child crying up a storm because he couldn't have ice cream. He wouldn't eat his lunch. This kid annoyed his dad once too often by his perpetual crying. In an instant the kid felt the dad's hand pass swiftly and forcefully across his backside. Those of us in the immediate area who tuned into the happening, also experienced the sting of the swat in our minds. At the moment of dad's contact with the kid's backside, Psalm 102:8, 10, 13-14, quoted in Lockerbie's book, came to mind:

*"The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love...."*

*He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities...."*

*As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.*

And there was that big oversized fifth grader who could play baseball better than I could. In the third inning of the game he walloped the ball and passed easily around first and second bases. Wanting to take a chance, and being encouraged by all of shouting, "Go to third, go to third," he made a mad dash to third base only to find it necessary to slide in head first. The slide cost him a very bruised right face and an irritated right eye. The kid's reaction was predictable—tears. When his father reached him and propped him up, the first words out of his mouth were, "Oh, stop crying, don't be a sissy, men don't cry."

It made me want to cry to make up for his containment of tears. Lockerbie feels the expression of tears and crying is only human, and should be freely and appropriately expressed by men and women alike.

### Uncle Walter for president

As I write this diary note, the day after Father's Day, another image of dad passes before me. I'm speaking of Uncle Walter. When you need a father image of honesty, integrity and stability, you can always turn to Walter Cronkite. They say if he ever ran for the office of president of the United States, he would win without an effort. We all can use a father image type like Uncle Walter to emulate. Certainly today our kids need more than their own dads to look up to. They need role models to communicate the building block values of adulthood.

Lockerbie and I know (and I am sure Mr. Cronkite would agree) that the only real superpop in this world from the time of Adam and Eve has been God the Father.

But, we will all be trying harder—all of us. There are lots more Father's Days coming up in the future. As the days, months and years go by, all parents should strive to be better leaders and, when the need arises, competent followers.

Yes, what a picnic. What a book Lockerbie wrote. What a man Uncle Walter is. And, God bless our moms and dads for making it all possible.