

Happy Father's Day

A Father's Day card seen in a local story observed that the celebration came about because about a month after Mother's Day, somebody smacked his forehead, exclaimed "Doh!" and asked, "Isn't Dad upset he doesn't have a special day, too?"

@font-face { font-family: "Times New Roman"; }@font-face { font-family: "Verdana"; }p.MsoNormal, li.MsoNormal, div.MsoNormal { margin: 0in 0in 0.0001pt; font-size: 12pt; font-family: "Times New Roman"; }table.MsoNormalTable { font-size: 10pt; font-family: "Times New Roman"; }div.Section1 { page: Section1; }That's not really how it came about that we observe this day dedicated to our dads. We know it's because they deserve it.

As with Mother's Day, West Virginia played a role in the early history of Father's Day. According to history.com, a West Virginia church sponsored the nation's first event explicitly in honor of fathers on July 5, 1908, a Sunday sermon in memory of the 362 men who had died in the previous December's explosions at the Fairmont Coal Co. mines in Monongah. It was a one-time commemoration and not an annual holiday. The next year, a Spokane, Wash., woman, one of six children raised by a widower, tried to establish an official equivalent to Mother's Day for male parents. History.com says she went to local churches, the YMCA, shopkeepers and government officials to drum up support for her idea, and she was successful: Washington State celebrated the nation's first statewide Father's Day on July 19, 1910. Slowly, the holiday spread. But History.com goes on to say that in the 1920s and 1930s, a movement arose to scrap Mother's Day and Father's Day altogether in favor of a single holiday, Parents' Day. Paradoxically, however, the Depression derailed the effort as struggling retailers and advertisers redoubled their efforts to make Father's Day a "second Christmas" for men. When World War II began, advertisers began to argue that celebrating Father's Day was a way to honor American troops and support the war effort. By the end of the war, Father's Day may not have been a federal holiday, but it was a national institution. In 1972, in the middle of a hard-fought presidential re-election campaign, Richard Nixon signed a proclamation making Father's Day a federal holiday at last. There is no doubt about it — we love our dads. Today, economists estimate that Americans spend more than \$1 billion each year on Father's Day gifts. While heaping gifts on your male parent is a nice gesture, what might be even better — and perhaps more appreciated by him — is the opportunity to spend some quality time with him. Take time today to sit down with your dad, or give him a call if you don't live nearby. Reminisce, ask his advice, tell him you love him. Those whose fathers have passed on will tell you to cherish these times with your dad, not just today, but every day. They would give much to spend just another few minutes with the man who held them when they skinned their knee, taught them how to drive or worked killer hours just to make sure they had the necessities of life — and perhaps a few luxuries as well. Happy Father's Day, Daddy, to those still here and those who live on in our memories.