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Trips With Dad

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Trips with Dad

Custom

Informant: Jason Swan is my father and is the youngest son of Susan (Sam) Swan. Jason was born in Tacoma, Washington but was raised in Eugene and Bend Oregon. When he was 8 years old his mother, Sam, got re-married to a man named David Swan. Jason was an excellent student and loved to ski. He Graduated high school in 1988 and then came here to Utah State to study history. He switched his major several times, and finally graduated in 1998 with a bachelor degree in Instructional Design. He continued his education and gained a masters in Instructional design in 2001. He married Jamie Swan in 1993 and together they have 5 children; 4 daughters and 1 son. I am the second eldest. He now works for a company called L-3 Communications, which has brought him and his family to live in North Carolina for several years and now to Arlington, Texas where they have been for nearly 7 years. Jason is a proud father and is a wonderful provider and patriarch of the home. Family is his everything, and traditions among family are something he holds very dear.

Context: I interviewed Jason last week over FaceTime. As he lives in Texas so it is hard for me to visit all the time. He was wonderful enough to agree to FaceTime me to help me collect this piece of folklore. I was in my office at work when we started the call, and he was at his home in Arlington in the living room. We chatted a bit about traditions and something my sister reminded me of earlier that week sparked a discussion about how our dad has taken each one of us on a trip just the two of us. It was a wonderful way to strengthen our parent/child relationship and was a fun way to make a memory.

Text: M: All right. This one is one that Katie [my younger sister] actually reminded me of and i wanted to hear your perspective and the traditions that you find is the trips that you take with your kids.

J: yeah-

M: Umm.. Can you tell me what that is?

J: *clears throat* Well, actually you started that. Umm... You know, when you were about nine or ten.. Eleven? I can't remember. Uh... we were in Logan and I was involved in starting up a curling club. And uh... a club up in North Dakota offered to uh sell us a couple of sets of curling

stones cheaply. And so... I borrowed Doug Jackson-Smith's ford explorer and you and I drove to North Dakota... Bismarck, North Dakota and picked up- picked up those curling stones. *long pause then a chuckles*

M: All right...

J: And after that it seemed like it could be a pretty cool thing and so I did a road trip with Becca about same age for her... we flew up to, uh or drove up to Oregon to help grandma Sam and grandpa Dave uh with a garage sale and get them help them move into a new home before they got on the road [they moved into a mobile RV around 2005 or 2006]. And with Katie... she and I helped a friend of mine drive a moving truck from North Carolina to San Diego. And Xander's had a couple of little trips, but he could never have a really big trip like that.

M: Well neat, what are some of your favorite memories like, Why did this become a little tradition?

J: Oh well it seemed like a great time for me to spend- spend alone time with my kids... You know, I have wonderful memories of our- you and me travelling up to Bismarck and getting the truck- breaking down in uh Billings, Montana... and, you know, and going to see the largest ground hog- or uh, you know, largest ground hog city in North America. *chuckles*

M: wait so, I have been to Montana?

J: And the infamous- the infamous straw wrapper... Do you remember that night?

M: *chuckles* yeah! *laughs* tell me about that...

J: You and I were sitting in like a Denny's or something and I- uh I wanted to show you how to blow the straw wrapper off your straw so it goes shooting across the table... So I wrapped half my straw and twisted up the end and pointed it at your face and blew... But somehow it was

twisted enough as it was going toward your face it curled up over your shoulder and went and hit a lady in the booth next to us. *laughs*

M: *laughs* Oh man. Good times.

J: Yeah- yep.

M: Very cool

J: You know, I remember just having good times with Becca... Katie and I, we went to Disneyland, so the thing I remember most with her is her over- overcoming her fear of roller coasters there. We went on Space Mountain when it was set up for Halloween... so it was Haunted Space Mountain. But that was a nice trip, too.

M: That's awesome. Yeah. Well, it's a fun tradition.

Texture: At the beginning of the interview call we laughed and joked with each other for several minutes before actually getting into the questions. He was sitting in his favorite armchair and wearing his "old man" glasses he despises so much. It has gotten to the point where he needs them to even see my face as we video chatted with each other. From the angle of the camera I got a perfect view of his "silver chin". He wears is facial hair as a goatee and his wisdom (not age of course) has turned his normally raven black hair to silver with spots of white in the center of his chin. We often tease him about it, but truthfully it is something that endears him even more to us. Throughout the interview he clears his throat a lot, he may have caught a bit of the December bug. During the interview we reminisced about the good ol' times and laughed about the ways we were able to spend time with our dad. As my trip was to North Dakota, you can imagine I was a bit jealous when my youngest sister got to go to Disneyland for her trip. I was a pretty spiteful child and often had to have everything fair and got jealous very easily. It is fun to be able to laugh about it now and look back on my childish ways with humor and growth. I'm so grateful for my Dad and his love for us, and this interview was a great way to connect with him again.

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