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THE BEST DAY & BUBBA

We all know that our families are our most treasured gift. This last father's day my family gave the best gifts ever. Because this day so tickled my funny-bone I wanted to share. It was planned to be a beach conquest! We had reserved our troops a camp-site at Allatoona Beach, procured supplies from our PX (WalMart) to include my favorites Sam's soda, Pringles, corn-o-cob, and all beef dogs.

However, in packing the cooler, I had discovered an unopened package of Bubba Burgers in our downstairs chest freezer. The discovered treasure gave me a smile. I envisioned for the picnic to bring a table-top Webber Go-Anywhere gas grill (the most fabulous invention), to grill our corn-o-cob in the husks and then grill Bubba's for the grownups and the dogs for the kids.

The day was warm. The kids, their grandmother (my mom), and our 90ish great-grandmother made up the invading troops. We had no sooner began the Allatoona campaign that many of our troops became nauseated. We thus assembled our "First-Up" portable gazebo from "Wally's" (also fabulous). Unfortunately, the thing has a green top-cover, and quickly began to absorb more solar-energy that it ever shaded. A biochemist could detail how this color of green perfectly absorbs the maximum photosynthetic energy.

Under the gazebo was well above the 100° heat of the direct sun. After only thirty minutes, the entire clan began to feel sick. While nobody wanted to say-it, the Allatoona beach was a bust. Somebody had to speak. I asked what if we could take our picnic back home. Without hesitation the entire set-up was re-assembled into the car (AC at full force).

I was disappointed. Father's day is supposed to be the ultimate man's holiday. However, our troops were in full retreat. At least we will not be vomiting. I was not all sad to trade the lawn-chair for my favorite couch.

When we arrived home, I was stationed on the couch, while the troops unpacked the car. My wife (mommy), nanna, and the kids said they had to run an errand. I had no idea what could possibly be needed. I was wondering if the troops were secretly going AWOL. Given the

circumstances, perhaps the best way to salvage the day was to nap.

When roused from my nap, dinner was served. The husks of the corn-o-cob had been sufficiently charred to predict their readiness. The Bubba's were ready to come off the grill. I was invited by the troops to take my place for the festivities. Never had the meal tasted so fine. Grilling the corn in the husk somehow releases the sugars and produces a taste the boiled product cannot equal. With butter and salt it is an elegant sufficiency all its own. Then came the Bubbas. Wow, never had they tasted so good. Thicker than usual. I kept commenting on how glad I was that I had found the Bubba Burgers, and on and on. Finally the troops started laughing uncontrollably. I asked what was so funny?

Momma confessed. When they opened my found treasured Bubbas (I was so proud of) apparently they were left-over from the last fourth of July. Since then the house power had gone out during various winter storms for long enough to thaw and re-freeze more than a few. Momma then laughed that my beloved Bubbas had turned gray and crumbled as she removed them from the package. Very much not like my usual Bubbas. Nobody had the heart to tell me. They snuck out to the store for more Bubbas but the delight was sold out. Top ground sirloin was the only choice. Mixed with Momma's and Nanna's special love, I had been fooled. These were not Bubba Burgers but Momma Burgers.

Not only had the trick worked, I was overwhelmed with gratitude. My family was so concerned for my feelings that they tried to even surpass the Bubba without letting me in on their extra work. The gesture actually made my eyes well-up and my throat grew a lump for a few minutes. Although Bubba makes great burgers, momma's burgers were never finer. I will always be grateful for this last father's day.

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