

## The Good Life

*By Hap Hansen*

Becoming a grandparent means a lot of things. It means pride. It means responsibility. It is something that moves me frequently. But most of all, it means getting even! Getting even with your kids for all those times they stayed out late and didn't call. Getting even for all those times they ate too much candy and got sick on your shag carpeting. Grandparents get even with their kids by spoiling grandchildren when we are babysitting. How? By giving them too much candy, in their parents home of course. By letting them stay up to watch the nine o'clock spooky movie on a school night. And by justifying all those events under the guise of 'Grandchild Education.'

Speaking for this grandparent, it gives me great pleasure and moves me to hear my daughter say, "Dad, you know these kids can't stay up that late on a school night!" And I say, "Yes, Honey, I know. It won't happen again." But both of us know that it will happen again, over and over and over. It's fun to spoil grandkids, because I don't have to suffer the consequences! It may take my daughter a few days of listening and whining and complaining and hearing, "Gramps lets me do that, why don't you?" before she gets her child straightened out. Just the thought of what she's going through gives me a lot of pleasure. And I'm getting even in a pleasant way. At least it's pleasant for me! I know my father got even with me in a similar way. As his father did with him. And as my daughter will do with her kids after she becomes a grandparent.

Getting even with one's adult children in those small ways has probably been occurring for generations. The difficulty is in making sure one's child is in a quandary about what it is the grandparent is doing. Grandparents cannot come right out and say, "I'm getting even with you for what you pulled on me when you were a kid." No, grandparents must play the getting-even game straight-up, straight-faced and straight-on. Usually our kids won't know until their children have children. Then, the light comes on! They realize what you have done and make their own 'getting even' plans.

Who's the winner? Why, the grandchildren, of course. They get a little extra candy, a little more loving and a little more time with grandparents. It's a wonderful game.