

## Family Fun with Dad

*By Marilyn Reeves*

Dad wasn't a particularly handsome man. He was tall, skinny and wiry, but deceptively strong. Multi-skilled, multi-talented, he was the smartest man I've ever known. He was also multi-faceted: normally friendly and outgoing, he could also be quite serious at times. He was never mean, but occasionally he could be quite stern.

And, like so many fathers, Dad was so busy trying to make a living to support his family that he had little time to actually spend *with* the family. He worked six days a week – Monday through Saturday – in his sporting goods store in downtown Salida. When he wasn't waiting on customers, he was running down to the basement to grab boxes of merchandise to restock the shelves, or crawling around in the front windows rearranging the displays. Or he was working on the books – the income and outgo of the business – or writing up orders for new items to sell. About the only time he was able to rest was on Sundays.

During the summer months, he would often skip church and take the family up to the mountains. There he would spend hours indulging in his favorite pastime: fishing!

Dad was an expert fly fisherman. He would stand on the shore of a high mountain lake, casting his line out again and again, watching it sail high up into the air, farther and farther out across the water, until he finally caught a Rainbow. At other times he would pull on his waders and stand in the center of a rushing stream till he caught a creel full of brookies to take home for supper.

But during the winter months when the fish weren't biting, sometimes he'd have a bit of time to spend with the family.

One of my favorite memories was when he would join the rest of us in a game of Monopoly. If he had houses and hotels built up on Broadway or Park Place, he would mercilessly gloat as one of his hapless victims landed on his property and had to pay the rent. He would grin a wolfish grin, cackle like a warlock, and rub his hands together like a miser. But if he happened to draw the card that said 'Go to Jail – Go Directly to Jail – Do Not Pass Go – Do Not Collect \$200' he would howl and carry on as if he'd been mortally wounded, making the rest of us laugh so hard we nearly fell out of our chairs!

My dad was a serious man, a hard-working man. Yet those times when he let his hair down, he could be so much fun!

How I miss those times we spent together, so many years ago. But they still live on, stored away in the back of my mind, as part of the precious memories of my childhood.