

dogs & grandkids

Grandkids and dogs make most of us smile, especially if you have one or the other—or both. I have a friend who says he doesn't want to hear about someone else's grandkids; to him it is just blah, blah, blah. However, he does love to tell you about "Deakie," his English Lab. Have you ever heard about a guy who chews the food for the dog before he gives it to him? Or, treats such a big dog like a lap dog? Can you say oxymoron? He can regale you with tales of the dog as though it was an actual grandchild. He beams and smiles every time he talks about Deak. You know, blah, blah, blah.

Now that you know one man's grandchild is another man's Deak, let me tell you about my grandkids and how they make me smile. Hopefully, the stories will make you smile as well. Like I said, kids and dogs make most of us smile.

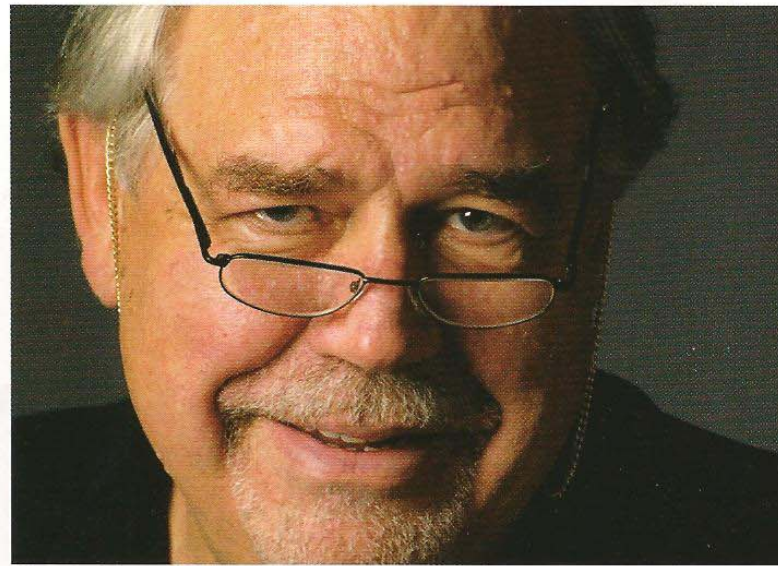
First there is Olivia. She (like every grandfather's grandkids) is a beautiful, bright little girl—a 7-year-old first-grader who loves to learn, talk and ask questions. As a 5-year-old, Olivia was shopping with her folks at a retailer. At the checkout desk, the clerk asked Olivia how she was doing. Olivia thought for a moment and then responded, "Not so good. I have gas, and I have pooters" (passing gas). The clerk, certainly not expecting that response, replied, "That's nice," to which Olivia responded, "No it isn't. You don't want to get pooters because people won't want to be around you!"

Olivia's brother, Jack, has a great imagination and is the king of "why?" He loves Hot Wheels cars and the Disney movie, "Cars." Once he announced that he had changed his

name to "Hot Wheels" because it was cool. A month later, after receiving a Superman shirt and cap, he decided that his name was now to be changed to, you got it, Superman. When he moves, the "S" on his shirt flashes on and off. When asked the reason for the flashing "S," he responded that the people who he was going to save had to know he was coming. This past Thanksgiving, Jack was given a Harley-Davidson jacket, which caused him to change his name one more time to "Harley motorcycle guy." When asked about why he changed his name so often, Jack responded, "Grandpa, 'why' is my question!"

Finally, Charlotte wants to be a princess. She was a princess for Halloween last October, and her commitment to living out her dream is apparently strong. So much so, that her Mom and Dad are concerned because she wore her costume every day for more than two months afterwards. She regularly "poofs" her baby sister, her parents, and anyone in range because that is, as she will tell you, what princesses do. She adds, "You should know that Grandpa!"

Charlotte has taken being a princess to a new level. The day before Janet and I planned to visit, we heard that she was protesting the idea of getting her first hair-



cut. When we arrived the following day, we were greeted by Charlotte, who was wearing a pair of tights on her head. She was apparently creatively protesting the cutting of her hair, making certain that she remained an authentic "long-haired princess."

As I write, these real stories make me smile. To paraphrase Twain, "Grandchildren pleasantly remind adults of what they were themselves, and of how they felt and thought and talked, and what queer enterprises they sometimes engaged in."

While I love dogs, I am not certain they have the same impact, but I don't think I'll be able to convince Deakie's owner of that. At least I don't have to chew my grandkids' food for them.

Fred Kusch is owner of JFK Associates and the Growth Coach. For more information, please call (608) 787-5771 or visit www.jfkassociates.com.