

# Smiley now knows why mothers sigh in relief after Labor Day

Now I know why mothers are terrified about teachers going on strike in September, which our particular loonies had planned to do, after waiting more than a year for an agreement with the Board.

Actually, I was rather looking forward to it. I've never been on strike, and thought it might be an interesting experience. I half looked forward to marching up and down with a placard, proclaiming something like "Down with the Board!" then slamming the board on which the placard was nailed to the ground, while the TV cameras ground. But 'twas not to be. The Board ground on like a deaf computer and the teachers scuttled for eight per cent, after dire threats from both sides.

I know there are too many "boards" and "grounds" in the last paragraph, but it's a hot day, and I'm ground almost into the ground by the presence of my grand-

boys.

That's why I know the reason mothers have a huge sigh of relief on the day after Labor Day, probably mix themselves a stiff martini, and go flop in front of the TV set to watch a soap opera. Their kids have gone back to school.

Not that we parents and grandparents don't love our offspring. I am almost in tears with affection when I've told them their last story at night, kiss them, and watch them go out like a burnt-out bulb.

Mornings are a little different. I'm grumpy. They can't find their shoes. They are as fussy as Hollywood actresses about which shirt goes with which pants, and who owns which shirt, and why did Gran put in the wash their favorite shorts. They think they should have lunch-pails, instead of plastic bags.

One wants mustard on his baloney sandwich; the other doesn't. One wants mayonnaise on his lettuce; the other doesn't. They both want peanut butter and honey sandwiches five days a week, and wife for breakfast.

If I never saw a peanut butter and honey sandwich after the boys have gone, I think I might retain my sanity. But I'm not sure. I dream about them now.

The peanut butter jar has just enough left for one sandwich. The honey jar is empty. There is no bread left. And there I am, in my nightmare, knife poised to make a p-and-h sandwich on my bare hands, cut off the hands and stuff them in lunch bags. I wonder what a psychiatrist would think of that?

It's not just the food, although our grocery bill has tripled since they arrived. It's the unpredictability.

Yesterday, after much pleading, I let them walk home from summer camp, which includes crossing a busy street. I got home rather late and found Gran in a state of mild shock.

Balrod, six, who needs only pointed ears and cloven hooves to make him what he is, walked in the back door and calmly told his Gran: "Nikov got runned over by a car." She, of course went into orbit. He grinned, and Nikov, grinning even more hugely, walked in the door.

Later the same day, after Nikov had declared they were hungry and fried two eggs each (dinner was to have been salad and cold boiled eggs) we had the usual evening sports.

This consists of kicking a soccer ball, or hitting a tennis ball or a baseball at Granddad, who is now in a state where he

finches when a mosquito comes near him; but it took a new turn.

Gran, having given up on dinner after the eggs fiasco, ventured into the backyard, lately becoming known as The Slaughterhouse. She should have stood in bed, as Kingfish Levinsky once remarked after Joe Louis pulverized him in one round.

They made up a new game. Gran was given a plastic tennis racket, worth about \$1.50, seated at the picnic table, and the two boys, from different angles, kicked soccer balls at her.

There was a certain amount of sadism in the game, because she had made them have a bath, wash their hair, put down the toilet seat gently instead of crashingly, and all those other things that make boys want to kill their grandmother.

She acquitted herself gamely for about 10 minutes, until the tennis racket was in shreds. But nobody can withstand two hard soccer balls, kicked with vehemence, from two different directions, for long. I had to break it up while she was still conscious.

Took them in and gave them a strong lecture. Would little boys in Africa try to kick their Gran to death? Would little boys in Africa whine about which top to wear with which shorts? Would little boys in Africa complain because their baloney and lettuce sandwiches were all crumpled up from being sat on and thrown around?

They were properly ashamed, because they're always being told about the starving little boys in Africa. So we all went to bed, and I told them about how Grandad won World War II single-handedly, their favorite story.

## Halton Women's Place

### Temporary aid

Homeless women, abused or not, can now look to Halton Women's Place for temporary help.

Members of the Region's health and social services and administration and finance committees approved changes to an agreement with the home allowing them to receive subsidies for non-abused women they shelter.

The changes to the home's purchase of service agreement with the Region allows them to provide temporary shelter to homeless women when there are vacancies in the two-year-old facility in Milton.

Other changes to the agreement approved by the committee increase the maximum stay for a woman with children to two weeks from five days.

In a staff report, social services director Debbie Oakley said the change was being recommended

because five days just wasn't long enough for women to arrange proper accommodation.

The maximum stay for single women was increased to five days from three days.

Sue Davie, president of the agency's board of directors, said the changes to the agreement were simply formalizing something they have been doing for most of this year.

"It's something that has been in place here for quite awhile. We have always taken in a few housing clients, as long as we have the room for them," she said in a telephone interview.

Mrs. Davie said there are periods during the year when the occupancy of the home dips slightly, but demand for space has generally been high.

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