

## Teacher Ted Engels

# He survives 18 years with sense of humor

By BRIAN MacLEOD  
Herald Staff

Eighteen years of teaching at Georgetown District High School has brought Ted Engels to appreciate a good sense of humor. Throughout the 1970s and '80s Mr. Engels taught math to umpteen numbers of willing and some not-so-willing students.

But Mr. Engels saw that part of his life draw to a close in January when he retired from teaching. He recalled a few of the finer points of teaching from his Delrex Boulevard home recently.

seventies. That year the cafeteria and library were being added to the building and teachers were strapped for room while the additions were completed. "I can remember teaching in the old teacher's lunch room with pneumatic drills going and plaster falling all over the students," Mr. Engels said.

He talked fondly of the seventies and the prankster students that roamed the hallways of GDHS.

"I was sitting at my desk and a student came in and kissed me on the head. He said the rest of the class put him up to it," chuckled the

"It was really great for a while until it got out of hand."

"I can remember one girl who recently showed up (as a Sunshine) girl in the (Toronto) Sun. She told me one day as she stomped out of the classroom, 'Go get a hair cut.'"

Other potentially fiery incidents were defused when students saw ways to take a friendly dig at a teacher.

On another occasion Mr. Engels observed a student scribbling away while he was teaching. Obviously numbers were not the subject of the student's pen so Mr. Engels straddled down the aisle to see what was up. The student had drawn a caricature of his math teacher. Mr. Engels still

has the caricature - carefully preserved and one day to be framed.

Even during lessons, students sense of humor often stood out.

"One day I was going through a problem and I was asking the steps. I got to one line and I said (to a student) what's the next step. He thought for a moment and said 'Pray.' I thought I was going to fall off my chair," Mr. Engels said.

When Mr. Engels joined the staff of about 65 teachers and a compliment of about 1,200 students in 1969, he could not have had an inkling of how things would change. In its peak, the high school employed 100 teachers with a student population of about 1,600.

He recalled one student - Dave Clarke - who rang up a perfect 100 in Calculus one year.

"That was pretty impressive to me. You really have to be impressed with the academic effort put forth in the school," he said.

He credits former principal Mike Furlong with making sure the school was progressive. Mr. Furlong, along with John Moore, were instrumental in ensuring a successful computer program, said Mr. Engels.

The staff of GDHS made Mr. Engels years in teaching memorable ones.

"Like Mike Furlong used to say, it's not the best staff in the world but it's certainly one of the best."



**FUNNY TIMES** - After 18 years of teaching, Ted Engels can still look back with a sense of humor, recalling pranks by students and their fun-

ny one-liners. One student was asked what the next step was in a math formula. The confused pupil replied "pray." (Herald photo)

Mr. Engels joined the ranks of the teaching profession in 1960, hired over the phone by then principal Mike Furlong. When I first started in '69 there was a great shortage of teachers at the time. Mike hired me over the phone before I had even graduated," Engels recalled.

The hardware salesman turned teacher had returned to school after 23 years to learn math at McMaster University.

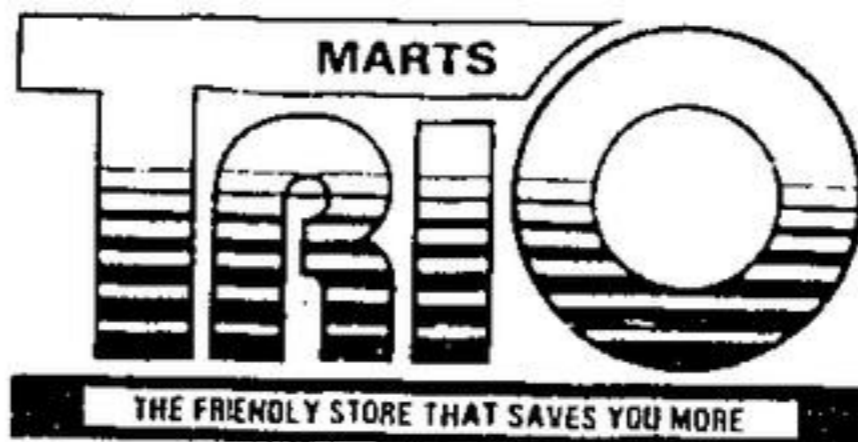
Mr. Engels started teaching at GDHS in the days of six periods a day - before the semester system introduced by Mr. Furlong in the

holding ex-math teacher

Mr. Engels was one of the first to fall victim to the infamous teacher kidnappings. Grade 13 students made it a habit upon the approach of graduation to kidnap several teachers from their classes. He still has the letter, which reads "You have been chosen. Today is the day." The letter was signed, "The Boss."

"They blindfolded you and took you out in the car. They took you through the car wash," Mr. Engels explained.

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