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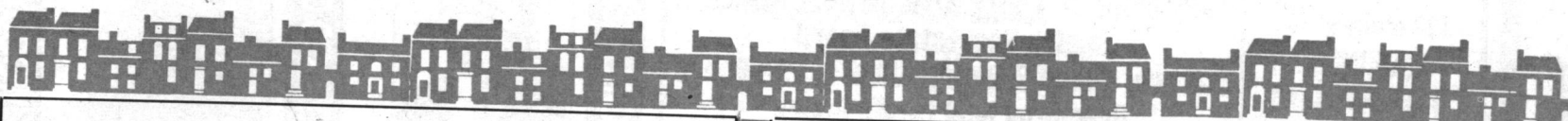
By Margaret Vint
 Just a few short months ago we were looking forward to the arrival of summer. People were talking about vacations, gardening, things to do to occupy the children during the school break, etc. Most of us probably thinking the same thing - let's hope the weather is much better than it was last year. The long awaited summer finally arrived and with it, thankfully, some really great weather. It's hard to believe that these hot sunny days we've been enjoying will soon be a memory.

Now that August is here, a popular topic of conversation is 'back to school'. Many of us can be overheard asking a child "are you looking forward to going back to school?" Whether the reply is yes or no, we tend to follow up with a second question - "why / why not". Needless to say a wide variety of reasons are given.

August can be a busy month for parents as they get ready for school. They have many things to think about and usually develop a list of 'things to do' before school begins. Last week when I visited a friend she was just finishing her list of 'things they need'. Whether you have sons or daughters, I'm sure many of you can relate to the following. Speaking of her daughter who happens to "hate trying things on" she told me she cleaned out her clothes a couple of weeks ago and kept quite a lot of things. She was positive they'd still fit because her daughter didn't look like she'd grown much this year. To cut a long story short, she did try them on and almost none fit. "I really didn't think she'd grown that much over the summer!". She went on to tell me where she planned to do her shopping. We both laughed as we

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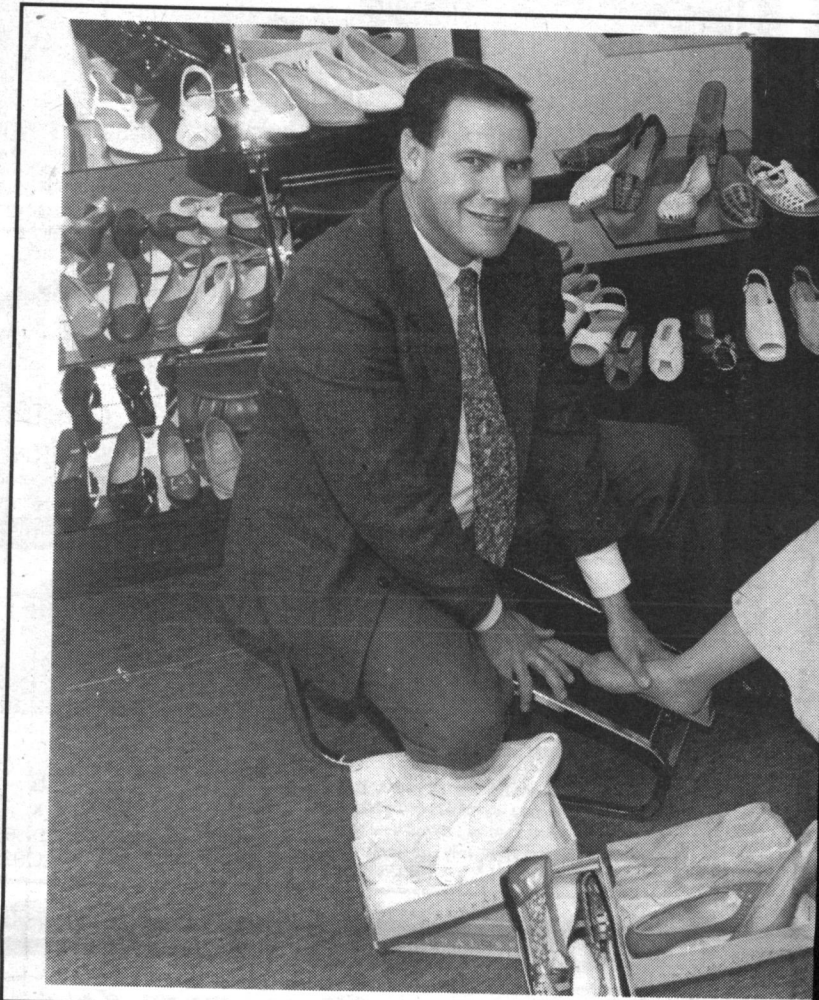
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