

# SUGAR AND SPICE

by Bill Smiley



## The Perfect High School

Virtually everybody these days is upset about our educational system. The public schools are not teaching the urchins to read, write and figger. The high schools are massive, seething factories turning out illiterates. The colleges are septic tanks of sex, marijuana and LSD.

Most of this is pure poppy-cock, of course, but a critical society is a healthy one, according to Hugh Durnit, that great Welsh bard and beatnik of the eleventh century. This makes Canadians about the healthiest critters in the hemisphere.

Columnists aver that high schools are run like military camps, producing lock-step conformists who haven't learned to think. This is patent baloney. They think one helluva lot more than did these same columnists, when they came out of Hayfork Centre with not much more than a burning desire to get away from said centre, a lousy basic education, and a shiny blue serge suit.

high school. It's probably just an oversight, and because I'm not a pushy type. But who is better qualified? I've been to high school myself, I work in the blasted factory every day, and I have a daughter who comes home every day and moans, "Do I ever hate school!"

Well, here goes. Don't panic, now. The changes would be slight and inexpensive. I think we'd all enjoy life more, students, parents and teachers.

First of all, let's cut out the muttered, mumbled morning prayer. I believe in prayer and practise it quite often (usually when I'm in a jam). But it's almost sacrilege in the way it's delivered. The R.C.'s whizz through it and leave out the last part. The Jews and atheists are silent. The teacher winds up leading three or four dogged Protestants who aren't always sure of the words.

Next, out goes The Queen. While I am a royalist, and have the utmost respect for Queen Elizabeth, I see no reason 30-odd

Lots of parents, and some teachers, are of the opposite opinion: that there is far too much freedom of speech, dress and action, too many frills, not enough good hard work and good hard punishment. These comments come from parents who worked one-quarter as hard in school as their kids do, and teachers who atrophied some years ago.

The kids themselves, depending on home background, their own personalities, and their talent, or lack of it, look on school as a jail or a ball. Some think of it rather like having a ball in a jail.

School boards beef about the cost of everything, and the administration beefs about the shortage of everything and the teachers beef about the paper jungle and the custodians beef about the salaries and the hours and the teachers and the administration and the school board.

You might think, from all this nagging, that there are some slight imperfections in our high schools. And you might be right. But it's not as bad as it sounds.

What I can't understand is that I haven't been approached for a definition of the perfect

teen-agers should be submitted, every morning, to a pompous and bad piece of music, the words of which have no more relation to their world than does the horse and buggy.

How would you like to go to the factory, or the office, and stand at attention while a tape-recorded band blares out one of these awful tunes, before you got down to serious business, like waiting for the coffee break?

In place of these, I would suggest a warm-up period. We're all pretty dang doggy first thing in the morning. The class cut-up would be master of ceremonies. Witty sayings, announcements, brief weather report. Some Beatles and Bob Dylan and the Rolling Stones. An original poem or song from the students. If a girl has Go-Go boots, let her demonstrate a new dance. Probably on the teacher's desk.

By this time everybody is friendly, warmed-up. The real learning atmosphere has been created. But unfortunately, I have run out of space. Read next week's column for a further thrilling instalment on The Perfect High School.

Toronto Telegram News Service

You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fears; as young as your hope, as old as your despair.

- St. George's Bulletin

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- Minnows
- Advanced Beginners

- Juniors
- Intermediates
- Seniors

- Royal Life Classes
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