

## Are our teachers deserving of respect?

(This article originally appeared in the Windsor Star on April 4, 1987. It has been reprinted with permission. With all the school issues that have happened in our area in the past, perhaps you will find it interesting- and maybe even enlightening.)

Karen Hall

People are still grumbling about the settlement the teachers got (in Windsor). Not me. I like teachers. I think they've got the toughest job in the world, and no amount of money- no amount of time off- is compensation enough for what they do.

You say they got a whole pile of money and some didn't deserve it? I agree. I've met some pretty lousy educators in my day. Some pretty lousy doctors and lawyers and journalists, too, so don't be throwing stones. You may hit someone you love.

Maybe I sympathize with teachers because I always wanted to be one. When I was growing up it was a noble profession. You may have hated some teachers, feared others, but there was always one who made a difference.

Always one along the way who respected your abilities, made you want to learn, gave you the confidence to think you could become a big person and achieve just about anything you wanted.

Maybe that's not a great battling average form some people, considering how many teachers a kid will have from start to finish. I had lots of teachers I yearned to please, but one would have been

plenty for me.

In this world, just having one mentor you like and respect is a blessing, so it seems a little unrealistic to expect all teachers to be all things to all students at all times. Flesh-and-blood parents aren't, for heaven's sake.

Teachers today are in a no-win situation. Years ago they didn't make much money, but they had respect. A good teacher was a community treasure; right up there with the minister, the GP and the parish priest.

Funny thing about educators, though. They decided they should be rewarded, not penalized, for undertaking to mould impressionable young minds. They decided they should enjoy a decent standard of living. They started getting militant like the rest of us organized, unionized folks- make it clear they were not just volunteers in this quest for knowledge- and that was the beginning of the end.

The community was appalled. Imagine those teachers thinking they could be forceful and demanding, just like normal people. Then going out on the picket line like half the parents of half the pupils in their class. Such nerve!

So now teachers make good money. Damned good money, and yes, they get the summers off, too. That's part of the deal. Be a teacher and you'll get your summers too. Respect? Sadly, teachers seem lacking in this department these days. Lots of parents don't like them. Plenty of kids won't mind them.

In some schools you can't even

put the fear of God into an eight year-old (even sanctimonious parents have been known to try this tact when all else fails), and if you teach in Detroit, you probably wouldn't try. Never mind teaching kids to read and write. Teachers over there are otherwise preoccupied by the nagging fear they may get their brains blown out for their efforts.

Crazy, isn't it? A baseball player on a losing team thinks money is the measure of his worth and nobody bats an eye. And when he

doesn't get the money he wants he goes to arbitration, gets a couple of million bucks, emerges a hero.

But what does a teacher with 35 young charges- and all the parents, and all the policies, and all the out-of-touch superintendents mired in paperwork down at the board- get?

Surely no thanks for running the school bazaar or coaching the basketball team. Never a pat on the back for going in early and staying late because some kids need extra time and attention.

The teachers I know get some guy next door- always the one racking in double overtime for pulling a neat little three-day shift- complaining because he works the March break and teachers don't.

I wonder what parents want from teachers? Each wants his or her kid to get a made-to-measure education, but nobody wants to foot the bill for it. Each wants teachers to go beyond the basics of reading and writing and be innovative, inspiring and stimulating.

Yet how many parents, tired

themselves after a full day at work, dump their kids in front of the tube and never inspire at all?

Parents want teachers to be on top of things, then begrudge them their paid professional development days. "Now I have to make other arrangements," they'll grumble, as if the sole reason for school was to act as a babysitting service.

Parents want teachers to instill values like decency, morality and responsibility, but howl if they think educators have gone too far.

Parents even expect teachers to become masters of etiquette and turn their children into polite little beings, but they do not expect them to achieve any of these miracles through discipline. That, they say, is not a teacher's job.

What is? Everything else.

I suppose teachers could say they'll just teach the three Rs and leave it at that. No bazaars, no extracurricular activities, no time for the kids with special needs. They could say their job is to make learning available, and it's up to the kids to take it or leave it.

They could let parents take responsibility for their own children; for inspiring them, stimulating them, teaching them the non-academic subjects like honour and respect.

Fortunately, I don't know many teachers like that, and I'm proud to say I know a lot of them.

If most parents gave half the time and effort to their craft as teachers give to their kids, there'd be no such thing as apathy in the workplace.

## New trades centre in Marathon

### North Shore residents to receive trades training centre

The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines will provide a \$250,000 grant toward the construction and equipment of a \$600,000 trades training centre at Marathon, announced David Ramsay, parliamentary assistant to the minister, David Peterson.

"This centre will operate as an extension campus of Confederation College of Applied Arts and Technology. Based in Thunder Bay, it is part of the government's commitment to equip Northerners with the skills to use tomorrow's technology in business and industry," Ramsay said.

The centre will be built as an addition to Marathon's future high school now in the planning stage.

The Lake Superior school board will contribute \$41,000 toward the facility and the Ministries of Education and Colleges and Universities will provide \$309,000.

The campus will deliver post-secondary training in fields such as electronics, metalworking, heavy equipment mechanics and computers.

## Legion News

The regular monthly meeting of the Legion Auxiliary Branch 223 was held on May 25 with 14 members present.

There will be an executive meeting on June 15 at 7:30 p.m.

Pam Jones will be convening a Father's Day Tea on Sunday, June 21 from 2-4 p.m.

A variety of delicious pies will be served. There will also be a collectors' corner at the tea. Peoples from the community will be taking part.

The auxiliary is giving a donation to Shawn Prince who will be taking part in the Cerebral Palsy Olympics.

Also a donation is going to the Annual Legion Athletic Summer camps. This is to help with the transportation cost for some of our boys and girls who will be attending.

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