

If board and union were students, parents would be called in for interview

There's something about grabbing a pot and a wooden spoon and running off to take part in a raucous labor demonstration that goes against the grain for some people.

Especially when you're a committed educator who believes that one of the "outcomes" of the current

Outcome Based Learning initiative should be the emergence of students equipped to deal effectively with life's inevitable conflicts. But with the arduous contract squabble that's been going on lately between the elementary

teachers and the school board in York Region, my wife Susan is afraid the example being set is hardly exemplary. You won't find Susan on a soap box delivering the standard party line about teachers working harder than any-

one else on the entire planet save perhaps members of a Louisiana chain gang.

And she's secure enough to admit that teachers don't have a monopoly on putting in extra time in this age of workplace upheaval.



From where I live

Bruce Stapley

Besides, she acknowledges, a seven and a half hour school day, weekends off and almost three months away from the job each year help balance the scale.

However, that's not to suggest Susan is a pawn of the school board. Like most teachers, she's far from impressed with the way they've handled themselves during the current negotiations, and sometimes wonders just what kind of a game the board is playing. The bottom line for her is that the two sides are both reliant on the same public purse for their sustenance, so they should be able to work together as opposed to going at each other like kids arguing over who gets the bigger cookie.

A recent union bulletin proclaimed in capital letters that all teachers were to attend a protest rally at the board office and were to bring along noisemakers. Susan just shook her head and wondered what would happen if her own students, or their parents, came equipped with klaxons and kazoos to debate her on a teaching decision to which they took exception. For her, preparing students for today's world revolves around the concept of effective, non-confrontational problem solving. That applies equally to a math question or a school-yard disagreement.

If she were to give a report card on the performance of the parties involved in negotiating the current dispute, Susan might have to call both parents in for an interview, but of course, as always, everyone has "the best interests of the children at heart." Heaven help the children.

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