

their test mistakes at home. Such improvement might be noticed, but is not likely to be reflected on a report card.

Rewarding students for their work has been discussed in an earlier issue of *Perspectives*, but Dr. Thomas Fagan says, "Lavish rewards are not necessary. Simple praise is often just as effective."

Finally, Kutner writes, "Variations in grades from course to course are to be expected from any child. Treat a significant drop in grades in several courses, however, as a warning sign that something may be wrong."

Here are just a couple of additions to Kutner's list. Report card grades (and test grades) are not created equal. There are chapters in some textbooks which are more difficult than others. A slight drop in test, and therefore report card, grades might be expected. Also, there are times when a teacher might change the format of tests. Maybe the teacher felt that a different style of test would cover the material which was studied a bit better, or perhaps there was not time to produce a test so the publisher's test had to be used. Changes, for

the better or the worse, could be expected under such conditions.

As a final addition, report card grades might also reflect certain personal interests of students. A student who loathes studying about flowers and trees, or some other topic, might also see his grades decline.

Certainly, report cards should not be the only means of communication between parents and teachers. Attention should be given to the daily papers which are brought home. Obviously, this is far more applicable in the elementary grades than in the higher grade levels, but, still, inspecting such daily papers should prevent "report card shock" brought on by an unexpected turn for the worse.

Professors, teachers, students, and parents will continue to discuss the merits and shortcomings of report cards for some time to come. As we listen to the discussion, however, do you recognize that small manila envelope protruding from Tom Sawyer's back pocket at the end of this school day? What does it say about Tom, and what will Aunt Polly's reaction be? ■■■

School Memories

The above is a new rubric. What we have in mind for it is short anecdotes (or even longer summaries) of school life, submitted by our readers. The stories may be humorous, or more

*serious; they may be from years long past, or of more recent occurrence. Just think back over your years in the classroom — either as a student or as a teacher — and if you can recall an incident that would be of interest to our readers, please take a little time to write it down and send it to the editor of **Perspectives**.*

I recall that one of my high school English teachers, a Mr. VanderMey, was attempting to demonstrate to us a particular error in reasoning. He said something to this effect: "Suppose I have three children. I find that the first one is something of a crybaby. The second one comes along and he's also a crybaby. Then the third, and lo he's a crybaby too. May I conclude that all children are crybabies?" A quick-witted student replied, "No, that just means that all VanderMeys are crybabies."

To this day I chuckle over that one (the teacher did too, by the way). And it wasn't anything all that important. There must be hundreds of incidents like that, stored somewhere in the memories of our readers. So why don't you do a little probing, see what you can come up with, and then share it with the rest of us.

For this issue we solicited a few, personally. And we got a nice variety — two longer, summary-type stories, and two of the short, anecdote variety. Read and enjoy — and then see if you can top them.

MY SCHOOL REPORT

John M. Faber

My schooling started in a little town by the name of Jamestown, some miles southwest of Grand Rapids. I was five years old when I was enrolled in the first grade. In those days there was no kindergarten class in a country school. So, there I was, in the first grade, ready and eager to have the experience of schooling like my older brothers and sisters had had before me. I cannot remember

much of those early years, but I do remember that it was a two-room school with four grades in each room. That made it easy to "learn above" one's own grade by listening to recitations of the older ones. Looking back, it was that "listening in" business that made it possible for me to skip a whole grade later on so as to finish my seven years of schooling while still only twelve years old.

Finish my schooling? Yes, it was necessary for all school children to have an eighth grade education, so as to be ready for world knowledge we might need in our grownup lives.

A freebie I picked up along the way was the ability to read upside-down printing. That was because I was a lucky kid who sat in the front seat of the row. That seat had the desk upon which the teacher sometimes placed his book, and the challenge to read his lesson material could not be resisted. Looking back, I realize that that was not cribbing — for the answers were not in his book — but it was an avid curiosity, that virtue which draws one on to learn lots of things. I'm glad that I never lost it.

My first six years of schooling were in the public school; the seventh, and last, was in the Byron Center Christian School, which opened its doors for the first time that September. My parents were glad that I could have at least one year under a Christian teacher with Christian textbooks.

After my graduation from the eighth grade, two of my fellow students were given the opportunity to start a ninth grade. But that lasted for a scant month, because we had to stay home to help harvest the onion and celery crops. I am not too sure that the teacher was qualified to teach

ninth grade because I remember that when he was teaching about the parts of a triangle he called the hypotenuse a hippa tenoosie. It's funny how the mis-pronouncing of a word can stick in a fellow's memory for seventy years.

But the fact that I could not attend a ninth grade because of farm work did not quench my thirst for a higher education. From magazine ads I learned that one could take a high school course by mail. I enrolled in such a correspondence course, and did all my studying in my upstairs bedroom, during the evenings, while all the other kids were playing outside in the summer, and around the kitchen table in the winter. Those around-the-kitchen-table games were dominoes, Old Maid, Flinch, and, later, Rook.

At any rate, I finished my study of algebra and geometry without much trouble. But when it came to trigonometry I got lost. That horrible branch of math was just too much for me to handle, with my school master far away in Chicago. He wasn't even a person to me, and I could not relate to such a teacher as one can in school. But I realized that, though it was fun to learn all that, I could not see where I could reap any fruit from such labors.

So I enrolled in another corres-

pondence course called "Automotive Engineering." No, I did not aspire to become an automotive engineer, but I had to sign up for the whole course in order to cover the first part which taught car repair. That course bore the fruit that I landed a job in a garage on Eastern Avenue in Grand Rapids. While I was working there the country got caught up in "The Great Depression." That was a time when men got laid off from their jobs, especially the unmarried men, who had to give way to married men with families to support.

Then I got a job driving for a cookie company and soon realized that was not to be my "thing" for a life-time occupation. Coming into contact with a veteran in the Post Office I was advised by him to try out for the P.O. Exam. Well, that usually required a high school education, which I lacked. But I took it anyway. And because of my seven grades of

formal schooling and my correspondence courses, I passed the exam with a high mark, seventh from the top. That made me eligible immediately, and it was the start of my thirty years of delivering the mail in Grand Rapids.

Besides that secular education I received which bore the fruit of obtaining a life vocation, I have enjoyed a spiritual education. That was received at my mother's knees, in catechism class, in Bible study societies in the church, in Sunday school classes, and in the Teachers' Meetings under the instruction of a well-qualified superintendent. Its fruits were more intangible, but the immediate fruits were that I, myself, might be privileged to teach in each of the above-mentioned places. And although I cannot find Scriptural proof for it, I believe I shall reap additional fruit in my eternal life in heaven.

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SNOWBALLING IN REDLANDS

John Kalsbeek, Jr.

Yes, believe it or not, snowballing was and probably still is, alive and well in Redlands, California.

Although it seldom snows in Redlands, there is snow in the mountains from November through early spring.

Several times each year some of that mountain snow mysteriously appeared on the Hope Christian School yard. You didn't need to be a detective to solve the mystery. The next morning was a giveaway. A couple of the kids always arrived with mittens

SCHOOL MEMORIES

or gloves on while all the others came barehanded as usual. Those with gloves knew that their older brothers had used their pick-up to transport the mountain snow to the school yard.

The throwing of this snow on the school yard always impressed

our little four-year-old son, Dan. He was born in Redlands. One Sunday morning we actually woke up to find a light covering of snow on our yard. When Dan saw it, his immediate question was, "Who threw it there?" ■■■

THE ALBERT FLYTRAP

John Kalsbeek, Sr.

Capturing flies has been a favorite pastime for budding scholars of many generations. One of the most interesting cases of fly-catching of which I am aware dates back to the year 1925 at Byron Center Christian School. Our teacher, Mr. Dewey Westra, would certainly desire no credit for it, but my fellow sixth grader, Albert, would. I vividly remember Albert's frantic gestures as he attempted to

obtain, and finally did get, my undivided attention; and then the satisfied look on his face after he opened his mouth to allow the escape of a captured fly. Needless to say, many an unsuspecting fly, who had the distinct misfortune of gaining entrance into the upper grade room of B.C.C.S. the rest of that year, was treated to the same mouth-watering experience. ■■■

MEMORIES OF SCHOOL

Peter Koole

My elementary school days began in the late 20's and ended in the 30's. I attended the old Baldwin Street Christian School (Grand Rapids) along with my sisters Winifred, Dena, Thelma, and brother John. The entire country was at that time in the midst of a most desperate financial and economic situation.

The Great Depression it is still called by historians. Unemployment was at an all-time high; jobs and work were at an all-time low. That brought dire poverty for many a family in our churches and the Christian schools. State and city welfare programs, the W.P.A., assistance from the church diaconate — by a com-

bination of these we lived and survived. What a valuable lesson and experience in life! It still tempers my thinking on financial and other matters.

Now let's get back to school. Though others may possess a greater gift of memory than I, there are a few events of my school years that are still vivid and alive to my recall. Some of my memories are of the music instruction, which had its place in the schools then as well as now. When the undersigned was in the 5th and 6th grades, I was to my music teacher, Miss VanDam, her boy soprano. When the time came for her grades to give the program for the afternoon Mothers' Club, I was the soloist. The song I sang was an Italian Boat Song. The chorus went like this: "Hark how the sailors cry, joyously echo nigh, Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia." Why she chose that song, I don't know. It must be that the music and words appealed to her. I also remember practicing and practicing at my cousin's house, as they had a piano and a player (also the luxury of a

telephone).

Another time, I sang a solo at an Easter program given in the old Dennis Avenue Christian Reformed Church. I don't recall the song, but this I do remember, that, as soon as the program was over, my first and only concern was to find my mother to hear what she had to say about my singing. Naturally she was pleased and proud of her little boy, Peter.

Being born at home and weighing only 1 pound, 12 ounces at birth, I know I had a lot of special tender loving care, especially from my mother. Dr. Pyle, at the time of my birth, didn't believe that I'd live out the day. But he didn't take into consideration the power of a praying father and mother and the grace of God. God had a purpose and plan, not only with me, but also in my generations.

Let me finish on this note: What exceeds a Mother's love and everyday care? The tender love our Heavenly Father has for all His children dear. ■■■

READERS' FORUM

"Your article on Christian self-esteem was excellent. Thank you."

David Prichard
Corwallis, Oregon

"We are enjoying the articles so much. . . interesting topics!"

Brenda Engelsma
Grand Rapids, Michigan