

School Daze

By Marilyn Reeves

When I first moved into Windsor Gardens, my granddaughters were five, going on six. They loved to play in my shower, squirting each other with my shower extension. Hard to believe that was ten years ago! They'll be sweet sixteen, come November. They are now lovely young ladies – slim and willowy and taller than I am.

This year my son and his wife decided to withdraw them from Smoky Hill, one of the big high schools in southeast Aurora, where Tom himself attended more than 30 years ago, and enroll them in a new experimental school in Parker. Something about receiving college credits for some of the classes they'll be taking. It's a much smaller school, a whole new social environment for them, but hopefully they'll adjust and do well. Perhaps it will be safer there than in the bigger school. I hope so.

When I was in high school, kids occasionally got sent to the principal's office for whispering in class, or for ditching school. Upper classmen who had cars would sometimes get into trouble with the authorities for drag racing. I'm not sure whether they got caught, but it was even rumored that a group of seniors once had a beer party out in the woods and got drunk. Who could imagine such a thing? Back then, a girl could get a bad reputation for necking.

Fast forward to the 21st century. Things are a bit different for teenagers nowadays. I wonder and worry about the girls. Are they strong enough to resist all the temptations of today's world? When they set off for school each day, do they wonder if this will be the day that their school will be evacuated during a bomb threat? Have they picked out the desk they will hide under when some dude – influenced by the stories he's seen on the media and craving attention – shows up with an automatic rifle and starts shooting teachers and students at random? Or will this be the day when one of their friends over-doses from drug use or alcohol abuse and gets carried out of the school on a gurney? How much of today's violent and immoral world affects their mood, their ability to concentrate, their ability to study?

Will my granddaughters survive high school? I wonder. I worry. I hope so.