

Keep Off The Grass!

By Marilyn Reeves

Awhile back, I overheard a couple of the ladies in our Writers Group talking about signs that say "Keep Off The Grass" and it reminded me of an incident in my childhood.

I must have been just four or five, so my sister Janet would have been ten or eleven. The playgrounds of McCray Elementary were just a couple blocks' walk from our home in the back of our dad's store, where we lived the first few years after we moved to Salida, so one day when school wasn't in session we walked over there to play at the playgrounds. And it must have been on a chilly day in late winter or early spring, because Jan was wearing her red wool hat. It wasn't just any hat, but had a rather stylish brim with a feather in the band, and looked a bit like the one worn by Robin Hood, or was it Peter Pan? My sister Jan was very proud of that hat, and it was still brand new.

We probably played for an hour or so on the slides and the swings and the merry-go-round, but as we were walking past the school building on our way back home, a sudden gust of wind came along and blew Janet's lovely red hat onto the lawn. But rather than run and retrieve her hat, Jan just stood there and cried in dismay, for there was a sign posted there that said "Keep Off The Grass."

Oh dear, oh dear, what to do? Well, we ran all the way home, and as soon as she saw Mom, Janet burst into tears, telling her that the wind had blown her beloved red hat onto the grass and she couldn't get it back because of that sign. Well, Mama gave her a hug and comforted her the best she could, and then she said, "Let's tell Daddy what happened."

So our dad dropped whatever he was doing and rushed over to the school ground and found the hat that the wind had blown across the grass and up against the side of the building.

With maturity comes wisdom, and he knew that occasionally, under dire circumstances, it's okay to break the rules. So without hesitation he ignored that sign that said "Keep Off The Grass" and grabbed the hat. My sister's tears of loss turned into tears of joy when he handed her back that pretty red hat.

At Windsor Gardens there is a lovely golf course with beautiful green grass. And there are signs posted all around that say "Golfers Only." But on a warm summer evening, when the golfers are no longer playing, I wonder if it would be okay to break the rules and walk across that grass?