

## **It can't be that time of year again**

Uh-oh, August is coming rapidly to a close and that only means one thing. Back-to-school. A day I both dreaded and long awaited each year.

County fairs have come to an end, ball games have wrapped up, practices for fall sports have begun and school supplies have been purchased.

With school beginning all around the area this week, many memories come to mind.

It was the same thing each year. The new clothes were ready the night before all laid out on the floor. For some reason, even though I didn't really want to go, I always woke up super early for the first day of school. My hair had to be just right, new jeans and shoes and of course the bike had to be all washed up.

Then the worst part. The first day of school photo. I don't think I ever smiled. Mom knew we didn't want it but the scrapbook needed the photo. My brother and I would stand on the front porch, bookbags in hand, praying someone we knew wouldn't drive by. With my mom, it wasn't just one photo, nope, different angles and poses. It took longer than we wanted but eventually it was over with.

After the picture there was usually a hug and then off we went. Living in a small town was great, we rode our bikes everywhere. It was almost a given that we would run into other kids we knew along the way to school.

After arriving it was time to hit the playground and meet up with friends. The bike had to be locked up first however. Once on the playground you of course had to show off the new kicks and clothes. We might as well have been in New York at a fashion show. You would hear, "look at those shoes, they're awesome," or "oh-man, I need a pair of those jeans."

The bell would ring and off we went. This was a wonderful moment. It was time to see your homeroom and classmates. Our names where on the desks and new decorations were on the walls.

But once we walked through those doors we knew we were stuck. Nine months of gym, music, art and other classes. It didn't take long for the reality of it all to set in though. We were back in school. And back to stay.

High school back-to-school was way different. No more playgrounds, bikes and we got bigger lockers.

Freshman year was pretty nerve-racking. We were in a new hallway with the "big kids." We could chew gum and have food in our lockers. Oh-man we were growing up!

You learned all the latest gossip, found out who was dating who now and what people did over the summer. And if you didn't know it already, found out who got in trouble over the summer and make fun of them.

I remember the first day in high school, much like college, you didn't sit around and learn names, nope, we dove right in and took notes. No fun games or anything. Just lectures.

The farm kids were driving cars now because of the school permit. We had open campus for lunch so even though it was illegal, we would cram into a friend's car who was driving on a school permit and take off. Instead of eating chili-cheese fritos or sloppy joes, we could go and get something from the grocery store or Sweden Creme, then cruise main street for about 10 minutes.

After the first day, you went home only to get those famous questions. "How did the first day go? What did you do? Learn anything new?"

After dinner, homework. Yep, back to the grind. Flipping through math books, history books and English books. It's just a part of life.

The first day of school meant something else. You were one day closer to graduation, college or a new job.

No matter how much we scowl or complain, there will always be back-to-school. Even if you aren't in school there will be back-to-school for your kids, or if your job somehow comes into play with school.

So here's to another year. Best of luck to all the area students and don't forget to show off those new shoes.