

IT'S ALL WELL THAT ENDS WELL

by Bill Hartley

At the start of this school year I was fairly certain that it would be my last year as a full time teacher. Some people might call it the seven year itch. I have completed 34 years of full time teaching of which the last 20 years were for the Butte Falls School District. I just don't feel that I want to renew my dedication. I am very happy that my replacement will be Mrs. Gorman. Besides being very dedicated she will be persistent in giving the students the opportunity to be successful problem solvers.

During my 14 years as a teacher in larger high schools I was evaluated as a successful teacher, I spent leisure time with other teachers and was accepted by most students. I was treated fairly in all of the 6 larger schools. However, I was not a happy camper. The schools were not student friendly. Most teachers didn't smile until after Christmas. I can recall when a group of students had gathered around my desk during the last day of a school year. They told me that the class had been very educational. I thanked them for the compliment, however, I realized that I really didn't know much about them. It was this discontent that placed me on the front door steps of Butte Falls High School.

It was during the second year with the Butte Falls School District that I realized that I was more that a math instructor to some of the students. One of the experiences that lead me to this conclusion happened when I was driving the bus. A student started down the steps to leave the bus. She changed her mind, and climbed back up the steps. She asked me to give her a hug so she could make it through the weekend. I did so without hesitation. This took place in front of a bus load of students. It was during that year when I realized that I had found my niche. Life really does begin at forty.

I do want to thank everybody for putting up with me. I think that I agreed with most people about 80% of the time.

The remaining 20% was probably split equally as to who was right or wrong. Also, I did have some difficult times during the late 80's and early 90's. I want to thank those who supported me.

I am very happy that many parents and students have thanked me. These comments will be especially useful if I experience an unwanted flashback. Also, if I do experience an unwanted flashback, I will be able to either open a year book or watch the Wizard of Oz, or watch the video tape about the class of 1999 to remind me that I am a very lucky person, that I was able to smile during the first day of school.

My only regret is that I was not allowed to encourage the students to utilize the Lord's Prayer every day even on the good days. I was not allowed to inform the students that repeated use of the Lord's Prayer during a sleepless night would help them face the tomorrow which might have brought nightmares. However, I find comfort knowing that several adults in the community are making a sincere effort to encourage the youth to build a strong spiritual belief.



Many thanks go to Cathy Harrington for the many hours she volunteered to assist with this year's Brain Bowl.

