

Back-to-School



When I was a young girl preparing to return to school at the end of the summer I looked forward to purchasing school supplies. It wasn't as extensive or expensive as the supply lists these days, but it was just as special to be sure.

First, we had to find an empty cigar box at the grocery store. The best ones still smelled of sweet tobacco. The typical supplies included an eight pack of waxy crayons with their unique scent, a jar of thick white paste that wasn't our own until we pulled the little paddle out and ate some of the sticky goop, two pencils, a pair of blunt tipped scissors, and a red Big Chief tablet. It was so hard not to write on any of the pages until the first day of school.

Every year until I graduated from high school my mother made me five new dresses during the summer. One for each day of the week. As I grew older I was self-conscious because they were homemade rather than store bought. I got one new pair of shoes. And, a Toni home perm that I detested. I looked like a blonde Little Orphan Annie.

During the earliest years I walked to West Elementary in Levelland, Texas. On the way, I passed a florist shop. It was like finding treasure each time the window displays were changed. I remember each season being represented by the flowers and greenery. The walk seemed endless, but it wasn't likely as far as it seemed.

When I was in the second grade I had some coins in my pocket and the school store across the street called to me like a siren. I was forbidden to go to the store, it was for the junior high students. But . . . I was in the crosswalk on my way to buy some candy and my dad was driving home for lunch. Oops! He picked me up, took me home, spanked me, and took me back to school. I was devastated. It was the only spanking Daddy ever gave me. It was also the time I learned that I never wanted to disappoint him again.

I was ten when we moved to a new house. I don't remember if I had to change schools, but I had many new friends in the neighborhood. When I was twelve we moved from Levelland to Lovington, NM where I would graduate.

I always enjoyed going to school. Probably still would if I decided to take a few more college courses.

I imagine all of us have special memories of the end of summer and the return to school. Do you?