



# Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

## Skip Day

Six weeks ago my 15-year-old daughter, Sandy, announced that May 25 was Freshman Skip Day at her junior high school.

"Is that an approved holiday?" I asked.

"Of course not," she giggled. "If it were approved it wouldn't be any fun. But they've always had one — just like they did when you were in school. Last year the kids all went out to Judge Woodson's and swam in his pool. This year I've invited them to our house."

"All 500 of them?" I screamed.

Well, it turned out only 40 showed up. The rest headed for the beach. And they had to change it to Friday. The word was out the principal had learned it was planned for Thursday and was going to catch them.

Forty kids in a swimming pool is a lot of kids. My wife gave orders. One kid on the slide at a time. Don't run around the pool. After lunch put all garbage in the cans. And most important, do not use the pool as a bathroom. Then she headed for the hairdresser, leaving me in charge and my college-age

daughter, Bonnie, to act as the lifeguard. I went inside to my studio to go to work.

About noon I heard a mighty shriek go up from the backyard. Fearing the worst I dashed out of the house to see the kids fleeing in all directions — into the woods, across the pasture, behind the garage. The principal had just driven up in our driveway. He, and the dean — who weighs in somewhere between a gorilla and a bulldozer — were marching across the lawn.

Suddenly I was running, too. Back into the house and up the stairs. It wasn't until I got in the closet that I realized this was my house — and I was the owner. Sheepishly I went back down and answered the front door.

"Word leaked out at school that Sandy had invited the entire freshman class to her house to break the law," he said sternly. "School board regulations strictly forbid this kind of thing. If you like I'll send you a copy."

"No need," I sighed, wondering if he ever skipped school when he

was a boy. "I'll send them back to school."

"I knew you would cooperate," he said, motioning to the huge dean who lumbered behind him back out to his car.

I gathered the kids together and told them that as the principal had to submit to the authority of the school board, so I had to submit to the authority of the principal. They had to leave. Churches are not the only places you find people who can't bend without breaking. You find them in schools, too.

As I suspected, the gang didn't seem to be disappointed at all. Being caught just made it that much more memorable. They piled in a pick-up truck and a couple of station wagons, one of them driven by my daughter Bonnie, and headed to the beach. There was only an hour of school left, and even I could not picture them showing up in class in their bathing suits.

And I returned to my studio. Still shaking. You never outgrow being afraid of the principal.