

Every Neighborhood Has a Bully

by Kern Hagg

(#10 in a Series)

We had three. When we grew up in Stonegate during the 1950's, there was a house facing Windsor Parkway which had three sons who were all incredible bullies. I will not mention their names because I am not anxious to be sued, but looking back at it from my current prospective, I have to wonder how our parents tolerated these boys doing what they did. When any child rode his or her bike down Windsor past this house, they could expect to be attacked by one or more of the brothers. They commonly ran out into the street with broomsticks and shoved them in between the spokes of our bikes as we rode by. This act destroyed the wheels on our bikes, and it ended up putting the riders onto the concrete street. If you were lucky, they didn't stand and kick you repeatedly, but it happened to me and it happened to most of my friends, and it taught us all to go way out of our way to avoid riding bikes past that house.

This family of thugs included a father who was quick to defend his sons. It was never their fault. Perhaps America was not as litigious back in those days, because if anything had happened like that to my children as they were growing up in Hampshire, where I presently live, I would have sued the parents for damages. The reputation of this family was widespread, and every child under the age of 14 knew not to ever ride their bikes or, God forbid, walk by this family's home. The problems did not stop until the boys were of high school age, and it only stopped then because they probably knew that they could be looking at jail time for assault and battery. The remedy for everyone else was simply to ride bikes two or three blocks out of the way to avoid any confrontation. I am writing these short stories because my family and I absolutely loved growing up in Stonegate, but unfortunately, not everything was always peaches and cream.