multiplication tables are also very fun to use. As students move into higher grades they can utilize programs for advanced math, for English, for science, and for nearly every other subject. These programs make learning at home easier and enjoyable. What a difference in learning the multiplication tables or English rules if you play a timed game on the computer! The game involves more of the senses and eliminates the difficult, boring memorization of raw facts.

Home computers can be a very educational tool and fun to use. We need to be comfortable with computers because they are and will continue to be a part of our lives. The computer can be a valuable investment for the home if the time is taken to learn how to use it.

VIEWPOINTS

The matter of home-schooling is not exactly a burning issue among us. There are, however, many Christian schools that are finding it necessary more and more to make some kind of provision for families who prefer to keep their children at home, at least for their first years of schooling. What should be our attitude toward the question? Some might wonder about the propriety *of home education, where we have established our own schools. Others may argue that our* first thought *should be to educate our own children in our own homes for as long as we can. We'd like, therefore, to give some attention to this question — in "Viewpoints" in this issue, and perhaps in a couple of "Feature" articles in a later issue.*

For this issue, then, we've asked two mothers to address the question from their own particular perspective. Thelma Westra, whose youngest child has just recently graduated from Covenant Christian High School, looks back over the years during which she was a busy mother raising eight children, and she says, in effect, "I'm surely glad we had our own schools." Ruth Nobel, who coincidentally is also a mother of eight children, takes a different view. Looking back over eight years of teaching her own children, she's ready to say not only that home schooling is a viable alternative but that it's to be preferred. *Her oldest daughter is now doing well in her first year at college, after*

finishing the 12th grade under her mother's instruction, and scoring 28 (a high *score) on the ACT. Ruth was careful in her article not to boast of the accomplishments of her students. Nor was she ready in private conversation to* volunteer *information concerning their achievements. But, when asked, she did admit that the National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalist to whom she referred in her article was indeed her second oldest daughter, who is now in the 12th grade at home.*

There are of course questions which come to mind in all of this. In a future issue, as was suggested, we'll try to go into those questions in a little more depth. For now, in what follows, our two writers have ably demonstrated at least this much, that there are two ways of viewing the issue.

Home Education. . . No

Thelma Westra

I would like to state my position on the question of home schooling versus the organized school system. Although I feel that there could be instances in which teaching one's children at home might be preferable, I believe that, in most instances, by using the Christian school system – and more specifically, the Protestant Reformed Christian School system – our children are receiving a more well-rounded and academically superior education.

As a parent of eight children who have taken advantage of our Protestant Reformed Christian schools, and having had my own education in the Christian school system, I confess that I really have no firsthand knowledge of home schooling; but I'll give you my viewpoint of what I see to be valid reasons for choosing our schools.

Had we opted to educate our children in the home, I'm sure that the task would mainly have fallen to me. My husband left for work by 7:30 AM, and from that time until dinner at 6:00 PM the care of the children was mine. Also in the evening hours, the main responsibility still fell on my shoulders since societies, consistory work, and school board meetings claimed much of his time. (I realize that had we been educating our children at home, his school board time would have been cancelled. However, I'm sure that mother would still have been the main "teacher.")

In this connection I'd like to remark that to me teaching school is not a distasteful chore – it's

something that has always held great appeal for me. However, when my firstborn was ready to enter school I also had a three year old and a small baby. Had I decided to teach at home I'm sure that I could not have done justice to that task along with my care of the other children plus other household duties. Perhaps there really are "supermoms" who can educate one child in each of the following grades: 12, 9, 7, 5, and 2 and give ample time to three pre-schoolers, serve fabulous meals (within the budget, of course), and keep a spotless house; but I do not believe that I'm one of them.

The teachers in our schools have generally spent *upwards* of four years beyond their high school education preparing themselves to teach our children, and they have specialized in the areas in which they plan to teach. Besides this preparation (which parents seldom have), a good teacher gives more of his time in day-by-day lesson preparation, and often will take summer courses or seminars. In order to more or less duplicate this, a parent should prepare lessons every day for *each* subject for *each* child separately (e.g., a trigonometry lesson for a 12th grader certainly is a far cry from the kindergartner's number concepts, and one can hardly expect a second grader to appreciate Shakespeare).

I understand that excellent material is available for home study, but certainly these materials and many more are accessible to our schools also.

Another great benefit of our schools in my estimation is the interaction between students. Although siblings can be "good friends" as well as being brothers or sisters, there is something very special about our child's first school friend. Many companionships begun in school blossom into lifelong friendships. . . and the boy/girl relationship may culminate in something still more special — a life's partner. But aside from these future benefits, I believe that classroom situations — working competitively, sharing "our class" comaraderie, learning to cope with one another's weaknesses, feeling that one belongs to this special group— all these things are also invaluable assets.

Of course, we instruct our children in the home. We must never forget that we have this beautiful calling. This takes place from infancy onward. We awaken each morning to this calling, and we instruct our children not only by word but by the example of a godly walk. Their formal education I prefer to turn over to the capable and dedicated teachers with which the Lord has blessed us. □■□