

KINS COMMUNITY COMMENT (442-5744)

This is Ron Pierre for Community Comment.

I asked a friend about finding someone to mow my lawn. He gave me a number to call for a yard service, but said he had not had much luck finding reliable yard care. As we talked, we both reflected on how we had mowed neighborhood yards when we were kids to make pocket money. I told him I really hated going back into hiring another lawn service. I've been down that road twice now with the same disastrous results. Both times, the service starts out great with a lot of initiative, but goes downhill from there. We had communicate our expectations to include the pruning and trimming and that part went well for a couple of months. What I eventually ended up with is the mow-blow-and go yard person and a bill that boiled down to the hourly rate of hiring a world famous attorney.

On my twelfth birthday, my Dad said that during the summers, I could start earning my own money. My Dad said, he would let me use the family lawn mower if I mowed the family yard, and bought my own gasoline for the lawns I mowed. I went door to door throughout my neighborhood, and pitched a weekly lawn mowing for the outrageous price of \$1.50. After a couple of days, I had agreements with 10 residents to mow their lawns for the summer. My father had cautioned me not to over extend myself and contract for more lawns than I could handle. I followed his advice. That first summer, I did quite well. I would keep my earnings in a canvas bank bag, and once each week go down to the local bank and deposit the dollars I had earned. On about week two of that summer, my Dad reminded me that I had to purchase gas, so he had me buy a gasoline can and pay to have it filled.

Throughout that summer I took great pride in providing a good service to my customers. I was really surprised when some of my customers referred me to other people, and I scheduled them into the mix. I even got some tips from some of the regular customers. Just before school started that Fall, my father and I sat at the kitchen table and summed up about the lawn mowing business. I had deposited about \$125.00 in my savings account after expenses. Not bad for a 12 year old in 1959! More important---- it was a father's gift of knowledge, reassurance, and self reliance that I still have.

Back to the current situation and the mow-blow-and go yard services. Where are the young entrepreneurs? I haven't had a kid come to my door asking if they could mow my lawn, walk my dog, wash my car, or any of a dozen other common chores I used to do to pick up extra money. A lot of kids come to the door selling raffle chances or asking for donations. Perhaps it's the regulatory climate we live in. City licenses, work permits, minimum wage requirements----- I still want something beyond the mow, blow and go....haven't found it yet!

This is Ron Pierre for Community Comment.