

Dad supports daughter's decision to broaden horizons

This column is about my daughter. Although ultimately, it's about the offspring of any one of us who have survived a family break-up and gone on to establish the eventual new order we all must work so hard to achieve for the betterment of all, especially our children. Marissa first appeared in this space back in 1987 when I wrote about how, as a spunky eight-year-old, she somehow

managed to get a hit her first time up in her one and only year as a house league softball player. I was coaching the team and it gave me a chance to spend time with her after her mom and I went our separate ways the year before. It was four years later that she chose to move in with my new wife Susan and I, following the pattern of so many kids who end up living in the homes of both par-



From where I live
Bruce Stapley

ents in the years that follow a divorce. But what a difference four years makes! Needless to say, wholesale adjustments had to be made by the three of us. Things got even more complicated when the baby came along a year after Marissa joined us. But despite the harrowing differences of opinion that characterize the relationship

between a parent and an emerging teen, we managed to hang in there and even have fun together. Now she's decided she wants to be closer to the action of the big city, so she's moving in with her mom in North York in time for the start of the upcoming school year. She checked with me first to see if I'd be okay and of course I told her I would support her decision in every way that she had to do what was best for her, not her parents. Being just a subway ride from downtown Toronto, her mom holds the hot hand right now and I'm all for her broadening her horizons. Besides, now when we see each other, it will be without the back-

drop of a perennially messy room, uncompleted household chores and my constant admonitions to get it in gear so she'll be on time for school, work, orthodontal appointments, etc. Oh, I'm sure that on the day she leaves, I'll feel some of the same pangs I felt when we last parted company back in 1986. It will probably be hard to walk into the room that housed her and all that stuff for the first little while. That's only natural. And who knows, a few years down the road we could live under the same roof once again. The door will always be open. Au revoir, sweetheart. And good luck in the big smoke!

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