

# MARKHAM MUSEUM

& Historical Village

## Old-Fashioned PICNIC

Sunday, July 6, 1997

Noon - 5:00 p.m.

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## Wisdom is born in the sandbox



From Where I Live

Bruce Stapley

'Tis the season to be graduating. And while most grad events this time of year involve emerging adults who have completed elementary, high school or post secondary programs, our four-year-old son Drew recently got to put on the traditional cap associated with the successful completion of a course of studies.

Drew, along with his 17 Kindercare nursery school class mates, were paraded for parents, grandparents and siblings to see in last week's "graduation" ceremony. Clutching his diploma firmly in hand, he responded to school director Pat Byer's query of what he planned to do for a living in his usual methodical manner. "First, I'm going to be a truck driver, then a train driver, and then a doctor," offered Drew.

Drew's early education has come complete with the kind of observations and pronouncements kids are famous for. A few months back I was chatting with him about the little fund we've set up so he can go to university like his big brother Shane some day in the distant future.

I proceeded to explain to him how the money would hopefully grow through the years, leaving him free to apply the eventual proceeds towards the costs involved in continuing on with his education after he finishes high school. He looked at me in that dead pan way he has perfected, then, having considered the matter, proclaimed, "I think I'll just go to kindergarten, Dad." Right son.

On another occasion, my wife Susan was attempting to add to Drew's ever growing vocabulary by explaining to him the meaning of the word "stale" as it related to a rather dated cookie he was considering eating. "It's hard and dry and old," explained Susan. "Oh," replied Drew, the wheels beginning to turn at a rapid clip as he sought out an example of his own. "I guess my night table's stale too."

When Drew was complaining of a mild stomach ache a few months back, I kiddingly suggested that we consider a stomach transplant to get him back to par. After asking me what transplant meant, he gave me that puzzled look and said simply, "You can't transplant my stomach. It's stuck in there!"

It always delights me when Drew reveals a considerable wit born of a computer-like mind. During the morning rush to get him to nursery school a month or so back, we were brushing our teeth together in the tiny ensuite bathroom attached to Susan's and my bedroom when I inadvertently turned around and gave his head a little bump with my elbow. "Sorry buddy, I didn't mean to give you an elbow in the head," I instantly apologized. He didn't miss a beat. "Sorry Dad, I didn't mean to give you a head in the elbow!"

One day I noticed Drew repeatedly covering his eyes with his arm, then pulling the limb away, obviously taken aback by a reality which had never fully etched itself in his mind to that point in his young life. "Every time I open my eyes I can see things," he said excitedly. I was immediately reminded of Robert Fulghum's claim in his book, "All I Really Need To Know I Learned in Kindergarten" that wonder was the defining trait of any true childhood.

I'll have to remind Drew of Fulghum's nutshell assessment of continuing education as he walks off to his first day of real school this September. "Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sand box at nursery school," the author aptly recalled. Amen, brother Fulghum.

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