

# Diana's tragedy proves need to evaluate 'news'

I don't know what Don Muir will come up with for his sermon tomorrow morning. He's probably wondering just what I finally settled upon for this column.

Like the two renaissance men that we are, Don, the good pastor of Stouffville's St. James Presbyterian Church, and myself, were escorting our offspring to Kindergarten once again Wednesday.

For Don, it's becoming a ritual, as this is the second year in a row and the third time in total, that he and his wife Renie have contributed to the ranks of the entry-level class at Summitview Public School.

For me, it was necessary to brush up on the routine as it's been a good 14 years since my daughter Marissa commenced her formal education, a journey which reached another milestone Tuesday when she sat down for her first class as a journalism student at Ryerson in Toronto.

After leaving our young ones in the capable hands of Kindergarten teacher Janis Sanford, Don and I repaired to the resplendent sunshine on the sidewalk in front of the old Main St. school. Don told me he expected to read about Drew's first day at kindergarten in *The Tribune*. I confessed that while it had been my intention to draw from the memorable occasion for a column, nothing had come forth around which to build a 650-word structure, despite my pumping Drew with endless leading questions before and after his first day at school, in an effort to elicit a few of those priceless kiddie quotes that make for such entertaining reading.

I inquired as to whether Don might base tomorrow's sermon upon the lessons to be learned from the tragic death of Princess Diana. While he wasn't sure exactly how he might come up with an appropriate spiritual theme, the question led to a thorough



## From Where I Live

Bruce Stapley

discussion of the whole grizzly business.

We agreed that while millions world wide saw fit to grieve and shed tears over the untimely passing of this most intriguing, sensitive woman, we were unable to see it as being of greater devastation than the accidental death of any dedicated local mother or volunteer.

We wondered at the need for people to bestow sainthood upon distant heroes, especially individuals of privilege, while ignoring the everyday efforts of those around them whose work-a-day lives are marked by constant striving to better the lot of their families, friends and immediate communities.

We noted how some were comparing the princess' death to that of President John F. Kennedy. A little extreme perhaps, but then again both individuals were well heeled, well loved and perceived through the rose-coloured glasses of fairy tale lore.

We also discussed the question of blame in the death of the princess. Were any of us totally blameless in that we could say we had never looked at a picture taken of her in what she had hoped was a private setting, or read one of the rash of recent articles speculating upon her relationship with Dodi Al Fayed?

Perhaps, we hoped, this horrible tragedy would cause people everywhere to re-evaluate just what is and isn't news, and pass their conclusions on to the media of their choice by refusing to patronize those who would profit from that which should be kept private.

Around mid-afternoon, Don and I

returned to pick up Lucy and Drew at the conclusion of another school day, then went back to our respective chores.

And at least one of us had decided what to write about this week.

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