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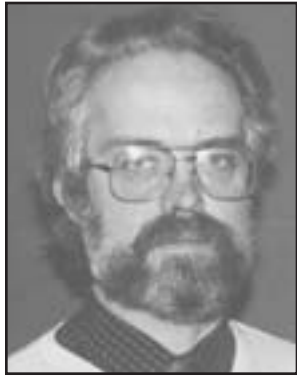
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**Bill's
Bulletin
Board**

By Bill Rea

Between now and Labour Day weekend, I think we're going to have to get used to the prospect of a lot of TV specials, documentaries, newspaper stories, magazine articles, etc., all timed to mark the 10th anniversary of the death of Princess Diana.

We're seeing them out already, in fact.

A recurring story over the last little while has dealt with a documentary that was aired in England (I don't know if it's been seen on this side of the Big Pond yet) which included pictures of Diana taken shortly after the car mishap that claimed her life.

Presumably, she was still alive when the pictures in question were taken and was undergoing unsuccessful efforts to keep her that way.

Diana's two sons, William and Harry, made efforts to keep those pictures from being shown. Over the last several days, I heard and read speculation and commentaries that these two young men were trying to pull their royal

strings to try and suppress these pictures, as if there's something wrong with that. The only reason why anyone would be interested is because of the royal connections to this incident, so what is wrong with royal clout being applied too?

This particular question is really a matter of professional journalistic philosophy - ie., should such pictures be distributed. For what it's worth, I wouldn't advocate printing such photographs in a publication I have authority over. I have twice in my newspaper career come across dead bodies; women both times. In both cases, I had a camera handy, and could have easily taken pictures. I did not, and have never regretted the decision. For one thing, I'm not sure my stomach would have been up to the task. For another, I would have thought of the families of the dead women, and realized that there comes a time when the right to decency overrules the right of people to know. The information value of such pictures is

limited, at best.

Granted, I have not seen this documentary, but given that admission, I'm still at a loss to understand how the public benefits from seeing pictures of a battered body. So on this question, I side with the sons.

But I'm left to wonder if there are going to be more of these questions in the weeks to come, with further suggestions that the Royal Family is overstepping its authority. Could this be the prelude to more gratuitous trashing of these people.

I am not a monarchist, at least I don't think I am. I bear no great allegiance to Queen Elizabeth II, apart from my acceptance that she is duly considered to be the head of state of my country. Mainly for reasons of gut instinct, I have no desire to see that change. And while I don't accept the concept that the Queen has any divine right to rule over me or tell me what to do, I respect the influence she has, and the way her ancestors have shaped world events over the centuries.

True, there have been many negatives things to come out of what was inspired from that Throne, such as religious persecution and the trading of slaves. But there was also the inspiration that led to the exploration of much of the world, promulgation of the language of Shakespeare and a heroic resolved that allowed a cul-

ture to endure the Blitz.

That being stated, I still do a burn when I reflect on the trashing that the Royal Family in general, and Prince Charles in particular had to endure in the days after Diana's death. It was unjustified.

Like most people, I was saddened when I heard about the tragedy in Paris. I was with a group of friends spending the holiday weekend at a B and B near Kingston, and it was the shocked proprietor of the establishment who broke the news to us. There was no radio in the tenants' portion of the house, so the card games abruptly stopped and several of us dashed to our cars to turn on our radios and get more details.

But as tragic as it was, I thought at the time, and still believe that a lot of the mourners in the streets of Merry Old over-reacted. It was almost as if they were angry, and needed to focus their anger at someone. The Royal Family was not behaving as many of them thought they should, so they became convenient scapegoats.

People who were quick to criticize the Queen evidently forgot that she had two grandsons who had just lost their mother. In other words, she had a couple of other obligations on her plate, which in her mind probably took priority over appearing to mourn in accordance with the wishes

of the populace.

Probably most of you reading this have had to deal with the death of someone in your family. How would you have reacted to people telling you how to behave in such a situation, and publicly condemning you if you didn't live up to expectations? Very few of us would have tolerated that.

"But the Royal Family are servants of the public!" I hear some people call out, meaning the public has the right to boss them around and tell them how to act.

Would you allow your employer to tell you how to grieve over a death in your family?

About the only thing that was really established at that time was Prince Charles falls a bit short of being a Prince Charming. Is that such a major revelation? Few men are perfect, and with the exception of my wife, I can't think of any woman who has found such a specimen. Magnificent men like me are in short supply.

That a woman and mother of Diana's age had to die the way she did is terrible, but it is, alas, part of life. Another part of life is people sometimes over react when they are grieving, and lash out at others who are undeserving of harsh treatment.

But this is 10 years later, so let's hope people are more interested in acceptance, rather than hostility.

Editorial

**Fool me once, shame on you,
Fool me twice, stay on as premier**

Premier Dalton McGuinty announced last week that his government won't raise taxes if re-elected this fall.

That should be seen as very good news; sure to attract many votes. And it will attract votes, at least from people who have short memories.

The reason, of course, is McGuinty made exactly the same promise in the 2003 campaign, and that pledge was in shreds within months.

In the first budget brought down by Finance Minister Greg Sorbara in May 2004 included what was called a health-care premium. That premium, of course, was just a synonym for "tax."

"We didn't know the extent to which the province was running into financial deficit," was the explanation Sorbara offered at the time.

But that raises an issue, namely why not? The Liberals had several members sitting in the opposition benches during the last days of the Progressive Conservative regimes of Mike Harris and Ernie Eves. While it's conceivable that the Tories would have been able to keep some of the details of the government's financial health from their opponents, the Grits should have had some idea of what was going on. Opposition MPPs are supposed to keep their eyes on things like that. That is what they are paid for.

It is possible that the former government was better than anyone thought at hiding the facts, and maybe the opposition wasn't as on the ball as it should have been. Accepting that, it may be possible to go along with the justification given for breaking a promise; a prom-

ise which no doubt sold a lot of people to the idea of voting Liberal.

But there have been three budgets that have come down since then, and numerous statements out of Queen's Park about how

Letter to the Editor

Horses can be a danger to vehicles too

It seems to me that sometimes our politicians make comments that seem contradictory to their good intentions.

One councillor was recently quoted as saying, "Even the calmest of horses can be unpredictable. A sudden movement or noise can make a horse swerve inadvertently into the path of an oncoming vehicle."

"A driver topping a steep hill can suddenly be surprised by a horse and rider jogging along the shoulder and drivers must be able to

well the economy's been doing, and how marvellous the government is at managing its finances. Yet for all of that, the health-care premium has not been touched. There's been no elimination, there's been no reduction,

control their vehicles and stop or slow down to avoid scaring the horses."

I read this statement to mean that all horses are a danger to vehicles, and I for one don't want one of these calm, unpredictable animals jumping through my windshield and killing me. Even if I am travelling one five km-hr., I am still injured or dead.

Since we are all becoming safety conscious, perhaps a better approach would be to ban the horses from the road. We can look

there's been no talk of phasing it out, there's been nothing.

One might already be wondering if there's any reason why the latest promise from McGuinty will be different.

at these beautiful creatures in the fields where they live and prefer to be.

If indeed the Township does post signs encouraging equine use of vehicle roads, I hope that this will not make the Township (aka the taxpayer) liable in the case of an accident.

To make King Township more attractive, any extra funds could be used to repair the thousands of pot holes on the 8th Concession.

John Sowerby,
Schomberg