

THE HALTON HILLS WEEKEND

KEN NUGENT
Publisher

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Local chapter observes World Red Cross Day

Dear editor:

World Red Cross Day, May 8, marks the birthday of Henry Dunant, the founder of the international Red Cross and Red Crescent movement.

The idea of a day to celebrate international understanding, with an annually changing theme, was established in Czechoslovakia in 1922. The national Red Cross Society invited citizens to avoid, for a couple of days, anything that might create misunderstanding between people. This appeal became known as the Red Cross Truce. It was observed from the capital, Prague, to the smallest villages. Bells throughout the country announced the start of the Truce, and it was an annual event in Czechoslovakia until 1938.

The truce, with its underlying

Letters to the Editor

sentiment of national and international understanding, aroused interest throughout the Red Cross world. But, it was only after the Second World War that the time became right to celebrate World Red Cross Day on May 8, 1948.

Today, it is an unfortunate that the greatest need at this time for a "Red Cross Truce" is now in place known as Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Red Cross is hard at work there as well as in many other locations, wherever there is a need to uphold the Geneva Conventions and bring the light of human dignity into the dark of conflict.

As the Secretary-General of the Czechoslovakian Red Cross has said of World Red Cross Day: "The day serves to remind people who already believe in our Red Cross that we are not alone, that the Red Cross is international, and there

are friends in other countries who will help us."

In Canada we are largely free of this kind of conflict, but the Oka affair of not so long ago serves to remind us that humanitarian initiatives can be required anywhere. The Red Cross in Canada strives to remain vigilant, and, what's even more difficult, remain neutral in these circumstances, supplying aid to the needy of both sides.

The Canadian Red Cross Society is regularly asked to send delegates to administer Red Cross resources and aid programs throughout the world. The Georgetown and District branch of the Red Cross has yet to send a delegate from its ranks, but the time will surely come. Until then, we continue to support international efforts with fundraising and by publicizing needs.

World Red Cross Day gives us all the opportunity to reflect on the needs of others, in our community and throughout the world, and keep that light in the darkness shining.

Geoffrey Moon,
Chair, Public Relations
Georgetown and District Red Cross

Disheartening news

Halton Hills town treasurer Ray King reports feeling shell-shocked and Halton Region Conservation Authority's (HRCA) general manager Murray Stephen is devastated.

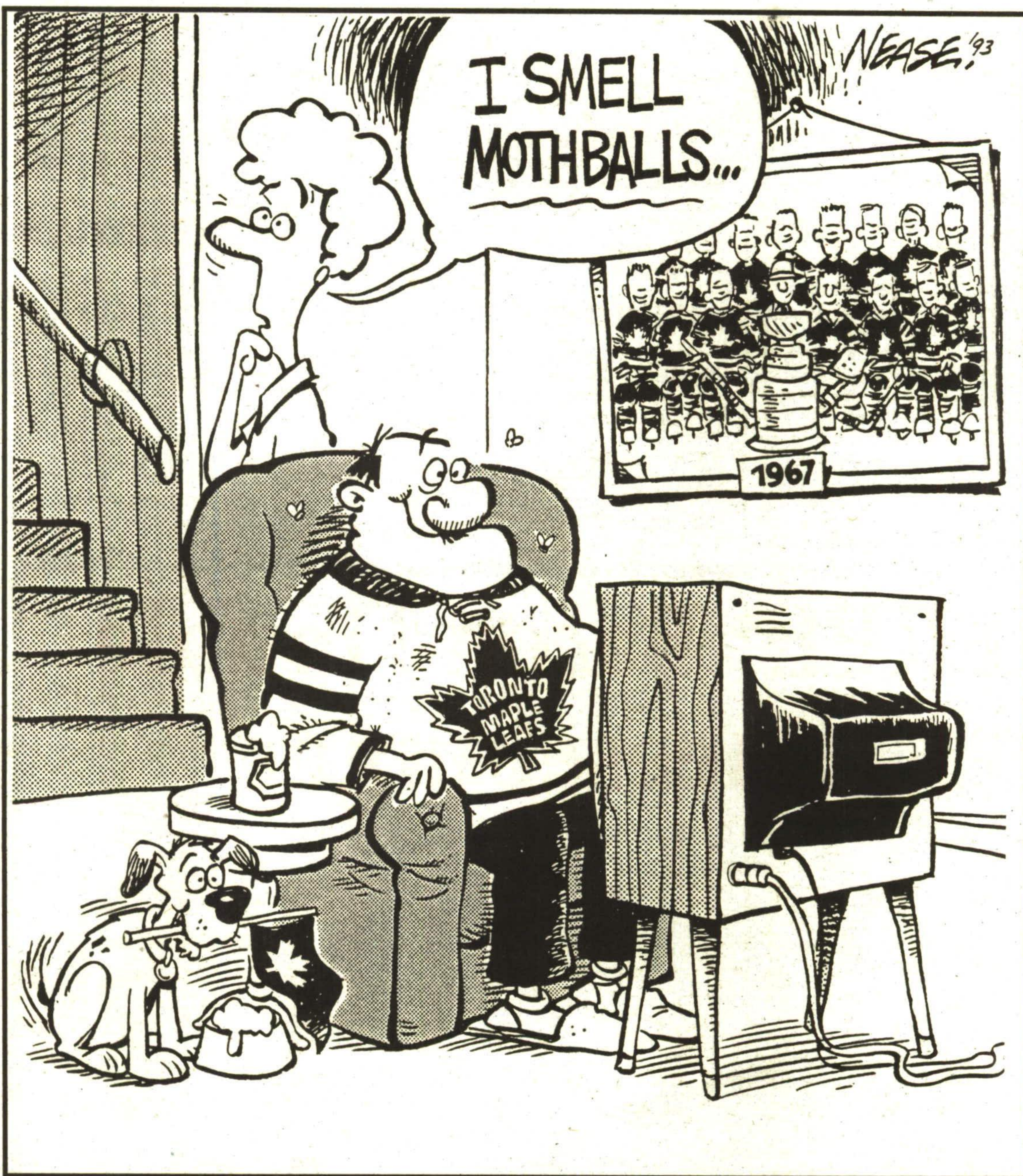
That's only two reactions to the NDP government's announced cuts aimed at reducing the 1993 provincial deficit from \$18 billion to \$10 billion. In fact what the Province is doing is downloading their problems to the local level. The shuffle could impact on the town's 1993 budget by as much as a half a million dollars while the HRCA faces a \$400,000 loss. The Credit Valley Conservation Authority is looking at a \$275,000 loss while hospitals and school boards are also bracing for cuts. Halton Region will lose \$1.7 million in 1993 — whole departments may be shut down. Chief administrative officer John Burke warned, "There will be street level impacts on services as a result of this."

And he's right — that senior's centre, that new Acton arena, more social and medical services for the north, pollution control and road repairs — it all has to be rethought.

And that is most disheartening aspect of all. For months, civil servants, politicians and the public have been wrestling, hour after hour, to pare down their 1993 budgets. And for the most part, despite frayed tempers and frustrated hopes, they succeeded so that taxpayers wouldn't face large increases on their tax bills. Now they're all back to square one.

To add insult to injury, these additional costs at the municipal level will be compounded by more provincial taxes.

We agree that Queen's Park should be cutting costs and lowering the deficit — they should never have put themselves into this position in the first place. But not at this late stage in the year after all the lower level governments, boards and agencies have already set their budgets, and not without warning. The HRCA received a "faxed" message from the Ministry of Natural Resources about their cuts and when they called the ministry to ask questions, they were treated to silence. We agree with Stephen's comment: "for a government which says it's interested in dialogue and communication, I find this atrocious."



Mother's Day — a day to acknowledge that 'life sentence'

We all know what today is, don't we?

Yep, it's Mother's day, the day we all take a little time to honor our moms everywhere for their unique contribution to our lives.

I often wonder who decided we should celebrate Mother's Day.

I imagine a group of florists and a few marketing executives from greeting card companies met secretly on a dark stormy January night long ago, and decided they would find another way to hit the consumer after the Christmas poinsettia rush and the Easter lily lull, just before the influx of June weddings.

But enough of that, back to dear old Mother's Day.

I recall chatting with a teacher at one of the local schools some time ago, and she told me about her children, and how they were now all in university, but she still found herself running errands for her kids, even though they were practically adults.

"You know, Ted," she grinned, "Years ago, I thought this motherhood thing was an 18-year stint, but I was wrong. No sir, it's a life sentence, without any chance for parole."

As we parted, we joked about having kids, caring for them, loving them, and trying to raise them as responsible adults.

But her words stuck.

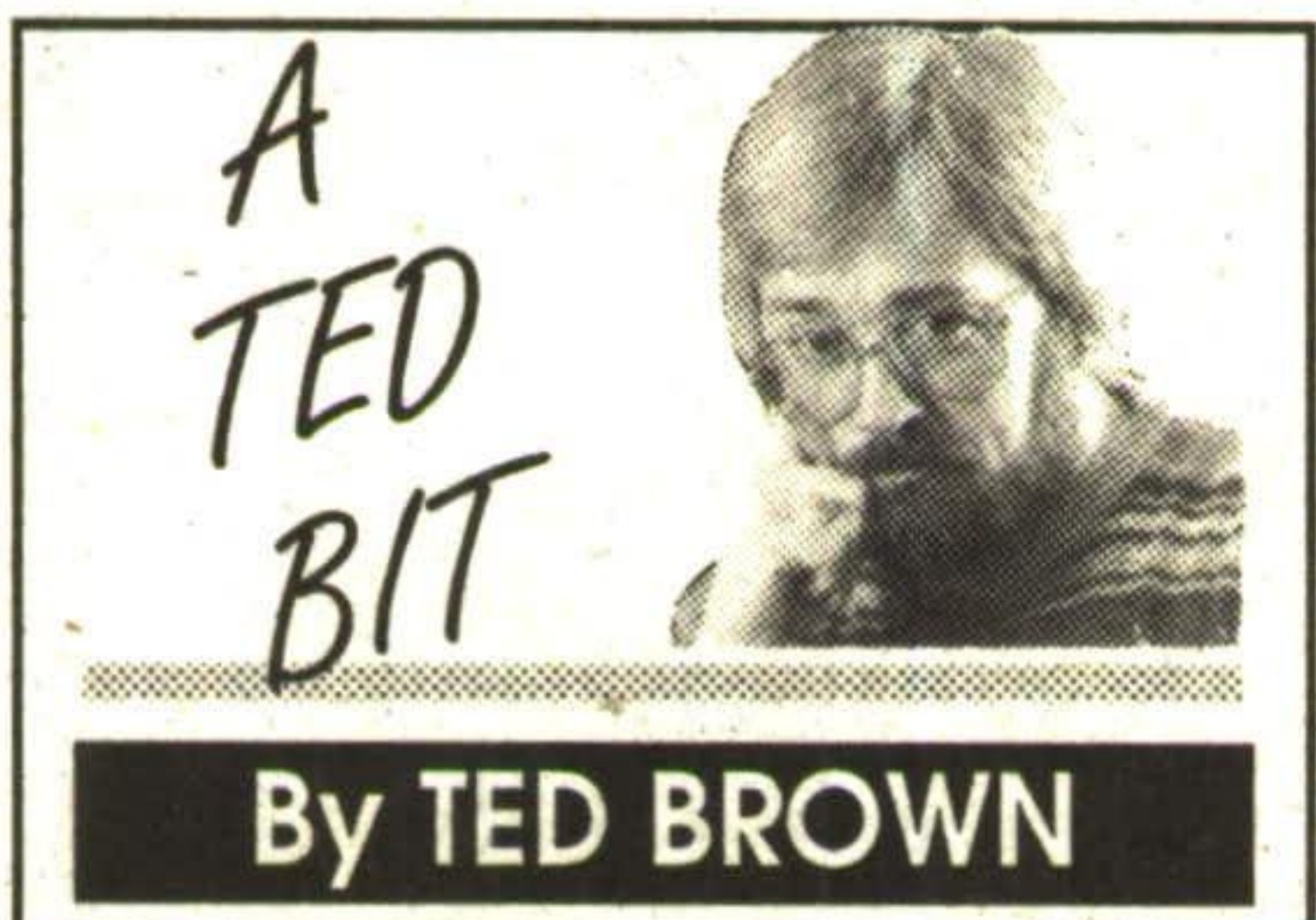
"A life sentence...."

As I thought about those words, a few things occurred to me.

Right from the moment of conception, moms represent that rock we learn to lean on early in our life.

Before birth, we are comforted by her voice, and protected by her body from the dangers of the outer world.

As infants, she is the source of our sustenance, a warm body to cuddle up against and the one who looks after all our worldly needs; usually no more than a warm crib, a dry diaper and a full tummy.



She is the skirt we hide behind when danger comes near, and the one who finds us when we get lost in the supermarket.

Mom is always the person we all run to for that loving little kiss to make it better, when we fall and hurt ourselves, and the one who endures the chaos of our birthday parties with our little friends.

And Mom is the one who bakes and decorates our birthday cake, just the way we like it.

She's the one who bravely walks us to the front door of the school for that very big step, all the while holding back her tears because her

baby is heading off to school.

She's the one who signs our notes to the teacher, attends school as a parent volunteer, and bakes the goodies for school functions. And she's the one who sews that costume for Halloween or the Christmas concert; all which we take for granted.

When we hit adolescence, Mom is the one who infuriates us when "she doesn't understand the situation" or "tries to ruin our life" but suddenly becomes our best friend, when we need a shoulder to cry on and an understanding ear to talk to.

She is the one who delights in embarrassing us by calling us by our pet names in front of our friends, yet all the time doesn't really mean any harm.

And she is the one who helps us as we grow with sage advice and warm encouragement.

She is the one who is as proud as us when we make her a grandmother, and is quite prepared to

fuss over and spoil her grandchildren every waking hour of their life.

She is the one we call upon in an emergency to babysit, and, yes, she often cancels her own plans to help.

She is there when we need her at family functions, to pick up a tea towel and wash some dishes and will almost certainly have just the right recipe for some special dessert we loved as kids tucked away in her old recipe box.

And she continues to love and support us, through thick and thin, every day of our lives.

Yes, in one way, my teacher friend was right. Motherhood is indeed a life sentence.

But on this Mother's Day, as I become older myself and think about those words, I realize it's not all bad.

Because, florist and greeting card companies aside, this is the one day we can show Mom the fruits of her labors for serving that "life sentence."