

KEN NUGENT
Publisher

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Dance for Heart well supported

Dear editor:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following companies and individuals for the wonderful support of our Heart and Stroke fundraiser "Dance For Heart".

We would also like to thank your paper for running announcements about the dance.

Joanne Anger, Bergsma's Paint & Wallpaper, Bill Smith Auto Parts, Cachet, Christiane Hair Styles & Boutique, Coffee Grind, Daddy's Chicken, Fendley's Florist, Foodstuffs, Hallmark, This Week In Halton Hills, J.V. Clothing, Kern's Jewelry, Linda Donais, Luanne Skovsgaard, Mac's Milk/Lyn Ferguson, Mal Dodge/Remax, Northern Reflections, Ollie's Cycle & Ski, Paul Morrow, Rave's Hair Fashions, S&S Sound (D.J. George Adams), Shopper's Drug Mart, Solmar Homes, Robynne Spence, Vanderburgh Flowers & Gifts, The Village Shoppe, Work That Body Staff/Friends, Young's Pharmacy.

Letters

to the Editor

And a special thank you to all our members and their guests who helped us to surpass our goal.

Yours truly,
Laurie Burns

Support appreciated

Dear editor:

North Halton Literacy Guild would like to thank your newspaper for giving us such wonderful coverage during February - Literacy Awareness Month.

This has proved to be very successful for us, attracting several new students who have literacy problems and need to upgrade their reading and writing skills. We have also been approached by volunteers who wish to help the Guild.

Yours truly,
Janine Carter,
president

Sign prompts letter to editor



Dear editor:

When we were in and on our way through the N.W.T. and Alaska we passed through Watson Lake. Here you find hundreds of names on hundreds of signs on hundreds of posts. I thought the one of which I enclose a picture was very special.

Just seeing the sign made us feel at home in minus 40 degree F. Maybe you could run a picture of this and ask the person that put it there to give me a call. I would like to know if possible. My phone is 416-270-3549.

Thank you,
Traven A. Matchett

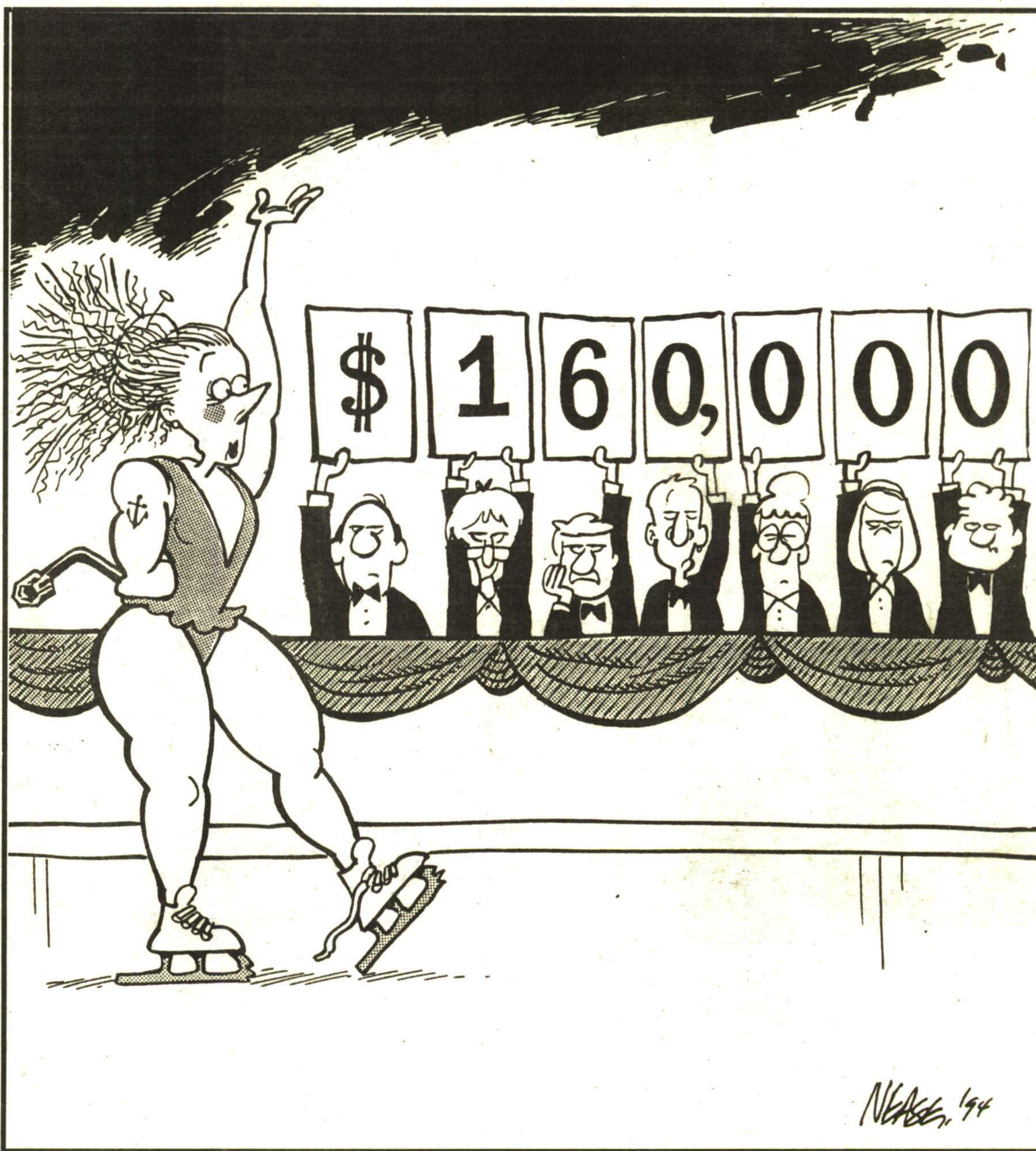
We're on AMO's side

Everyone is scrambling for that extra buck these days, and for some who own their own home, renting out a room or a basement seems an ideal solution.

Queen's Park is attempting to help homeowners by loosening restrictions on these kinds of apartments with Bill 120. But municipalities and fire departments believe the bill may go too far in relaxing restrictions, creating possible planning headaches and safety nightmares.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) which appealed to the government this month to prevent basement apartments have a point: the government is meddling into local planning issues. It should be the local people who decide what planning direction their neighborhoods will take. Can you imagine living in single family neighborhood, then discovering all the houses on your block becoming two, or possibly three family developments — what does that do to your taxes, your home value, your local roads, your local parks, your local schools ...?

Everyone has a right to earn an extra buck, but it should not be at the expense of others.



First there was Bilbo, then Gandalf and Thorin

"In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty dirty wet hole filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor a dry bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort."

The Hobbit - J.R.R. Tolkien

It was years ago, I first met Bilbo.

And soon after, I met Gandalf, and then Thorin Oakenshield and his cohorts.

And I was mesmerized by the whole group of them, the dwarves, the goblins and the lake dwellers.

But the best of all was the hobbit.

If you haven't guessed by now, I'm referring to the literary masterpiece by J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*.

I can't remember when I first read *The Hobbit*, but it was shortly after I finished high school, and my brother-in-law-to-be studied it in university.

He got me hooked.

The Hobbit? A fairy tale? I remember feeling insulted with the prospect of reading a story about elves, dwarves, dragons and magical runes, spells and maps.

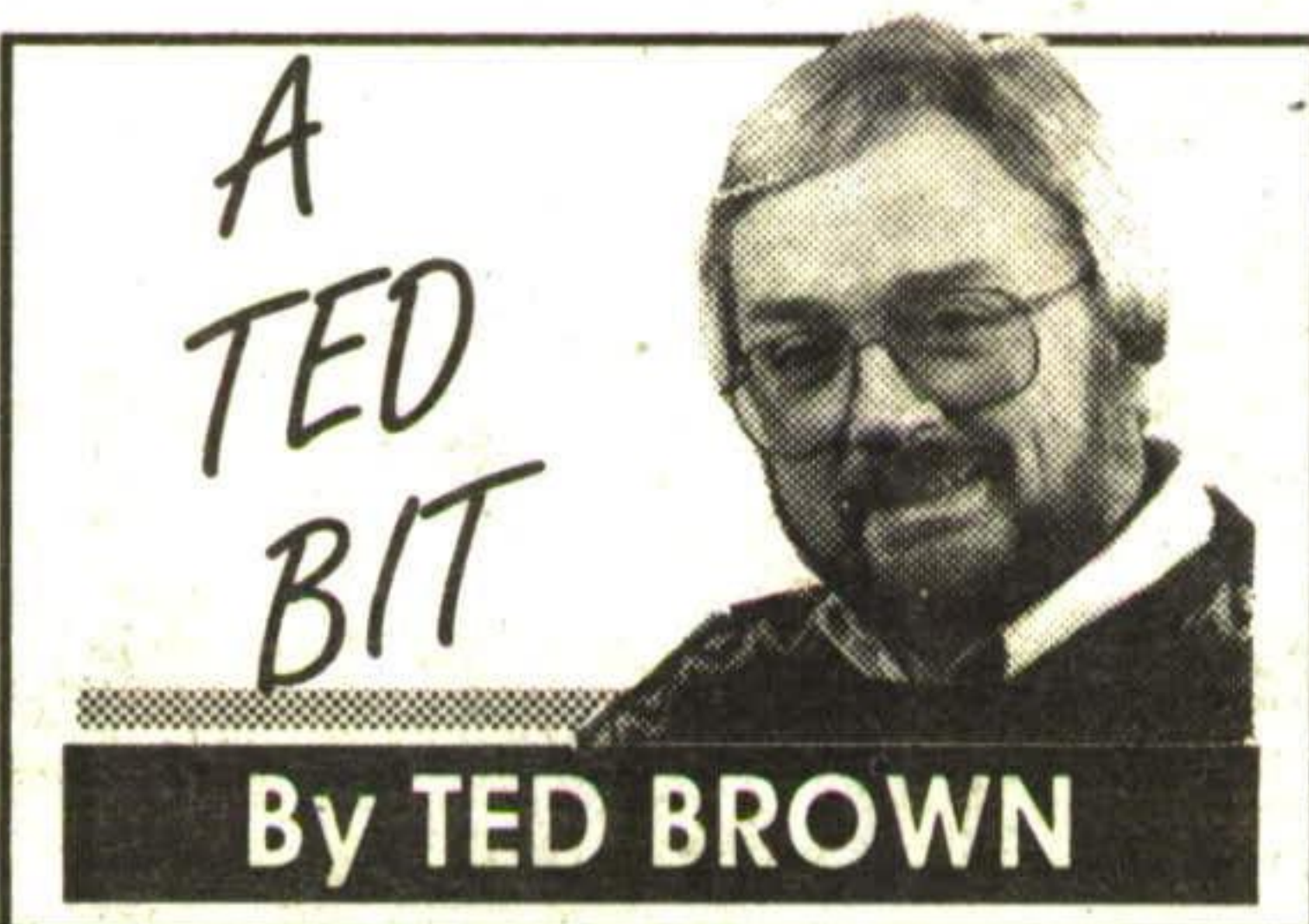
I considered it a kid's story.

Or was it?

It only took a couple of pages, or perhaps more accurately, a couple of paragraphs before I was drawn into that wonderful adventure of the pot-bellied little fellow with the furry toes who went by the name Bilbo Baggins.

I found Bilbo such an amiable character, and I found myself eager to follow his adventure with a passion, as he used his quick wit and good-natured manner to escort a group of adventurers to the very heart of the Lonely Mountain, where he confronted Smaug the dragon.

It's a wonderful story, and served to feed my appetite for adventure, fantasy and humor, where good always triumphs over evil, although the win is sometimes at a hefty price.



By TED BROWN

Over the years, I collected many of Tolkien's books, and although I've read several, I still can't get motivated to trudge through *The Silmarillion*, perhaps one of the heaviest pieces of writing the man ever penned.

A few years ago, I started a collection of Tolkien figurines which are sold at the Fergus market, and have collected my own Gandalf, Bilbo and the despicable Gollum, all sculpted and cast locally in Fergus.

Although no one else in my family shares my love of *The Hobbit*, they do find the fact I like to collect

those figurines a relief, especially around Christmas or my birthday.

Of course, they've never got hooked quite the same as I.

But recently, I had the pleasure of seeing my daughter with her nose stuck in that wonderful book.

Not because she liked the story, or was even remotely interested, but because it was on her Grade 10 enriched English curriculum.

It occurred to me how much education has changed. The same book that was studied in depth in a university English course 20 years ago, is now dissected by Grade 10 students as they appreciate the eloquent descriptive writing technique of Tolkien, as well as observing the philosophical message subliminally put across through those many colorful characters.

Bilbo is a likable hero, no doubt about it, but has many flaws. He avoids confrontation, he doesn't like to offend and he most certainly enjoys his sedentary lifestyle with lots of food, drink and lively conversation.

Not unlike many of us, is he?

My daughter complained bitterly about having to read *The Hobbit*, and even more about the assignment which required her to write a response journal after each chapter.

She did admit, when she was finished, she did "kinda like" the story. And I was a tad disappointed she never got caught up in the magic of the story, and the philosophy behind it.

But as I get older, I have come to realize how accurate that philosophy of life portrayed by Tolkien really is, as he sums it up quite nicely at the end of the book, through Gandalf the wizard:

"You don't really suppose, do you, that all your adventures and escapes were managed by mere luck, just for your sole benefit? You are a very fine person, Mr. Baggins, and I am very fond of you; but you are only quite a little fellow in the wide world after all."

Aren't we all?