

THE HALTON HILLS WEEKEND

KEN NUGENT
Publisher

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Don't drink and drive

It was an eerie, but effective message, which the Student Wellness Action Council, gave to Georgetown High School students last week. A student posing as the Grim Reaper pulled a student from a classroom declaring him dead — this happened every 31 minutes, symbolizing the statistic that every 31 minutes someone dies in a drinking and driving incident. By the end of the day, there was a group of whitefaced 'dead' students who served as a grim reminder of the deadly consequences of drinking and driving.

It is a message that all people should learn, not just high school students. According to the Against Drunk Driving (ADD) organization, drunk driving causes more deaths, injuries, and destruction than all the murders, muggings, rapes and robberies combined.

Keep in mind too that if you host a Christmas gathering this year, you may be held liable should any of your guests consume too much and are injured afterwards — even if they aren't driving. It makes sense that hosts should prevent serious inebriation; serve alternatives and have safeguards in place to protect your guest from foolish actions.

Don't let drinking put a damper on your holiday cheer.

CHCs will not threaten hospital

Dear editor:

There seems to be some misunderstanding among some Halton Hills residents regarding the proposal for establishing a Community Health Centre (CHC) in our town. The misconception lies in the belief that should the Ministry of Health grant us a CHC, the hospital would be in jeopardy. This was evident in Alex McKee's letter to the editor on Wednesday, November 30.

When a doctor's office opens to provide medical care, does a hospital feel threatened?

When various agencies take on health prevention do hospitals close as a result?

I suggest that these services improve the health care services of that community and are quite often welcomed.

Because CHCs offer health promotion and preventative services, they complement the acute care services offered by the local hospi-

Letters to the Editor

tal. They go hand in hand. It would be sad if the two services fought over control instead of understanding the value of the natural referral processes that would result.

The Halton District Health Council supports the establishment of a CHC and will be a watch dog assuring no duplication of services exist in the region.

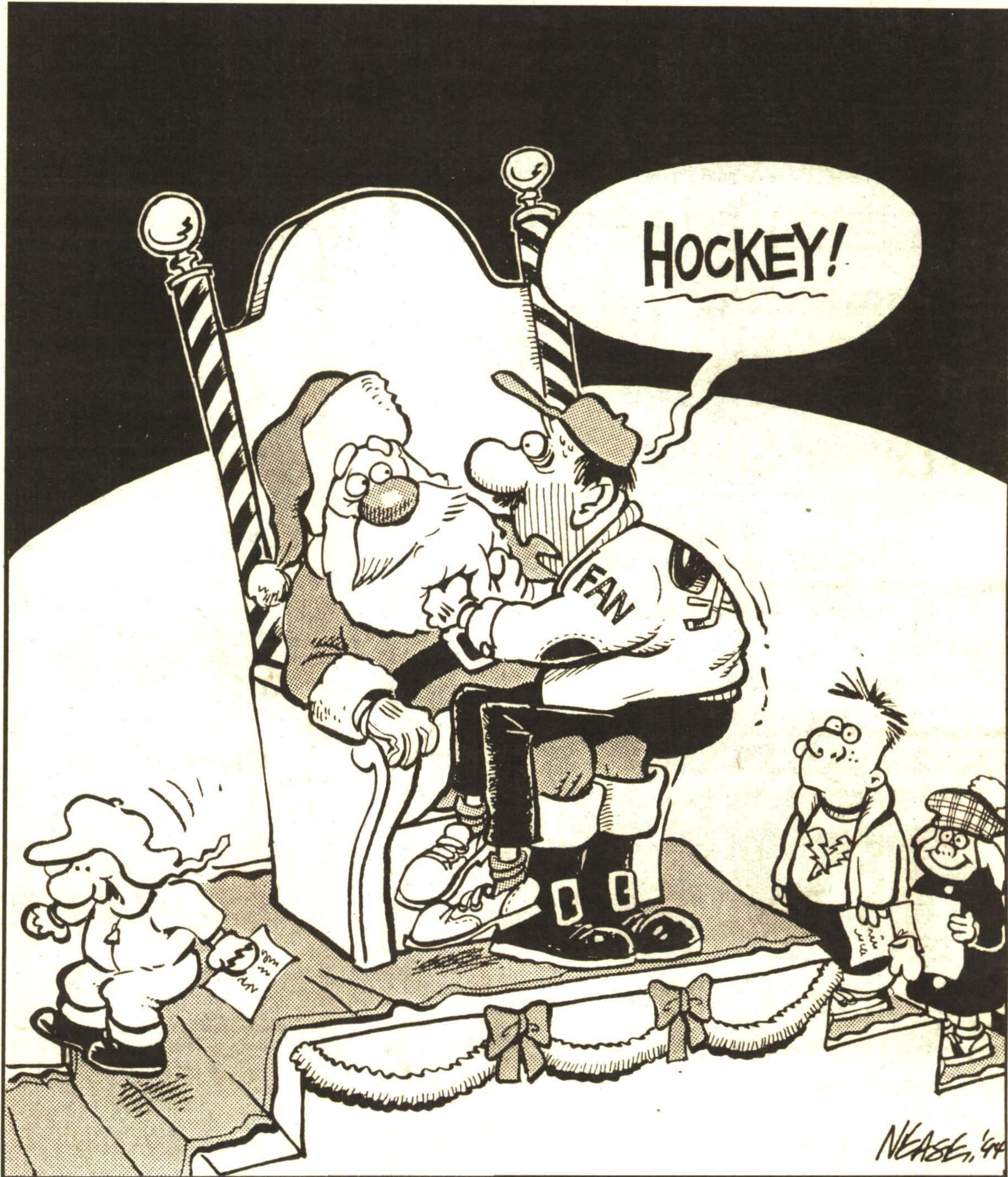
Communities that are fortunate enough to have a CHC have a variety of health care needs met through a wellness and prevention model. Patients are allowed to be in control of their own health issues and have a variety of health care

professionals available to them. Residents of Halton Hills can be excited and feel hopeful about the prospect of receiving a unique type of health care and promotion in our home town.

Potentially our CHC would provide a salaried doctor; a nurse or nurse practitioner; a social worker; an outreach worker; a health promoter and perhaps a midwife, if the community sees fit. CHCs are run by a board of directors made up of residents that use the facility, thereby assuring responsibility to the people it serves.

I am excited about Halton Hills joining the ranks of Guelph, St. Jacobs, Hamilton, Toronto and 49 other cities across Ontario in having a CHC, almost all of which boast great hospitals as well.

Kim Peters
Acting program director
Canadian Mental Health Association, Halton Region



That Christmas tree could easily withstand an earthquake

For more years than I can remember, we have had an artificial Christmas tree.

And for the most part, it was for convenience, so we didn't have a load of spruce needles to clean up. Besides, our kids have voiced opinions about "wasting" a perfectly good tree for Christmas.

But this year, after photographing and writing about a long standing Christmas tree lot in Georgetown run by the local Kinsmen club, I once again mentioned the subject of a real tree to the kids.

It has been a good 10 years since we had a real tree, so my youngest daughter had no idea of the concept of bringing a living tree into the house.

So, like the Griswald family in *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*, the entire Brown clan headed out last Sunday, amid singing Christmas carols and armed with a sturdy piece of rope to lash it down, to acquire that tree; a real, honest-to-goodness tree,

complete with its dropping needles and strong evergreen scent, to grace our living room for the festive season.

We found a nice spruce, but unlike Clark Griswald, I didn't dig it out by the roots. It was already cut.

The trip home with it tied to the top of our van was uneventful, despite prophecies from the kids that it would end up on the highway. After untying it from the top of the van, I stood it up in the garage.

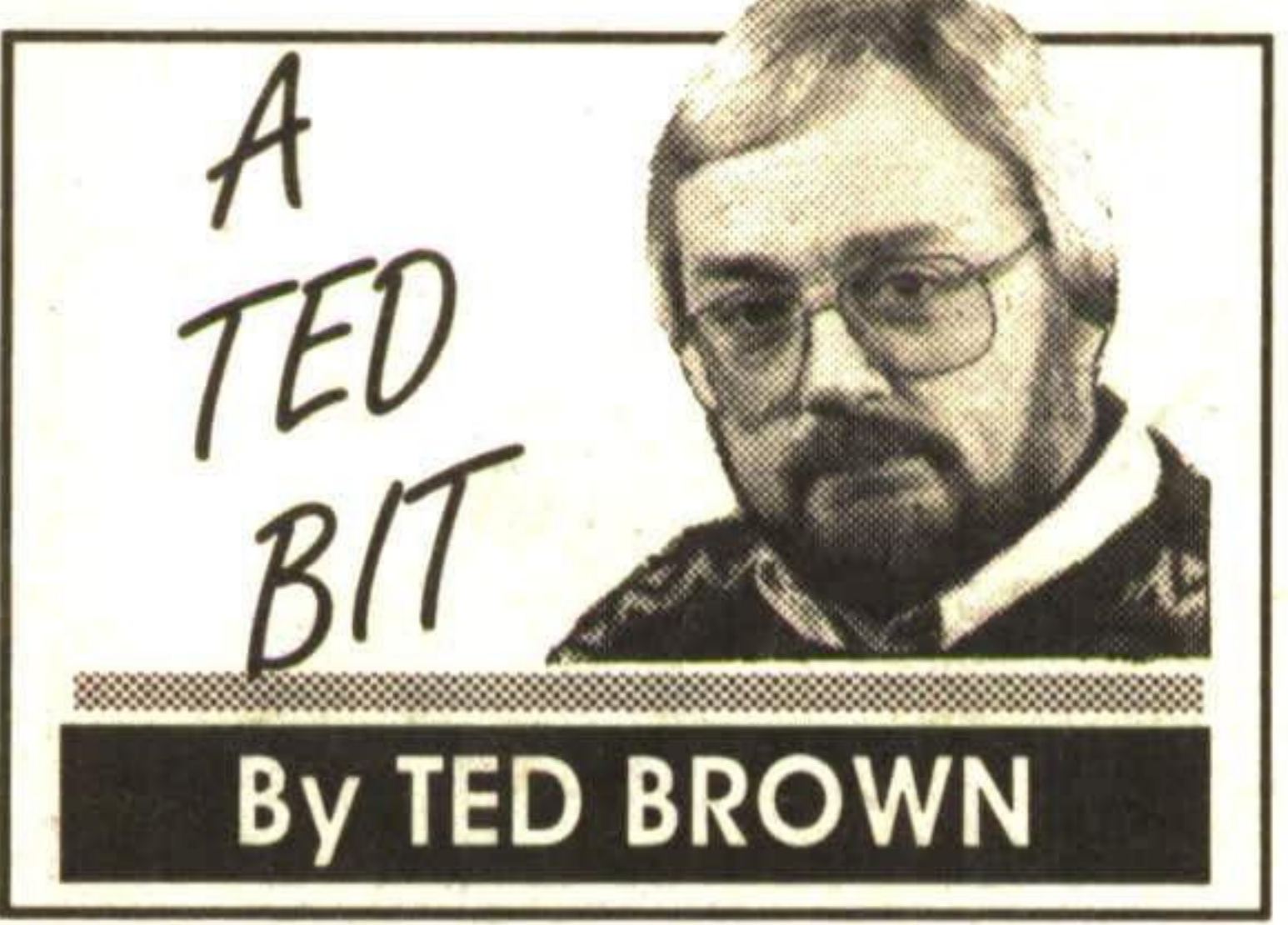
"Why are you putting it in the garage?" one daughter asked. "Why don't we take it in the house now?"

"We can't. It's a real tree, and it'll dry out too much if we put it inside too soon," I explained. "We'll have to wait for Christmas to get a little closer before it goes in the house."

They weren't impressed. "Do we have a tree stand?" another asked.

"No," I replied, "I'll just nail it to the floor."

Suspicious stares greeted me.



"Okay, okay, I'm joking," I continued, "But years ago my grandfather used to nail the tree to the floor every year."

"He did? Why?" I proceeded to tell them how my father reminisced about his father's tree anchoring techniques.

It seems when my dad was a little boy, my grandmother had numerous cats in the house.

And, typical of all cats, the moment the annual Christmas tree was put up in the house, the cats immediately found themselves a new napping place; in the middle of the Christmas tree.

Consequently the tree often

ended up laying on the floor, amid a pile of broken ornaments.

My grandfather, being the resourceful type, wasn't one to admit defeat. That tree was going to remain standing, regardless.

Myself, I would have simply banned the cats from the house for the Christmas season.

But not my grandfather.

He nailed a piece of plank to the bottom of the tree, and then nailed that plank to the floor.

My kids were aghast. "He drove nails into the floor?"

I explained how our living room has a thick tongue and groove pine floor, so if he drove the nails between the boards no one could even see a nail hole when the tree was taken down.

Anyway, he finished out the exercise using fine stove pipe wire to support the tree from three directions in the corner of the living room.

According to my dad, that tree could withstand anything short of an earthquake or hurricane.

Including cats sleeping in the middle of it.

Anyway, the tree was decorated with somewhat unique lights. They were candles. Dozens of little white candles were attached to the boughs with clip-on holders, and the tree was lit only once.

On Christmas Eve. Dad always said how beautiful their tree was, with the little twinkling candles glowing in the dark Christmas Eve, as the family gathered round.

And with a very dry tree and many little candles, my grandfather kept a full bucket of water close by; just in case.

As we decorated our tree I thought how times have changed since my grandfather nailed the tree to our living room floor. We now use electric lights, flame retardant garland and a metal tree stand.

But one thing seems to remain the same.

Our cat keeps eyeing our tree in the living room.