

WORD'S WORTH

With Eric Balkind



In praise of Samaritans

I too, am repulsed by recent incidents in which decent people who stepped in to help protect fellow citizens in apparent danger, ended up losing their lives.

Within the past several weeks, friends and family have buried at least three innocent souls whose only mistake was to meet the wrong people in the wrong place at the wrong time. Dying when what you're really trying to do is to help out is no way to go; these are losses which society cannot afford.

Such tragedies tend to scare us and make us ultra-cautious; we decide that it would be safer to walk by on the other side rather than to get involved. Perhaps we even try not to identify with those who are in trouble.

Yet we must surely recognise what it is that Paul Semple, Santo Michelin and Wesley Young bring to us. (They are three young men who were brutally killed when they went to the aid of citizens in distress.) By their caring responses they distinguish our kind and they honour us; they raise the human race by a notch or two and we are made to feel just a touch more noble and, indeed, valuable.

We are reminded, by such selfless folk, that we live in a society where some do care and where people can make the essential difference — and that is enough. Perhaps we are also comforted by the knowledge that, in an emergency, someone might come to our assistance.

Can we know how we would respond in such a moment of crisis? Of course not! We may hope that we will do the right thing but, in the end, there is no substitute for the actual event. Until that moment suddenly arrives, we will certainly not know what we would do — how we would behave or whether we are up to the challenge.

Like you, I want to believe in the essential decency and the sense of caring which do so much towards ensuring that we remain civilized. Words may not be of much comfort to families now mourning these courageous young people, but I want them to know that, yes, we are in their debt and, yes, they have set us a grand example.

And what can we say of the despicable wretches who took away, without much apparent thought, the lives and the hopes of Paul, Santo and Wesley? Not very much but, at the risk of being thought hard-hearted, I will venture a reactionary hope — that when these pathetic individuals finally leave jail it will be in a plain pine box. That I wish for just one simple reason — because, at all costs, the rest of us deserve to be protected forever from their thoughtless mayhem.

Wit & Wisdom

Acton residents may read Toronto newspapers or watch national news broadcasts and shake their heads at the brutality and injustice that exist on big-city streets every day and night. We may be grateful for the safety of a smaller community.

But the threat of senseless violence is all around us, really, and there are beatings and crimes and random acts of violence here, to be sure. Let us unite as a community against those who would abuse our neighbour's health and property and thereby ensure our own safety.

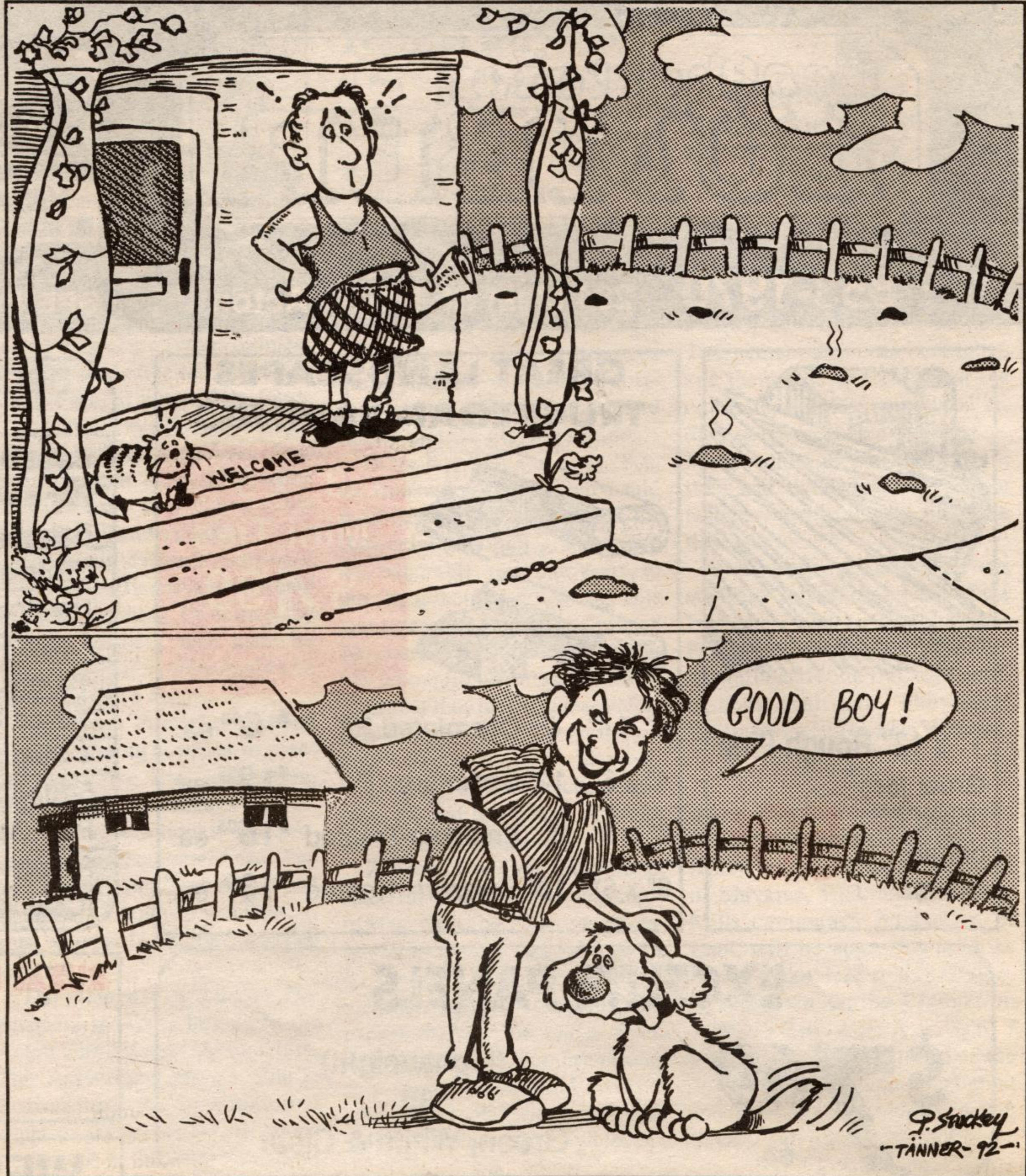
Last week in *The Tanner*, we reported on a Neighbourhood Watch revival that was being proposed for Acton. It may be perfect timing; why not call our village constable Bill Riddle and pledge your support?

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." — *John XV*

"Better to expose ourselves to ingratitude than fail in assisting the unfortunate." — *Du Coeur*

"After all there is but one race — humanity." — *George Moore*

"When moral courage feels that it is in the right, there is no personal daring of which it is incapable." — *Leigh Hunt*



LETTERS

Full-Employment program proposed by John Shadbolt

Dear Editor,

Further to my last letter with the new save-a-tree full-employment socialist idea, I would like to extend this new line of thought.

We have seen how the government genie can solve most of our unemployment problems with their tree licenses, but we must remember that there are two sides to every tree.

If we have to obtain a license to cut down a tree, then I assume certain things will happen.

1. No company will be given the right to clear-cut, a practice that is only made legitimate by government issuing a license.

2. The right to plant a tree must be controlled, since a society that wants everything controlled by government must understand that the government cannot allow unplanned growth, so to speak.

3. The method of planting trees must be licensed — the size of the

hole, depth, etc. (Plus Garth's size tax.)

4. Annual leaf counts to determine the health of the tree.

5. A department will have to set up to determine the growth rate of the trees.

6. My last letter dealt with lightning, old trees, etc.

7. Every township will have to set up civil service tree experts to oversee the planting, etc.

8. A license to plant a tree will be required (plus Garth's sapling tax.)

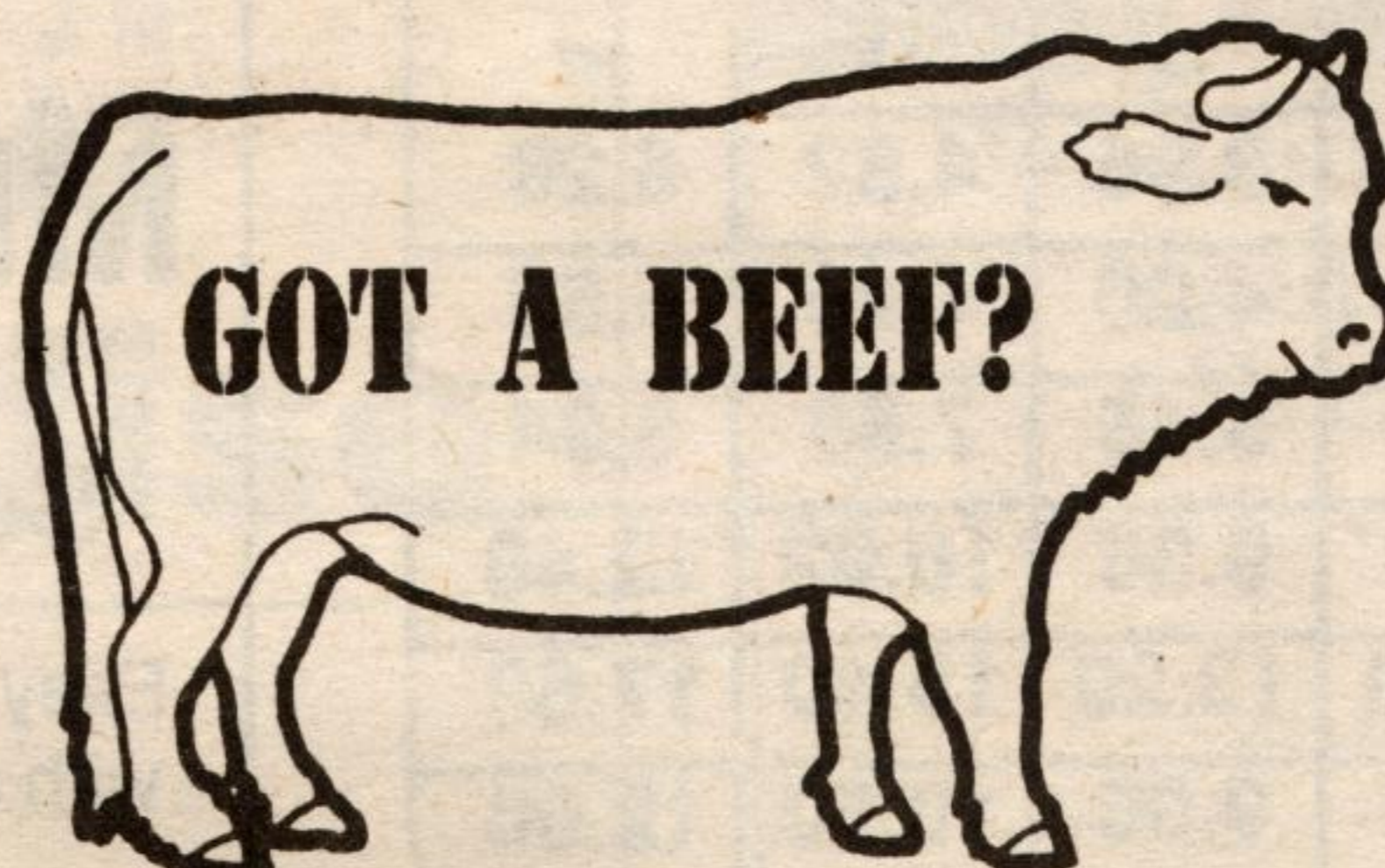
9. Seeds that fall off the older trees will be banned, under penalty of NDP (No Damn Planting).

10. A department will have to determine the type of tree to be planted. Licenses will vary, depending on the type of tree.

11. To water a tree, another inspection and license required (plus Garth's soak tax).

If anyone had any doubt about creating full employment by trees, I hope these further ideas — called "The Full-Employment Equality Program" — will prove, beyond a shadow of doubt, that everyone can look forward to a branch plant economy, courtesy NDP (Noel Duignan's Planning) and our local government.

John Shadbolt, Acton



Write a letter to the editor. All letters must be signed.

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