

## ACROSS THE FENCE

With Joanne Stevenson



# Pass it on!

If you've ever worked in an office, you've probably fallen victim to the office cold at least once. Somewhat like a chain letter, the only way to get rid of the cold is to infect five or six of your co-workers. While you can take pleasure in watching your colleagues suffer as you have suffered, the down side is that you will be re-infected in another six weeks. This is taking recycling to its extreme.

Take two weeks ago, for example. Doug, our reporter/photographer extraordinaire, came down with the flu. In truly heroic fashion, he came to work, suffered two miserable days, and generally did his part in putting out a terrific issue.

Even though I avoided him and wore a surgical gown and mask, as he began to feel better, I started to feel worse. I cursed Doug all weekend, as I sniffled and coughed, but by Sunday night I was feeling better.

When I came in to work last Monday, our fearless leader Paul was filled with a miserable cold. He too had been cursing Doug all weekend. Paul holed up in his office for most of Monday – foolishly I thought I might be spared.

But by Tuesday, I had a cough I just couldn't seem to shake. I was cursing Paul for the rest of the week.

Now Karen, who is forced to share air with these two, decided there was no way she was getting a cold or the flu. She arranged baffleboards around her desk in a complicated series of tunnels and passwords – something like Maxwell Smart's route to Control headquarters in the old *Get Smart* series – in an effort to keep the germs away. But by Monday morning, she was complaining of a runny nose. "There's no cause for alarm," she declared. "It's just a runny nose." She's so cute when she's in denial. No doubt she will be cursing Doug and Paul later in the week.

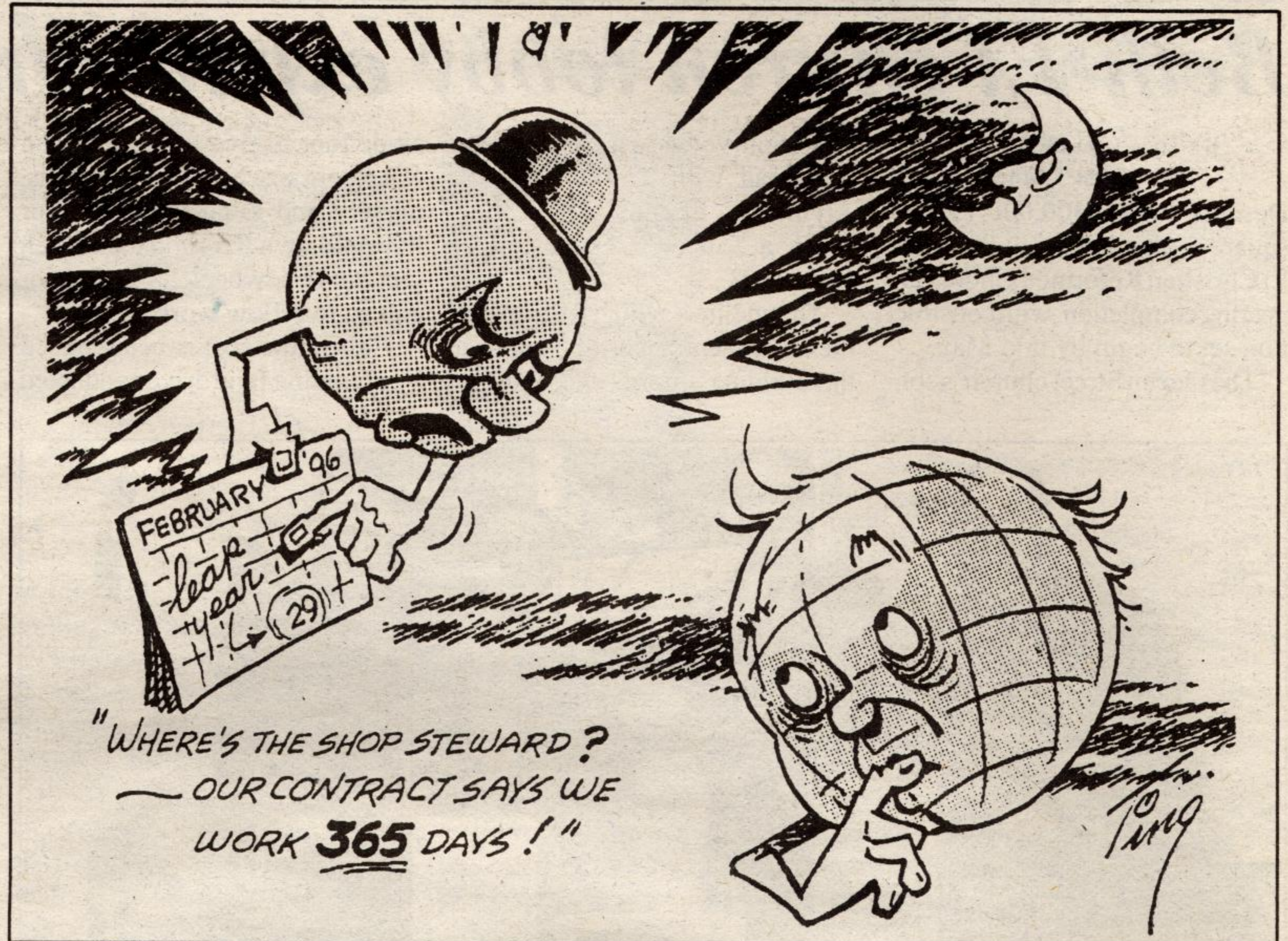
Doug swears he picked up the bug while covering various events in the schools. All I know is that ever since he was at my kids' school taking pictures on Lighten Up Canada Day, my daughter has had the sniffles.

And I'm fairly certain that in another six weeks or so, I'll be ready to pass it on.

★ ★ ★

The new \$2 coin arrived on the scene with much fanfare last week. Toonie, twoonie and bear buck are the more printable nick-names the coin has acquired. But after several reports of the coin splitting apart, many people are calling them "Quebeckers," because they prefer to separate.

Any parent can tell you the two pieces of the coin should be attached with pablum. If you've ever tried to wipe this hardened substance off highchairs or table legs, you know this is impermeable to water, hammers and chisels and Mr. Clean.



## LETTERS

### Red Cross month

To the Editor,

"Friends for Life" is the theme in 1996 as the Canadian Red Cross commemorates 100 years of humanitarian service. As the Red Cross launches March is Red Cross Month, the Toronto Blood Centre asks healthy individuals to be friends for life by being regular

blood donors.

We hope people will make a commitment to share their good health regularly. By doing so, they can help ensure the gift of life is available to their community whenever it's needed and eliminate blood shortages.

Donors can give blood every 56 days, or up to six times a year. Healthy individuals aged 17 to 70 are urged to call (416)974-9900 for clinic hours and locations throughout central Ontario.

The next clinic in Acton is on March 21, from 5 to 8:30 pm at the Acton Legion.

Chris Meyer  
Canadian Red Cross

### Suicide intervention

To the Editor,

Suicide is one of the most frightening situations a professional or a lay person may ever have to face. While professionals usually have some more resources and experience available to help them, people in the general public are often overwhelmed by the very thought of suicide, which is why the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Halton Region Branch is holding a two-day Suicide Intervention Workshop next month.

The workshop will be held on March 21 and 22 in Georgetown. Participants will be taught emergency first aid to intervene in a potential suicide situation. This workshop is designed for anyone who may come in contact with a person at risk of suicide.

The workshop will provide an

overview of common warning signs of suicide, indicators of risk, assessment of risk, and instructs as to how to effectively implement the suicide intervention model; phases, structure, and process. The participants gain a feeling of empowerment as they now have the knowledge to effectively intervene in suicidal behaviour.

CMHA, Halton Region, as a branch of a national, voluntary association, provides people in the region with opportunities to enhance their mental health, and to increase the understanding and acceptance of mental health issues through: support services, consumer and community involvement, education and advocacy.

To register for the workshop or for more information, call the CMHA at (905)945-5044.

Lisa LaChapelle  
CMHA

### Cancer canvassing

To the Editor,

The Acton Branch of the Canadian Cancer Society is gearing up for the spring campaign.

Volunteers are needed for the following areas of town: Churchill Road South apartments, Maria Street apartments, Danville estates, Ransom Street apartments and the new subdivision by the Legion.

If you have a few hours to spare, please call Liz Bailey at 853-0585 or Cathy Gerrow at 853-1424.

Pat Kentner, Acton Branch  
Canadian Cancer Society

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SOMETHING  
TO SAY?**

A letter to the  
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