

# EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

## Danger at intersection

Another incident at Mill and Main has again focused attention on pedestrian safety at this busy intersection where Highway 7 and Regional Road 25 (formerly Hwy 25) meet.

This time a grandmother and her three-year-old granddaughter were attempting to cross Main Street, walking east, when a van, turning left onto Mill from southbound Main, struck the grandmother's leg. Although she wasn't seriously hurt, it was a frightening experience for both her and the youngster, who was bumped by a van at the same intersection six months ago.

The three-year-old's mother says, "You always take your life in your hands when you cross this intersection." Most of the cars don't wait for the pedestrians to cross when they have a walk sign and it's always busy with lots of huge trucks."

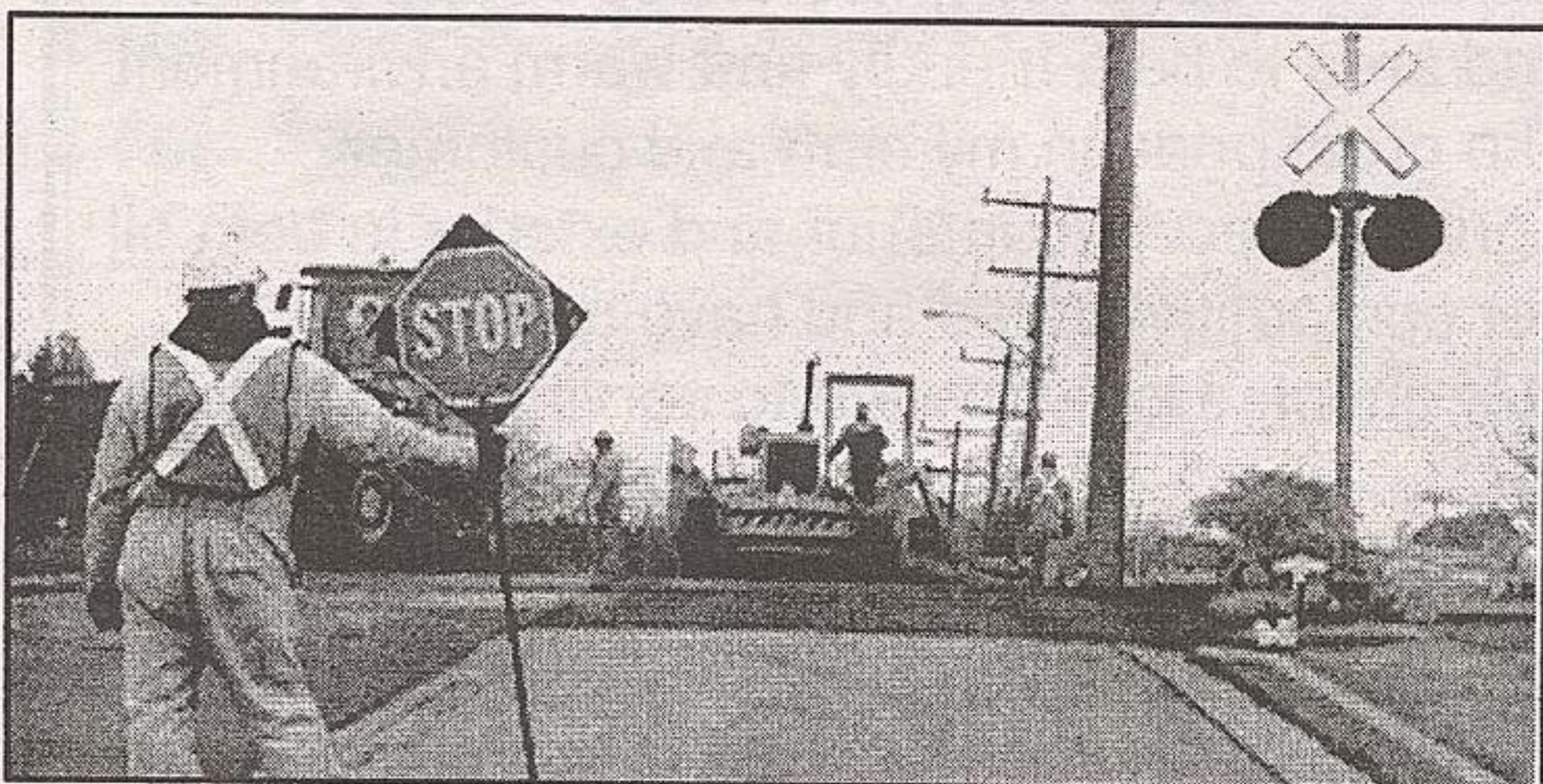
The mother is right. The intersection can be a frightening experience, especially at rush hours when large trucks and bumper-to-bumper cars and vans come from all four directions. In spite of the fact the Province has relegated Highway 25 to a regional road, it has not reduced the volume of traffic. Indeed, since the former Hwy 25 has been paved from Acton to Ospringe, it most likely will attract more vehicular traffic, especially trucks.

A statistical history of the intersection indicates there are 6.6 accidents a year there, and in the five years ending in 1996 there were 33 accidents, six of which involved personal injuries. Halton Hills traffic analyst Bob Butrym has said the numbers of accidents at the intersection are at a level that warrants study.

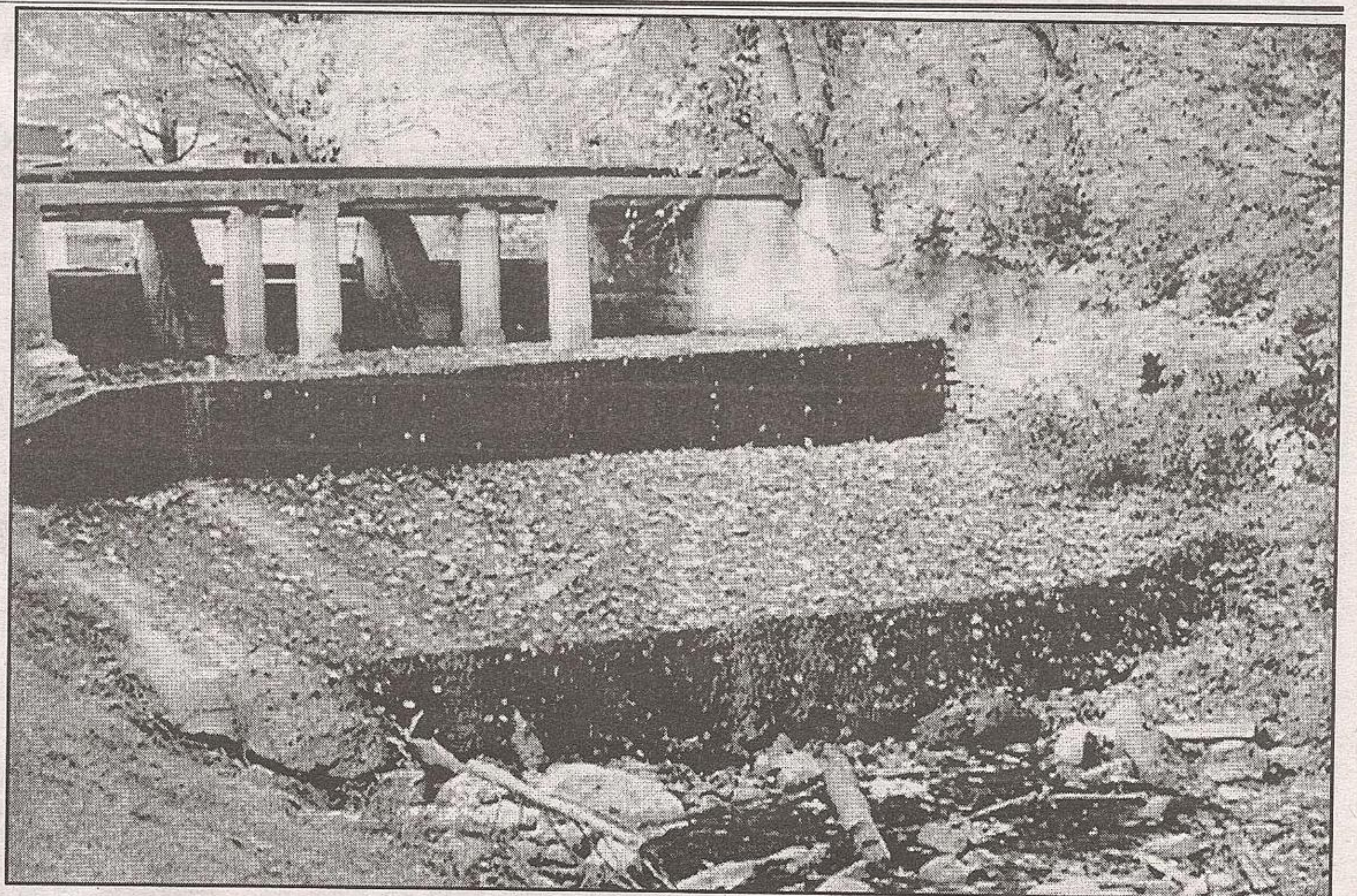
However, statistics don't tell the whole story. The numbers of near misses and heart-thumping experiences at the intersection are not recorded in data banks. It's an intimidating place for both pedestrians and drivers, compounded by its proximity to the IGA plaza where there is a constant flow of traffic, in and out.

When the Town installed a pedestrian traffic light at the Robert Little school crossing where the School Lane meets Main Street North, it helped slow down incoming traffic from Hwy 7 and 25.

Police constantly patrol Main Street North and issue tickets to speeders but they can't be on patrol at all time. So unless there are better answers to the problem at the intersection, some thought should be given to slowing traffic down before it reaches Mill and Main.



Paving on Regional Road 25



**DRY DAM:** A good illustration of the drought which has reduced water ground levels in this area is provided by the dam on mill Street where the Black Creek leaves Fairy lake on its way to the Credit River. Only a trickle of water is going over the dam because of the low water levels in the lake. Rain which pounded this area Tuesday and Wednesday helped to alleviate the drought which has dried up wells in the rural districts. - Frances Niblock photo

## Young people who smoke

By Senator Colin Kenny

... how do we help them?

Young people are intricate. Not that older folk aren't intricate too, but at least we've had a bit of time to try to figure out what makes us tick.

Not so with young people. Anyone claiming to know how to spew out a quick assessment of what motivates any given teenager, or group of teenagers, is a fool.

Let's say you've got a kid who smokes. Fresh young lungs headed for the long dirty road. Why a young person smokes may involve a number of factors: to be part of a peer group, rebellion against parents and other authority figures, striving for independence, the excitement of risk-taking behaviour, weight control, stress release - the list goes on.

All of these factors, of course, are exacerbated by tobacco advertising and cigarettes that are a lot cheaper than they used to be.

What to do, parent, what to do? Do you scold? Bribe? Cajole? Use scare tactics? Threaten? Reason? Plead? Made a deal? Or ignore?

What if rebellion against you is part of the mix that makes cigarettes appealing? That probably means that whatever strategy you employ will be countered. Even if it's the most subtle one you can imagine. Hey, they know us. They watch us with big eyes.

So, what's the alternative? Turn the problem over to ad agencies? Wily masterminds, their lives devoted to manipulating people's behaviour? Sure, maybe these folks can help. But young people have been watching these clever schemers for a long time too, and when the messages gets righteous most of them twig to the fact that ad people are just parents in disguise.

What to do, what to do? If paren-

tal guidance won't work, if the slick guys at the ad agencies are a lot better at selling cigarettes than they are at selling clean living, how do we give our young people a chance to avoid the kind of addiction that is killing off 40,000 Canadians a year?

I say there are answers. But they are complex answers. They will involve all kinds of initiatives taken by the collective efforts of all kinds of people. And they will cost money. But we can get that money, and we don't have to take it from taxpayers.

Remember, the tobacco companies say they aren't out to entice young customers to replace the ones who are dying off. They have said publicly that they want to help discourage that very thing. You may laugh at that - I admit it makes me laugh - but there is a way of making these companies put their money where their mouths pretend to be.

Bill S-143, the Tobacco Industry Responsibility Act, has passed the

Senate and is ready for the House of Commons this fall. It would slap a levy of 50 cents on every carton of cigarettes sold in Canada. The \$120 million in revenue raised would be distributed to community groups and national organizations across Canada who want to put real people on the front lines against tobacco addiction among the young.

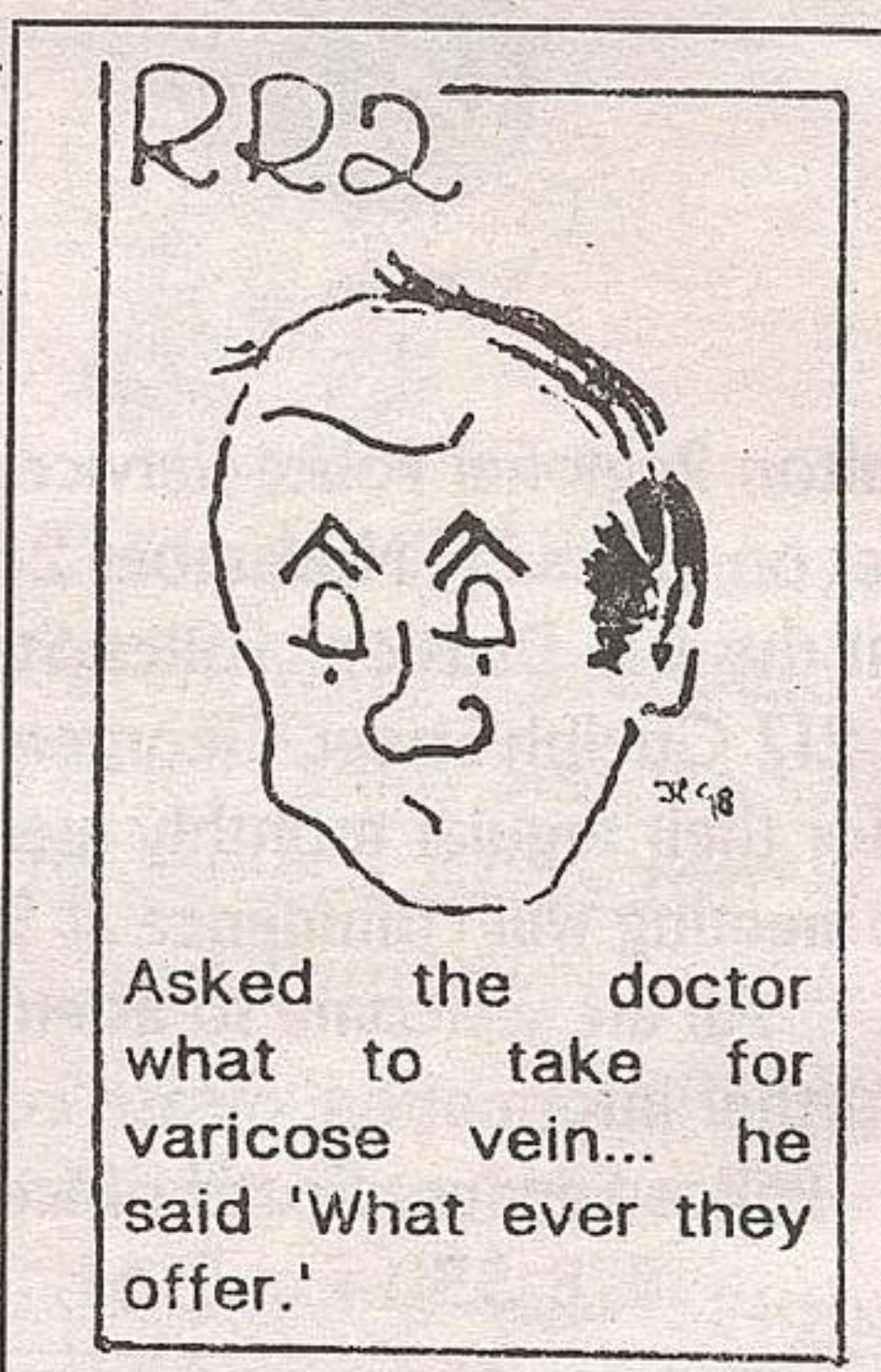
There has been a sense that young people and adults are working together to beat this thing. Not just clean-cut young people that appeal to every parent, but kids with pins sticking out of body parts as well. Not just clean-cut, nonsmoking parents and social workers, but adults who have tried 20 times to quit and failed. And adults who have been diagnosed with lung cancer and heart disease and have a story to tell. We need everybody involved.

I can't tell you which approaches will work best in which communities, and where the kids will be running the show and where the adults will have a say, but I can say that we need face-to-face encounters all across this country that come to grips with tobacco addiction and offer healthier alternatives.

The government of Canada collects \$1,000 in tobacco taxes for every dollar it puts into anti-tobacco initiatives. Frankly, that's an insult. Since California's Proposition 99 applied a 25 cent tax to every package of cigarettes sold and used the money for inventive anti-tobacco programs, adult smoking has declined precipitously and smoking among young people - on the rise nearly everywhere else - has stabilized.

The pressures on young people in this society are enormous. Only if we

See Bill S-143 on Page 5



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