

THE HALTON HILLS WEEKEND

KEN NUGENT
Publisher

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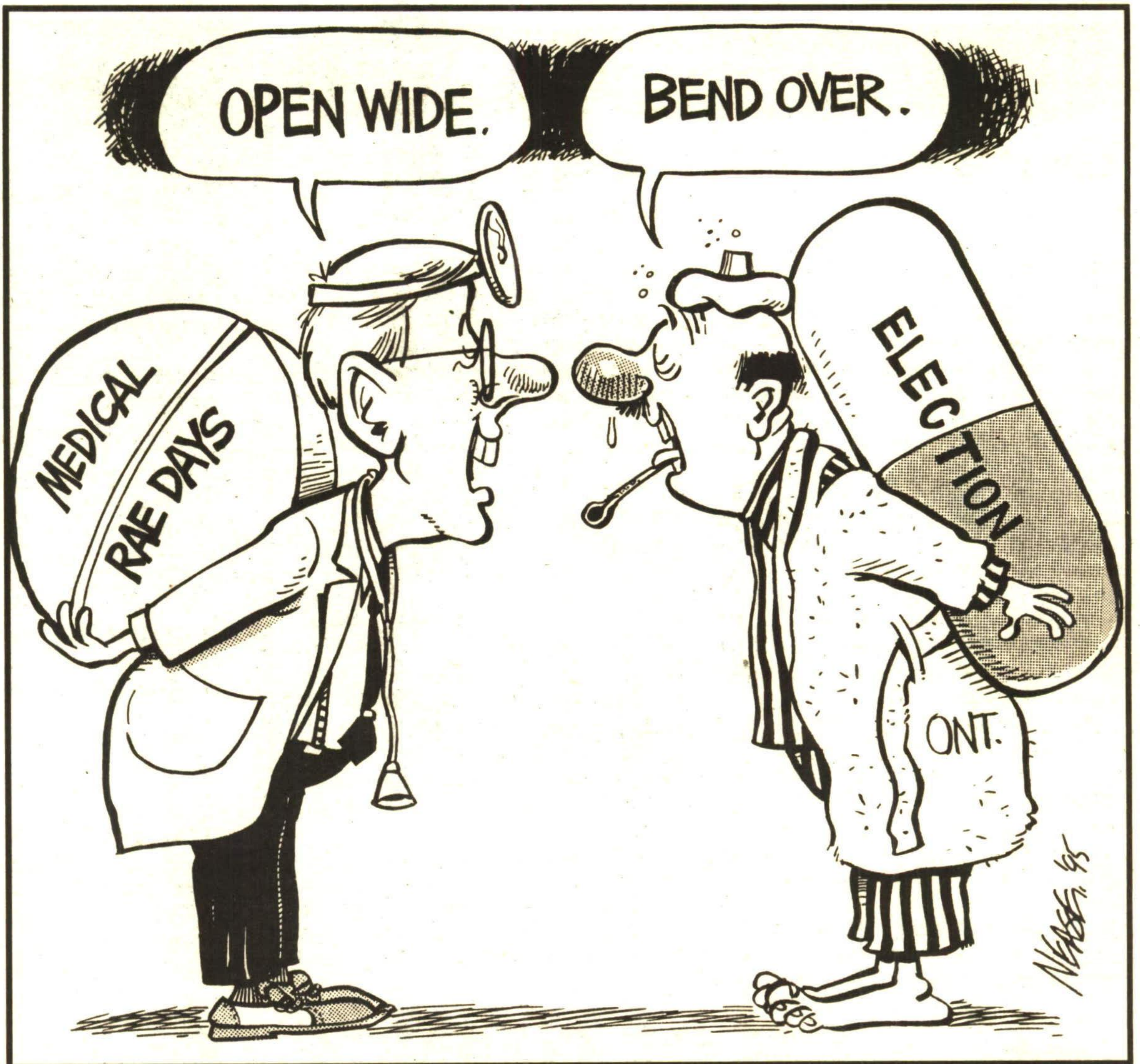
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Victims of fire

In less than a week in Halton Hills, 12 people have been left homeless after fires ripped through their residences. Gone, in a few blazing hours, were lifetimes of possessions and memories. Accidental causes are being blamed in each case — warranting perhaps a cautionary note to all residents to consider their fire prevention habits.

Commendation should be extended to Halton Hills firefighters who risked their lives to quench these fires, and to protect neighboring homes. They did a good job.

Meanwhile, the twelve are struggling to get on with their lives. A fund has been set up for the Georgetown victims. This community has demonstrated in the past its willingness to open its hearts and pocketbooks for these unfortunate citizens.

We will do so again.

Buckle up!

From April 16 to April 30, Halton Regional Police will participate in the Provincial Seat Belt Campaign. The seat belt compliance rate in Halton Hills is 92 per cent.

It is estimated 200 lives could have been saved in Ontario if last year everyone wore a seat belt and child restraint system correctly.

In Halton too, many people could have been saved from injury by seat belt usage ... so buckle up!

Photojournalism is a whole new world

You might notice some of the photos appearing in current issues of *The Independent/Free Press* are carrying the credit of Meg Elstone.

Meg has been spending time here, on a placement from Loyalist College in Belleville, as the final part of her second year of the photojournalism course.

She spent the first week and a half of her placement at our sister paper, *The Brampton Guardian*, under the watchful eye of chief photographer George Beshiri, gleaning information about the business from him, and will be working at *The Independent/Free Press* until the end of the month.

It's a learning experience for both of us, I must say.

You see, unlike many veteran news photographers in the business today, Meg has had a thorough training in most aspects of the business, before she even stepped foot inside a newsroom. In addition to photography, she studied writing, libel and other aspects of the law and the rights of photographers. In the past, many photographers had to learn by trial and error on the job.

Meg came to *The Independent/Free Press* with a working knowledge of the QuarkXpress desktop publishing computer program, (considered by most the industry standard) as well as Adobe Photoshop 3.0, which is generally reserved for the bigger dailies, in which the photographer spends more

time cropping photos and correcting exposures in front of a computer screen, rather than leaning over a darkroom sink in a red light darkroom with unpleasant odors lofting in the air.

Yes, photojournalism is a whole new world out there.

We chatted recently about the course, its challenges and downfalls, and, of course, Meg's expectations about this business of gathering and reporting news.

She told me how she has found the workload easier than she expected.

"The instructors made it

about every two weeks.

They experiment with such interesting toys as digital cameras and scanners for both negatives and prints, and manipulate their images on the computer screen.

"But I found I became discouraged part way through my second year," admits Meg. "We were required to shoot all the class assignments with specific guidelines, according to the instructors — no exceptions. But in the last semester, all the restrictions were off and we could really cut loose with our creativity. It seemed to make it all worthwhile at the end of it all."

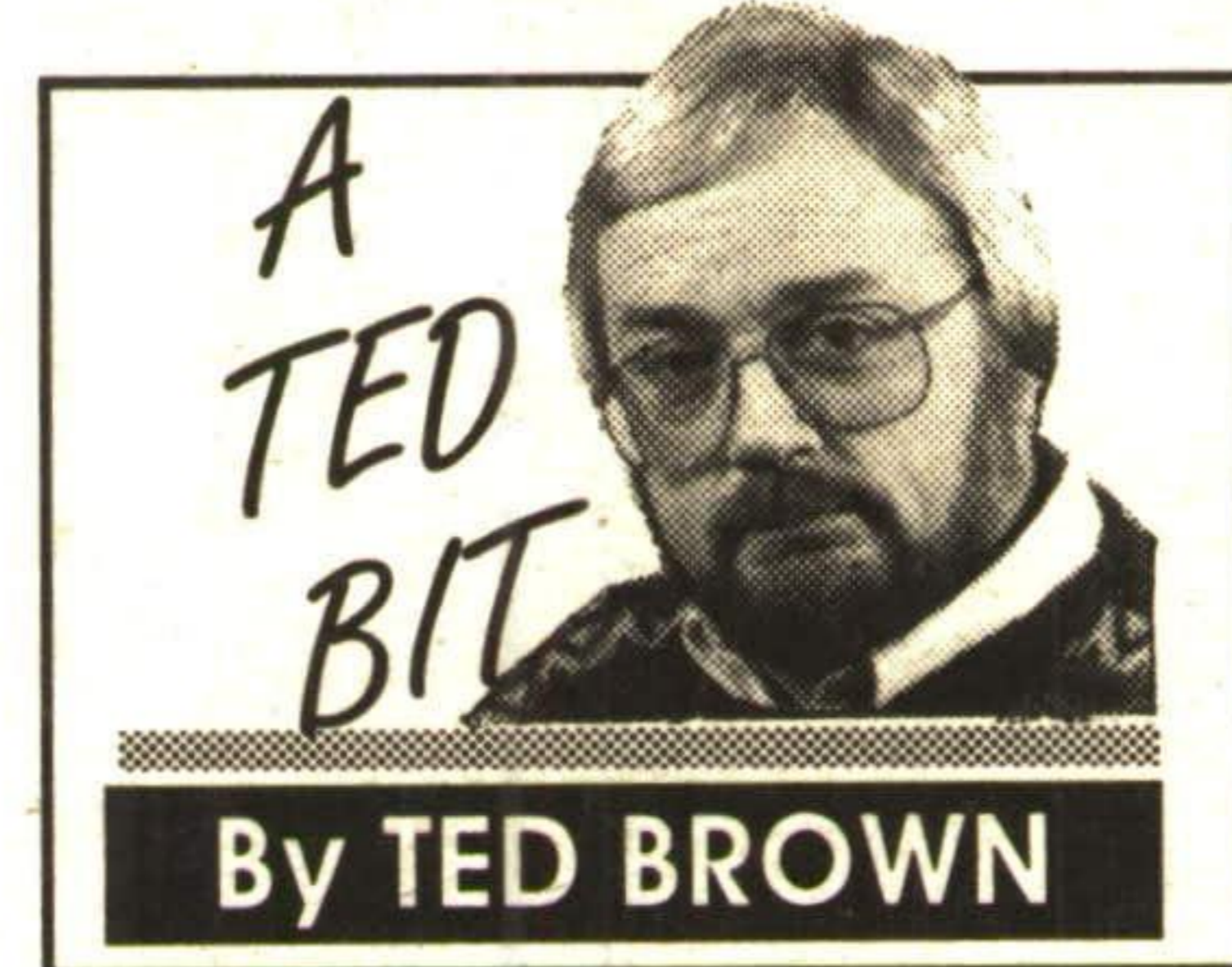
The course at Loyalist doesn't come cheap, costing \$1,200 to \$1,300 tuition a year, and another \$1,000 or so a year for supplies (books, film and paper.) And room and board is added on top.

And when it's all said and done, there's no guarantee of getting a job. But Meg has no delusions about the job market.

"Oh, I'd love to get a job as a full-time staffer at a newspaper, but I'd be just as happy to settle for a position in the graphics department. Just so long as I get to work in photography."

Yes, the industry has changed dramatically over the past few years with the influx of new technology, computer programs and autofocus cameras.

But one thing does remain a constant among all photographers, no matter what their age. They still love creating images.



sound harder than it actually is," says Meg, "(At Loyalist) We were usually pushed to the limit, and rarely had enough time to get our work done. But it became unrealistic. If, for example, we ran out of time on a particular assignment, the instructor would simply extend the deadline. At a real newspaper, that just doesn't happen."

Students at the college are required to work on the college's newspaper, the Loyalist Random Times, (known as L.R.T.) so named because it is published somewhat randomly, usually

RR2



New spring sales philosophy: If you have no cash, no down payment, they have no interest.

Did you know?

The Canadian couch potato is an endangered species according to an American Express Rewarding Lifestyles survey. It finds that 60 per cent of Canadians are satisfied with their lives, 34 per cent 'strongly agree' that their lives are 'full of fun.' Ranking as the number one enjoyment is going on a trip (79%); getting away for the weekend (75%); dining at a fine restaurant (59%); taking part in a favorite sport (56%); going to see a movie or show (43%).