

THE HALTON HILLS **WEEKEND**

KEN NUGENT
Publisher

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The caring Canadian

Once again we have local citizens rallying for a local family. We report in this edition, on our front page, how friends and neighbors in the middle of the night came to the aid of the Laidlaw family, as their barn burned to the ground. And the help doesn't stop there, because a local church is setting up a trust fund to get this farm family back into operation.

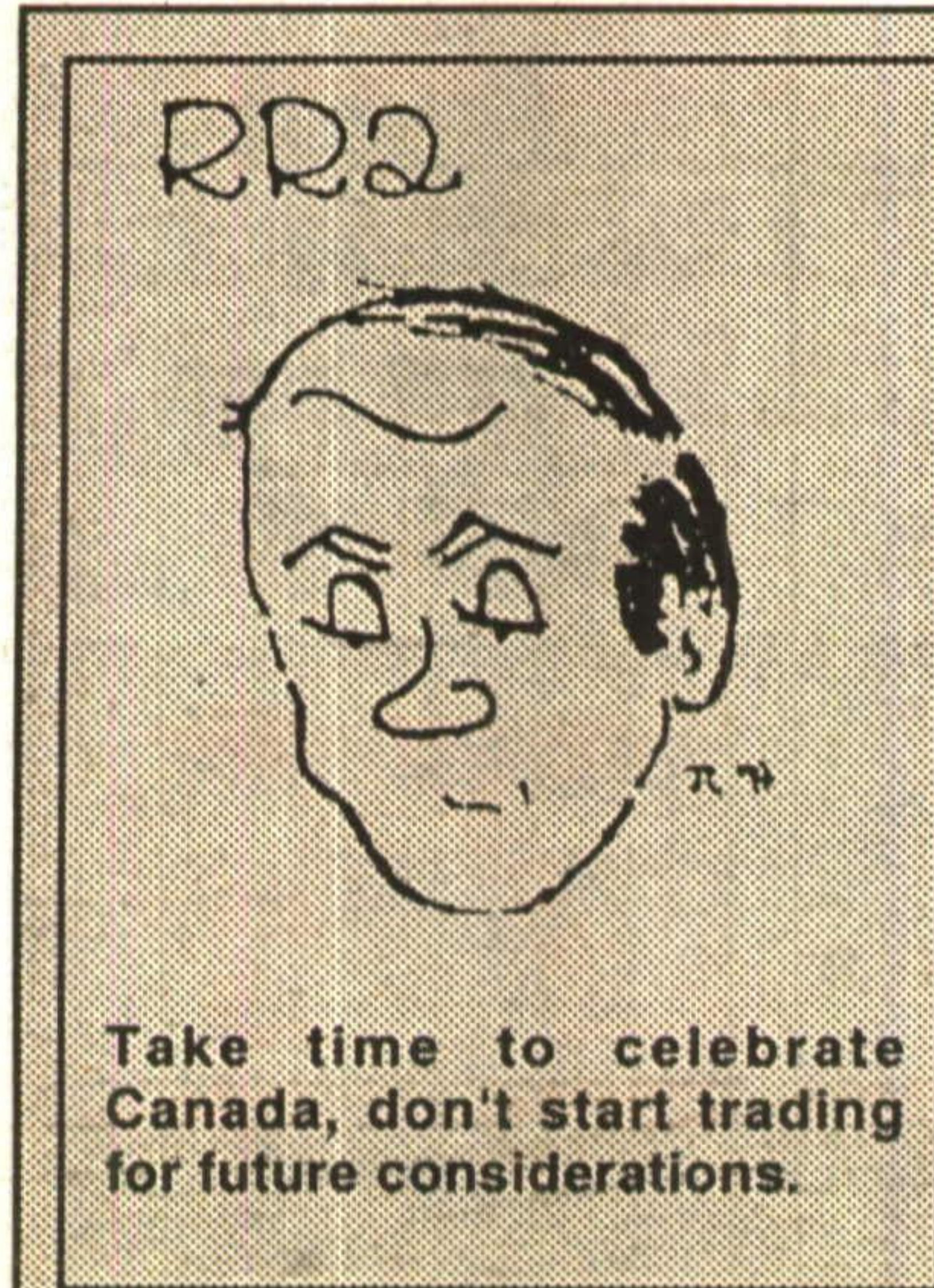
In last Wednesday's edition, we reported how friends, neighbors, and Centennial School classmates are rallying around Stephanie Harroun and her parents, Susan and Dan Cole, all badly injured in a head-on car crash. A trust fund has been set up to help Stephanie, who may never walk again.

In the past year, we have reported many times how this community has rallied around their neighbors who have suffered misfortune.

And it is through this sharing of strength and kindness, that we, in Halton Hills, have demonstrated what it is to be Canadian.

Although the Canadian character is multi-faceted, our most dominant trait, whether it is here in Halton Hills, or around the world, is our caring for our fellow human.

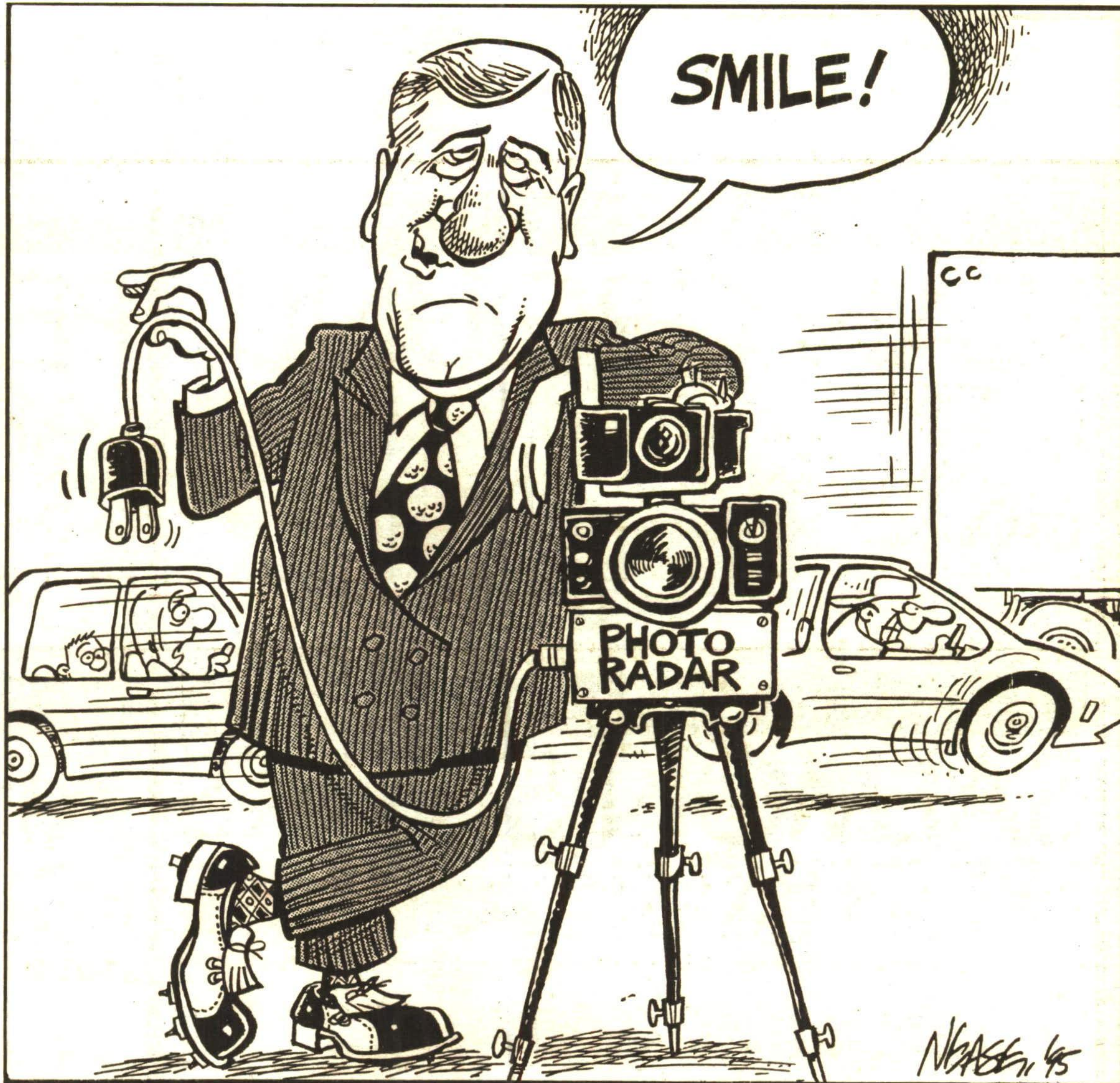
When we wave the flag this weekend, let's cheer for a community which truly cares for one another.



Did you know?

Canada became a self-governing dominion in 1867, 128 years ago, with four founding provinces — Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Newfoundland was the last province to enter the confederation in 1949. Canada derives its name from the Iroquois-Huron word, Kanata, meaning a small village. Ironically, Canada, as a result of the dissolution of the USSR, is the largest country in the world. It covers an area of 3,849,675 square miles.

Take time to celebrate Canada, don't start trading for future considerations.



I'm pleased to be a Canadian

This may sound a bit sappy, but I'm pleased to be a Canadian.

Now don't get me wrong. I'm not a dyed-in-the-wool, wrap-me-in-the-flag and O-Canada-forever type of militant patriot.

I just like being able to call myself a Canadian.

Been one all my life.

My parents as well. And their parents, and parents' parents, and so on...

You get the drift.

But I never really thought about it much more than that, about what it means to be Canadian.

That is, until last Monday.

I was assigned to cover a Citizenship Court at Halton Hills Civic Centre. It was the first of its type to be held in Halton Hills, as most are regularly held in Brampton or Mississauga.

But this one was in Halton Hills, and I was there.

At this court, 37 new Canadians from Oakville, Brampton, Mississauga and three local residents from Halton Hills, were to take their oath and be presented with their brand new citizenship cards and a small Canadian flag.

As I arrived and positioned myself in the gallery behind the seated spectators and recipients, I began to survey the crowd as they checked in with the signing officer, and found their assigned seats.

There were people of all nationalities, religions, and races, assembling in the council chambers.

As I watched them take their seats, it occurred to me how delighted they were to be there.

For them, it was Christmas, their birthday and their lottery numbers had come up on 6-49, all wrapped up in one big bundle.

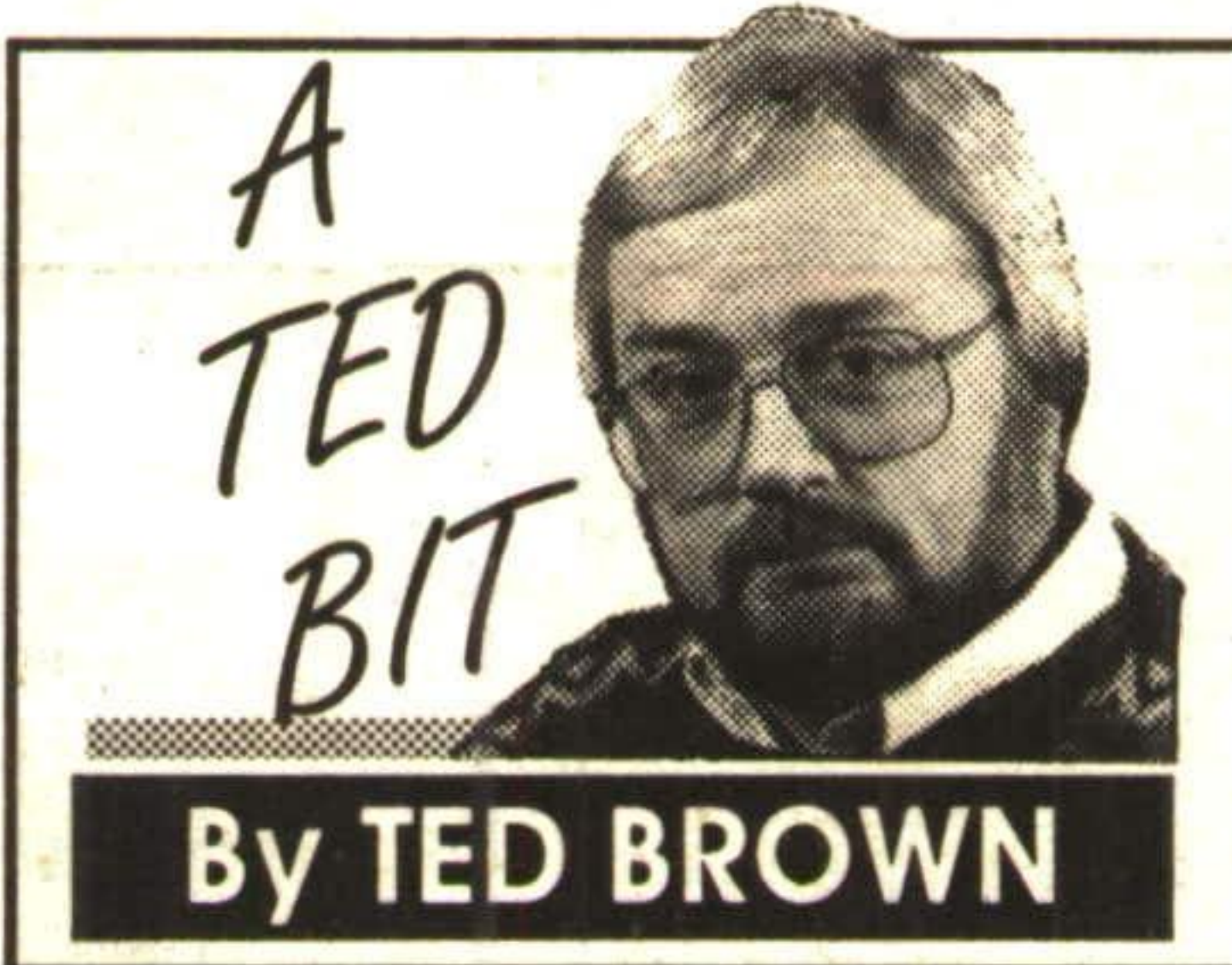
As they entered, most in their Sunday best, and some in traditional dress from their native countries, they were smiling and shaking hands with each other.

And they were all to be Canadians.

Proud Canadians.

Together.

I thought how brave and strong a person must be to leave his/her country of origin, becoming a citizen of a different country than the one he/she was born in.



For me it would be scary, and I can't imagine myself ever leaving Canada for another country.

Then I started to realize why I felt that way.

Canada is such a friendly, open, and safe country to live in.

There are no wars being fought here, no police states, and for the most part, a good standard of living (in spite of the PST and GST).

Our country is beautiful, with a diverse geographic expanse, and a climate that is changeable enough to keep it interesting, yet beautiful.

And best of all, we have

freedom.

When Judge Jo-Anne Robertson administered the Oath of Canadian Citizenship to the recipients, she requested everyone in the room to join together, in both French and English, as we took the oath ourselves.

Until that moment, I think I had taken being a Canadian for granted, content to just enjoy the comfort and security this country offers, and little more.

Like thousands of others.

You know, I've come to believe our American neighbors maybe have the right idea on some things — particularly when it comes to patriotism.

American school children start their day pledging allegiance to the flag, and the adults never miss an opportunity to show their love for their country.

But Canadians tend to be a little too relaxed in their patriotism, and are content to show it one day of the year, Canada Day, when they wear red, and show the flag.

Judge Robertson said that court was an early Canada Day celebration and I had to agree.

As we concluded the ceremony with a rousing rendition of O Canada, I'm sure everyone in the council chambers was as pumped as me, all proud Canadians, together proclaiming the glories of this marvelous country.

So on this Canada Day weekend, join with me and wish your neighbor a happy Canada Day.

And be proud to be a Canadian.