

THE HALTON HILLS **WEEKEND**

KEN NUGENT
Publisher

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Ushering in the festive season

With this the last weekend of November, the festive season is certainly upon us, as Santa Claus made his annual grand entrance into Halton Hills the past two weekends, at parades in his honor in Georgetown and Acton.

Those parades don't just happen — they take a great deal of effort.

Many tireless hours are spent planning, sponsoring and contacting float entrants, bands and all sorts of participants, all with the express purpose of giving our little ones, (and not so little ones) the thrill of seeing jolly old Saint Nick waving at the conclusion of the parade, as an official kickoff to the local Christmas season.

In Georgetown, we offer congratulations and a hearty thank you to members of the Georgetown Lions Club for once again tackling the organizational duties for the annual parade.

And in Acton, we offer an equal pat on the back to members of the Acton Firefighters Association for their commitment to make sure Santa Claus has a fitting welcome to town, as well as entertaining the kids in the bargain.

In these days of economic restraint, it's reassuring to see some things do remain a constant, as volunteers from both communities are still prepared to make a monumental effort to keep the Christmas spirit alive.

RR2



Did you hear the one about the guy who, on the advice of his doctor, opened his mind and his brains fell out?

Did you know?

A survey of 1,000 farmers by agricultural economist professor Tom Funk of the University of Guelph showed major differences among farmers in Canada's various regions.

Farmers in Atlantic Canada - more than anywhere else - see farming as a business, rather than a way of life.

Quebec farmers are the most traditional.

Ontario farmers put great stock in advice from dealers and extension specialists.

And price has a higher value with farmers in the west than anywhere else.

University of Guelph



The kitchen's awfully quiet...

We had a passing in the family recently.

Our cockatiel died.

Sunny had been a fixture in the Brown household for the past eight years and was a tad unique.

You see, she hated me.

No one else, only me.

The rest of the family could talk to her, feed her or dangle a finger inside the cage and she would coo and chirp away like she was some silly long lost friend.

But if I went near the cage she wasn't at all receptive.

Matter of fact, she was downright hostile.

She would hiss at me.

Or spit sunflower seeds at me.

She even splashed water on me one time while I sat in the chair in front of her cage.

My family always found this bird's behavior towards me a source of humor and entertainment. Sunny was continually congratulated for her great judge of character.

But I knew her day would come.

I guess her dislike for me hinged from an event which occurred shortly after she arrived in our house.

You see, years ago, one of the kids left her cage door unlocked after feeding her.

And when the door eventually flew open from her swinging about the cage, who could blame her for seizing the opportunity and heading out for a quick fly about of the kitchen?

The kids panicked, shouting for me for help.

"Dad, Sunny's out!" they hollered, "You gotta get her back in the cage before the cat gets her!"

Now I knew the cat couldn't

care less about chasing a stupid cockatiel, but I suggested the kids close the doors in the kitchen to keep Sunny from making a grand tour of the entire house.

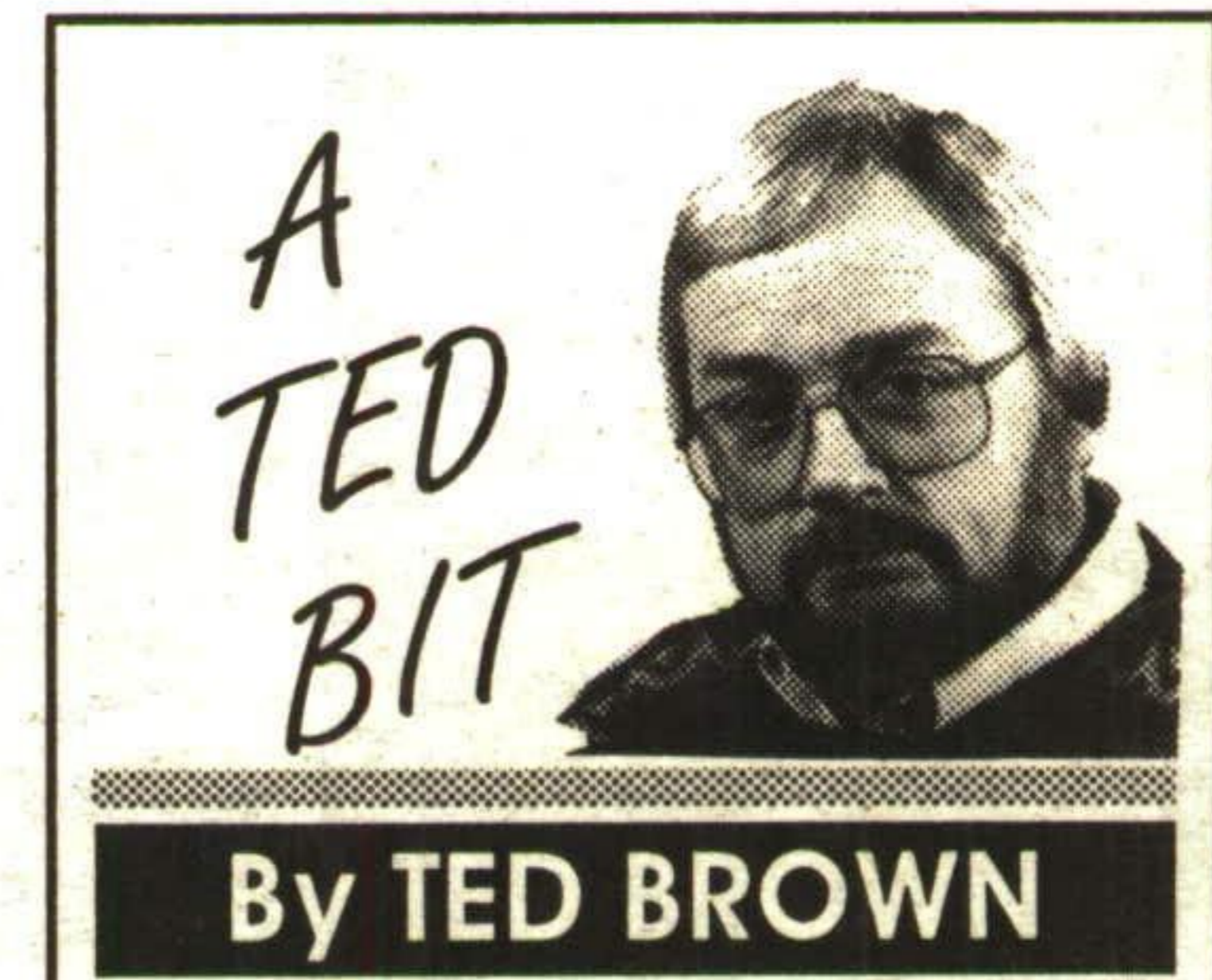
And the pursuit began.

After a small skirmish, Sunny flew into an area where everyone throws off their overshoes after coming in the door. She landed on the boots and got herself sort of tangled in the numerous shoe laces on the floor.

The time was right to grab her.

So I did.

With my bare hand.



By TED BROWN

In retrospect, I wish I hadn't done that.

I think a heavy leather glove might have been a more prudent choice.

Anyone out there who has ever grabbed a cockatiel or a parrot with their bare hand, knows exactly what I'm talking about.

The little buggers bite.

And bite hard.

So hard, in fact, she managed to pierce that nice little tender flap of skin between my thumb and index finger with her little hooked beak.

Sharp, hooked beak.

Now, when something like that happens, one has this quandary to face.

Do I let go and risk missing another chance to catch this bird, or do I simply grin and bear it, and get her back in the cage?

I chose the latter.

I'm sure, for that short time it took to cross the kitchen to her cage, I squeezed a little tighter and firmer with every step.

I even admit less than honorable thoughts went through my mind.

But the kids were watching.

And it's not cool to wring the damned bird's neck when they're watching.

So, Sunny was gently (*I repeat, gently*) replaced in the cage, and I then had a chance to see what kind of havoc she had wracked on my hand.

It was bleeding — and bleeding pretty profusely for that matter.

My wife laughed.

"Yeah, sure," I snapped back, "Let's see how much you'd laugh if she'd taken a chunk outta your hand."

She laughed some more.

Anyway, from that day onward, Sunny had it in for me. She hissed and snapped every time I approached the cage.

But it all ended last Sunday.

We came home to find her laying in the bottom of her cage, having made that escape to the grand bird cage in the sky.

The kids cried.

I hid my feelings (after a stern look from my wife.) And we later buried Sunny, in the flower bed.

Yup, Sunny's gone. And I can't say I'm sorry.

But I must admit.

The kitchen does seem awfully quiet these days.