

THE HALTON HILLS **WEEKEND**

KEN NUGENT
Publisher

The Halton Hills Weekend is published every Sunday by The Georgetown Independent/Acton Free Press, at 211 Armstrong Ave. Georgetown Ont., L7G 4X5. It is one of the newspapers published by Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing Ltd., which includes: Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser, Barrie Advance, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Post, City Parent, Collingwood/Wasaga Connection, Etobicoke Guardian, Kingston This Week, Lindsay This Week, Markham Economist & Sun, Midland/Penatanguishene Mirror, Milton Canadian Champion, Mississauga News, Newmarket/Aurora Era-Banner, Northumberland News, North York Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Orlia Today, Oshawa/Whitby/Clarington This Week, Peterborough This Week, Richmond Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan Liberal, Scarborough Mirror, Stouffville/Uxbridge Tribune, Today's Seniors.

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Price: Store copies 50¢ each; Subscriptions \$26.00 per year by carrier; \$92.50 per year by mail in Canada; \$130.00 per year in all other countries. Plus G.S.T.

Second Class Mail Registration Number 6869. The Georgetown Independent is a member of The Canadian Community Newspaper Association and The Ontario Community Newspaper Association.

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Staff Writers: Janet Baine, Lisa Tallyn

Photography: Ted Brown

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DISTRIBUTION

CIRCULATION/SUBSCRIPTIONS - 873-0301

Director of Distribution: Dave Coleman

Circulation Manager: Nancy Geissler

Mailing Address: 211 ARMSTRONG AVE. GEORGETOWN, ONT. L7G 4X5
Telephone: 905-873-0301 Fax: 905-873-0398

Keeping promises

We were pleased to read that our local MPP, Ted Chudleigh, is reaffirming his party's promise to cut taxes this spring.

Tax cuts were the primary reason the Mike Harris-led Tories swept into power last June. According to their Common Sense Revolution book of promises, provincial income tax rates will be cut by 30 per cent in three years, with half of the cuts in the first year (meaning in this spring's budget). The book states that in year one, a taxpayer earning \$25,000 will save \$425; someone earning \$50,000 will save \$934, and someone earning \$75,000 will save \$1,695. Although a health care levy will be collected from everyone earning \$50,000 and more, the Tories have included its impact into the above savings.

Those sound like great numbers, but sounding even better is Chudleigh's promise that the Harris government, unlike its counterparts, will not backtrack on these promises.

So far in six months of power the Tory government has moved swiftly to fulfil its election promises. While there were a few promises we would have preferred they reconsider — photo radar for one — it's reassuring to taxpayers that so far this government has kept its word.

This is one spring budget taxpayers will eagerly anticipate.

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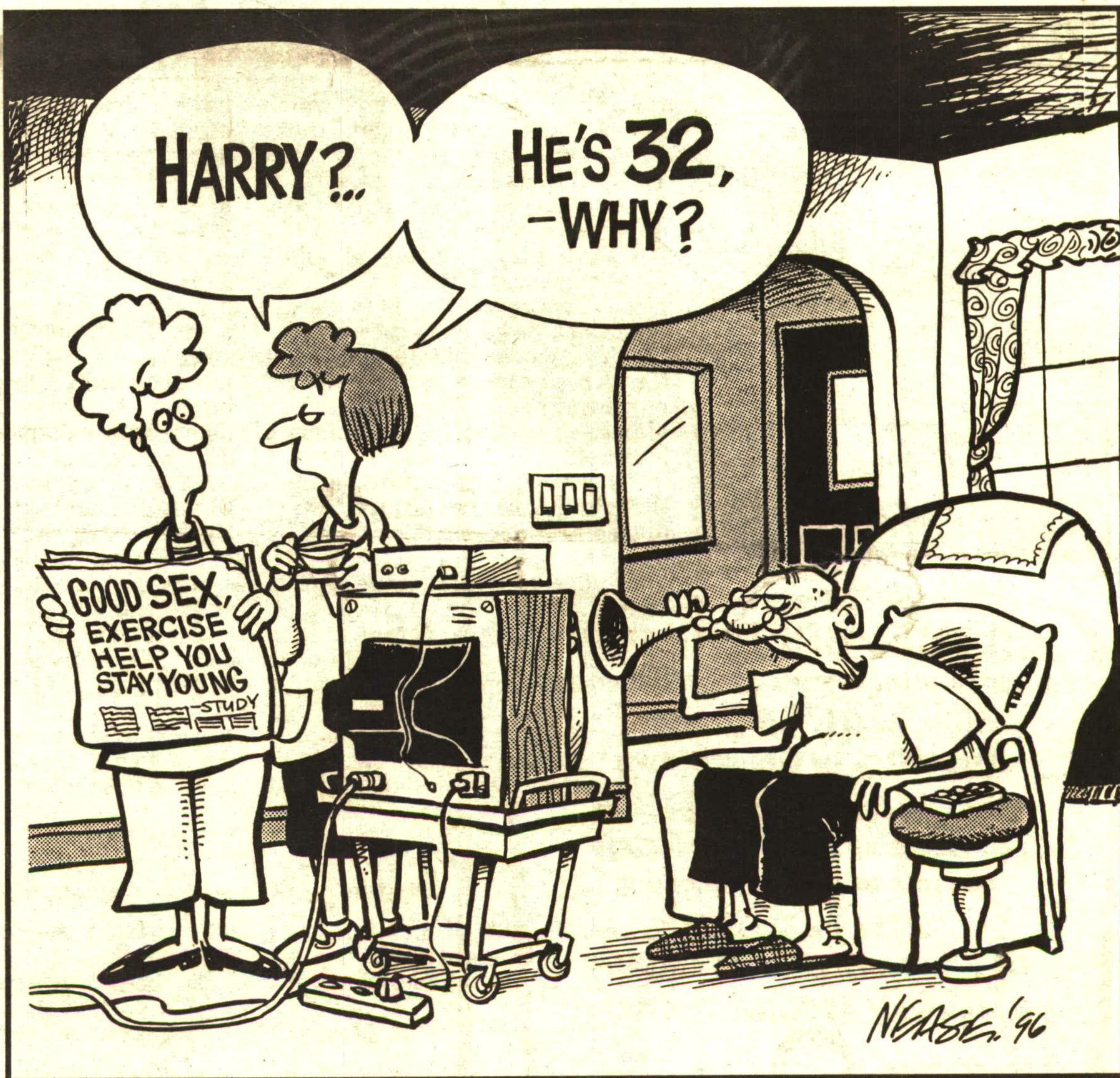


Now if the U.S. made Bosnia a TV series it would be all over 13 weeks.

Did you know?

Ontario's social assistance caseload has dropped six months in a row. There were 10,685 few individuals relying on social assistance in December. In that month, 1,231,928 people received assistance. More than 113,000 people have left Ontario's welfare system since June and social assistance costs have declined by almost \$100 million over that same period.

— Ministry of Community and Social Services



Get a life, 'cell addicts'

You know, it seems half the people in the civilized world own a cellular phone these days.

And I'll be the first to admit, they're pretty darned handy at times.

Mine is, and at times I wonder how I ever managed being a journalist, father, husband and son before I acquired my cell phone three years ago.

But every once in a while, I'm irritated by some people who are obsessed with letting a little electronic god rule their life and mine.

They stop conversations mid-sentence when it rings, and leave it turned on to ring in the middle of a meeting or social gathering.

And they insist upon dragging it out and dropping it on the sales counter of the local convenience store when they pick up a jug of milk.

(At that point, I'm tempted to ask them if they're really THAT important to their job, but usually resist.)

In most cases, I'm sure the only reason they're flashing their cell phone in public is to make a statement, "Look at me — I've got a cell phone."

Sorry folks, but cell phones are almost like VCRs — almost everybody's got one. And the status symbol is gone.

So get a life, 'cell addicts.' I'm always annoyed when I follow one of those people who couldn't walk and chew gum at the same time, yet tries to carry on a full scale conversation and take notes on a cell phone, while

weaving through traffic?

Don't get me wrong. I'm a self confessed gadget freak from hell, and just love to have a new toy to play with. And my cell phone is no exception.

But I draw the line on using it when it starts to irritate people around me.

In a press release which recently landed on my desk, the question was posed, "How's your cell etiquette?"

After perusing it, I realized how obnoxious some people can be with their portable phones.

The article gave a number of pointers to get the

the meeting a warning that you may be expecting a call. It's called courtesy.

And leaving the phone turned off during lunch dates and in quiet places like libraries or hospitals was also recommended.

Sure there are exceptions, like physicians or professionals on call, but they should at least excuse themselves from the area to take the call.

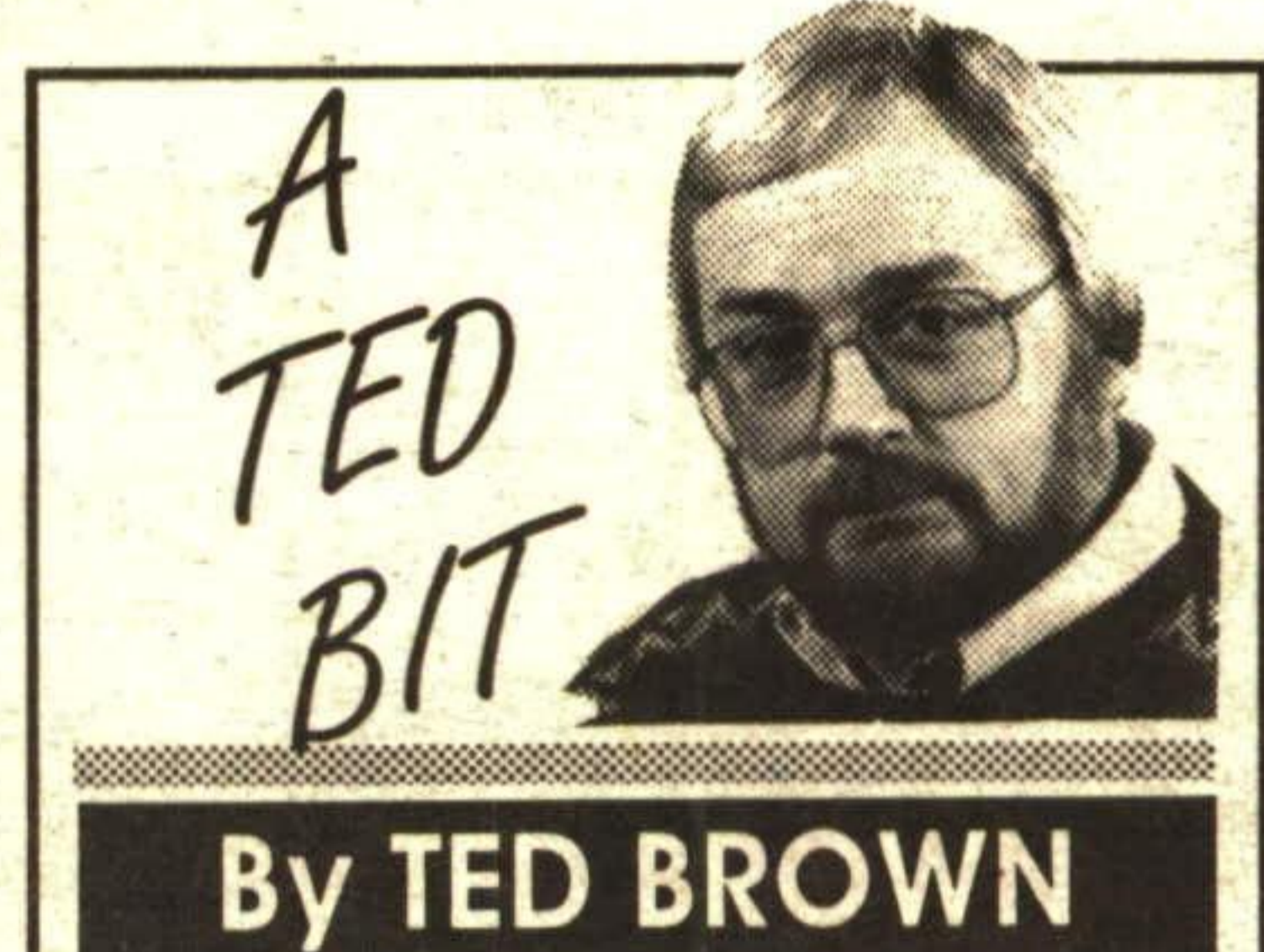
The press release mentions the hazards of talking and taking notes while driving, especially in heavy traffic, and suggests pulling over or calling back when you can stop the car.

Another suggestion was to use discretion when discussing confidential or sensitive information, since few cellular lines are truly secure, and someone could possibly listen in with a scanner. (Ask Prince Charles and Princess Di about that one.)

Last but not least, the article suggests cellular phones can be a great boon to everyone, with their ability to contact emergency services quickly in the event of an accident, or to report drunk drivers to police.

No doubt the cell phone is here to stay, and with the introduction of new personal communications systems recently announced, experts predict almost everyone will have some sort of portable phone by the turn of the century.

I only hope there'll be a liberal dose of common sense and courtesy — issued with every phone.



most from a cellular, while not ticking off half the world around you.

The fist tip was to use common sense.

Plain and simple, if half the cell callers adopted that tip and none of the others, the world would be a better place to live.

Another point suggested no one would carry on a full scale conversation during a church service or in a movie theatre, so why expect to take a phone call there?

It suggests turning the phone off during a formal business meeting or at least give the other members in