

THE HALTON HILLS **WEEKEND**

KEN NUGENT
Publisher

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Pay for what you get

In an effort to put Ontario's bookkeeping in order, the Mike Harris government is ordering massive budget cuts to every sector of the province, and Ontario's 38 conservation authorities have not escaped the scissor action. Their total funding of \$18 million in 1995 will be reduced to \$10 million by 1997. It will mean that some authorities which maintain watersheds, flood control and environmentally sensitive lands, may cease to exist.

Locally we have three authorities which are struggling to survive the deep cuts.

Credit Valley Conservation, which covers points north and east, were forced to cut 50 per cent from its 1996 budget resulting in layoffs and the shutting down of the popular Credit Valley Conservation Area interpretive centre and its services. Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) which takes care of the Blue Springs watershed west of Acton, has seen a 66 per cent cut in its provincial funding is also laying off staff and cutting back on programs. The Halton Region Conservation Authority which covers points south and west, is increasing user fees to keep their areas like Kelso, Mountsberg and Crawford Lake, open to the public.

The three are also looking at other innovative solutions such as adding volunteer support teams, considering business partnerships, and introducing profit-making centres such as food services and gifts shops.

But still the conservation authorities will be forced to turn to the local taxpayer for greater support — and there's only so much in the pocket.

However, the GRCA makes an interesting point in one of their press releases: the municipal levy for each resident of the Grand River valley is \$5.84 a year for the GRCA to maintain drinking water, flood control, natural areas, fishing, camping, and hiking trails. That's the cost of a light lunch.

The quality of life isn't defined by the number of government services you get, it's defined by the amount of money you have to spend on what you want.

We've always wanted clean drinking water with our lunch.

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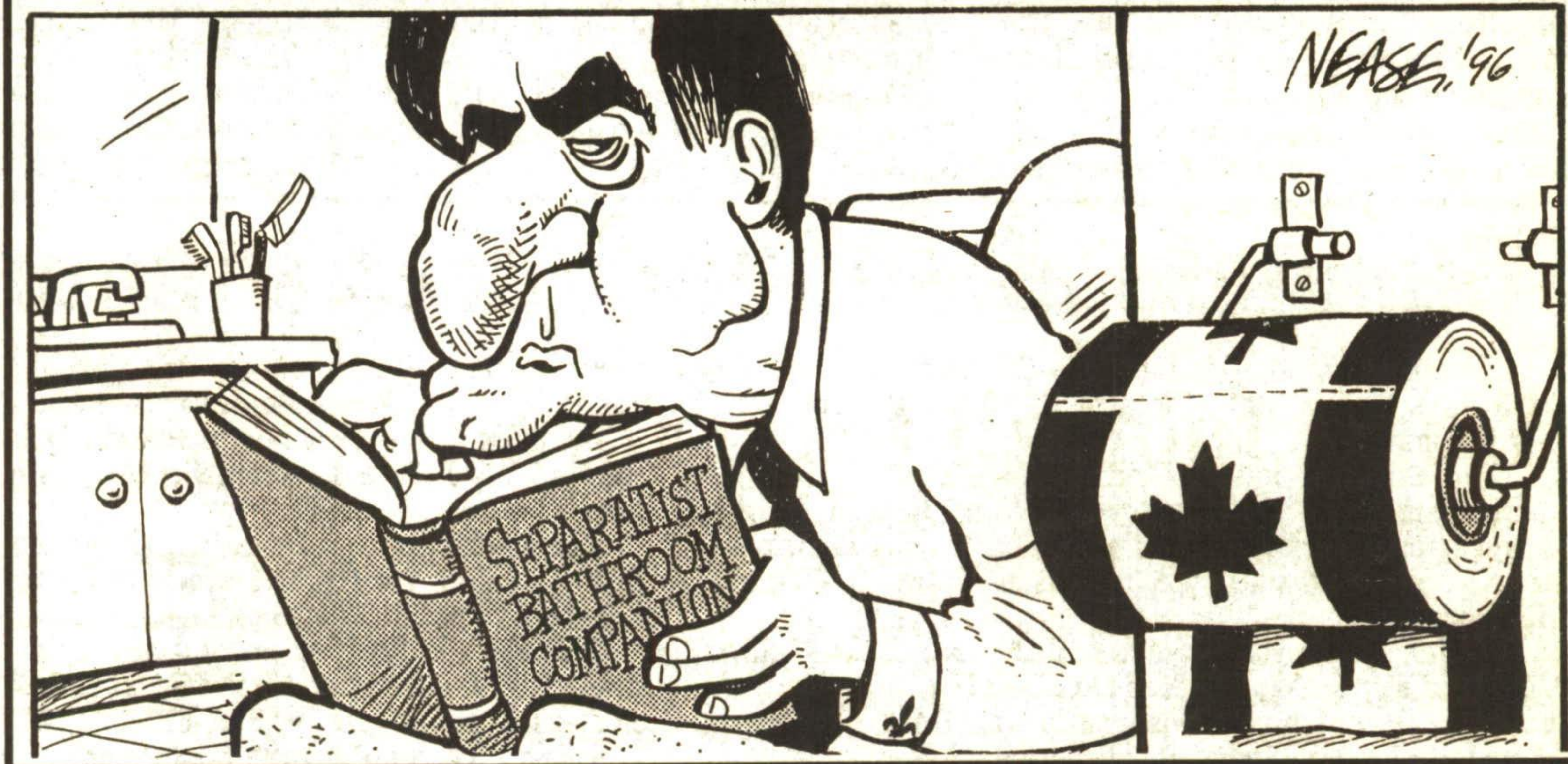
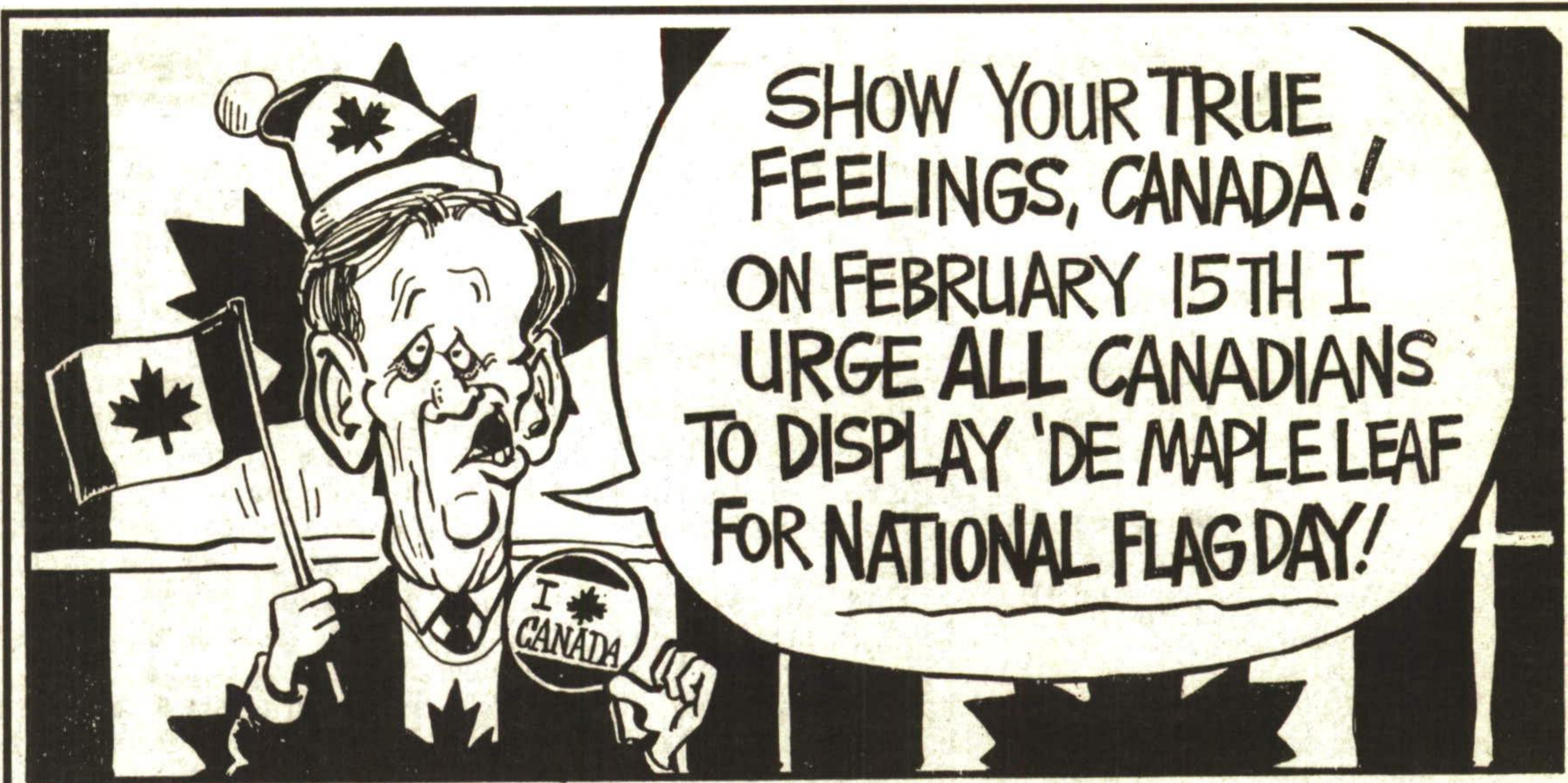
You have to wonder about gas stations? The office is left open while the washroom is kept locked.

Did you know?

The Swiss are the largest per capita consumers of chocolate in the world consuming about 21.4 pounds per person each year while sweet-toothed Canadians enjoy about 7 pounds per person.

Most of the top 10 brands in the chocolate bar market in Canada today have been among the top 10 for close to 60 years. The market is steady all year round.

—Agriculture Canada



Let's rename it an 'awake-over'

Don't know, maybe it's my age, but it seems I need more sleep these days.

If I miss a full night's rest, I find I'm a tad slow on the uptake the next day, and it takes longer to recharge them old batteries.

Now it wasn't always that way, and I love to point out that fact to students in our office, who sit at their desk, yawning, on a Monday morning.

I hit 'em with jabs like, "Tired? Gawd, what's this generation coming to? When I was your age, I functioned on three hours sleep a weekend..."

And so on.

I guess it's my version of our parents' old story about their 10 mile walk to school every day, uphill, both ways, smack dab in the middle of a blizzard.

Anyway, I have come to a point in my life when I need my sleep.

Not an outlandish amount, rather a consistent six or seven hours a night.

As a rule, I'm late to retire, but as long as I hit the hay by midnight, I'm in good shape.

But last weekend knocked my sleep pattern out of whack.

You see, we had a birthday at our house.

A tenth birthday.

And with that tenth birthday, a sleepover.

Now over the years, all my daughters have hosted sleepovers, during which time we all suffered to some extent, as the little people giggled and chattered all night long.

So, it's no surprise that I've become less than

appreciative of sleepover parties.

This event featured inviting four, wired-for-sound, we're-gonna-stay-up-all-night-if-it-kills-us young ladies who arrived at 5 p.m. Saturday to begin partying non-stop until Sunday morning.

My wife thought taking them swimming at the Milton Leisure Centre would be a good activity for the party.

And birthday girl, Jennifer, was easily convinced of the merit of the idea.

"There's hot tubs and water slides down there," said Cathy, "And they'll have a

added twist since our last sleepover. My wife and I recently moved our bedroom downstairs, on the same floor as the family room, where the "all nighter" was taking place.

Those girls played, laughed, and used the bathroom (located right next door to our bedroom) every 15 minutes.

All night long.

And they didn't even sleep late Sunday morning.

As the girls' parents dropped by the next morning to pick up their red-eyed little ladies, one of the fathers and I discussed sleepovers.

His daughter had hosted one the previous weekend, also celebrating her tenth birthday.

We complained about the disruption factor of holding a sleepover.

"One thing bothers me, Ted," he commented, "Why do they call it a sleepover? Hell, no one ever sleeps at one, they just party all night."

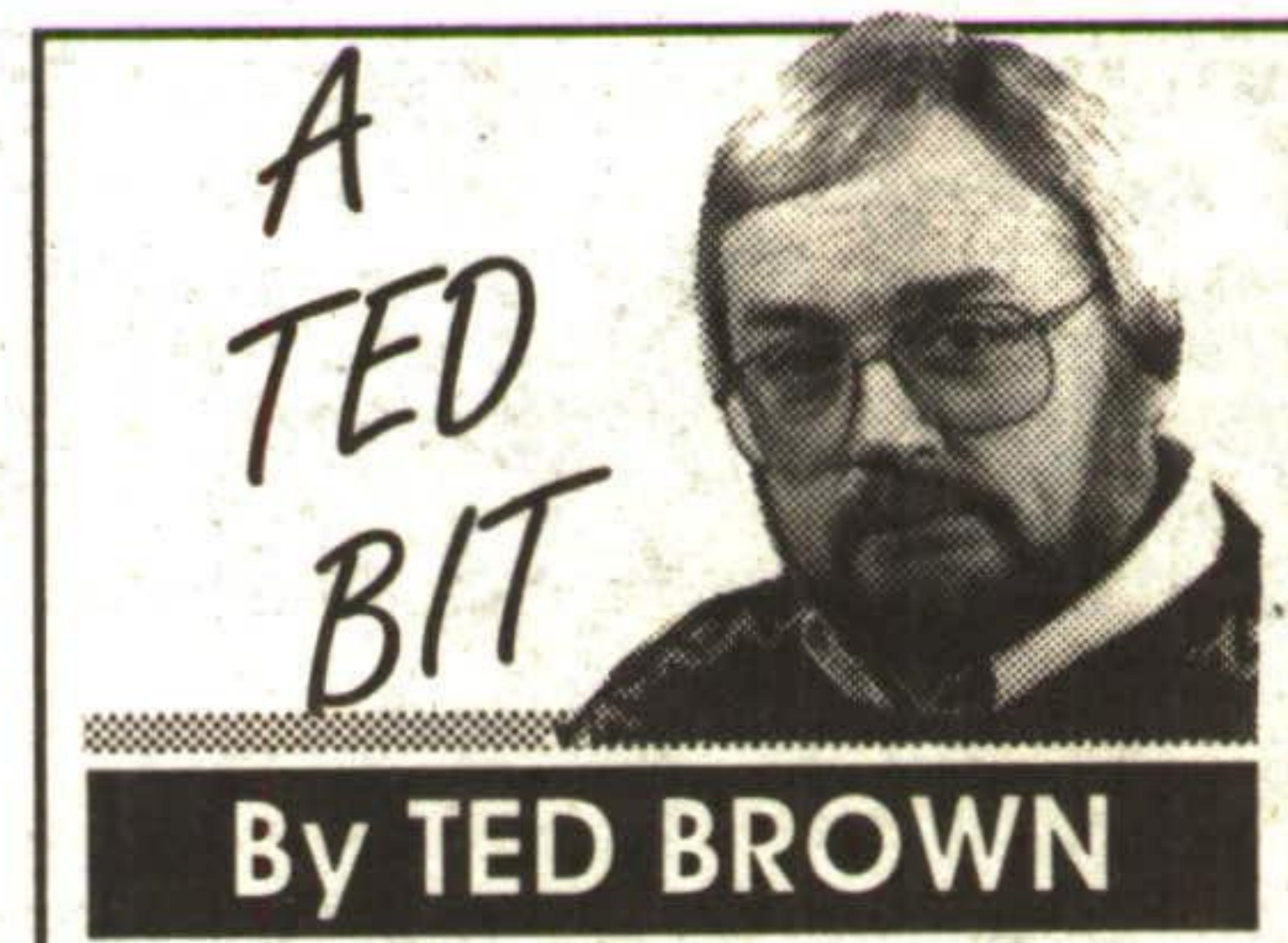
We agreed we should rename it an "awake-over" making the term literally accurate.

Anyway, our "awake-over" party is history and we're gradually catching up on our sleep.

Jennifer crawled into bed at 7 p.m. Sunday, after nodding off on the sofa, and my wife has been attempting to retire a little earlier the last few nights.

I'm still struggling to make up for lost sleep, grabbing a few extra winks whenever possible.

But I figure I might be back in shape before the next "all nighter." Perhaps, when Jennifer turns 19?



whale of a time.

"Besides, it'll tired 'em out," she added, smiling at me about her clever plan. "That way those girls will simply be too tired to be awake all night."

It seemed logical. Unfortunately, she was wrong.

In the past, I've noted that particular age group of children has a built-in sensor that kicks into gear at the mention of a sleepover, and completely eliminates the need for sleep for at least 36 hours.

(It's a sensor similar to the one that fires off at 5 a.m. Christmas morning.)

Anyway, this event had an