

THE HALTON HILLS **WEEKEND**

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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, East York Mirror, Etobicoke Guardian, Georgetown Independent/Acton Free Press, Kingston This Week, Lindsay This Week, Markham Economist & Sun, Midland/Penetanguishene Mirror, Milton Canadian Champion, Mississauga News, Newmarket/Aurora Era-Banner, Northumberland News, North York Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Orillia 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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Slim pickin's

Prime Minister Jean Chretien and his fellow Liberals may be walking around with Cheshire cat grins this week as a result of Monday's by-elections, but the Grits are the only ones with reasons to smile.

The results — five Liberal wins and one Bloc Quebecois victory — are a sad commentary on the state of the national political scene.

Nationally, it appears that voters have a choice between the Liberals, and well, not much else.

The Bloc Quebecois are a nonentity outside of Quebec and appeal only to those bent on breaking Canada apart. In other words, the radical minority of Quebecers.

The Reform Party, which had hoped to overtake the BQ as Official Opposition with two by-election victories, finished a distant second in Labrador and Etobicoke North and were a non-factor in the four Quebec ridings.

The Tories, still reeling from their disastrous showing in the last federal election, managed one second-place finish, three thirds and were fourth in two others. The message to Jean Charest is clear: you have a lot of work to do to repair the damage done during the Brian Mulroney years and any hopes for a Tory quick-fix solution vanished with Monday's results.

But give the Liberals their due. They have proven that by avoiding major mistakes, taking advantage of weak opposition and not shooting themselves in the foot, they can win and maintain the support of the electorate.

RR2



A survey shows children are still found wanting everything under the sun.

Did you know?

There was an earthquake in Canada on March 14. The quake began at 5:42 a.m. with an epicentre 15 km. southwest of Ste-Agathe-Des-Monts in Quebec. The quake registered 4.5 on the Richter scale and was widely felt in the Montreal and Ottawa regions. This was the largest quake since one hit Napierville with a magnitude of 4.3 on Nov. 16, 1993.

— Geological Survey of Canada



Could I make a difference

You know, there are accidents and medical emergencies occurring around us every day.

And it makes me wonder at times.

If I encountered an emergency medical situation, could I make a difference?

I spent the past two Wednesday afternoons in the board room of *The Brampton Guardian*, with an instructor and 11 other *Independent/Free Press* and *Guardian* employees learning emergency first aid and A (adult) level cardiopulmonary resuscitation, better known as CPR.

We learned how to deal with different scenarios, including basic first aid for cuts and burns, and keeping an accident victim safe and comfortable until the emergency services arrived to take over.

We were shown how to administer abdominal and chest thrusts, often referred to as the Heimlich maneuver, to dislodge a piece of food from a choking victim's airway, and we were subjected to numerous role-playing scenarios.

As partners, we practised our new-found skills, one of us the victim and the other the rescuer, 'saving' each other's life, dislodging imaginary obstructions from our airways.

During those scenarios, our instructor Annette occasionally took the part of an obnoxious passerby, who tried to give advice, or stressed the victim with such remarks as "My God, you mean she's really choking!"

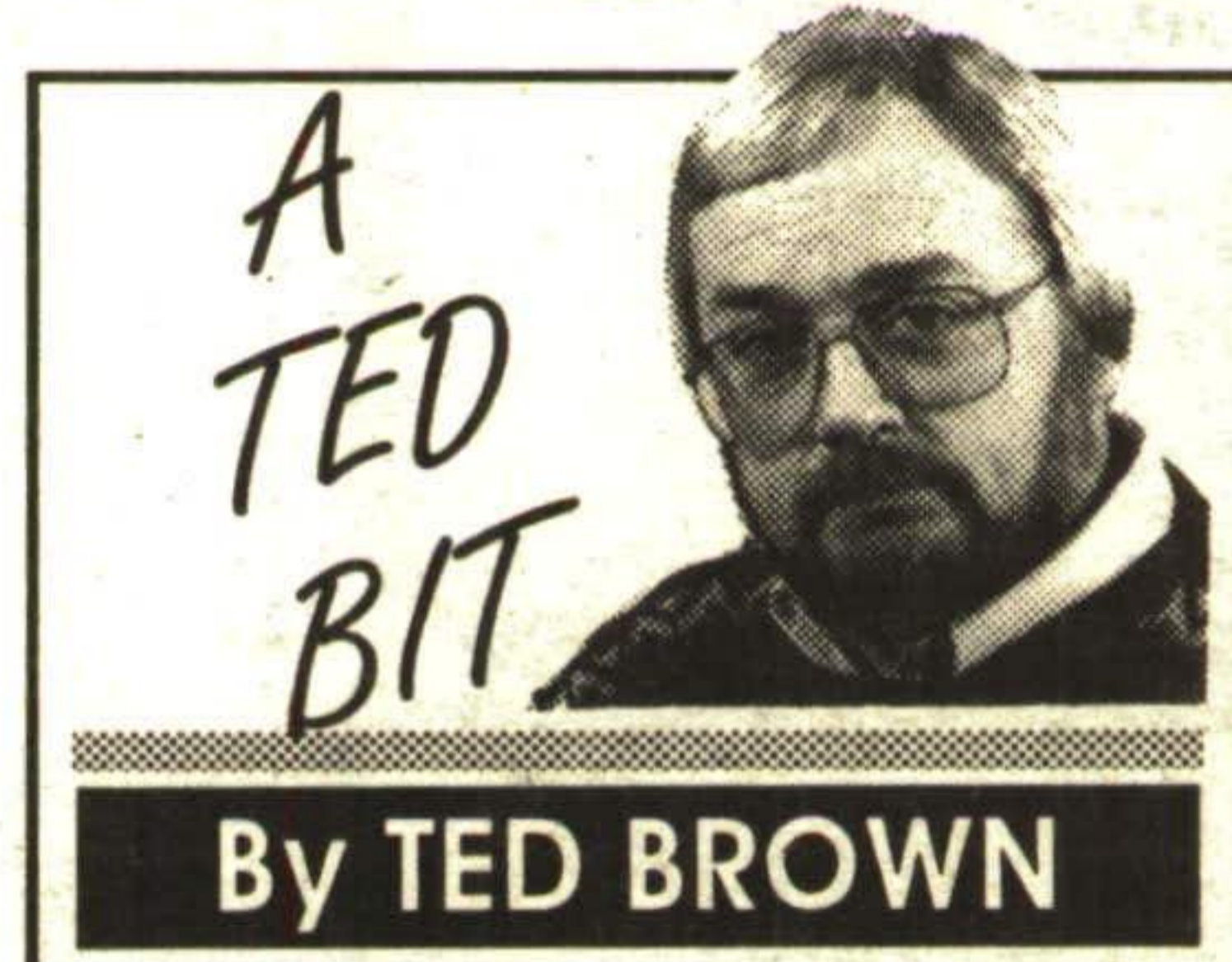
or "Gawd, she could die doing that!!!"

Role-playing as the know-it-all passerby, Annette showed us how to effectively deal with someone who is more of a nuisance than part of the solution.

We learned how to spot a suspected diabetic attack, and to offer help or call for medical assistance if needed.

But most of all, we learned the biggest factor for keeping our victim alive, is to call 9-1-1 as soon as possible.

The latter half of the course dealt with unconscious victims, those who have stopped breathing,



having suffered a possible severe heart attack or stroke.

We learned how to check for a blocked airway, how to search for a pulse in the victim's neck, and to start and continue rescue breathing, (often referred to as mouth to mouth) and then how to administer chest compressions, to keep our victim's blood flowing through their body to feed their brain and vital organs in the absence of a pulse.

We learned statistics, like without CPR, the victim's brain may suffer damage after 4-6 minutes without breathing, and most

certainly will suffer damage after 6-10 minutes.

And we learned time is the most important factor, meaning, the sooner we get help, the better the victim's chance of survival.

Yep, survival — we're talking life and death situations here.

It was sobering, I'll tell you.

Annette told us statistics indicate we're most likely to perform CPR on a friend or relative, since many emergencies occur in the home. And as we expressed concern about remembering all the procedures of CPR — the correct number of compressions, the right number of breaths and so on — she was supportive by saying in an emergency situation, we all will forget things, and will probably lose count of the compressions, or the wrong number of breaths.

"But just remember one thing," Annette added, "Any help will increase the victim's chances. If you do nothing, that person will die." As I said, sobering thoughts.

The CPR course isn't long, nor too difficult. And everyone should take it.

Since finishing that course, I now carry a little card in my wallet, reminding me I learned CPR and first aid.

And after all that, could I make a difference in an emergency?

Maybe, maybe not — I dunno. I hope I'm never forced to find out. But after taking the course, one thing is certain.

The odds are in my favor.