

'Ted's not in right now, but...'

This column is an experiment. A test of the system around the office of the old Independent & Free Press.

You see, when this bit of literary masterpiece hits the street, I will be winding up a week of glorious vacation, by the sun drenched, bikini infested shores of Sauble Beach. (And having written that, so far in advance, I'm probably certain to have experienced the wettest, coldest week at the beach recorded in the annals of the Amabel Township Historical Society.)

Regardless, this past week I haven't been in the office. And I'm not so sure, apart from Carol our office manager, who reports such things as vacations to the payroll department, that anyone else really notices.

That's why I'm writing this one a week in advance and leaving it on the office file server, so Thursday or Friday morning, when the editors pull it into their computers, and stick it on the page, things will appear to be normal.

Except I'm not here.

It's an experiment to see if they miss me, and actually notice that I'm on vacation.

You see, during my day to day duties, I'm often out of the office for extended periods of time, and only the day timer at my desk holds all the secrets as to where I'm at.

So if I fill my day timer with "assignments," like Thursday, 2 p.m.; Mayor's office photo, or Wednesday, 3:30 p.m.; Acton Social Services pic, who's to say I'm not at work.

And when the phone calls come in for me, one of my editorial colleagues usually picks up the call and takes a message.

"Ah, Ted's not in right now, but we expect him back in, oh, a half hour or so," they con their way through, "But, if you want, I'll give him the message...."

And they haven't a clue when I'll return. No problem.

'Course, it would be a real bonus to have voice mail in the office, so I could retrieve my

A
TED
BIT



Ted Brown

calls at my leisure from the comfort of my humble abode at Sauble.

But that's only one tiny inconvenience.

Besides, if my co-workers back at the office get really excited and need to talk to me, they usually call me on the cell phone.

I've got 'em again, since the phone works just as well sitting beside me at Sauble Beach as it does in my car in Halton Hills, so all I have to do is muff my way through with something like, "Oh yeah, I'm just on my way back from Acton as we speak. I'm driving down Hwy. 7 right now but there's a pile of traffic ahead, so I'll probably make it in by about ten after 5."

I know no one stays in the office one minute past 5 o'clock, so I'm safe with that line. (Just so long as they don't pick up the sound of the waves lapping at the shore of the beach or the screeching of the sea gulls on my phone.)

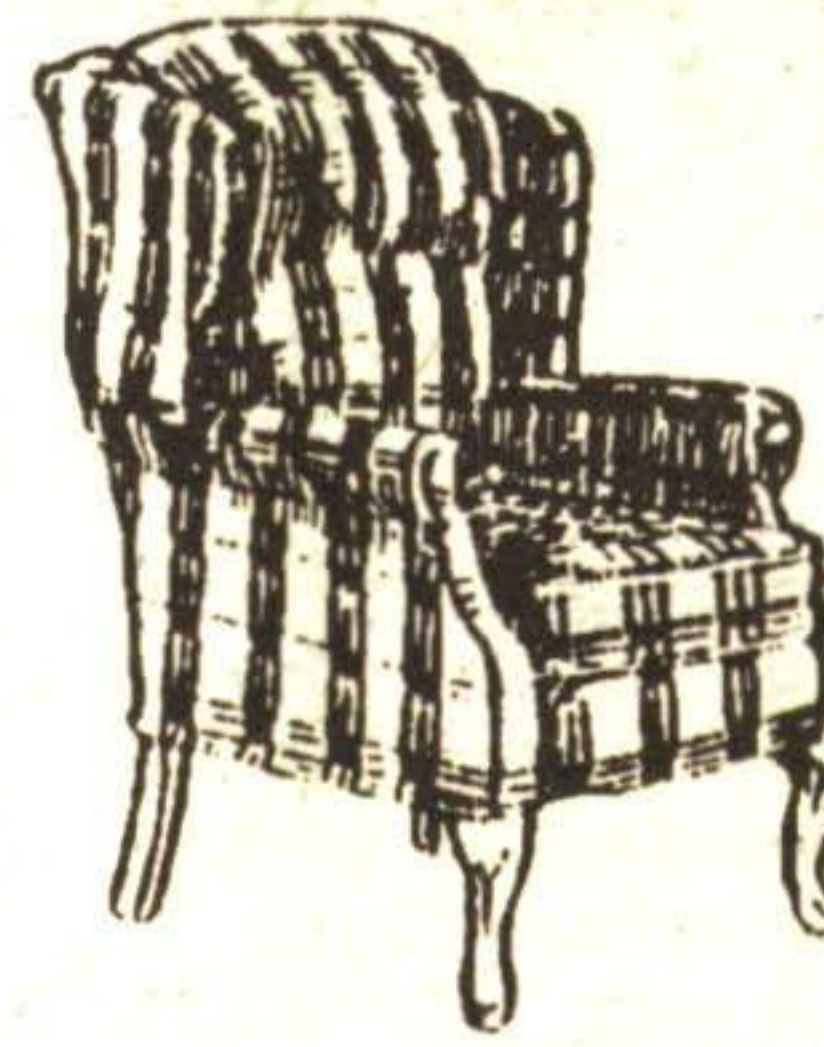
In preparation, I've got a load of pictures ahead in my file, so chances are they'll never even miss me for five days.

And with direct deposit pay, I don't even have to drop by to retrieve my pay cheque.

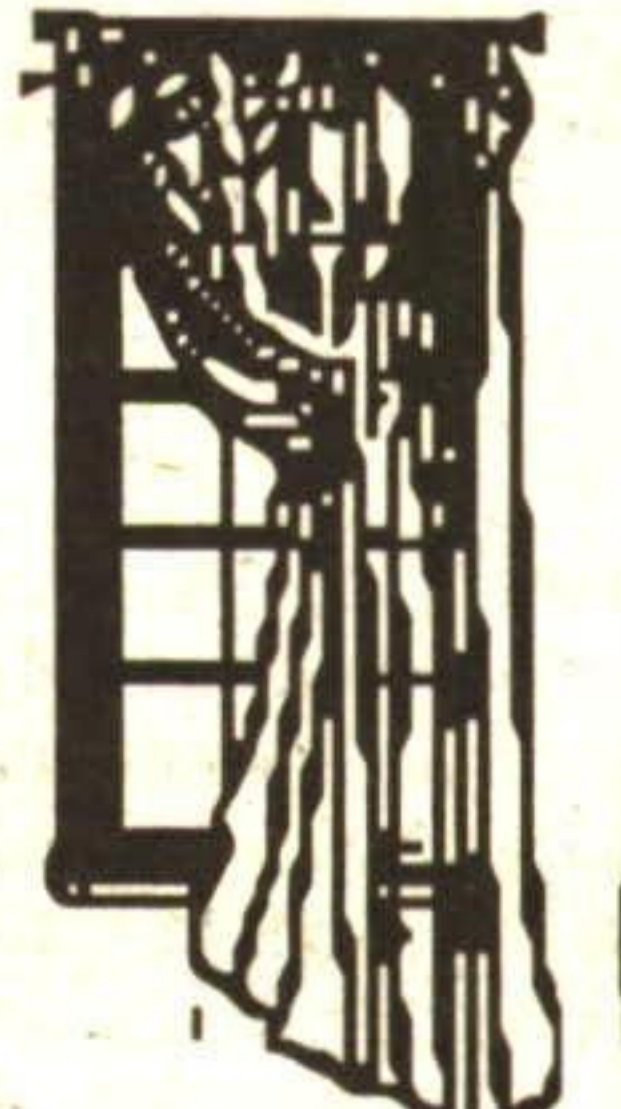
Yup, this is an experiment, and I'm counting on you, the readers, to keep my secret. You could even support the cause by calling in to say something like, "Oh I'm just returning Ted's call... just tell him I called."

That'll convince 'em I'm out on assignment. And, of course, on the job.

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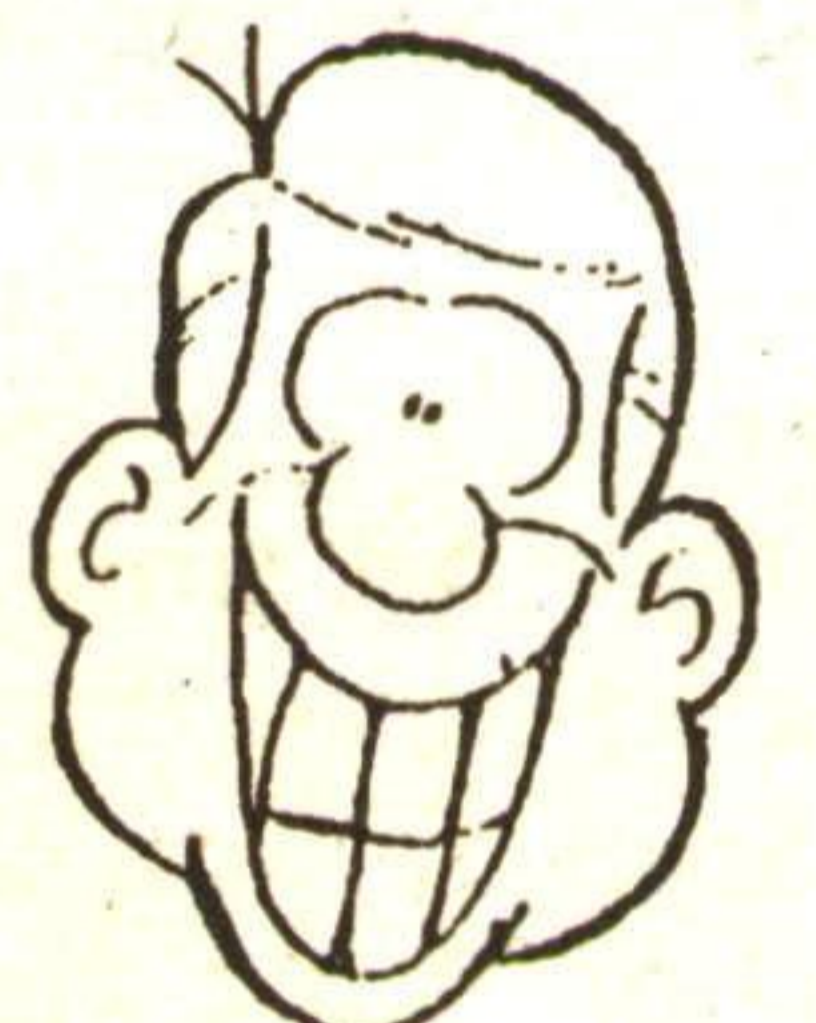
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