

The Independent & Free Press

Weekend Edition

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Funding follies

Premier Mike Harris admitted last week that he was "embarrassed... disappointed...and frustrated" that it took six months for money the Tories had promised to ease overcrowding in Ontario hospital emergency rooms to actually begin to find their way to those hospitals.

Harris, and particularly Health Minister Elizabeth Witmer, should be wiping the egg from their faces on this one.

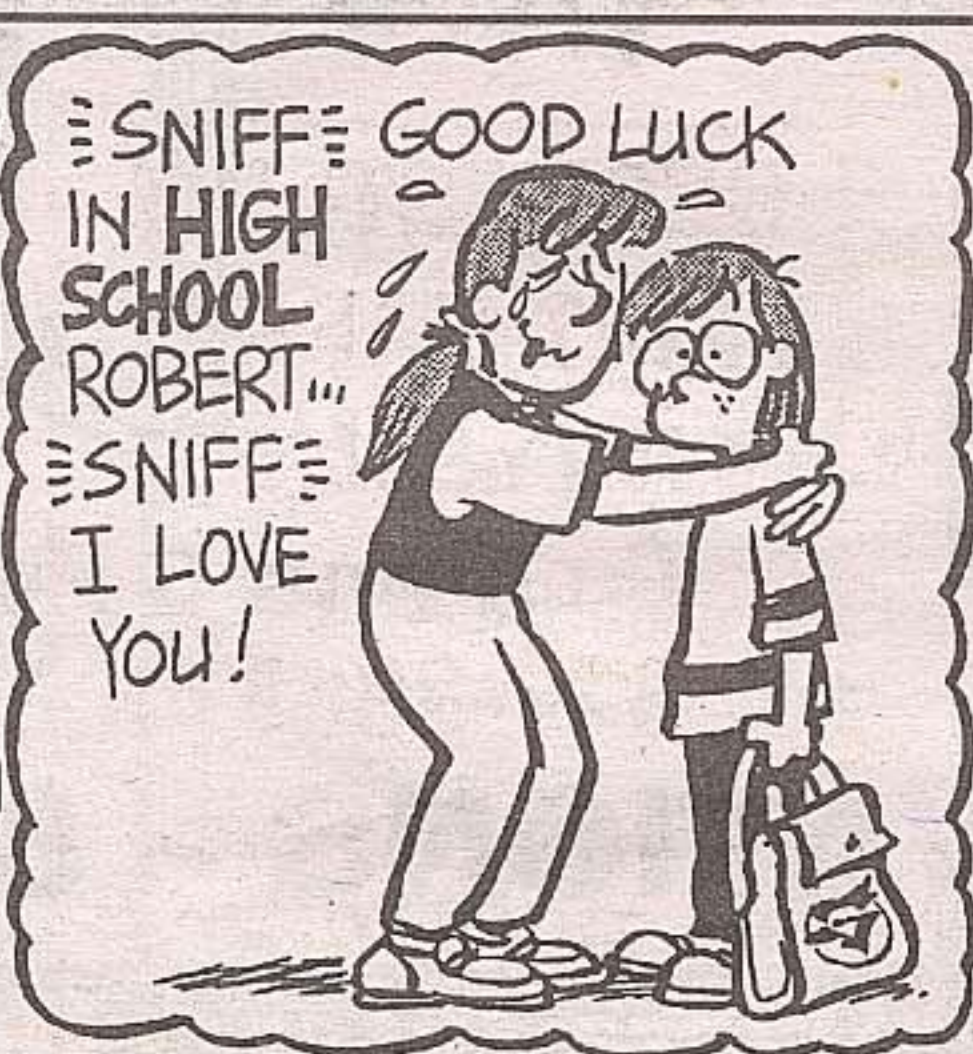
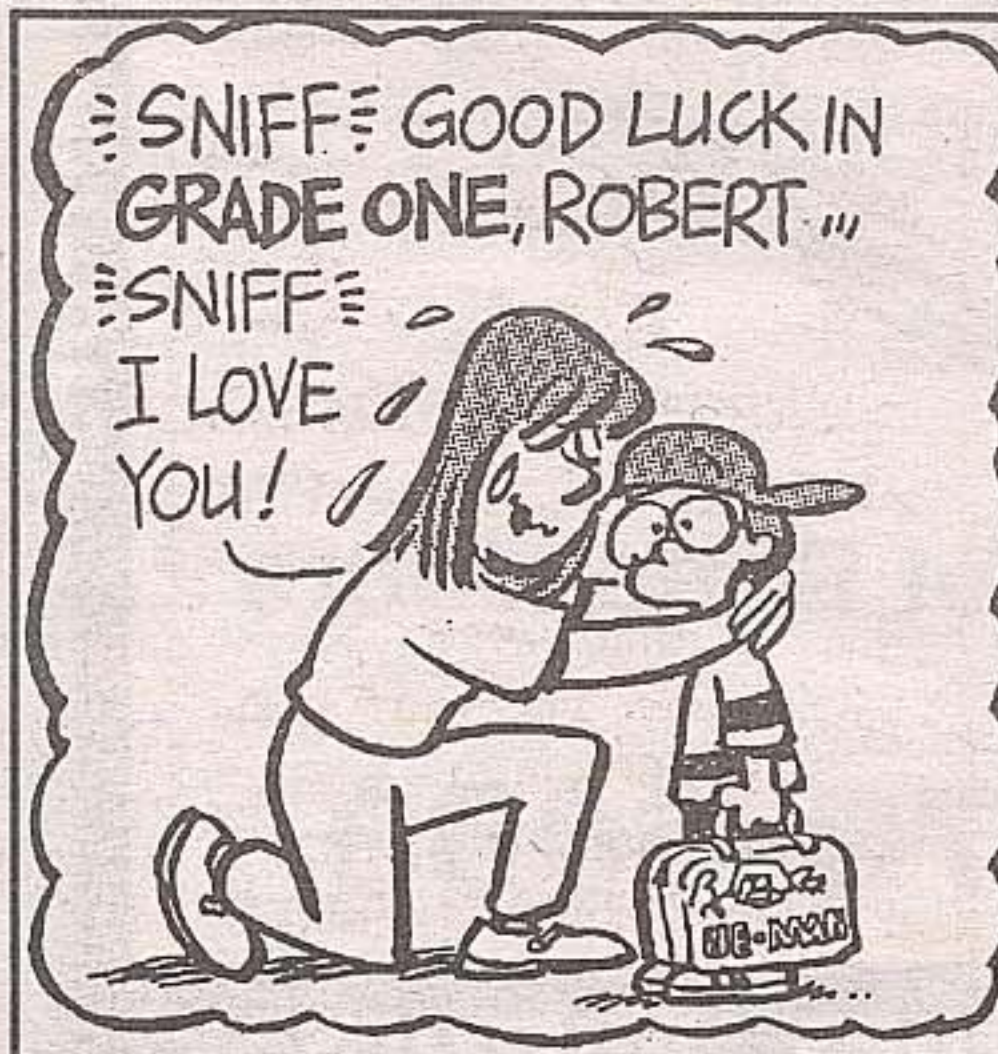
Last April, Witmer promised \$225 million over two years to solve the overcrowding problem. However, foot-dragging by all levels of government kept the money from reaching the hospitals until the issue reared its ugly head last weekend when 17 of 19 Toronto hospitals had to turn patients away because of overcrowding.

That forced Harris to step in, push the bureaucracy aside and get the cheques in the mail.

Let's face it, long waits in hospital waiting rooms are nothing new, and more power to the Tories for actually trying to solve the problem. But surely, a six-month delay in sending out the promised funds was ludicrous, wasn't it Ms. Witmer?

The Tories should take a long hard look at why there was such a delay and perhaps a surgeon's knife should be wielded to the bureaucrats who caused this problem.

PUD



Hospital praised for great care

Dear editor,

I was somewhat apprehensive about my day surgery appointment at Georgetown District Memorial Hospital. It was to be what is now considered a very routine arthroscopic knee operation, but it was after all "Georgetown".

Well, I would like to report that my day in Georgetown, (it was actually only half a day), was first class. Although I am not what you might call an expert on hospital stays, I can honestly say that I would recommend our local hospital to anyone.

From the moment I gingerly stepped into the day surgery admitting room I felt that I was in confident and professional hands. The nurses and other professionals made sure that I understood the procedure and told me exactly what to expect before, during and after the operation. I woke up to a nurse telling me it was all over and feeling like I had had the best sleep in years.

So, for all those who still feel that they have to go to a 'big' hospital for good health care, I would suggest they should save

Letter of the day

Councillor, CVC failed residents

Dear editor,

Congratulations to Councillor Kathy Gastle for having the courage and individuality to question and demand Halton Region, Credit Valley Conservation, the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), John Spina and Halton Hills Mayor Marilyn Serjeantson particularize what has transpired in the political process of granting approval to build a sanitary pumping station in an environmentally sensitive Norval valley.

Councillor Gastle has made some very powerful claims that point to a decision process cloaked in political expediency and surreptitious in nature.

David Huk (development co-ordinator for Halton Region) is contending that Halton Region did not "presuppose what approvals will be given" to developers in the future. Sadly, we expect nothing short of political compliance from Halton Region. Halton Region is an impotent group of "yes-men" controlled by the Harris Tory-driven OMB, which quickly approved development of this pristine land in 1997.

The most peculiar part of this "done deal" is how taxpayers and environmentalists were sold out with no apparent contention by the Credit Valley Conservation (CVC). Councillor Norm Elliot (town representative on the CVC) had an entrusted duty to consult and provide dialogue on a decision that has important environmental and local health consequences. Mr. Elliot and the CVC failed the residents of Halton Hills.

P.R. Higgins, Georgetown

themselves and their family the drive. The Georgetown District Memorial Hospital is more than capable, much more personable and it is so much more convenient. As for the knee, I

was riding a bike the next day and it's coming along just the way they said it would. I'm grateful for our local hospital.

Barry Shepherd, Brampton

Our Readers Write

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