

Innovation vital to fight crime

Are we allowing certain young people in Penetanguishene to drift into a life of crime?

Theft by young offenders here rose 25 per cent last year, according to police chief Bob Cummings' annual report.

Overall, 200 complaints of theft were lodged in 1988 compared to 167 in 1987; 35 charges of theft were laid against young offenders last year, up 28 from the year before.

This rise in crime among young people is especially upsetting when contrasted with the big picture: the number of criminal charges against all age groups actually dropped 14 per cent in 1988.

What makes a young person steal? Money? Boredom? Drugs? Rebellion against society? Can we see these youngsters every day, steering down a dangerous path?

In nearby Port McNicoll, an active community policing program set up by the Ontario Provincial Police has proven that there is a better way to fight crime by teens. Through informal, non-threatening meetings with young people the community police officer in the notorious village is given credit for breaking the trend of rising crime there.

Coupled with a stronger police presence in the community and an effective, almost militant attitude toward crime by the public, the program has been widely commended as a success.

The old school of thought is not meeting the challenges of modern youth. Innovation in fighting crime is vital to the well being of this town.



By David Gravelle

Guest Column

Change the image

Venturing to Saskatoon for the 1989 Labatt Brier was a homecoming of sorts for me. Saskatchewan was my stomping ground a couple of years ago when I worked at a radio station in Estevan.

Coincidentally, that province's representative at this year's Canadian Men's Curling Championship was from Estevan as well. Small world, eh?

The people of Saskatchewan are some of the warmest I know. I experienced that when I worked there, and throughout last week. The thousands of volunteers, who gave their time for more than two years to stage this event, deserve a lot of credit. Curlers and non-curlers alike staged "Magic on Ice" to perfection. From the decorations in the 8,700-seat Saskatchewan Place, to the ice cleaners wearing top hats and tails, the performance was perfect.

The Saskatoon Brier marked the 10th anniversary of Labatt's corporate sponsorship, and the 60th anniversary of the Canadian Men's Curling Championship. If there was any question where to hold the Brier, the only answer was Saskatoon. With its new arena, its curling tradition and enthusiasm, there was no doubt the Labatt Brier would be a triumph.

City transit was provided free. The cabbies were polite. Everybody involved in the curling production played

their roles flawlessly.

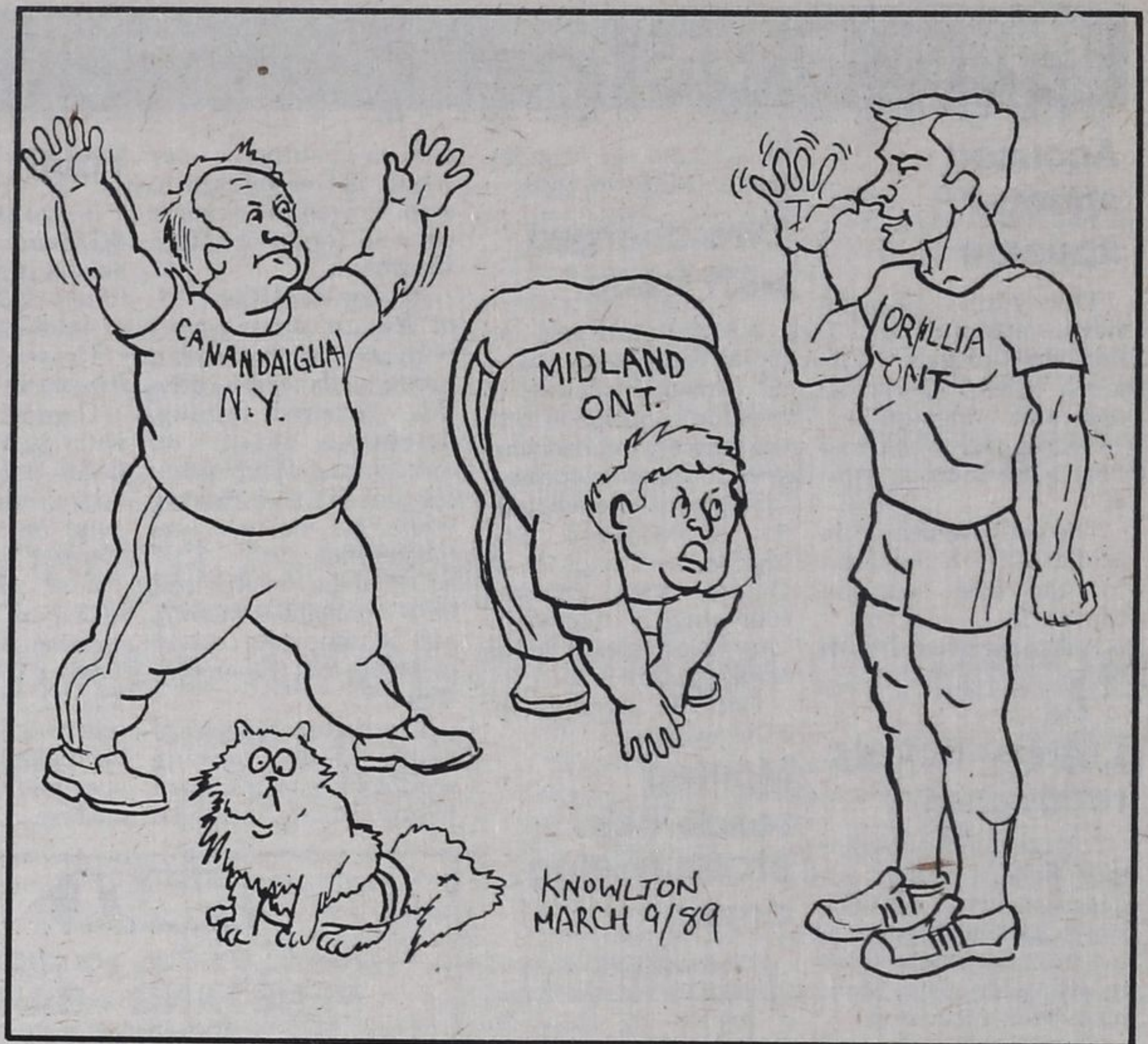
Next year, the Brier will be held in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., followed by Hamilton's Copps Coliseum in 1991. Representatives from each city were on hand last week to learn how to host Canada's premiere curling event. And, if they learned one thing, it's that a smile goes a long way.

If they learned another thing, it's that curling ice, must curl. If you watched Sunday's final game on TV you probably heard a few cat calls from the crowd yelling B-O-RRRR-I-N-G. What a terrible display for a national championship.

I felt cheated by that game. I don't want to take anything away from Pat Ryan and his Alberta rink, they are a great team and deserve to be Canadian champs. But, I don't think straight ice is fair to the paying crowd and to the national television audience who want to be entertained.

Hits and peels are technically difficult shots in curling, but make for dull games. If curling is to progress, to the Olympic level, and to a wider audience swingier ice will have to be a prerequisite. It promotes offense, high scoring matches, with tough shots, and a lot of rocks in play.

That's what curling fans enjoy, that's what the majority of curlers enjoy, and that is what's needed to change the image of the sport as a game for old men with beer bellies.



You know you're in a small town when...

You don't use your turn signal because everybody knows where you're going anyway ...

Third Street is on the edge of town ...

The editor and publisher of the newspaper carry a camera at all times ...

You dial a wrong number and talk for 15 minutes anyway ...

You can't walk for exercise because every car that passes offers a ride ...

You get married and the local

newspaper devotes a quarter page to the story ...

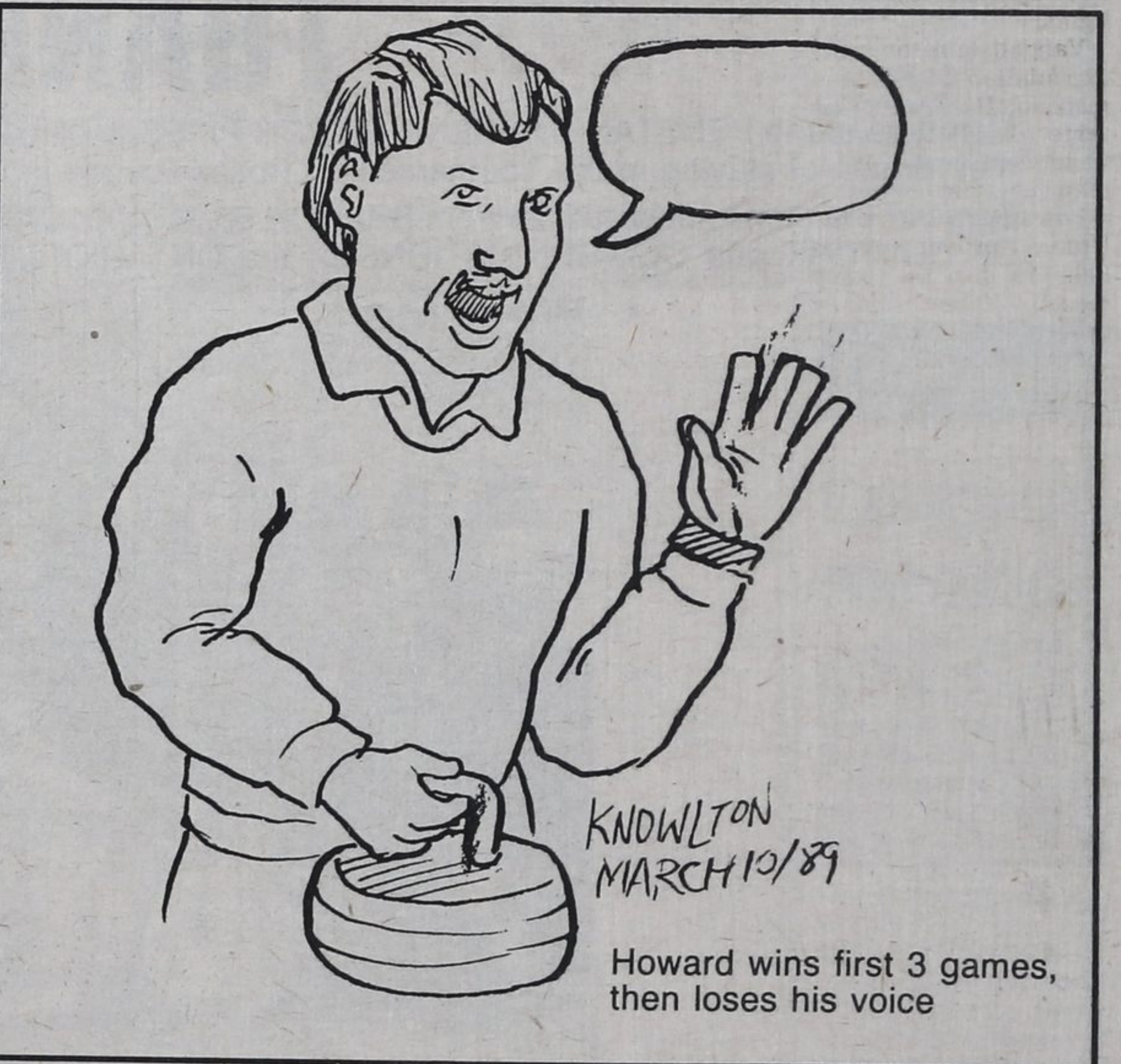
You drive into a ditch five miles from town and word gets back before you do ...

You write a check on the wrong bank and it covers it for you ...

You miss a Sunday at church and receive 10 get-well cards ...

Pickup trucks on Main Street outnumber cars three to one ...

Someone asks how you feel and then listens to you.



Letters

The Penetanguishene Citizen welcomes letters to the editor. They must be legible, signed (by hand), and carry the writer's address and telephone number for verification purposes. Pen names are not allowed and anonymous letters will not be published, but names will be withheld if circumstances warrant. Letters published by this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the opinion of this newspaper, its publisher or editor.

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