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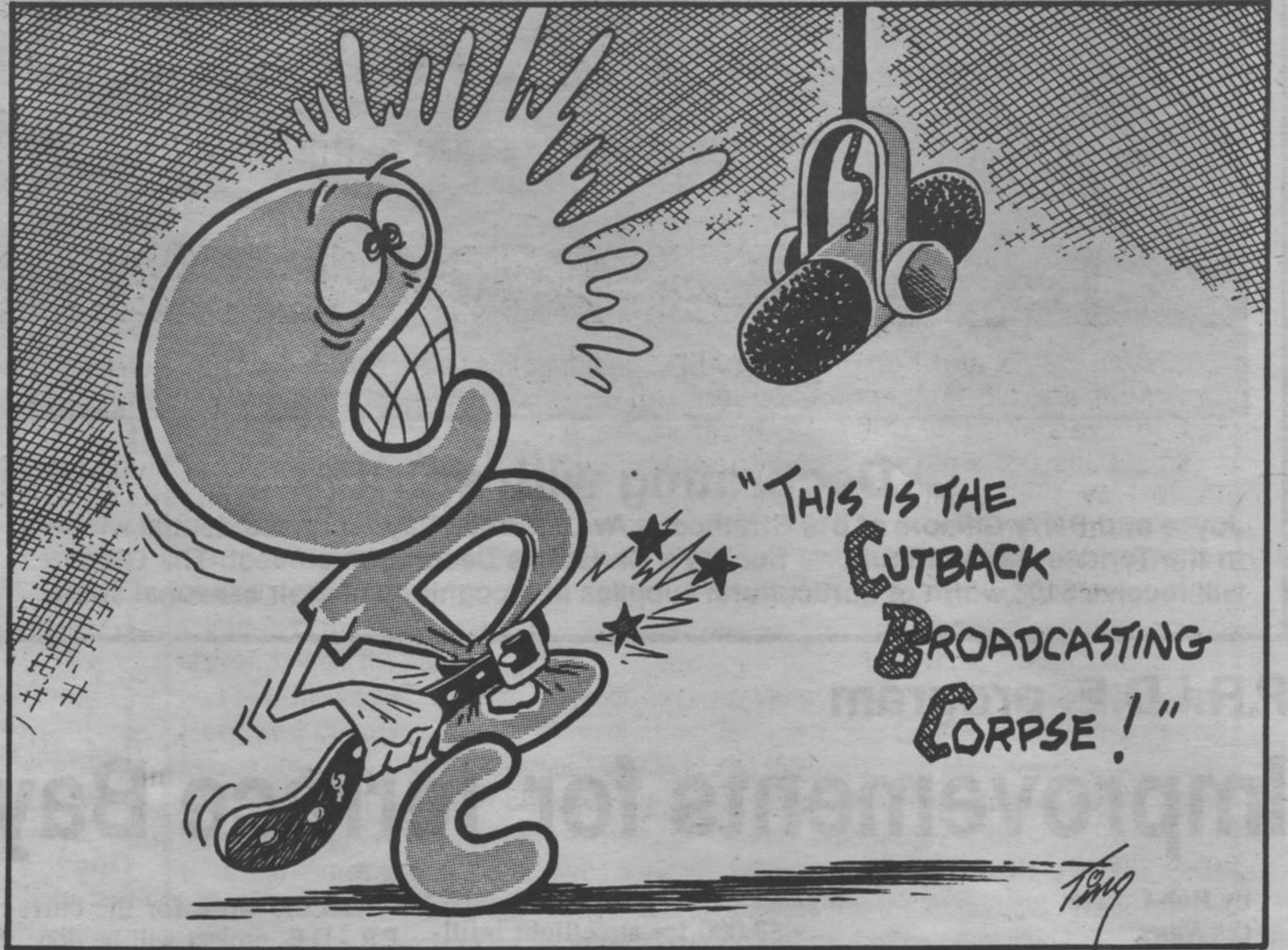


## Santa Claus is a fat magical miracle

The holiday season is over for another year but before we fly off into the New Year let's take one last look at Christmas. This time through the eyes of those who really see its magic - the children.

This is how the Grade Ones of the Schreiber Public School see Santa Claus (from the school newsletter).

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <i>Santa is nice. I can kiss him. He can work for me.</i>   | Krystle   |
| <i>Santa is fat. Santa has helpers. Santa makes toys. Santa likes kids.</i>   | Shawn     |
| <i>Santa has a red sleigh. Santa is fat and good. Santa Claus likes milk and cookies.</i>   | Lance     |
| <i>Santa Claus is a miracle. Santa Claus has a white beard. Santa can make Ho, Ho, Ho. He likes you and milk.</i>   | Scott     |
| <i>Santa Claus is a miracle.</i>  | Megan     |
| <i>Santa Claus has candy canes.</i>   | Alan      |
| <i>Santa Claus is fat. Santa has reindeer. Santa Claus is magic. Santa likes kids.</i>  | Kirk      |
| <i>Santa is a miracle.</i>  | Daniel    |
| <i>Santa Claus is nice. Santa Claus is playful. Santa has red cheeks and a hat. He can make toys. He likes kids.</i>  | Karly     |
| <i>Santa is fat. Santa has a hat. Santa can fly. Santa likes kids. Santa was hearing me snore.</i>  | Kristin   |
| <i>Santa is nice. I am nice to Santa. Santa has chubby cheeks. He has red hat. Santa likes dogs and cats. Santa is magic.</i>   | Christine |
| <i>Santa gives presents and lives in the North Pole. He has reindeers. He has elves to make toys. He lives in a shop. He brings toys at Christmas when I am sleeping.</i> | James     |
| <i>Santa is a miracle. Santa has reindeer. Santa can make toys. Santa likes boys. Santa likes holly. Santa has a hat. Santa likes candy canes.</i>                        | Krista    |
| <i>Santa is fat and magic.</i>  | Justin    |



## New jokes for new Russia

The chubby little guy with the strawberry-colored map of Albania on his balding forehead stopped in the Kremlin lobby, cleared his throat, and stepped up to the microphone.

"They say that President Mitterand has 100 lovers" he deadpanned. "One has AIDS but he doesn't know which one."

"President Bush has 100 bodyguards" he continued. "One is an assassin, but he doesn't know which one."

Pause. Lay on that Jack Benny pre-punch-line stare.

"And President Gorbachev has 100 economic advisers. One is smart, but he doesn't know which one."

The Soviet President tells a joke. Not a great joke, to be sure. Nothing that John Crosbie or the Royal Canadian Air Farce would steal - but a joke. Told by a Russian. In public.

Just another rivulet in the Great Soviet Thaw, I guess. Not enough that they withdraw from Afghanistan, melt down their missiles, open the door to Macdonalds and Pepsi franchises - now their leader does Johnny Carson monologues. What next - Barry Manilow CDs in Russian?

Well, nobody ever said Freedom was cheap.

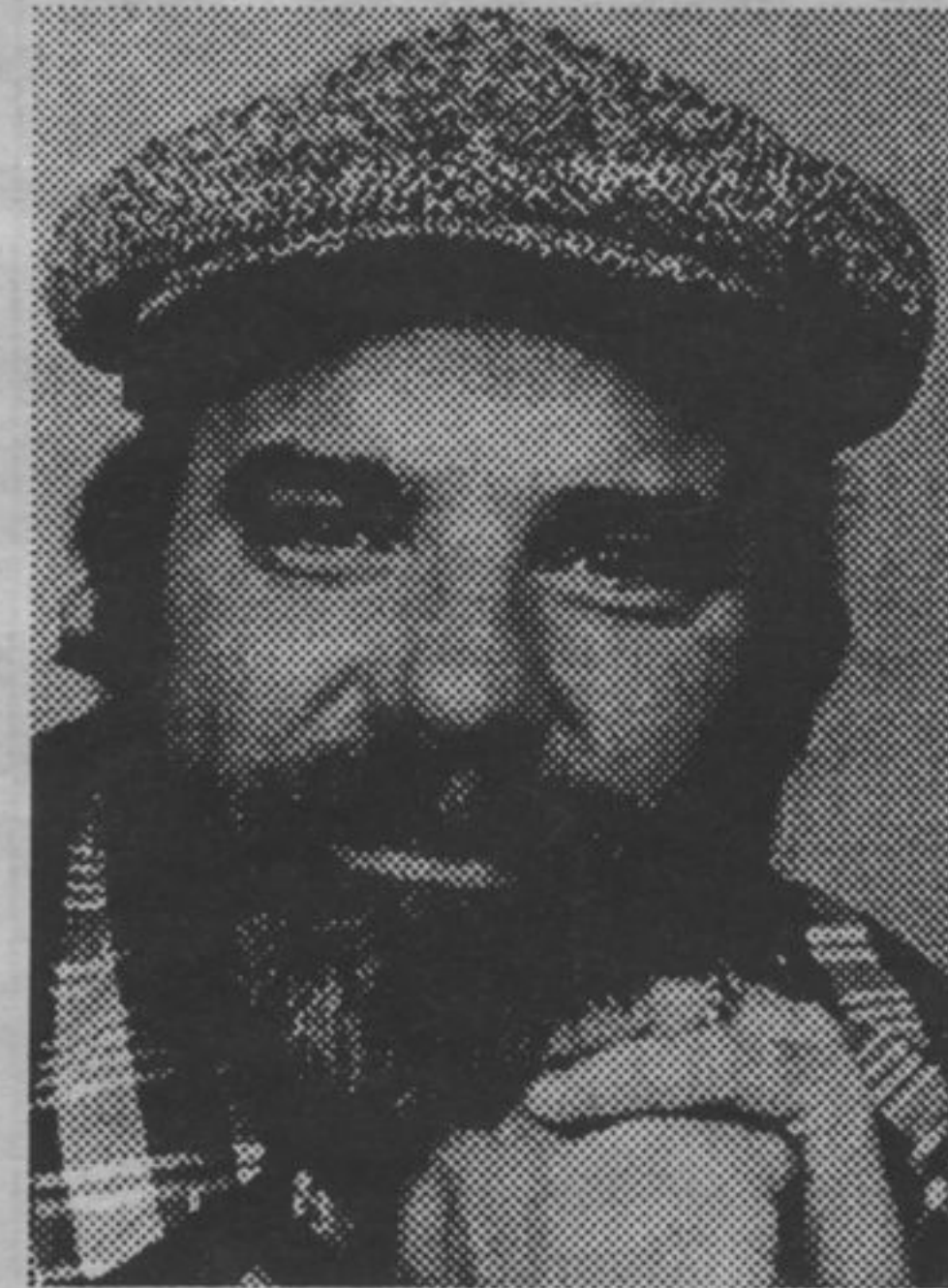
Comrade, have you heard about the new contest in Pravda? They're looking for the funniest political joke of the year.

Really? What does the winner get?

Well, first prize is twenty years...

That's an old joke - and one that was whispered, not broadcast, back in the Bad Old Days. Of course, some hoary Russian chestnuts are hardy enough to withstand Glasnost and Perestroika.

One Muscovite to another: "Hey Vladimir, why are you running?"



**Arthur Black**

*I'm running to Kiev to buy cabbage!*

*"Are you nuts? Haven't you heard of the shortages? The only cabbage available in all of Russia is right here in Moscow!"*

*"I know, but the lineup stretches to Kiev!"*

That joke makes as much sense now as it did under Stalin, but a lot of jokes won't survive the transition and more than a few professional jokesters will have to go into comedy drydock for refitting.

Yakov Smirnof, for instance. Yakov's the ex-Russian who defected to America several years ago and has been surviving rather handsomely on the rubber chicken circuit by

poking fun at the Great Gray Soviet Monolith.

Yakov Smirnof joke: "In the United States you have freedom of speech. You can go up to Ronald Reagan and say, 'I don't like Ronald Reagan.' In the Soviet Union you have the same thing. You can go up to Chernenko and say, 'I don't like Ronald Reagan.'"

Very old joke. Chernenko is dead. Ronald Reagan turned out to be more ossified than Gorbachev and Yakov Smirnof is a stand-up comic badly in need of new material.

Perhaps Russia is destined to get the last laugh. Let me throw one more comedy routine at you:

*There are at the present time two great nations in the world...the Russians and the Americans...The American relies upon personal interest to accomplish his ends and gives free scope to the unguided exertions and common sense of the people. The Russian centers all the authority of society in a single arm. The principal instrument of the former is freedom; of the latter, servitude. Their starting point is different, and their courses are not the same; yet each of them seems marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe.*

Hey. You're not laughing.

Would it help if I told you a Frenchman by the name of Alexis de Tocqueville wrote the foregoing?

In 1835.

And that's no joke.

## Letters

Dear Editor,

The arrival of winter and winter weather means that numerous "outdoor" dogs will suffer as they are not adequately protected from the harsh elements. Howling winds, biting cold temperatures and snow, sleet and occasionally rain will adversely affect even the hardiest of outdoor dogs which are not appropriately protected.

Some people believe it is acceptable to keep their dog outside without shelter. This is not the case. Many dogs are not outdoor dogs. Some dogs can manage out-of-doors provided they have a good doghouse and they are acclimatized to outdoor weather when they are younger and during warmer weather.

Under the Criminal Code of Canada, all dogs are by law, required to have adequate shelter. A doghouse should be large enough for the dog to stand up, sit down, turn around and stretch out comfortably to the fullest extent of it's limbs. It should be insulated, have an interior windbreak, exterior door flap and be elevated six inches off the ground, facing away from the prevailing winds. As well, the dimensions of the doghouse should be directly related to the size of the dog. This is important for the dog to keep warm in the doghouse with its own body heat. Outdoor dogs should always have access to