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Reasoning behind dog tag fee hike was good

They say the road to hell is paved with good intentions. I think Schreiber Council had a peek of just what that means last Tuesday night when about ten angry people turned out for the Council meeting to complain about the increase in dog tag fees.

There is no doubt that Council's intentions in raising the fees were good. Dogs running loose on the streets is a problem in Schreiber—although the township is far from being the only municipality with this problem—and raising the fees for unspayed and unneutered dogs is bound to encourage people to get their pets fixed.

And in the long term, with more fixed pets, the dog population is bound to decline, making the problem easier to deal with. So far, so good, right?

The problem is, a distinction should be made between people who want to breed dogs (or just want the option of doing so someday), and people who let their dogs breed on the street.

One answer may be charging people for breeding dogs. In Marathon, a dog breeding license is \$25, which is still \$50 less than a tag for a female dog that's not spayed in Schreiber, whether the owner has any intentions of breeding the dog or not.

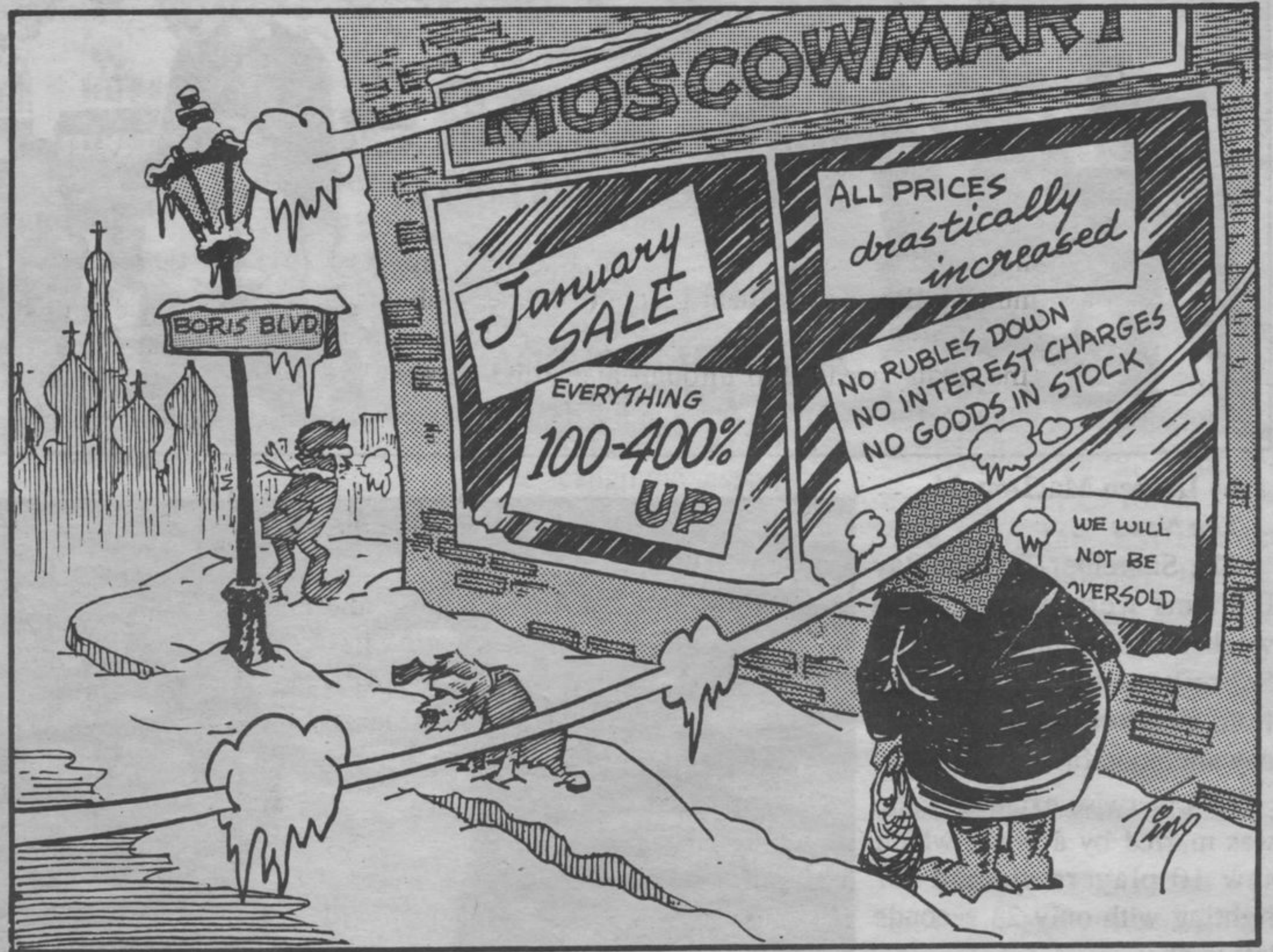
Raising the cost of the tags in itself is probably not going to get dogs off the street, because chances are the people who let their dogs run wild probably don't buy dog tags anyway. What it may do is lead to an increase in people simply not buying tags, and, as a result, more fines and court dates for the Township.

But the worst part is that the fees put the blame on every dog owner, whether their dog runs loose or not. The main complaint of the crowd at last week's meeting was that they were being punished for what others are doing, and that was an accusation that Council couldn't deny.

While a reasonable compromise seems to be in reach—that of offering dog tags at a reduced rate each January—that still doesn't point to a solution of what started all the commotion in the first place: how can you prevent owners from allowing their dogs to roam the streets without imposing punitive measures that harms innocent and responsible pet owners?

The simple—or simplistic—answer is to enforce the Animal control by-law, but that's much easier said than done. I suppose you could hire a team of dog-catchers to roam the streets 24 hours a day, but that's not economically feasible.

The only way to get dogs off the street is to force their owners to keep them tied up. How do you do that? Unfortunately, it may come down to draconian solutions like destroying loose dogs to set an example for irresponsible owners.



Insignificant news offers break

*There are more things in heaven and earth,
Horatio,*

*Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
Hamlet, Act 1, Scene V*

Oh, Billy boy, thou shouldn't be scribbling at this hour.

Can you imagine what Shakespeare would do if he was alive in 1992? No need to rummage around in dusty historical tomes for tales of Danish, Scottish or Roman regicide. The late twentieth century has enough simmering pots (and plots) to keep a Shakespeare writing with both hands around the, er, sundial.

Think for a moment of events that transpired in the last year alone:

A jerry-built false front saloon called Meech Lake collapsed in the dirt. And Canada shivered, fractured and threatened to fall apart.

The Soviet Union *did* fall apart. What Ronald Reagan called the 'Evil Empire' disappeared as if by magic. Two philosophical talismans by the name of Marx and Lenin, whose brooding visages presided over nearly a century of misery for hundreds of millions, went into the garbage chute of history.

Then there was Desert Storm, the "Mother of All Wars." It turned out to be shorter than the average Prairie blizzard. And who can forget . . .

But enough. Let's face it—if Shakespeare was alive today he would probably be living in a garret with quilted walls, chewing Valium like popcorn and prancing around in a dinner jacket that buttons up the back. We've had too much history lately. A news overload. We need a break.

Accordingly, as a public service I am pleased to offer up my brand new information service, INSIGNIFINEWS. A timely round-up of actual news stories from around the world that got passed over in the heat of the past few months. All items guaranteed 100 per cent true . . . and utterly inconsequential.

Item One: Singapore bans chewing gum. It's

official. If you visit Singapore with a couple of packs of Trident in your pocket you better declare 'em at the border. Otherwise you could find yourself spread-eagled on a Customs Shed floor with a gum-sniffing German Shepherd standing on your sternum. The ban is a result of an eight-year study of "chewing gum pollution" by the Singapore government.

The study found that used chewing gum "has caused train disruptions as it prevents train doors from closing." Accordingly, anybody who knowingly imports chewing gum into Singapore faces a fine up to 10,000 Singapore dollars AND one year in a Singapore jail.

You don't want to know what Singapore does to drunk drivers.

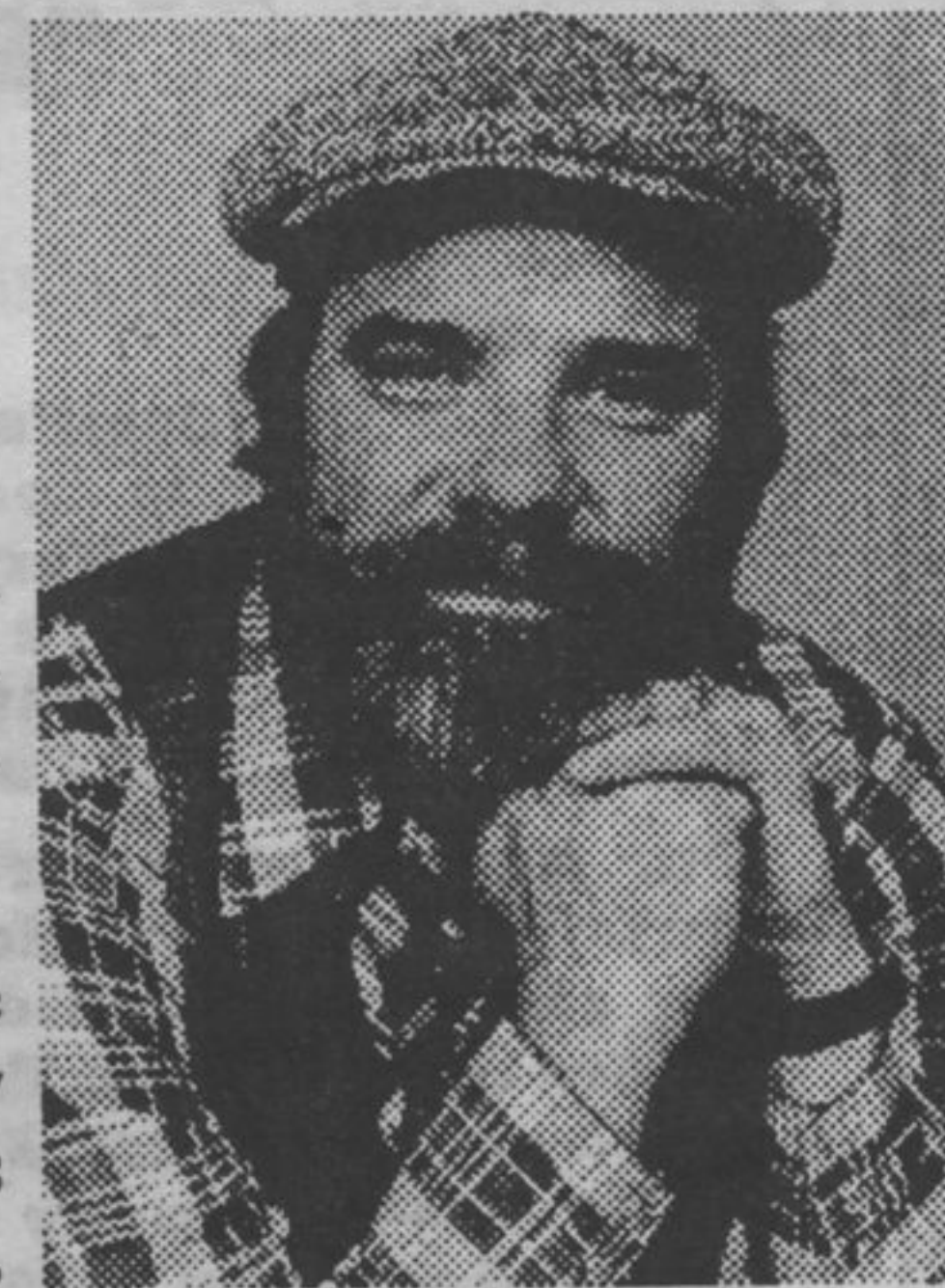
ITEM TWO: In a display of UFO one-upmanship, Soviet UFOlogist Sergei Bulantsev asserts that extraterrestrials who visit

(what used to be) the USSR are "better looking" than the non-earthlings that touch down in North America from time to time.

I'd counter Mister Bulantsev's claim with the old Western cliché that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Especially having seen some members of the USSR Women's Swim Team.

ITEM THREE: The 16th Annual Spamput Championship is over and the winner is . . . Mark Carey, of Austin, Texas, who managed to hurl twelve gooey ounces of meat-like substance (Spam) an incredible 60 feet. Mark lost out in the Spam-calling contest. That was won by a leather-lunged doctor from Dallas who hit 110 decibels with his tympanic-membrane shredding "HEEEEEEEEEERRE SPAMMY, SPAMMY, SPAMMY!"

Speaking of leather lungs, let me paraphrase old Owl-Eyes, Knowlton Nash, and say: "AND, THAT'S INSIGNIFINEWS. G'D NIGHT."



Arthur Black

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