

Weekender

Comment

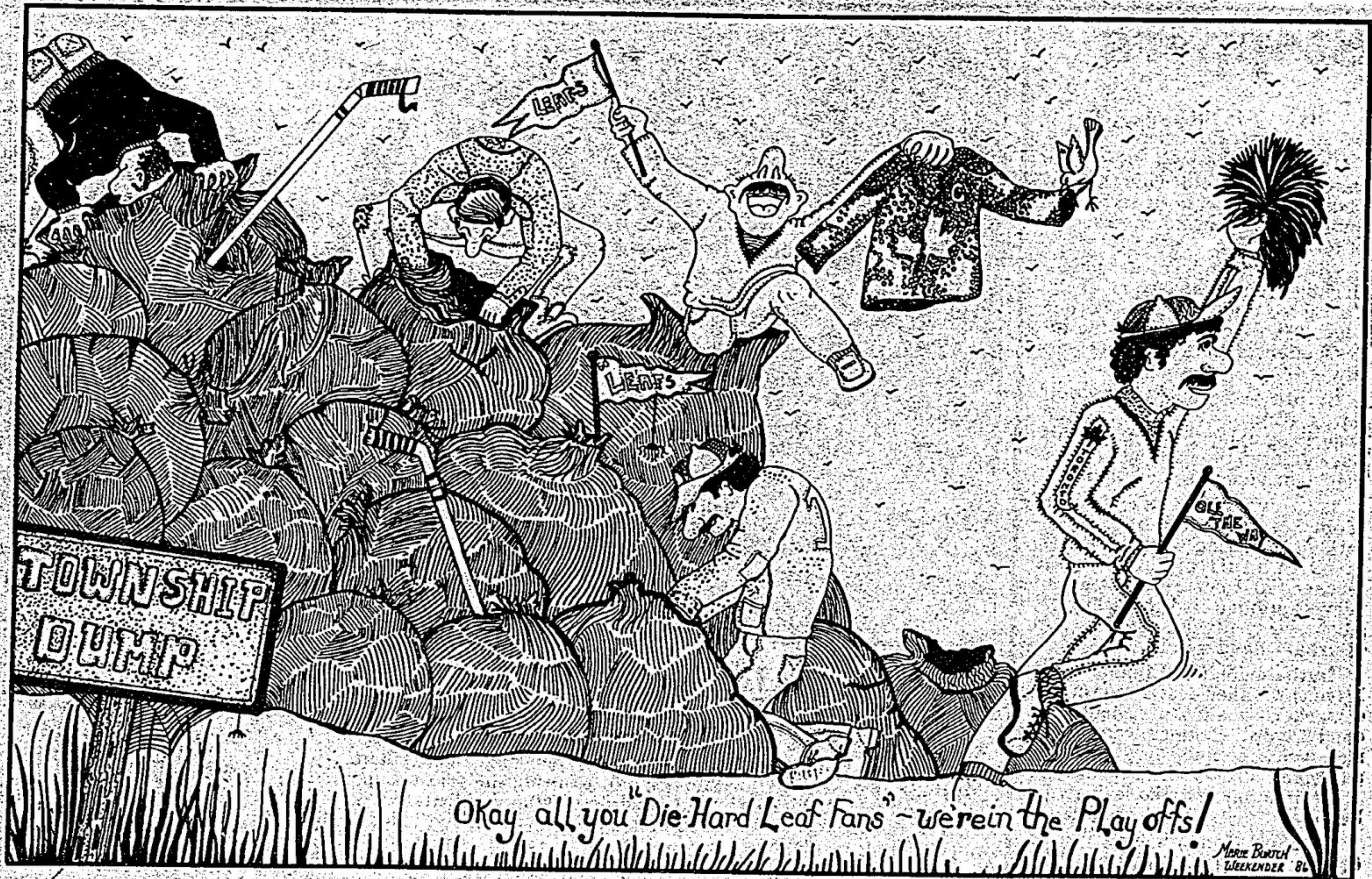
Essays wanted for mom

Moms are the greatest. And, since Mother's Day is just over three weeks away, it is an appropriate time for youngsters to enter the Why My Mom's the Greatest contest sponsored by the Weekender, the Economist and Sun, The Tribune and Markville Shopping Centre.

There are two categories (youngsters aged seven and under and those 8-12 years of age). First prizes, to be awarded in each category, include \$50 gift certificates at Markville Shopping Centre and dinner for two at the Carpenter's Arms Restaurant.

Two runners up in each category will win \$25 Markville gift certificates. The essays must be 200 words or less and must be submitted to the Economist and Sun office at 9 Heritage Rd., Markham or the Tribune office at 54 Main St. W. in Stouffville by 5 p.m. on Friday, April 25.

Winning entries will be published in the Weekender's special Mother's Day supplement on May 3.



Missions work no piece of cake

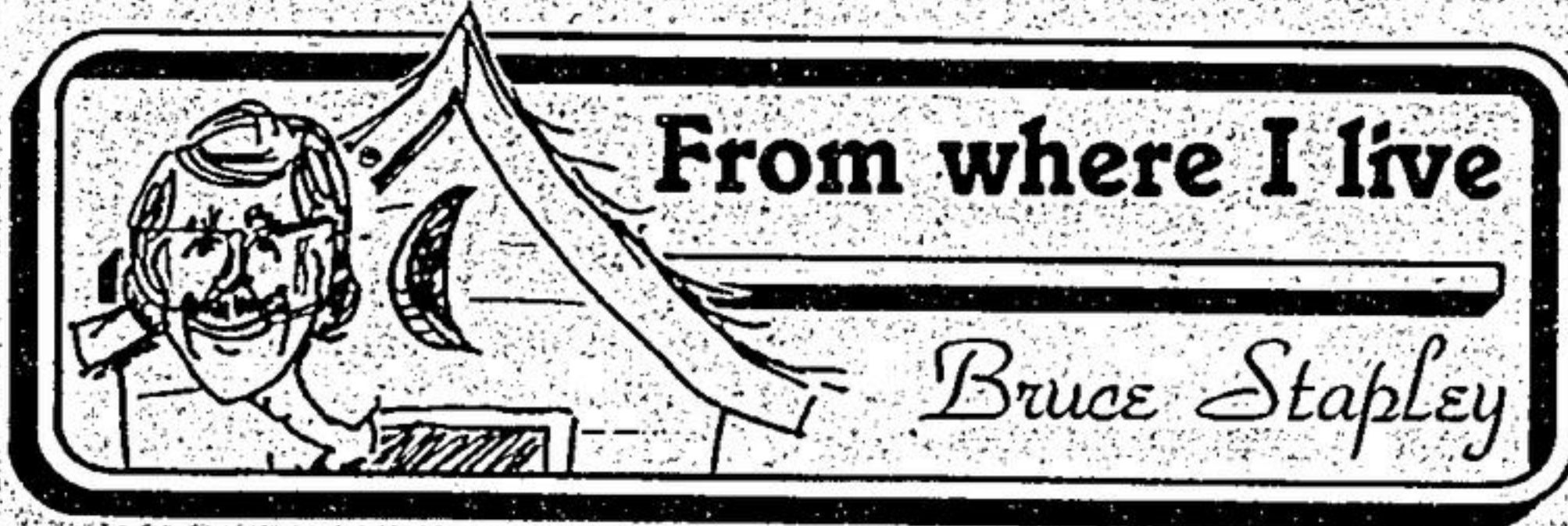
So you want to be a...missionary? Now before you upwardly mobile Yuppies go running back to your computer terminals, lend me your ears, or eyes, while I tell you about a missions field with some zap to it. Yes, and it even boasts a headquarters right here in the Markham-Stouffville area.

Emmanuel International is a Christian foreign aid organization founded by George Middleton, a man whose dream has been realized, a salesman who believes in his product.

The purpose of this outfit is to provide material and spiritual aid to parts of the world afflicted by extreme poverty or disaster.

That sounds harmless enough until you consider that these areas are often the same ones experiencing political instability, civil wars and insurrection.

Mark Middleton, George's son, is the current director of operations for the mission. He grew up in Africa, while his parents worked for the Sudanese International Mission.



Mark's insights into the politics of countries like Ethiopia and Uganda go far beyond what you see on your television screen during the eleven o'clock news.

It frustrates Mark to know the extent to which the powers-that-be in famine stricken Ethiopia use food as a means of establishing their authority over a frightened people.

It grieves him to receive letters from life-long Christian friends in Uganda telling him they are sure to be killed within six months because of tribal feuding that has ripped apart that once proud

country since the days of Idi Amin.

The commitment of the Middleton family to helping put poor areas back on their feet is nothing short of awe inspiring. The constant disregard for their own personal safety has resulted in the countless close brushes with death.

Mark's sister has survived a machine gun barrage of a car in which she was a passenger. His mother lived to tell about the explosion of a hand grenade in an airplane hijacked by terrorists — not exactly your standard missionary fare of old jeeps, basic

food, and sunset photographs for the folks back home.

Now before you go pleading with your 19-year-old son or daughter to reconsider their decision to give a few years of their life to Emmanuel International, it must be pointed out that your average recruit is more likely to be tested by primitive living conditions than by life threatening situations.

I had occasion to visit one of their encampments last spring in the tiny town of Grant's Bailey, tucked away in the hill country of Jamaica.

While the workers I encountered there were fervent Bible-believing Christians, they hardly fit the image some have of missionaries as droll, ram-it-down-the-throat evangelists.

These people were vibrant and fun loving, unflapped by living conditions that make your average Ontario camping holiday seem like a five star hotel experience.

Evidence of their work was to be seen everywhere. A huge water catchment system has been built; roads were being made navigable by means of breaking rock and filling in huge potholes and washed out sections; cement was being poured in various reconstruction projects; food was being produced; and there was even an exercise program offered to the ladies of the town.

In a day when most of us are so concerned with second cars, R.V.s and electric toys, it is gratifying to know that there are people who are so committed to the plight of those in dire need that they are willing to endure incredible conditions and circumstances.

When questioned about the risks his family has been exposed to in promoting the cause of Emmanuel International, George Middleton, master of the casual reply, simply states: "We don't expect miracles. We live by them."

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