

Weekender

Comment

Sinc: Sinkingor sunk?

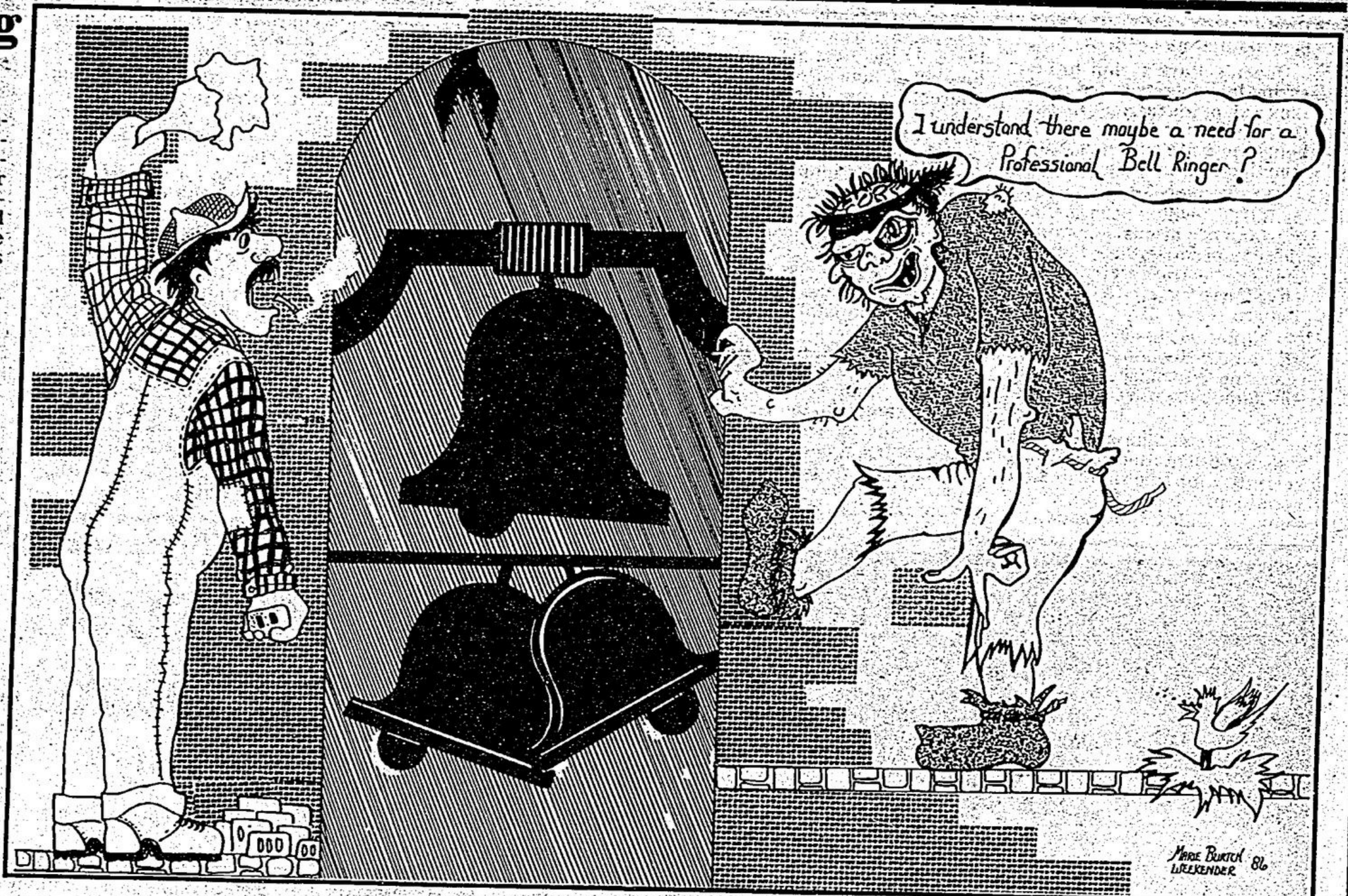
We await the decision of the inquiry probing the conflict-of-interest allegations against Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel Member of Parliament) with interest. Regardless of its findings, it would appear that Mr. Stevens will have some explaining to do to his Stouffville constituents.

This paper is on record as supporting Mr. Stevens as a hard worker for York-Peel, and however muddled his reputation becomes as testimony mounts, his performance on behalf of his riding was exemplary.

Shirley Walker, his special assistant has admitted working for Mr. Stevens' family companies while on the federal payroll. It's also alleged that his wife Noreen received a huge interest free loan from Markham's Magna International, which received millions of dollars in grants from his department.

Most recently, his secretary and a receptionist each testified they noticed papers and visitors linking Mr. Stevens to business activities. As well, a chartered accountant told the inquiry he twice met with the cabinet minister about ways to increase Mr. Stevens' company profits.

Each new bit of testimony seems to sink "Sinc". We may be watching a very public ending to Mr. Stevens' public life.



Big league ball, big league fun

There are no umpires in this league. If you can't stop in time, you just run right past the base. Each hitter gets three chances to hit the ball, with his own teammate doing the pitching. And the water jug has been known to contain more than Stouffville Pure.

It's Monday Night Baseball, Stouffville's concession to out of shape men who still have what Reggie Jackson calls "The little boy" living within them.

There's absolutely no pressure to perform, mistakes are greeted with good natured hooting, and win, lose or draw, all participants head back to The Greens after the game for a good old-fashioned bull session.

There is a feeling of timelessness to this local institution. In a world of constant change, pressure, and uncertainty, Monday Night Baseball provides a welcome playground that remains the same, year after year.

The cast includes the likes of



Toronto Maple Leaf oldtimer Bob Hazzard, local hockey hero Keith Acton, councillor Jim Sanders; some lawyers, preachers, truck drivers, farmers, and a columnist from the Weekender whose batting skills are somewhat suspect.

And, of course, there's Jim Brazier, the league's mascot. A commercial artist, Jim paints all those signs that adorn the boards at Maple Leaf Gardens during professional tennis tournaments.

Gentleman Jim exemplifies the spirit of sportsmanship, fair play, and mild inanity that the

league has come to be known for.

One of the founders of the organization, Jim is a member of the motley outfit that was once called the Brew Jays, before the boys decided to go legit and adopt major league team names.

This once proud band of long-ball hitters has fallen on hard times of late, with victories coinciding in regularity with appearances of blue moons.

"No matter," insists Jim, the team's "manager" (no one else would take the responsibility.) "We may play like girls, but we have a lot of fun and it gets us

away from our wives for a few hours."

Recently, when his team eked out a close win, Jim provided both local papers with a press release proclaiming that the squad had extended its winning streak to one game. When the team tied its next game, he was back at it again, saying how the town's firetruck was being lined up for a victory ride down main street if this phenomenal success was to continue.

The league's most outrageous individual has to be Czech exile Bill Shena, who is reputed to have made a clean catch once. Bill plays catcher, so it is his job to rule on balls hit fair or foul. His judgment tends to be a little off on occasion, something to do with his unbridled enthusiasm for the game, or his excitement at living in a free country.

Bill's thunderous cries of "Fol Bol" can be heard as far away as Richmond Hill. He's the only player in the league who takes it

extremely seriously. Consequently, Bill ends up sitting by himself in The Greens after some games.

Bill takes more than baseball seriously, and this occasionally causes his teammates mild anxiety. A few years ago, he opened up the hood of his car to find out why it wouldn't start, only to be winged by a bullet from a shotgun rigged up to the engine by a questionable acquaintance.

For the next few Monday nights, nobody on Bill's team wanted to stand too close to home plate, let alone use Bill's bat. No, telling just when his "friend" might pull another practical joke.

But, above all else, Monday Night Baseball is a bunch of mediocre jocks who get a kick out of running, throwing, catching, and hitting a baseball, the odd near-brilliant play is thrown in just to prove we can still cut it. After all, we can't let the kids have all the fun.

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