

Weekender

# Comment

## Fair an annual tradition

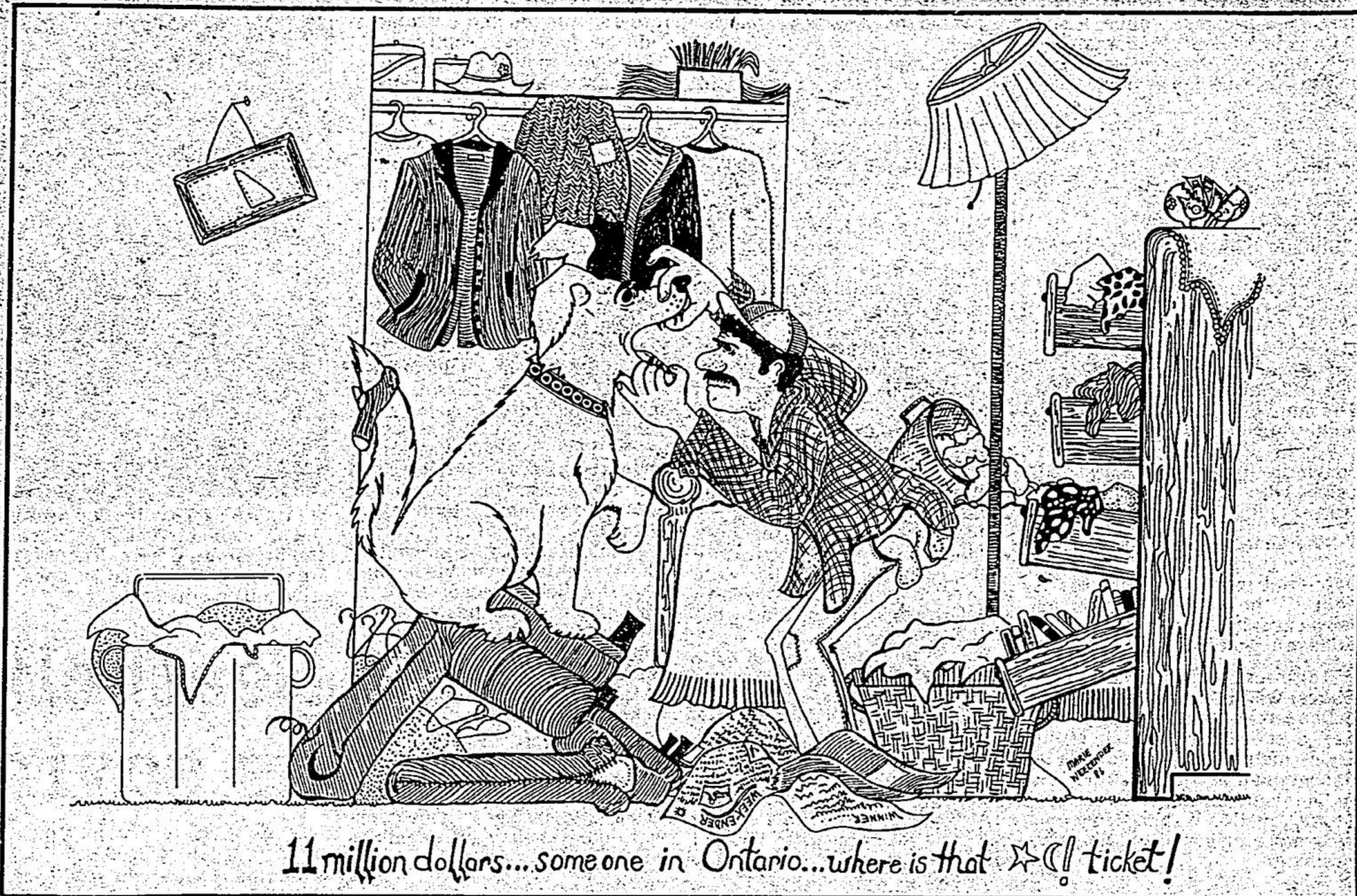
There is something special about the fall. The colored leaves, a nip in the air — and Markham Fair.

Situated on a country setting at McCowan Rd. and 16th Ave., the Markham Fair is the ideal place to bring urban and rural folks together in a celebration of agricultural life past and present.

There is something else unusual about Markham Fair — it's put on by a vast army of volunteers in what is an impressive show of community involvement and dedication. So, if you haven't been there this year, there's still time to go.

The Fair is open all day today and again tomorrow until 6 p.m.

With entertainment, livestock, homecraft exhibits, refreshment booths and the midway, Markham Fair has something for just about everybody.



## Wood stoves fashionable again

There's a collective blaze burning ever brighter in these parts lately. I guess you could call it another "back to basics" trend, a yearning for the simple pleasure of days gone by. But as another heating season has us all shuddering at the inevitable rediscovery of the furnace thermostat, the renaissance of the fireplace has more and more people staving off winter's wretched chill the old fashioned way.

Rare is the house today that doesn't have a rather sizable pile of logs stacked in the garage or up against the fence.

It's never been hard to sell a housebuyer on the charm and romance of an open fireplace. Show me a new house in York Region that doesn't come with one as standard equipment.

But our obsession with energy efficiency that has become so dominant in recent years, has caused many of us to lament all the wasted heat that escapes out



the chimney as we sit watching the flames dance.

The first attempt at correcting this situation was the "black box" woodstove that bore such cutesy names as "Mama Bear" and "Papa Bear."

Efficient they may well have been, but the novelty soon wore off when people realized that it just wasn't the same, sitting around the family room watching a dull metal form radiating heat. They just weren't interested in spending that kind of money on a fire they couldn't see.

Necessity being the mother of invention, the woodstove boys

flocked back to the drawing board, anxious to regain the lifestyles their initial successes had brought them.

Eureka, somebody came up with a type of glass that could withstand extremely high temperatures. This revolutionary concept resulted in wood burning stoves that allowed one to have his fire and see it too, thanks to the introduction of glass doors.

Conversation at any social gathering today is bound to eventually turn to the merits of the various "air tight" devices on the market.

It has become essential for to-

day's macho male to know as much about BTUs, slip connectors and double insulated chimneys as he knows about imported sports cars.

Such is the interest in our town that Graydon Card, Stouffville's retailer emeritus, has just completed the rather ambitious project of converting the newest addition of his hardware store into a glamorous woodstove showroom, complete with brick and fieldstone fireplaces to show off his wares.

The "everything-old is new again" approach to heating our abodes has extended right into the kitchen. Replicas of Grandma's old Findlay Oval cookstove are finding their way into more and more homes. And those who are using them to cook as well as heat are bragging about the results.

Even the interior decorators are being allowed in on the fun. The old Henry Ford "choose

any color as long as its black" mentality that used to apply to the woodstove industry is no more.

Living rooms are being designed around woodburning heat generators that sport porcelain enamel and tile exteriors, and designs range from oversized fish bowl shapes right through imitations of 1700s Williamsburg corner cupboards.

So beware those of you who are still burning Franklin stoves and Acorn fireplaces. These, and other similar units have become very passe, the strawmen of those who would try to dazzle you with their knowledge of contemporary wood heating trends. Whatever you do, don't admit you ever had one.

And I hope that I've helped you forget about all that rotten rain, if only for a few moments. Just be thankful you haven't had to shovel it.

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