

Weekender

# Comment

## How not to carry on talks

The current contract dispute between the York Region Roman Catholic School Board and its teachers federations is a classic example of how not to negotiate in good faith.

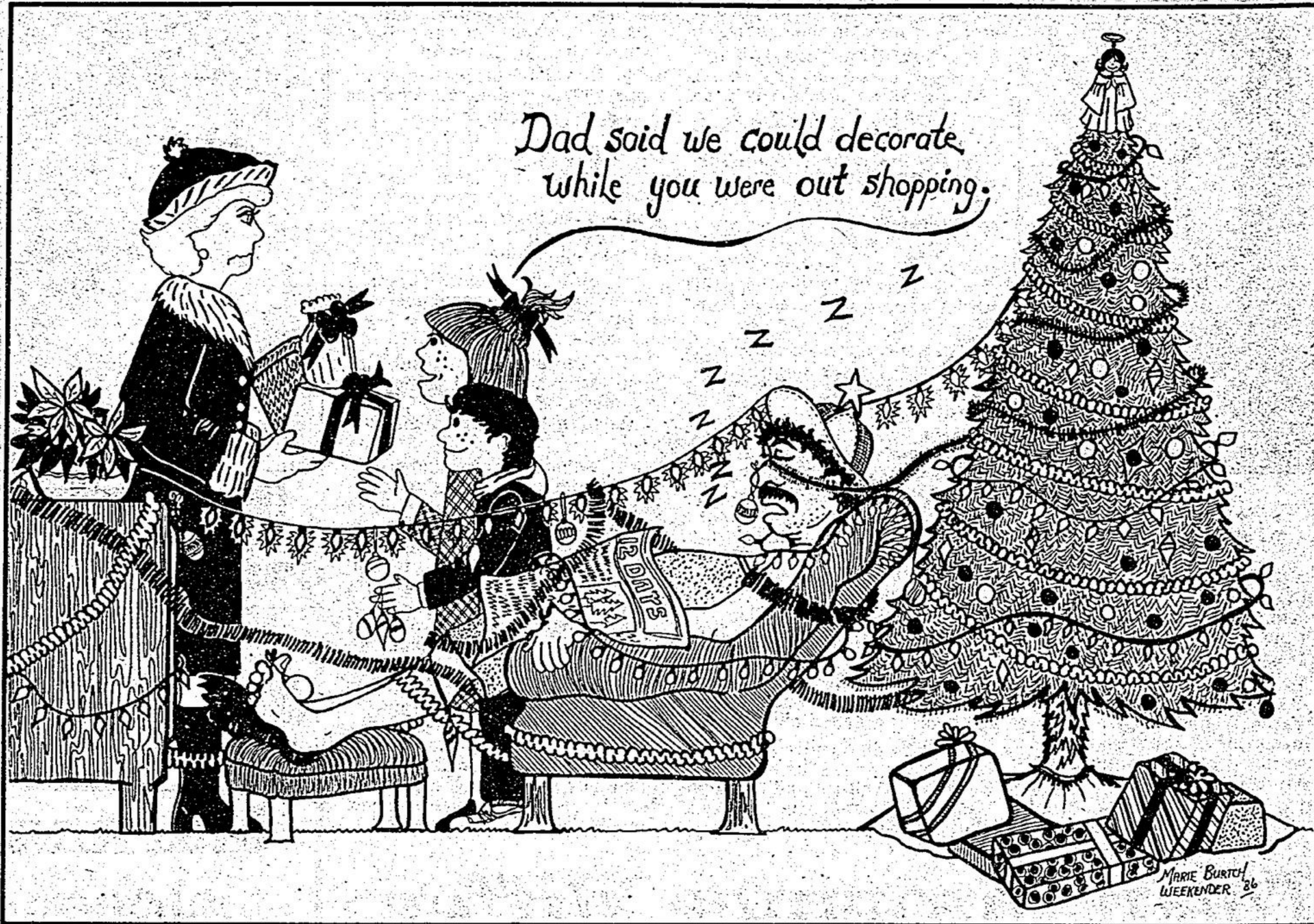
Both sides seem to be using semantics to take pot shots at each other. And we can't see how this will aid reaching a fair settlement. It will just leave a bad taste in everyone's mouth.

Take the teachers as an example. They are claiming that the issue isn't money. They want smaller classes and more preparation time — all of which cost more money, and create more teacher jobs in York Region.

The board has taken the high road by buying advertising in local newspapers disputing the teachers' claims. The board is saying that the teachers cannot have substantial salary increases and expect smaller classes and extra preparation time too.

Unfortunately, the board people won't make further comment on the negotiations to clarify the matter. Both sides, it seems are trying — each in its own way — to manipulate the media.

All of which does little to serve the best interests of the taxpayers in York Region who deserve to know the real truth. After all their children and their dollars are at stake here.



## Sunday opening makes me angry

Okay, its time to get serious folks. After all, this page is headed by a rather large "Comment" printed up top.

Now it takes a pretty hefty kick to my value structure to get me aroused to the point where I want to go public with an opinion. However, the spectre of Sunday store openings has me all cranked up and raring to stand up and fight. Or at least posture a little.

Sure, it may be easy to justify the apparent need for turning the traditional day of rest into just another shopping day. All you would have to do is point to the throngs of people who patronize stores and attractions currently keeping Sunday business hours.

After all, in a democracy, the majority rules, right? And a recent Gallup Poll did show that 53 per cent of Canadians are in favor of allowing stores to open their doors on the seventh day of the week.

Yes, I'll even grant you that there are plenty of businesses and admission-charging events that seem ideally suited to Sunday stores, to name just a few.



When the Stouffville Sales Barn decided to open on Sundays a little while back, I found it hard to sympathize with the cry of outrage from many in the community. Flea markets are strictly a weekend phenomenon, and are as much an excuse for a family outing in the country as they are a regular shopping trip.

Certain small shops that deal in crafts and related goods have always lent themselves to Sunday traffic, and I believe the powers that be have always recognized this fact.

So while my opposition to the recent move towards mass Sunday openings may seem to an extent hypocritical, I feel that there is a

world of difference between what has been allowed up until now, and this across-the-board stuff we seem to be heading for.

Now certainly there should be a little more consistency to the law than we have seen in the past. Unfair advantage shouldn't be gained by stores who would bend the rules to qualify for exemption from the Lord's Day Act.

What we have emerging now in a way is a "gas war" mentality in the retail industry where everyone is trying to get the edge on the competition, no matter how short lived that edge may be.

Somebody decides to do something outrageous to get attention, to

establish their business in the minds of the consumers.

This can be done either by price slashing to the point where a loss is actually taken, or by being first to offer something revolutionary, like Sunday shopping.

Unfortunately, everyone else is forced to follow suite in order to protect their share of the market, and nobody is any further ahead.

That's because there are only so many dollars out there to spend. That's why it is so important to have laws that establish the rules of the game, so everyone has an equal chance of competing for those dollars.

If all the retail giants are told they must remain closed on Sunday, none will be tempted to tamper with a tradition I feel is very much worth keeping.

The Lord's Day Act and the Business Retail Holidays Act are, to my way of thinking, the few remaining positive reinforcements for the family, and for sanity in general. Sunday has managed to survive as the pause between the week-to-

week routine, not for everyone, but for the majority.

It is a day that forces the workaholics among us to seek diversion and recreation, to throw on those old jeans and relax, or tend to neglected house hold chores.

Forget the rat race for a day, the never ending pursuit of the buck. Take the family to church, or go visit relatives or friends.

Surely the family has taken enough of a kicking, with so many old values having been dismissed as outdated. There is a price to pay for this "brave new world" thinking. Sunday openings can only make family life less viable than it has already become.

Do you want a world where, you have Tuesday and Friday off, while your wife gets Monday and Thursday? Where do the kids fit in?

Think about it: What starts with store openings is bound to spread elsewhere into other areas of business and commerce. Once we lose Sunday, it's gone for good.

I'm not buying it. I hope you don't either. End of lecture.

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