

Weekender

# Comment

## Hamlet's future in doubt

Work is to go ahead on two projects that will impact heavily on the already battered hamlet of Buttonville. Woodbine Ave. is to be widened from Apple Creek Dr to north of the municipal offices and the jog will be eliminated at Woodbine Ave. and 16th Ave.

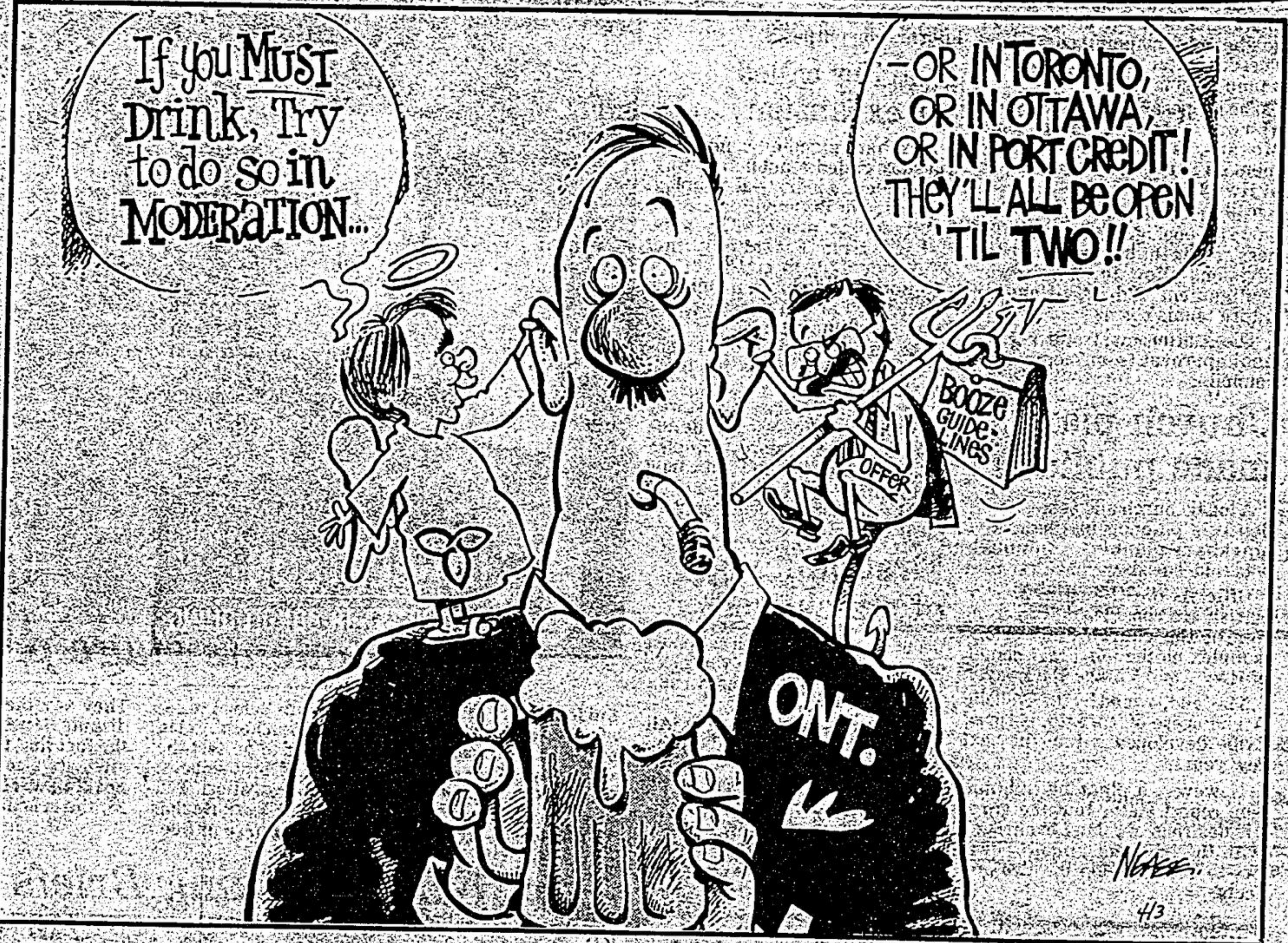
Although we question the widening north of Apple Creek Dr, there is no doubt the 16th Ave. jog elimination and widening is necessary. If the work would stop there, it might be all right.

But future plans are to widen Woodbine all the way through to 16th Ave. — and that would be a major blow to current efforts to retain something of the hamlet's original character.

It would be better to postpone the Woodbine widening and study future transportation needs in the area to avoid cutting a huge four-lane swath through the older areas of Buttonville.

Although a small hamlet, Buttonville figures prominently in the history of the Town of Markham. At the rate things are going, its character may be wiped out completely — and that would be a tragedy of major proportions.

— Don Bernard



## Couple offers bed, breakfast and blessings

Genuine love, as expressed through the lives of real-life people who have been through real-life struggles, is always a source of great inspiration and hope.

In the best interests of privacy and discretion, the pseudonyms "David" and "Rachel" will be used here in place of the names of two very real individuals whose warmth and concern for others is the stuff of which sainthood is made.

David and Rachel just moved the family into the new house in the Markham area. Having lived for years on a farm to the north of town, Rachel's cooking still has a quality, and a quantity to it, that would satisfy a horde of famished farmhands. Sitting down to such culinary delights on moving day after slugging mattresses and assembling shelving units, I couldn't help but wonder just who had gotten the better of that deal.

The new house is more than a little roomy. Which is a good thing, given David and Rachel's penchant for opening their doors to people whose accomodation



prospects are a little scant, or whose needs include some good old-fashioned family atmosphere. Such as the 22-year-old girl to whom life has brought on more than a few undesirable circumstances. The fifth bedroom, which was to be David's study, has been assigned to her.

"I've never experienced the kind of unconditional love that these people have shown me," she will tell you, admitting that it has been a life-changing turn of events.

On the day of the move, Rachel was trying to figure out how they could find accomodation for a family they knew, which was about to be without a place to live.

She was all set to take them in herself, if need be! And David's dad, who lives nearby, has been assured he is always welcome in their home, Archie Bunker-style shots and all.

David is the kind of man who just seems to exude warmth, and he is possessed of a childlike enthusiasm for life. He loves people. A hopeless romantic, he told me recently of how he read my column encouraging people to pursue talents such as poetry, then proceeded to sit down and write his first ever poem, to his wife on their 20th wedding anniversary. And what a poem it was!

Especially when you take into account that theirs is a marriage

that has been miraculously salvaged from the slag pile, a marriage that at one time was characterized by anger, bitterness, distrust, yes, even hatred. Unlike so many others, however, they were able to stand back and take a good look at themselves when things had reached the point of no return. They didn't like what they saw, and set out to change it.

What has happened to this couple since this dramatic decision was made is truly astonishing, an inspiration to all those who have ever considered throwing in the towel.

"Today we love each other more than we ever dreamed possible," David proclaims with unflinching sincerity. "But it had to start with me." A few lines from his anniversary poem sum up his former self, he admits:

I wanted to be the true man of your dreams

But I just couldn't get past myself, so it seems.

Like many others whose lives have experienced such transformation, such as Jesse Barfield

of baseball's Blue Jays, David and Rachel are not so proud as to try to accept the credit themselves. They will tell you that they owe it all to the person of Jesus Christ, who they claim to have accepted as their personal Lord and Saviour. The key, they insist, is true submission, and denial of self. Powerful stuff.

As you watch David's face radiate from within while he explains the nature of his conviction, you can't help but pause a moment in order to take a personal inventory of your faith, whatever it may be based upon.

David's commitment led him to walk away from his job almost two years ago, and enroll at Bible College at the age of 40. He admits he doesn't know exactly what lies ahead. He hopes to someday take his ministry "into the field", where there are broken people in great need.

And knowing David, he won't just go around handing out Bibles to these folks. He'll feed them first.

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