

# Comment

## Markham fire has insurance industry hot

The Insurance Bureau of Canada is still smoking after Markham's 108-home fire last month.

Million dollar losses are not going to be tolerated by the industry and this week's announcement about strict safety measures comes as no surprise.

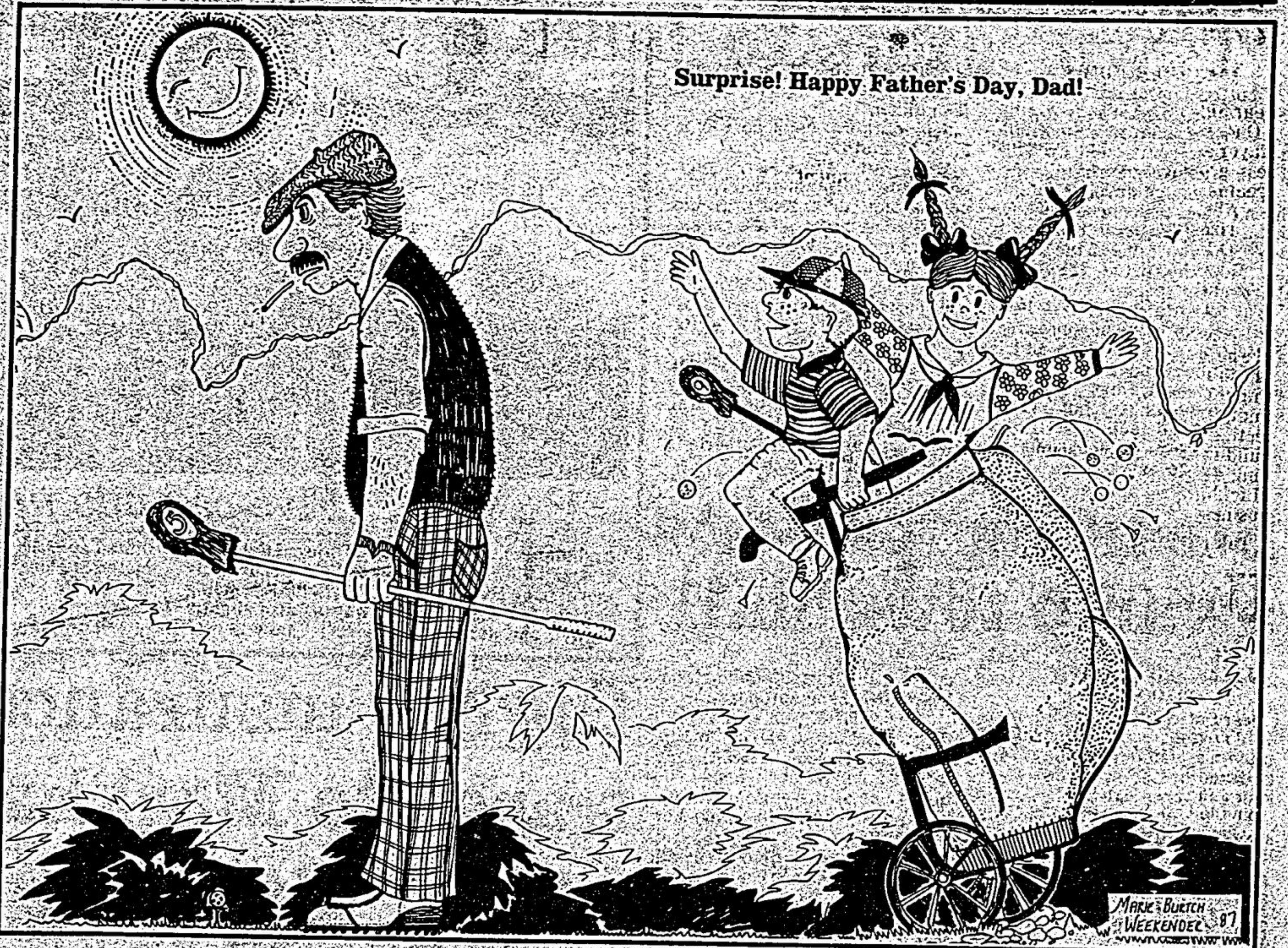
Welders and plumbers (and anyone using an open torch) must carry fire extinguishers, water valves must be locked open and municipalities must certify that valves are fully operational — these Ontario-wide changes can be traced directly to the Markham fire.

However, the criterion of independent night watchmen now specified by some insurers indicates industry concern about arson. The link to Markham is not direct, since arson was never confirmed by investigators.

With the potential for horrendous losses from unsupervised sites, this precaution seems obvious.

But the safety measures have another hard-hitting effect. They'll increase the price of homes for a consumer already buckling from the weight

— Jo Ann Stevenson



Surprise! Happy Father's Day, Dad!

## Being benevolent in Stouffville

BY BRUCE STAPLEY

The milk of human kindness, as poured by those who are truly sympathetic to victims of misfortune, has a way of making us feel a little more positive about what can sometimes be an indifferent world.

Stouffville's Suzanne Wallis is an infinitely creative lady with a pronounced tendency to altruism. Suzanne is Special Assistant to Ontario Communications Minister Alvin Curling.

She's also a freelance writer. You may have read her article about uninvited household guests in the June issue of *Chatelaine*.

My earliest recollection of this perky, good natured, ever so vibrant blonde gal goes back to 1980. A gathering of local businessmen were sitting around a big table in the old Regal Restaurant on Stouffville's Main St.

### Fundraiser

Terry Fox had just been felled in his attempt to cross Canada on



one leg and we were challenged by one of our members to organize a town fundraising drive in his name.

Suzanne walked into the room and within minutes, was offering her creative input, her determination and her time towards the establishment of what would become the town's annual Terry Fox Run.

A few years later, when a local teenager was seriously injured in an accident in which Suzanne's daughter was also involved, she researched and headed a plan that saw dozens of residents organize in an effort to restore the

girl's vital faculties. Suzanne remained optimistic, even though the hundreds of hours of therapy bore precious little fruit.

### Always time

A mother of three, she has always had time to apply her enthusiasm to school assignments brought home by her children. Her high creative energy level and genuine concern for others has rubbed off on them as well.

Son Duff, a student at Stouffville District Secondary School, recently took it upon himself to line up a bus for students to take

them to and from the school prom in Toronto.

A realist, Duff was aware of the possibility of drinking at the function and wanted to avoid the incidence of students drinking and driving.

When the hour of departure arrived, only eight students climbed aboard the bus. That didn't even begin to cover the cost of the rental.

Duff collected every dime he could muster and took it to Ged Stonehouse of Stonehouse Travel, who had arranged the bus rental.

### Owner steps in

Mr. Stonehouse, whose two teenagers also attend the school, felt compelled to absorb the shortfall. Such was his sympathy for a young man who had stuck his neck out trying to ensure the safety of his fellow students.

A letter awaited the travel agent the next morning as he opened his office door.

In her own flowing style, Duff's

mom, Suzanne, expressed her appreciation of Mr. Stonehouse's generosity.

She was genuinely moved and felt it was her duty to tell him how deeply impressed she was by his kindness.

At the same time she explained that she couldn't allow him to absorb such a loss, and that she would arrange to pay it.

### Hard to hide

Because of this experience, there are three people who are able to walk a little taller. All three will be quite embarrassed when this column is brought to their attention.

For that I am sorry. But I find it hard to keep something like this a secret.

Periodically, we all feed on this type of story to restore our faith in our fellow man.

When our chance comes to pour some goodness into the cup of one who finds himself in a jam, hopefully we will be able to find a way to open the milk bottle.

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