

Editor's Mail

Still take prisoners

Dear Editor:
The March 1 issue of The Tribune contained a letter written by Adam Johnstone of R.R. 1, Stouffville. It made me angry at the time and I haven't fully recovered.

Mr. Johnstone, in a very intimidating manner, poked fun at the thought of females serving 'up front' in the Armed Forces.

He should hang his head in shame. This, in my opinion, is discrimination in its worst form.

Several of Mr. Johnstone's suggestions make no sense. For example — an enemy soldier might be hesitant to kill a woman in hand-to-hand combat.

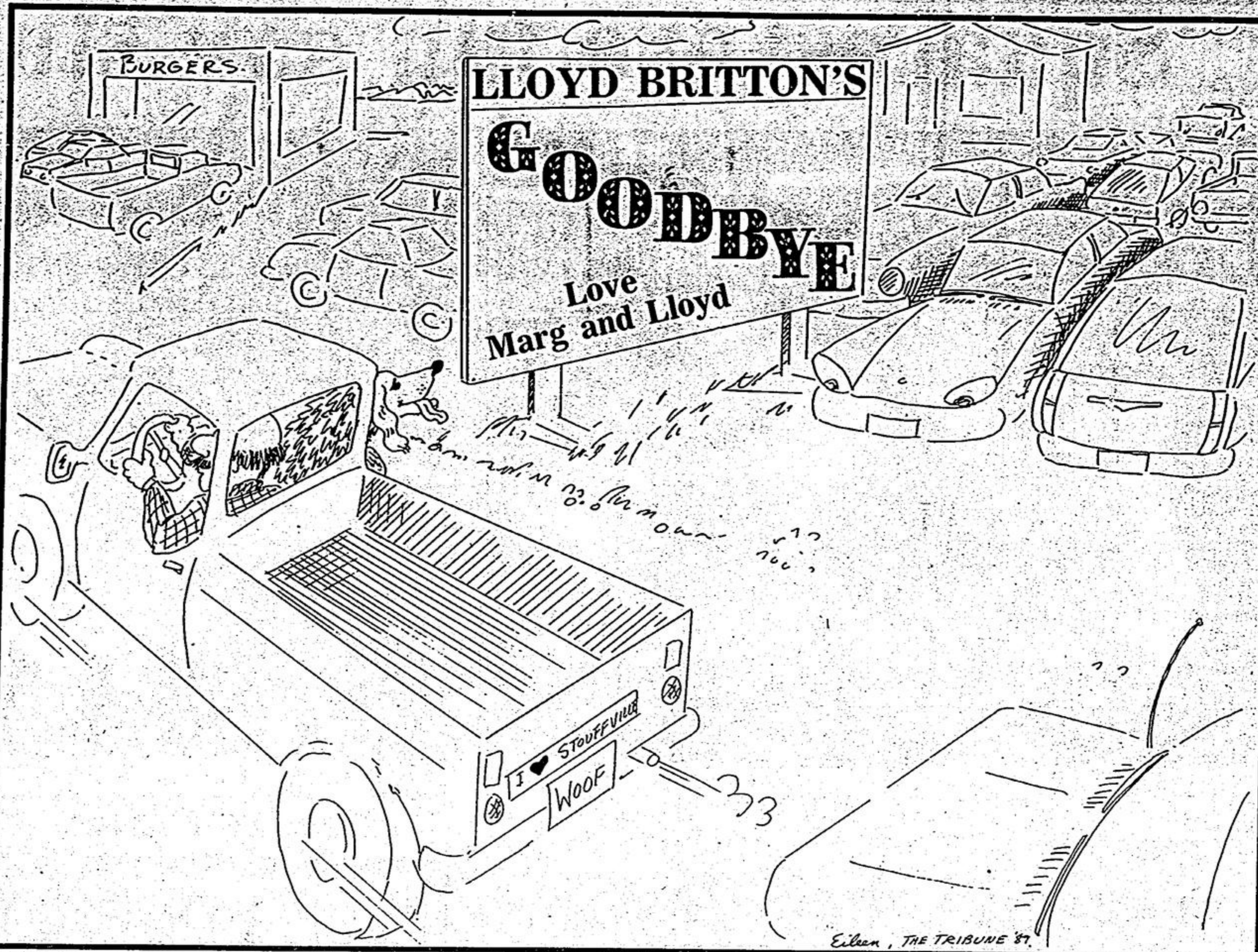
So be it. Has the writer never heard of people being taken prisoner?

It happened you know, both in World War I and II.

Mr. Johnstone's reference to female soldiers as Amazons is unforgivable. I'm 5 feet 11 inches tall and weigh 140 pounds. Therefore, I could be classed as an Amazon. But I wouldn't be afraid to enter the Miss Bikini Contest if that's the criteria Mr. Johnstone is looking for in describing a 'real' female.

Rather than anger, I should feel sorry for the writer. He's the loser if he still so discriminates against women as his letter indicates. This is 1989 not 1914.

Sincerely,
Tracey Gellman,
Ballantrae



ROAMING AROUND

Pride before a fall

BY JIM THOMAS



Pride goeth before a fall. In my case, conceit goeth before a crash.

Only three weeks ago, I bragged in this very column about my excellent driving record. I boasted of nothing more than a few fender scrapes in 43 years.

And it was all very true. Two million accident-free miles was an accomplishment of which I was justly proud. So I elected to tell the whole world about it. In doing so, I (intentionally) omitted one small but important piece of information — the close calls, the near misses, the split-second differences between life and death.

Wife Jean tactfully reminded me of these as she sat reading my epistle during a quiet moment before bedtime.

Then she began listing those moments which, but for the grace of God, could have been catastrophes.

Like the second night of our honeymoon, heading east on the westbound lane of the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

Or falling asleep on the Bloomington Road and coming to a stop in a farmer's field.

Or zipping over the top of a gravel hill to discover, (to my surprise), a fire truck parked crossways a short distance below.

No, these would-be horror stories I didn't mention.

"A miss is as good as a mile," I shrug-

ged, switching the subject to something more pleasant.

My spouse only shook her head.

Had I taken her ominous warning to heart, I wouldn't be sitting here, my palms and forehead wet with perspiration and my nerves a tangled mess.

Yes, my accident-free ego trip came to a metal-crunching end, Monday morning; not dead-end, fortunately, but close. Too close for comfort.

The crash occurred at the intersection of McCowan Road and Bullock Drive in Markham. The time was shortly after 1 a.m.

No, I'm not about to bore you with details. I won't because I can't. I remember little of what happened. In fact, ten days after, it all seems like a terrible nightmare.

It was some time after midnight when I left the Office to pick up the newspaper's cartoon on Karma Drive, west of Markville Mall.

I recall approaching McCowan and the light was red.

Suddenly, there was a flash of white directly in front. The subsequent crash sent my car into a 180 degree spin. The steering wheel rammed my chest and my head hit the windshield.

Dazed, I sat there several seconds, not knowing where I was or what had happened.

Then I jumped out, searching, vainly

at first, for the other guy.

His car had careened backwards down an embankment. Only the front bumper was visible.

The driver was pinned inside. At first, I tried to call for help on his cellular phone, but it wouldn't work. Then I requested a nearby service station attendant to notify police and an ambulance.

Officers arrived quickly, so did ambulance personnel and firefighters. The victim was soon whisked away to hospital.

As I stood there shivering in the chill of that early-morning night, it seemed like the world had suddenly come crashing down upon my head.

In a split-second, everything had changed — two cars badly damaged; one man in hospital and me, deeply depressed.

But it's never that bad that it couldn't be worse, my friends keep saying. And I suppose they're right.

Somebody could be dead right.

Realizing this, my family has also been kind. They could have replied "we told you so"; a come-down I deserve.

However, they'll settle for the fact my bragging days are over; the scale has balanced out.

On April 10, I returned to earth with a thud. Only with the little luck I had left the downward path could have continued an additional six feet.

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Editorials

SDSS May Prom is school responsibility

The annual May Prom is the social highlight of the High School year.

Any high school year.

The event's particularly significant for graduating students. With the exception of Commencement, it's their last hurrah.

At S.D.S.S., the dance will be held on board a boat in Toronto Harbour.

However, the administration has withdrawn its support. Principal Peter Bright wants the Prom to take place at the school. The event's been ruled 'strictly private' at any outside location.

There are two sides to this issue.

Serving as chaperones, (at a non-school site), places too much onus on staff, Mr. Bright claims.

The Prom committee sees the school gymnasium generating too little excitement. They want May 26 to be a night the students will remember.

In this instance, we think the school administration is negating its responsibility. We also think it's showing a surprising lack of faith.

Whether or not the Prom receives the principal's 'blessing', is immaterial. In the eyes of the public, it's still a High School dance involving High School students. It should be chaperoned by High School staff.

Let's face it, the gymnasium,

however beautifully decorated, is still a blah site for such an event. Students today, with their ties and tails; corsetline gowns, orchid corsages and stretch limousines, want more than this. If the administration won't approve, they'll go it alone.

And this is what they plan to do. At this stage, there's no turning back.

We urge the administration to reverse its decision, show a little faith and make the Prom a 'night of nights' for all.

Can't win

The 'threat' of an Ontario Municipal Board hearing is bad news for Council.

It represents additional time, additional work and additional expense.

Invariably, the Town endeavors to iron things out, before citizen protests go this far.

Admittedly, many complaints are trivial; a waste of time and money.

To avoid this, pre-OMB reviews are held. If resident 'beefs' appear legitimate, the hearing, in all likelihood, will proceed.

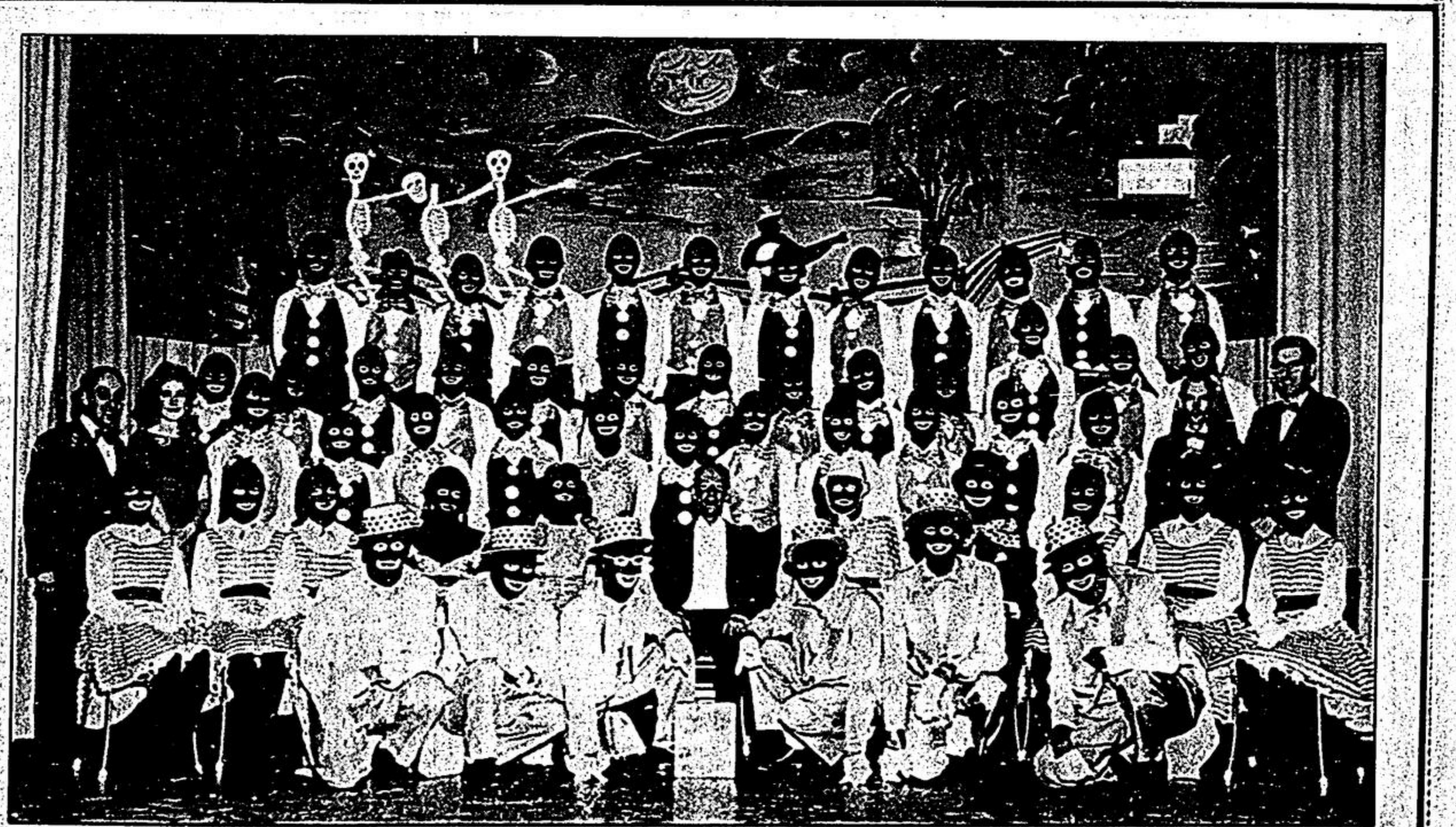
If the petitioners lose, they cover the cost. But even if they win, they're still assessed the expense.

Dollar-wise, this adds up to a no-win situation.

It's grossly unfair.

We say, if the protesters lose, they should pay. But should the complainants emerge victorious, the Town should pay.

The policy should be changed.



Music Mania — the way they were more than a quarter century ago

Back in the early 70's, when Music Mania was organized, the cast was almost entirely black face. Later, the Stouffville United Church Couples Club altered its presentation, thinking it might be considered a form of discrimination. This formal photo was taken on the High School stage

back about 1972. In the centre is Bud Sanderson. On the far left is Cec Hendricks and on the far right, Jim Rehill and Jerry Wolfe. The 1989 edition of Music Mania opens April 27 and continues through April 29.

—Ted Cadieux Photo