

# stouffville comment

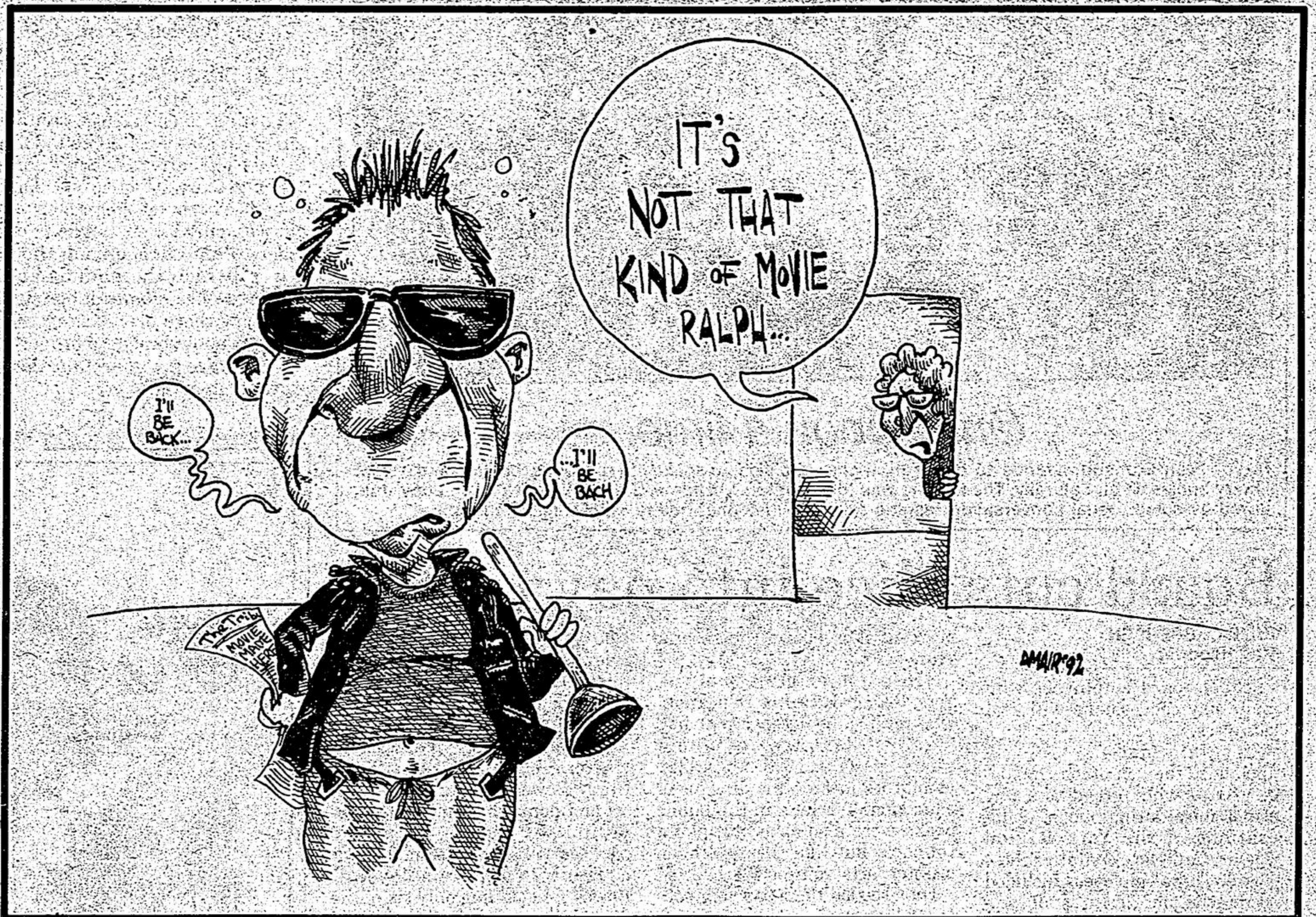
## You ought to be in pictures

Lights, camera, action. Those words could be ringing through the streets of Stouffville, if a movie company decides to film here during the Strawberry Festival this year.

The scouts are out now, looking over our town for possible scenes. The town is expected to pass for Wichita, Kansas, during a country fair.

The *Tribune* has sent its photographs of past Strawberry Festivals to give the producers an idea of what the town is like during festival weekend. Be assured that for star-gazers, there will be plenty to see, as all the principal actors - Kelly McGillis, Treat Williams and Hal Holbrook, will be on site that weekend. There will also be economic benefits. The film crew has to live here for two weeks, bringing added benefits to our local economy.

The town should be proud that a film company would say, "You ought to be in pictures."



## On the hunt for a red-eared slider

One of the stipulations I agreed to when my wife Kim and I were married was that our home would be a haven for a host of animals, a veritable Wild Kingdom, she said.

We began the collection with a cat, added another to keep the first company, and a third who decided she wanted to live with us.

Along the way, we were lured into purchasing a turtle - one of those red-eared models about the size of a quarter you see splashing harmlessly around pet store aquariums.

We had tropical fish for a time, but our lack of knowledge of how an Amazonian river ecosystem worked led to their untimely demise. One of these tiny turtles took up residence in the abruptly-vacated fish tank.

Fluffy, as we sarcastically dubbed her, didn't last long. She wasn't right

from the start, but Kim has always had a soft-spot for the underdog, so she picked the slowest, most placid turtle in the pet store commune. Fluffy bought the farm about six months later, and Kim was so devastated to lose a member of the growing menagerie, she promptly went out and bought two more of the slimy green things. These two have done splendidly. They have grown out of two aquariums; blown two filters with their waste and eat \$14 worth of food every two weeks. They now weigh in at about 10 lbs. apiece.

Last week, disaster struck. Kim emerged from the Turtle Room; ashen. "Sigmund is gone," she said.

"What do you mean, 'gone'?" I asked, annoyed at the prospect of missing the rest of the Simpsons.



MINUTE WITH MAIR

andrew mair

Somehow, the turtle climbed on his sunning shelf, hoisted himself to the top of the tank, pushed aside the lid and tumbled over, dropping four feet to the hardwood floor. We searched the entire house, from stem to stern. We live on the top floor of a triplex, and we have a large deck out back. With a great feeling of dread, we went outside, looking with a flashlight for

signs of blood. With three cats, we didn't think the turtle stood much of a chance despite being heavily armored and weighing more than the three cats combined.

Our worst fear was that they dragged the turtle onto the deck, and as they are wont to do with anything laying around, we believed they pushed it off the deck. Eighteen feet below, I was quite a sight for the neighbors, as I scanned the grass and patio below for shell fragments with my penlight. I checked the neighbor's yard, the street out front and under porches. After two hours of searching, we assumed that our turtle had gone the way of the dinosaur, or had been swallowed up in some Bermuda-trian-

gle like vortex in the aquarium. Kim suggested we retrace our steps, this time thinking like a turtle. With Hercule Poirotian effort, we inched slowly along the floor on all fours, looking for water marks or turtle trails through the dust bunnies. Our sleuthing led us in a straight line to horrors! - the top of the stairs.

I ran down the two flights to the closet at the bottom. The door was slightly ajar. I pried it open, dug through the shoes, boxes and umbrellas, and there, hiding behind a ski boot and a frisbee was Sigmund.

A little worse for wear, but still alive and kicking, Kim has taken to calling the errant beast our Teenage Mutant Missing Turtle.

## Grade 8 not the time for tuxedos

Around this time of year, many parents are vainly trying to inject a sense of proportion into Grade 8 graduation.

As a foreigner who has never experienced this phenomenon, except in relation to university, I was stunned two years ago to see kids of 13 and 14 all torted up in tuxes and gowns, just to celebrate their departure from elementary school.

This year, alas, I am gaining first-hand knowledge of the rituals of '90s style graduation. I am assured by friends, however, that the present state of affairs is a relatively recent occurrence. Today's grade school graduation seems less a student send-off than an exercise in one-upmanship. Parents who are financially strapped are under enormous pressure to purchase or rent expensive dresses and tuxedos which will be worn once, then left to gather dust in a closet.



KATE'S CORNER

kate gilderdale

And parents like myself, who hope that leaving Grade 8 is just a stepping stone to greater achievements, would prefer to keep the whole thing low-key, with the emphasis on school and family.

If our children do graduate from high school, and even university, how will they celebrate those milestones? By renting SkyDome?

Some kids privately admit they're not ready for a Hollywood style graduation, but are loath to voice their feelings in front of their peers for fear of ridicule.

Unfortunately, parents who resist the pressure to elevate Grade 8 graduation to such unrealistic heights often end up risking a serious confrontation with their children, whose need for peer acceptance is crucial at this time in their lives.

Placing limits on kids is out of fashion, but maybe it's time parents took a stand instead of making their offspring believe that they can have it all.

It's parents, after all, who are responsible for creating these expectations in the first place.

Most adults know from experience that you can't always get what you want, and the sooner our children learn that, the better they will be able to cope with the realities of life.

Thirteen and 14-year-olds have years ahead of them to party, but childhood is fleeting. Perhaps we shouldn't be quite so eager to hasten its demise.

## Stouffville Tribune

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