

# Hot dog sale teaches lesson in business

It had all the makings of a major entrepreneurial disaster, especially in these days of slim profit margins.

The materials were lined up, the labor force was signed on, and the target market established. The exact time of the venture was decided, and prices were set based upon total costs.

What couldn't be anticipated was an honest pricing mistake by a major supplier resulting in an unexpected 35 per cent cost increase. It was too late to adjust prices, as advance orders had already been placed.

Such was the predicament a Grade 5/6 class at Markham's Roy H. Crosby Public School found itself in earlier this week. The class, taught by my wife Susan, had planned a hot dog barbecue at noon Tuesday as a means of raising funds to be put towards a class outing in June.

The mix-up in prices was just one of several obstacles that set out to sabotage the undertaking.

It turned out the hot dog buns originally lined up were unavailable. An emergency call placed to a local bake shop just minutes before closing time Monday night succeeded in lining up a commitment of 11 dozen freshly baked buns for the following morning.

But they couldn't possibly be ready for 8 a.m., the time Susan heads off to work. So naturally, I was commandeered to make the bun run.

As the barbecue warmed up, we discovered the jumbo-sized wieners had remained frozen, despite sitting on Susan's classroom floor all morning.

This meant more cooking time, with the



From Where I Live

Bruce Stapley

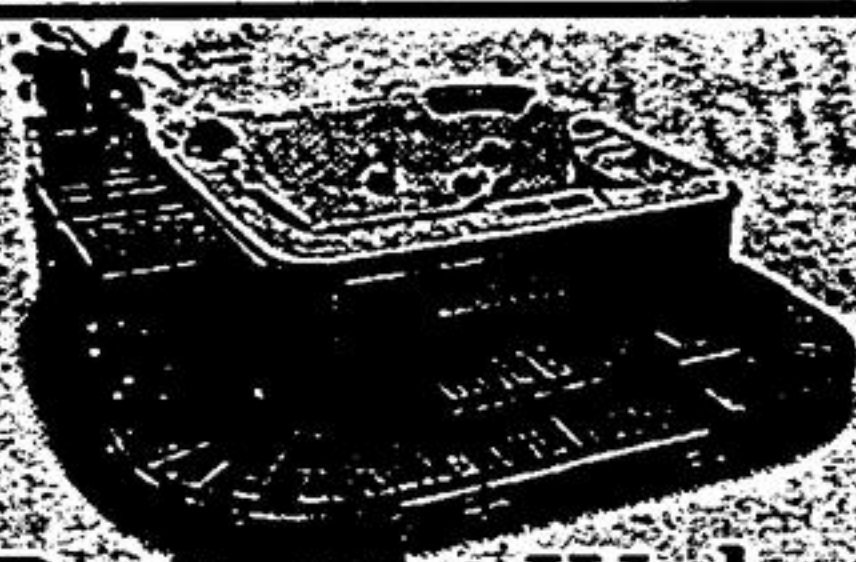
onslaught of hungry students and staff due in a matter of minutes. With 75 of the 132 jumbo dogs pre sold, and a capacity of only 30 or so wieners on the barbecue at a time, there was going to be a crunch for sure.

And if things went as hoped and the extra 57 hot dogs found takers, it was going to make things more hectic.

We also failed to take into account that the buns, being freshly baked and not store-bought, hadn't been pre-sliced. Off to the staff lunch room ran a student in search of a couple of knives. He returned with several, and a small committee of students set about the task of slicing the buns.

The expected lineups materialized, but we were somehow able to keep things going just smoothly enough to prevent a major food riot.

Meanwhile, new orders began to appear, and there was concern we might run out. There was talk of mutiny among the staff when they were told by my wife they would be the last served. When the dust settled and all the bills had been paid, the hot dog sale realized a profit of around \$55. Whoever said our education system was out of touch with the real world?



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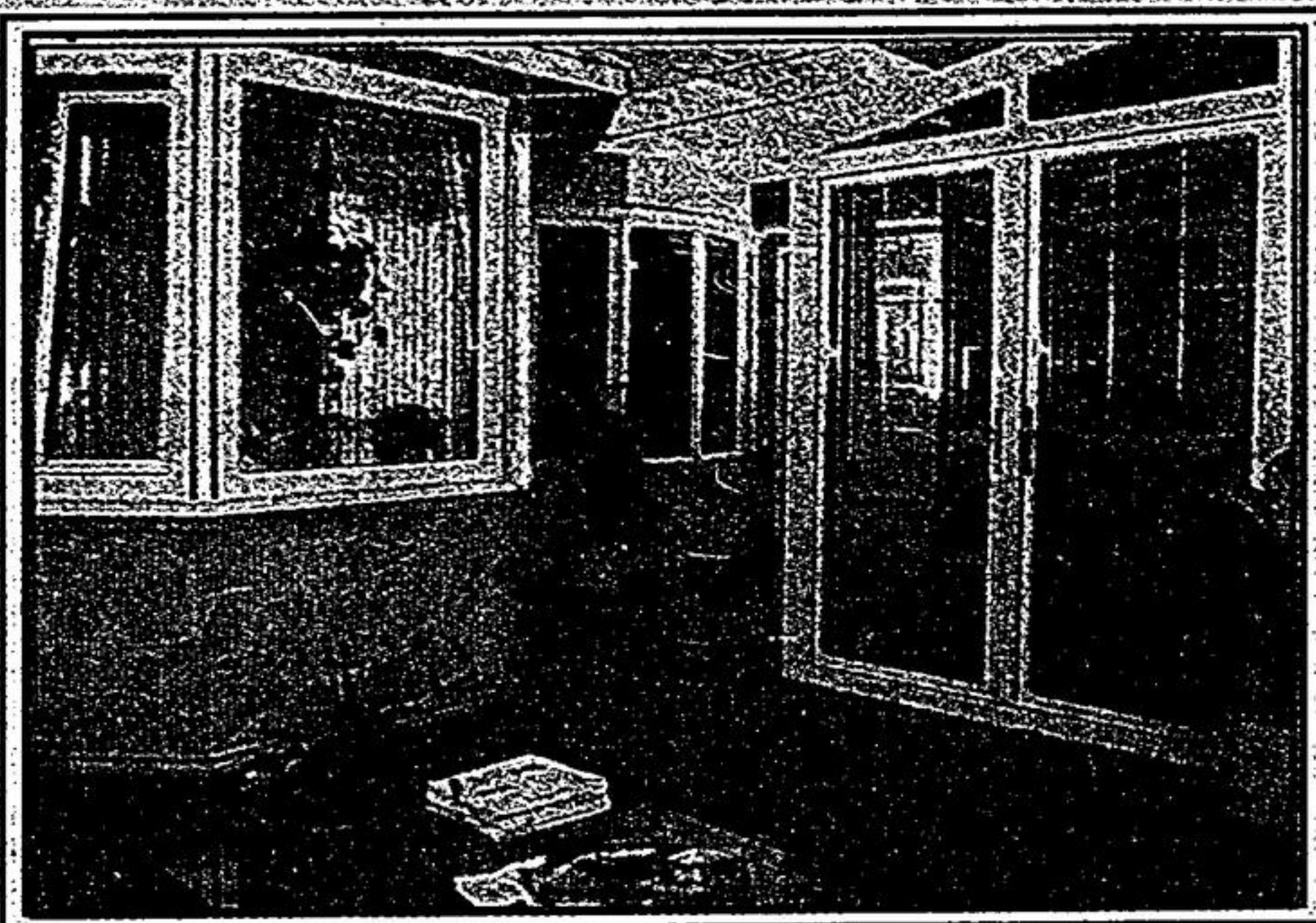
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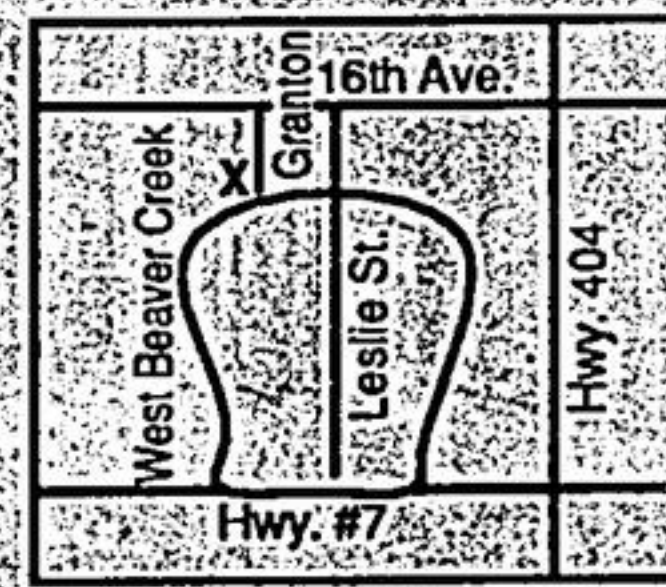


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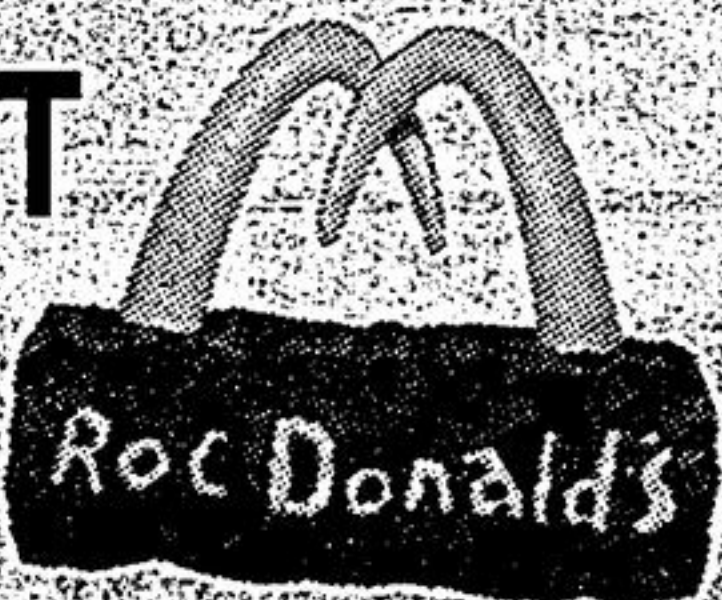


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