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EDITORIAL

Take an active role in child's education

Education Week celebrates all that is good about Canadian schools.

And despite a recent teachers' strike, and the continual discord between the Ontario government and the teachers, there is plenty to feel good about in our classrooms.

Our nation has one of the highest literacy rates in the world, and our post-graduate students are among the most highly-sought in the world.

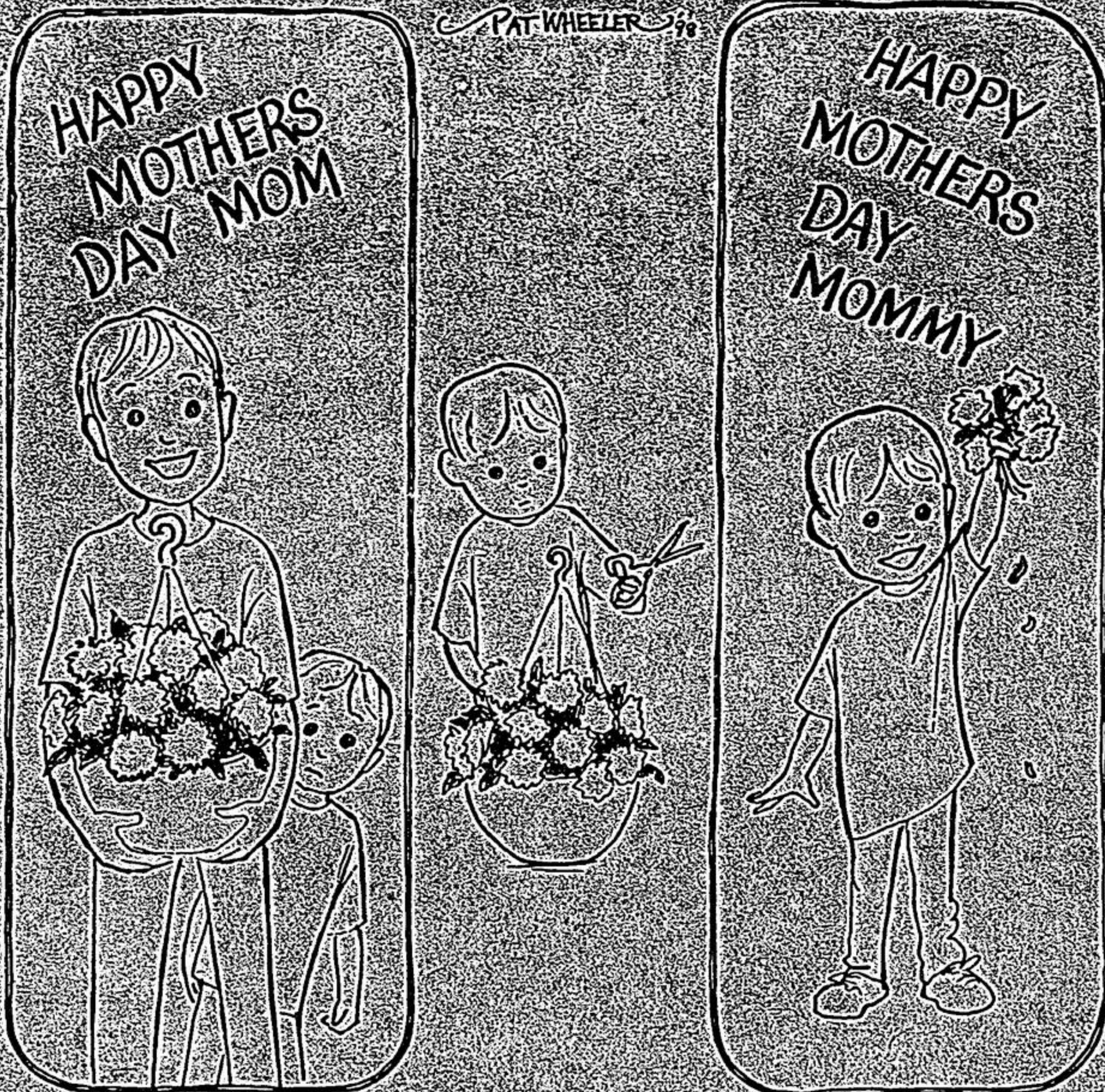
We are making strides in attracting women in the direction of the sciences, technology and engineering. And while the teachers don't like the idea, standardized testing at least gives us an idea where we stand.

Education Week is a great idea, because it brings the system to the foreground. We are made more keenly aware of what is going on in the lives of our children.

Parents should take this time, as another school year draws to a close, to speak with educators in the community. Parents should make themselves a part of the process. It also helps to improve the education system through active involvement.

It is important that parents take the time to visit local schools, talk with the teachers and principals and hear what they have to say.

If parents want the best for their children, it is imperative to take the time to be a part of their education.



Hey, Vandorf, get off 'fog mountain'

Dear Editor,

Whew! After reading last Saturday's *Weekender* (April 25) I was almost afraid that Tuesday's edition would see the paper renamed the "Vandorf Tribune".

"Who is driving the bus?" (The headline on Elaine Stewart's column.) A better question might be "Who is greasing the wheels?"

While I admire the determination of the VRA and the Vandorf community in creating a strong voice towards the future planning of its community, it should be pointed out that there are

many more taxpaying residents in Ward 1 than those living in Vandorf. Reading pages 6 and 7 of Saturday's paper may have lead one to think otherwise.

I see, after having lost the Ward 1 council seat to Steve Pliakes, that Frank Martino has now styled himself as the "Vicar of Vandorf".

Here's a free tip, Frank — the majority of taxpaying residents (at least those here in Ward 1 who were eligible to vote) didn't support a self-serving agenda which focused primarily on the needs and desires of Vandorf residents

LETTERS

only.

And since I'm on the subject of community priorities, there's another thing I'd like to point out:

Tram whistles are sounded in areas where there are level crossings without barriers in place for a simple reason — public safety.

While this may disturb your precious sleep somewhat, there are many that travel through these level crossings late

at night or in the wee hours of the morning, some weary after long shifts. While we are blessed to have the forest here, combined with the weather on "fog mountain" it makes for poor visibility much of the time.

Believe it or not, there are a surprising number of people who, after a decade or so of working in factories in the music industry like my husband and I, or simply due to aging, have experienced a certain degree of hearing loss.

To silence these whistles to any extent would be, in my opinion, courting potential disaster — and I applaud Elaine Stewart for having recognized the danger in this.

I suggest that anyone who feels their comfort is being undermined by the very brief sounding of the trains' whistles invest in a pair of sponge earplugs. They cost less than a dollar, are extremely comfortable to wear (yes, even to sleep, as years of coping naps on flights and in four buses will attest to) and are more than effective in blocking out extraneous noise.

Let's use the limited community funds we have at our disposal for the benefit of all residents.

Education, safety, services, future growth and environmental protection should be at the forefront.

Recreation and beautification are certainly important, but not at the expense of the former.

If you need a sidewalk to enjoy the rugged beauty that is all around us, move to High Park.

You'll soon see that increasing public access brings its own problems — muggers, gangs, hookers and drug dealers are just a few of them.

Shauna Kennedy
Ballantrae

No twist of fate is as cruel as that which takes away a child

There are times when even the most compassionate words and deeds are inadequate to ease the devastating agony of loss.

How do you offer comfort in circumstances so unbearable that the usual platitudes and expressions of reassurance seem almost an insult to those who are suffering? Tragedy does not discriminate between the deserving and the innocent, as last week's events in Stouffville so painfully illustrate. No one is to blame, yet everyone involved will be affected by the outcome for the rest of their lives.

The anguish in the community for the two families was palpable, where ever you went. Everyone, both those who knew them and those whom they had never met, wanted so desperately to help, but what could they do or say in their sad awareness that some things can never be made better?

The death of a child is something



Kate's
Corner

Kate Gilderale

every parent instinctively dreads from the moment they hold their baby in their arms for the first time. And for the first time, they find themselves overwhelmed with a love which is generous rather than self-centred, and the knowledge that they would do anything, even give their own life, to protect their child.

No twist of fate is as cruel as that which takes away a child from loving parents, leaving them to live the rest of their lives with a gap which can never be filled. What happened last week was just such a twist of fate, one which has also left friends and neighbours

deeply saddened, and struggling to articulate their feelings to the grieving families.

Those within the community but outside the families' immediate circle are torn between offering condolences and invading a very private grief. Prayers, sorrow, empathy and love can never be enough, but they are all the rest of us have to give.

In his poem *On Another's Sorrow*, William Blake wrote:

Can I see another's woe
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief
And not seek for kind relief?
Think thou canst not sigh a sigh
And thy maker is not by,
Think thou canst not weep a tear
And thy maker is not near?
Oh he gives to us his joy
That our grief he may destroy
Till our grief is fled and gone
He doth sit by us and moan.

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