

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
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EDITORIAL

Someone must know about horse shooting

A lot of questions are being asked about last week's brutal shootings of two horses at a Stouffville boarding farm.

The incident captured the attention of newspaper, radio and television media, not to mention the police and Ontario's animal protection society.

Someone apparently walked into a barn at Bloomington Road and Hwy. 48 in the early morning hours on Dec. 1.

That person then pointed a shotgun through the stall bars and shot one horse in the cheek, and another square between the eyes. (Attempts to save both horses at the animal hospital at Guelph University failed; both horses had to be destroyed.)

Even if the shooter managed to enter the barn undetected, and then walk or drive away, wouldn't someone have heard the shots, spotted the vehicle or even noticed if a gun had been fired once that person returned home?

People are wondering whether the shooter just walked in and shot the first two horses he spotted, or if he knew which animals he wanted to harm.

People are also wondering why anyone would intentionally shoot two horses without motivation or what, if any, motivation there could possibly be.

There is no mention of either horse being heavily insured, and the owners are devastated by the crime.

The horses were owned by boarders, one a 12-year-old boy from North York, and the other a veterinarian from Schomberg.

Police said they have interviewed a number of people and may have a suspect soon. To help with the investigation, the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals posted a \$10,000 reward for information leading to an arrest.

The shooter, it seems, would have had to have known that Greenwinds Farms was not occupied on a regular basis, but leased to a horse trainer who doesn't live on the grounds.

The senseless shootings have horrified the local horse industry, which is wondering whether other barns will be targeted next.

The public is shocked and disgusted by the notion that someone could walk up to a defenseless animal and pump a slug into its face.

Is there some sick, twisted ritualistic pleasure behind this act?

Hopefully, the \$10,000 reward will prompt someone to talk to police about what they know, because someone must know something about this crime.

It's just a matter of time before the culprit is caught.

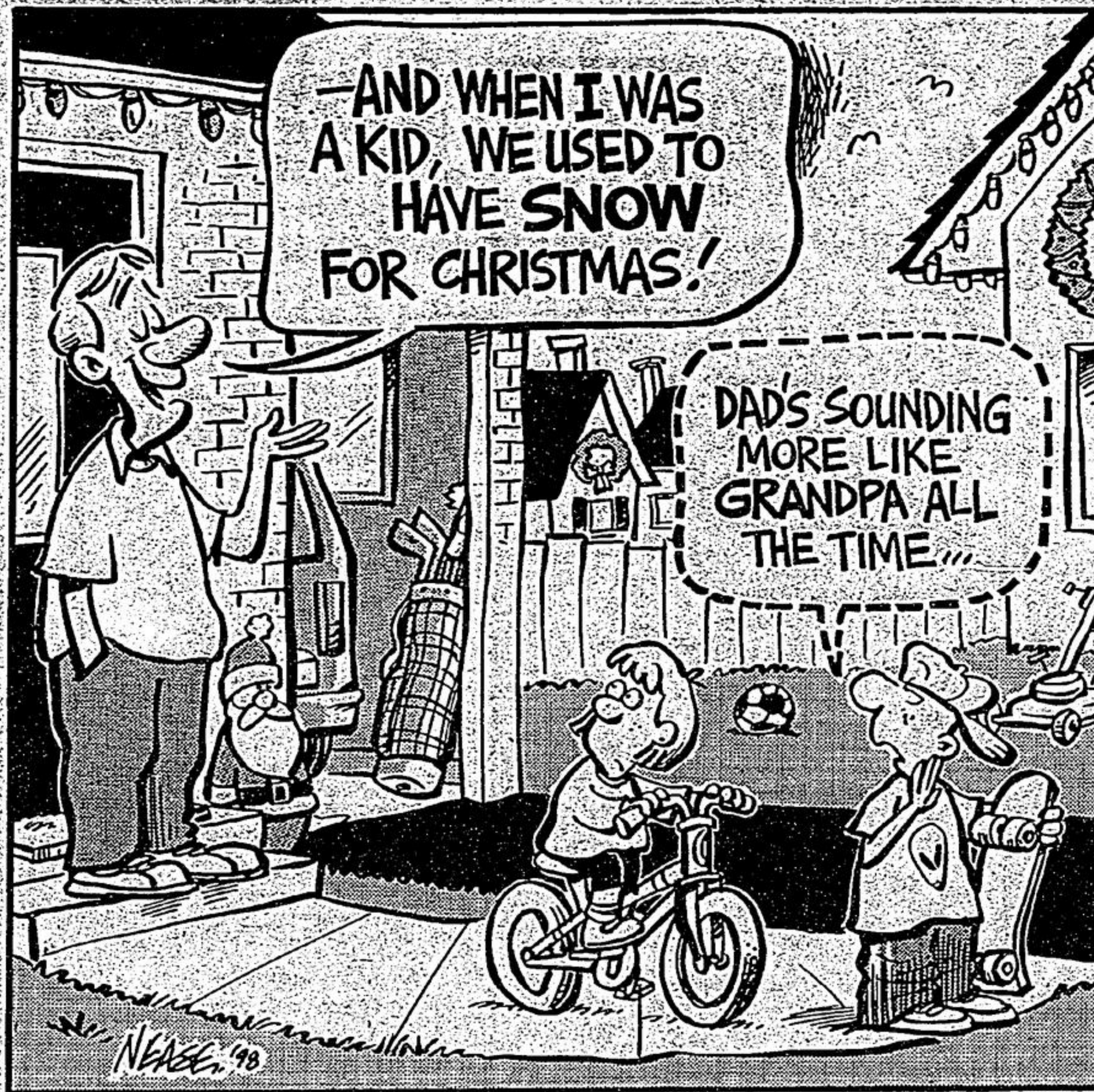
CHEERS & JEERS

■ **CHEERS:** To the provincial government for recognizing the need for more money at York Region's Children's Aid Society. Hopefully, with the province's injection of \$1.82 million to the society, the CAS will be better equipped to protect children in need.

■ **JEERS:** To the culprits who smashed windows in a private school portable in Markham — not once, but twice, in the past three weeks. It's this kind of crime that makes people wonder what it going wrong with society and its youth.

■ **CHEERS:** To York Region for spending some cash to help abused women, hungry residents and families in trouble. The \$60,000 fund to set up a social services database is a positive step to keeping the region's citizens in need from falling through the cracks.

OPINION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Martin made right decision

Finance Minister Paul Martin should be commended for making a tough decision to disallow bank mergers.

In making his decision he not only listened to bank chairpersons and Bay Street people, but to ordinary Canadians, too.

And the voice of Canadians weighed heavily towards his decision.

In a real democracy, public opinion counts most and our Ontario Premier Mike Harris should take note of this.

SURESH PATEL
MARKHAM

Lions celebrate success

Lions president Paul Laking and spouse Anne Clark hosted the Lions annual Christmas celebration Dec. 14 at Latham Hall. About 150 Lions, friends and family joined for an evening of fun and fellowship.

Entertainment was provided by The Barons of Barbershop led by Stouffville's own Jim Rehill.

A donation was made to their favourite charity, Harmonize for Speech, by the local service club.

Lion Brian Blenkhorn of Manitoba Street, a past president and secretary of the club, was honoured with a Judge Brian Stephenson Fellowship. The award named for past international president judge Brian Stephenson of Calgary, Alberta has never before been presented to a Stouffville Lion.

Proceeds from this fellowship go directly to The Lion's Foundation of

Canada in Oakville, which operates Canine Vision Canada, the organizations' dog training facility for seeing eye, hearing ear and special skills dogs.

Region chairperson James Noble of Newmarket was guest speaker, thanking the Stouffville club for its continued support of people in need, not just at Christmas, but throughout the year.

The club members were pleased to hear the Lions of Stouffville are considered to be the club others should model themselves after.

A donation was made to Markham Stouffville Hospital in Noble's name.

TOM WINTERS
PUBLICITY CHAIR
THE LIONS CLUB OF STOUFFVILLE

Harris causing resentment

If you govern by order of decree the way Premier Mike Harris is doing with nurses, city amalgamation and now teachers, then you cause resentment, disruptions and, ultimately, chaos.

Yet Harris' intentions of putting the financial house in order is alright. But how he is doing this is another question.

As long as we subscribe to a democracy, we must make the effort of getting together with people and organizations and thrashing out the need for savings.

Without unanimity, without judicial respect for common agreement, we slide close to dictatorial behaviour.

Then all the talk of raising standards and common sense revolutions is null and void.

G. OTTO
STOUFFVILLE



Debora Kelly

Teachers' talents need to be used in the classroom

You'll see them patrolling the hallways and parking lots at two Catholic high schools, Cardinal Carter in Aurora and St. Joan of Arc in Maple — and they can make arrests, if needed.

When a change in scheduling that lengthened lunch periods to 72 minutes left the York Region separate school board staring at nearly 400 unsupervised students, the security guards were brought in under a pilot project.

The experiment has been so successful — at least four other principals are clamouring for a piece of the guard pie — the board may put them in all nine of its high schools.

The only drawback has been the negative connotation of the term "security guard" for the personnel who are receiving \$12 an hour for four hours each day "to provide a presence in the school to support the school staff".

Vaughan Trustee Tina Rotondi Molinari has suggested they be called "adult supervisors".

"When you call them security guards, parents tend to get their backs up," Molinari said.

Whatever they are called, the bottom line is we shouldn't be paying teachers to act as lunchtime supervisors and hallway monitors.

Teachers clearly told us how overworked they are during the recent labour disruption, so let's ensure their education and talents are used in the most appropriate manner — in the classroom.

Let's take it a step farther.

When staff writer Jennifer Brown spent the day with two public high school teachers, she observed they were using precious "spare time" (a.k.a. the hallowed prep time) to attend to such chores as photocopying — as much as 60 minutes at a stretch — tracking down audio-visual equipment and inputting grades into a computer. No wonder teachers have to take home marking.

And what a waste of their skills.

Why not hire others to do those tasks? The unions for school support staff and teachers will be quick to answer that question for me, more anxious to protect/expand their territories than protect/expand the quality of education.

Our beleaguered and challenged education system desperately needs a fresh approach to some of its problems — and kudos to the Catholic board for its sensibility.

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