

Getting in Ted's space

I'm not Ted.

The distinguished Mr. Brown, who has occupied this space for the past five or six decades, is currently recovering from surgery and is likely to be absent from our newsroom for the next 6-8 weeks.

So, in our erstwhile photographer's absence, I've opted to fill his slot since the line of volunteers to do so is still waiting to form.

While I have been mistaken for Ted on several occasions while walking through the mall (we both have grey hair, wear glasses and have a preference for facial fuzz) there are distinct differences you, the good reader, should know about us.

Ted loves anything mechanical and if it has horsepower (not the four-legged kind) all the better.

The most complicated mechanical thing I use is the electric can opener.

Ted loves his vehicles, especially his "Little Red Rocket"—a red Ford Probe. He washes it religiously and, I believe, gets monthly Molly Maid service for it.

For me, cars are simply a way to get from Point A to Point B and if I remember how many doors my current car has I consider it a bonus. Also, odds are good you might find part of a lunch from last September under the front seat if you look hard enough.

Mr. B. has a spouse he dubs "The Sidekick".

I have my beloved "Wifey" of 29 years. (Please, no hate mail. If she can live with nickname then you shouldn't raise a stink.)

Ted fixes things...constantly. He builds sheep pens, tinkers with motors, does home repairs. Hell, give him a hammer, a pair of pliers and two nails and he'd likely build a space shuttle.

I have a simple solution for home repairs—the Yellow Pages.

Ted's a gentleman farmer who spends hours each week in the barn.

As a kid I used to play in my best friend's barn, get covered in hay and pigeon poop and come down with allergies so severe my mother often



John McGhie

thought my next breath would be my last. That was the extent of my farm life.

Ted and I both love music... but that's where the similarity ends. He likes Jim Cuddy, Sarah MacLachlan, Gordon Lightfoot, et al—you know, the stuff that doubles as sleeping pills.

Give me Alice Cooper, Rush and Green Day. If the music you listen to can't cause a nosebleed, I figure it's not worth listening to.

Ted's no fan of squirrels, rabbits, raccoons or other wild critters.

On the other hand, I spent the past fall and winter hand-feeding Peter, a wild rabbit who made nightly visits to our front yard, and the trio of raccoons who made their presence known for a couple months. I won't mention the dozens of squirrels Wifey and I feed daily nor Sam and Ethel, two mallard ducks who have visited our neighbourhood each spring for the past six years. I did, however, draw the line at feeding the coyote that showed up on our front lawn in January.

Ted has Hamish, a border collie who knows his place in the pecking order in the Brown household.

I have Rusty, a floppy-eared schnoodle who has made sure I know my place in the household pecking order.

Despite being waaaaaaaaay older than me, Ted has a steeltrap (or should I say photographic?) memory, easily recalling events of years, or even decades, past.

Me? I have a hard time remembering even the most recent events...like, why the hell isn't Ted writing this?

—John McGhie can be reached at jmcghie@independentfreepress.com

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