

We all have an elusive 'squirrel' in our sights

Chasing shiny objects can come with a price tag, laments Ted Brown



TED BROWN
Column

You all know Hamish, our trusty border collie who I've written about in the past.

He spends most of his time in the house with me, but when I'm out, he takes over patrolling in the barn.

Hamish is pretty set in his ways. When we go from the house to the barn and back, he follows the same route, usually marking his territory to remind any wayward coyotes that he is around and they are trespassing on 'his turf.'

But no matter how regimented Hamish might be, there is one distraction that he can't resist.

We refer to it with one word - SQUIRREL!

Yup, rain or shine, heat wave or cold snap, any hint of a squirrel on the ground beside a certain tree, and he bolts out the door like a bat outta hell. He heads to that tree at warp speed, as Mr. Squirrel casually makes his way up to the safety of the upper limbs.

Sometimes in the evening, when it's dark and there isn't even a squirrel in sight - Hamish still does his mega-speed squirrel attack manoeuvre, on the off chance there's one sitting there. (Personally, I've never seen a squirrel out in the darkness, but I guess Hamish is hopeful.)

The Sidekick and I

chuckle when Hamish goes through his distraction routine. We often just say 'squirrel' and both of us understand the joke.

Years ago the 'squirrel' syndrome was illustrated in the animated movie *Over the Hedge* where one of the characters, Hammy the hyperactive squirrel was portrayed with Steve Carell's voice. I often think of our own Hammy when Hamish goes after them.

The point is, to the best of my knowledge, I don't think he's ever caught one. He might have, I've just never witnessed it.

Over the years, I've noticed the squirrel syndrome is not limited to our Hamish.

Studies on various species have proven that the male and female in those species are stimulated by different items.

Male birds are often more brightly coloured than their female counterparts, to attract them to propagate the species.

Some fish are attracted to shiny items and as a result end up on the hook.

Having said that, the Sidekick, like many females, is also attracted to shiny items - the only difference is I'm the one who ends up on the hook.

If we go past a jewelry store, shoe store, a home

centre or a hardware store and the Sidekick slows down - I just say 'squirrel.'

It doesn't make any difference, we still end up in the store but I had the satisfaction of getting my jab in.

And like Hamish, she doesn't always 'catch' her squirrel - just admires it.

Now before all those females out there reading this prepare to ride me outta town on a rail, I'm very quick to add that the male species are equally distracted (or maybe even more), but with one slight difference.

We're subtle and try our very best to be cool.

I'm not saying we guys pull it off, but dammit we try.

Throughout life, there are countless 'squirrels' that grab the attention of testosterone-laced males, hopelessly locking them in their grip.

That 'squirrel' could be a car, a truck, motorcycle, snowmobile, ATV, tools, sports equipment, game tickets . the list goes on.

We all have a 'squirrel' in our sights, but I'm not sure that's all bad.

We go through life working to make ends meet, providing for those who depend on us, and in general meet our commitments.

But once in a while, we all need to enjoy an indulgence, as a personal reward to ourselves and chase down that 'squirrel' - be it 'bling' or a man toy.

And once in a while, ya also gotta catch it.

- Ted Brown is a freelance writer for the Independent and Free Press and can be reached at tedbit@hotmail.com.

THE WAY WE WERE



Esqueing Historical Society/Photo

In this 1932 photo, a Buick sedan is parked in front of "Maplehurst" at 327 Maple Ave. Built circa 1865, it served as a staff house for Smith & Stone from 1944 to 1952. (Smith & Stone manufactured electrical wiring devices until they closed in 1992). Maplehurst was later owned by J.P.S. Mills from 1967 to 1989, then sold to Bill Yundt, and demolished in 1990. Text courtesy of Heritage Halton Hills.

OPINION

PC Party has this reader's overwhelming support

To the editor:

I have no idea what Premier Kathleen Wynne sees in her crystal ball for the future of Ontario and its taxpayers, but I have a darned good idea what Ontario's taxpayers see in theirs.

With the resignation of Progressive Conservative leader Patrick Brown last Thursday, Wynne and NDP's Andrea Horvath wasted no time taking advantage of the opportunity to lambast Mr. Brown. It

has always been quite typical for the Liberals to deliberately deface someone without doing their research. Or doing any research on anything before they implement it.

Would anyone in their right mind vote for a government that has demonstrated the ignorance and arrogance that the Liberals have tortured us with? One thing is for certain, with Mr. Brown's sudden departure and whoever is chosen to lead the PC Party

they have got my overwhelming support. By ousting the present premier it will show that your average taxpaying, hard-working Joe, is more intelligent and competent than the Liberals ever anticipated. I challenge and encourage every Ontario citizen to give it some serious thought regarding the present situation we are in, and the dishonesty and lies we have endured these past four years.

Jerry Newton

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