

# Yankee

I guess you could say I'm not much of a believer of fate. It's a word that, too often over simplifies life and diminishes the decisions we make. There's just a little too much convenience attached to the word fate, especially when it comes to life-altering events, like the death of a dog.

Fate allows for an instant explanation for the timing of his departure. It implies that there are much larger forces at work and that maybe his soul was needed elsewhere. And although I do believe that, fate will never absolve me of the guilt I feel about not being there for him when he needed me most.

See, Yankee was there for us for nearly 17 years. From the times he'd lick tears of sorrow off our faces, to his happy trot to the car greeting us when we'd come home. His love was unconditional, his timetable, completely flexible. He never complained about anything... ever.

Yankee came into my life on October 15, 1988. He was six months old at the time. A few months earlier my radio partner, Howard Glassman and I came across a chilling advertisement in the Montreal Gazette. The ad was designed to shock and it did. In it, the SPCA revealed that unless pet adoptions increased dramatically, between 60,000 and 70,000 animals would be destroyed in the coming year. At the time, neither one of us owned a pet but were both huge dog lovers. So, not only would we each adopt a dog, we'd convince the promotions department at the radio station to broadcast an Adopt-a-Pet day during our 6 to 9am slot. Our on-location show at the SPCA turned out to be an overwhelming success and led to hundreds of new adoptions,

Including a scared, little Golden Retriever named Tigre.

Don't ask me why I changed his name to Yankee, heck I'm a Red Sox fan. It just suited him, I guess. His people parents were moving from Montreal, where I was living at the time, to New Brunswick and they couldn't take him with them. What was probably a very sad moment for them ended up being one of the most wonderful events of my life.

Yankee didn't start out as the angel, I remember in his final days. He was quite a handful. When I count the number of articles that went clean through his system, I'm surprised he didn't pack it in years ago. He ate socks, scarves, gloves, sunglasses, pillows, balloons, mascara pencils, Kleenex, tennis ball fuzz, furniture, doors, football laces, shoelaces, paper plates and cat litter. He also got me into my share of trouble back then.

One day around Christmas my wife Julie was waiting for me when I got home from work. "Oink, oink!" she said. Puzzled, I asked her what she was talking about. "You know exactly what I'm talking about piggly wiggly. If I'd have known you liked Ferrero Rocher chocolates that much I would have bought two boxes."

"I didn't eat any Ferrero Rocher chocolates," I said. "Well then, how is it that the box is empty and all of the little

# Jeff Lumby's view from the country

gold foil wrappers are gone?" she asked. I said, "I don't know, but I didn't eat any of them." "Ok, whatever you say..." and "oink, oink!" were the final words out of her mouth as she left the room.

It took us about a day to discover who the chocolate thief was. The evidence was overwhelming. Scattered all over the back yard were 20 or 30 little, foil wrappers. It looked like Yosemite Sam had struck gold back there. To this day I have no idea how he managed to extract all the chocolates from that box without being detected. At that time he was crated when

we weren't around so he must have planned his offensive while we were there. On the bright side, it did make the clean up a lot easier what with the gold beacons marking the scoop zones so well.

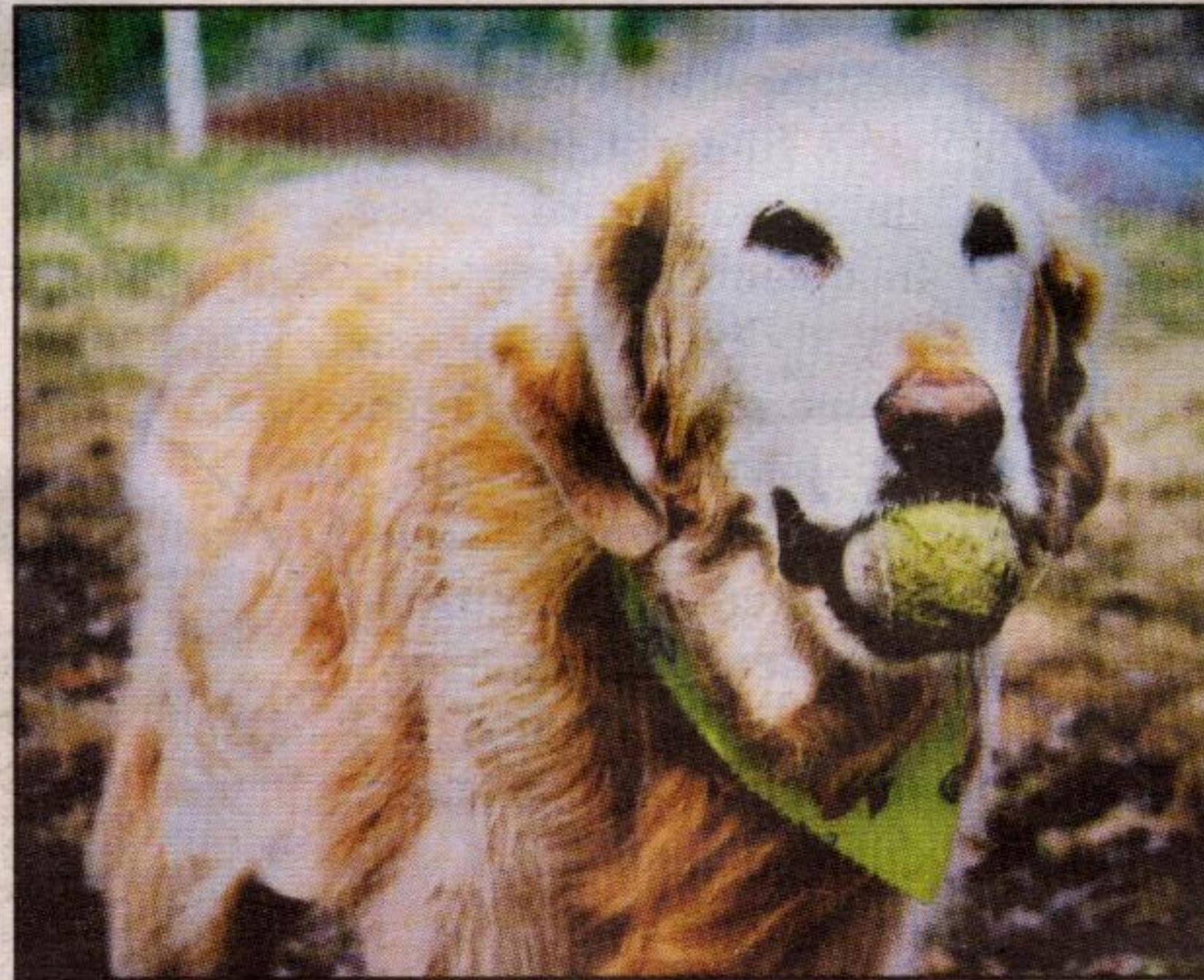
The chocolate saga, however, pales in comparison to the corn roast incident. Just prior to moving from Montreal to Ontario, Julie and I thought it might be nice to host a corn roast out at our place since we lived in the country. We invited friends and colleagues and thought we had everything looked after. There was the rented corn roaster that came complete with a propane tank and giant boiler. We had all kinds of food and beverages, and our location was a great

spot for a party. What we forgot to account for was the sun setting. With no street lights in our area it got incredibly dark at night. And that was good news for Yankee. At about 10:30 I hear my General Manager yell, "Lumby, do something about your dog!" Because my GM chose to wear an argyle vest and bowtie to an outdoor corn roast, I didn't take his plea seriously. Then I begin to hear everything from laughter to panic. By the light of the flame on the corn roaster I can vaguely see my dog humping the bejeez out of my program director's son.

Now, I'm not talking about a harmless little leg hump. NO. Somehow my dog had maneuvered this poor kid so his face is buried in the sand, his butt is in the air and Yankee is wheelin' and dealin'. It wasn't pretty. And try as you might, it's a little difficult convincing a parent that a dog-hump isn't sexual when Scooter's face is caked in sand, his jeans are ripped and Yankee's having a smoke in the garage.

Together, Julie and I probably have enough Yankee stories to fill this paper. Our entire life together has included this beautiful little companion, so I expect the grieving period to take a while, as it should. Towards the end, Yankee's vision and hearing began to fail him. His nose helped him get around the property and for most situations that was enough. That's why it wasn't the truck driver's fault. Yankee just didn't realize he was that close.

So, the tribe has been whittled down to two dogs, two cats, a couple of deer and 12 really stupid wild turkeys. Someone once told me they'd never have pets because of the hurt their deaths can cause. Well, they were half right. But, I'll take the two or three months of emptiness and sorrow for the 16 years of joy and laughter any day. Goodbye, old friend.



Yankee, after polishing off some cake at his 15th birthday party

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## Waste not, want not

### Halton children to get creative with recycled materials

Individuals who work with Halton children are now able to obtain craft materials, such as fabrics, tubes, wood and foam, at a low cost. Materials that have been donated by various community businesses are now being made available through The Creative Recycling Centre (THRC), an initiative of The Halton Resource Connection.

Ongoing research indicates that providing children with creative experiences is an important element in the positive and healthy development of the children themselves, as well as benefiting their families and communities. People who work with children are encouraged to make use of the Creative Recycling Centre program, as it will provide a cost-effective way of obtaining the raw materials needed for children's craft programs.

The Halton Resource Connection gives individuals who work with children, and the community of Halton and its neighbours, access to equipment and resources for the purpose of enhancing children's programs in the community. THRC is located at 917 Nipissing Road, at the corner of Thompson and Nipissing in Milton. The hours of operation are Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12 - 8 pm and Saturday, 9 am to 1 pm. THRC is run in conjunction with the Regional Municipality of Halton and Milton Community Resource Centre.

For more information, or to donate a product, please contact Ruth Anne Wollaston at 905-875-4600 or visit [www.thrc.ca](http://www.thrc.ca) or [www.region.halton.on.ca](http://www.region.halton.on.ca)

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