

The year in review

Hold on to your socks folks, we might be in for a bumpy ride. It's time to reflect on the year 2004.

For starters both Canada and the U.S. participated in national elections. In the U.S. we learned that the majority of Americans don't share the same moral code as Hollywood. There's a shocker. While Alec Baldwin was threatening (again) to leave the States if Bush was re-elected... Bush was re-elected. Hey Alec, did you ever think that your threat might have given Bush more votes. Even Michael Moore and Dan Rather couldn't swing that one the other way. I guess it's up to Hillary in '08. I've got goosebumps.

Here in Canada we decided... what a minute, what the hell did we decide? That we kind of like Paul Martin, but we also sort of like Stephen Harper and Jack Layton. We like these guys so much we almost gave one of them a mandate. How Canadian. And with same-sex marriage and the legalization of marijuana on the front burner, when will these guys get time for some of the more trivial issues like, oh I don't know, **TERROR**.

For my money the most important election of '04 took place in Afghanistan. Two years ago women were being summarily executed in soccer stadiums, this year they could cast a vote. How do you quantify freedom?

A bunch of people who should never be famous got their 15 minutes in 2004. And in the case of a couple of them, that was about 14 minutes and 59 seconds too much. Topping that list was Paris Hilton. You can imagine my shock when I heard she was featured in a sex video. And I had such high hopes for her single handedly solving the Israeli/Palestinian crisis. Ok Paris, I think we're all done with you now. Here's your

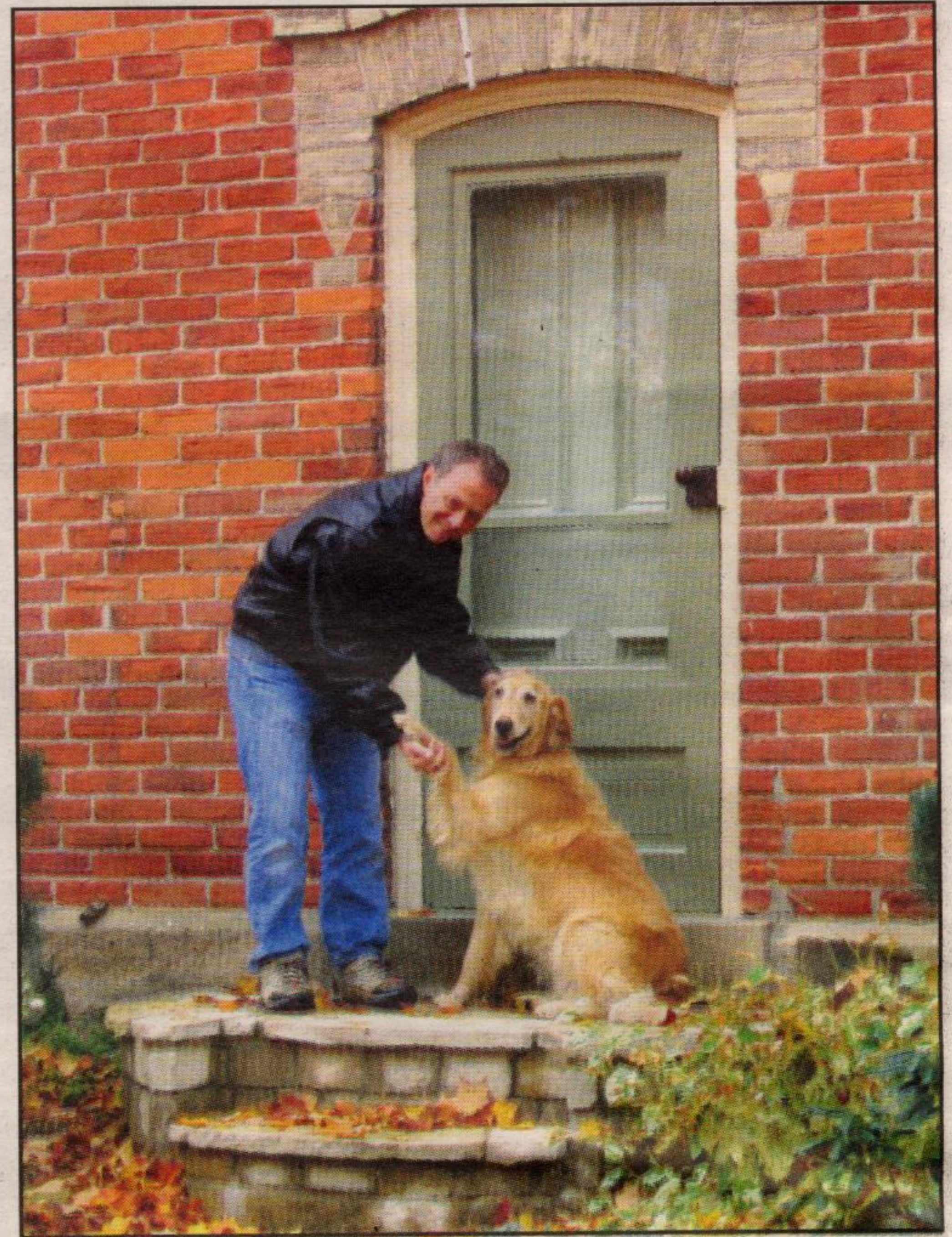
hat, what's your hurry. Off ya go, bye bye.

Hey, if I told you 20 seconds before the jury handed down the verdict in the Nicole Simpson/Ron Goldman trial, that 10 years later Martha Stewart would have done more jail time than "the juice" you'd have had me committed. Hard to believe isn't it. By the way, how's the hunt for the real killers going OJ?

The summer Olympics happened in 2004. Aren't you glad I reminded you. We finished in 19th place with a total of 12 medals. 12!!! That's about a medal every 32 hours if you watched the whole thing. No wonder they kept replaying the opening day fireworks. Once every 32 hours, hell *The Swan* has a better-hit rate than that! Little France and little Italy both almost tripled our medal count. We were beaten by Cuba, the Netherlands and Belarus for pity's sake. On the bright side, we kicked the crap out of Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan.

Sports in general took a beating in 2004. Kobe Bryant was charged with rape but defended himself by saying it was just adultery. Oh, just adultery Kobe, well that's ok then! No harm, no foul. Get outta here ya big knucklehead. He was later heard to say something about wishing he'd have learned from Shaq and just paid the woman off with money and cars. Yes he did say that with his "out loud" voice. I'm sure Shaq and Kobe's wife and pretty much everyone alive found something offensive in that pearl of wisdom. When

Jeff Lumby's view from the country



Jeff is pictured here with his golden retriever, Murphy.

your basketball career begins to wane, you can always work as a diplomat K.B.

In baseball there's a huge scandal arising with performance enhancement drugs. It threatens to put an asterisk in front of all the records being compiled by one of baseball's greatest hitters Barry Bonds. The problem is so pervasive Senator John McCain has proposed legislation against Major League Baseball. To me it's just a classic case of someone trying to get an edge.... I mean everyone knows McCain will be running for president in 08, he's got to find something to hang his hat on.

Forget Baseball and Basketball though, it's Hockey that threatens to become the first professional sport to lose an entire season due to a labour disruption. I've got news for the players. If you don't try and get something signed now, the pie will be a lot smaller in September. Did you know that in a poll of sports fans in the States, hockey finished in 10th place just in front of professional wrestling?

What's in front of it after Baseball, Football, Basketball and Golf? NASCAR? Strongman? Darts? Tiddly Winks? I don't know what bill of goods Bob Goodenow is selling you but you guys are cooked if you don't start acknowledging a hard salary cap. The owners will not sign a deal without it. The way things look right now it appears we'll be without a season, which means only one thing. Between the Super Bowl and the Masters, all we really have to look forward to is the edge of your seat world of curling. Where grown men can be heard yelling **HURRY!!! HURRY HARD!!!!**

One of the most anti-climatic television series in Canadian history occurred this past year on CBC. The countdown to the *Greatest Canadian*. Every week someone would trot out a case for one great Canadian or another. It featured everyone from Pierre Trudeau to Don Cherry. Shania Twain was mentioned but Oscar Peterson wasn't. In the end former Saskatchewan Premier Tommy Douglas was voted the *Greatest Canadian* for his involvement in the creation of Medicare. Medicare...the system that was designed to provide government paid medical care to all Canadians. See now most people think that government paid means "free". But nothing could be farther from the truth. It was reported in the Post last week that the average Canadian making \$35,000.00 a year pays upwards of \$7,000.00 of their tax money to cover the costs of Medicare. To support a system that is responsible for hundreds of thousands of Canadians being without a physician at all. A system that has diagnosis and treatment wait times of over a year in many cases. We honoured the creator of that system with our *Greatest Canadian* award. Holy crap, I wonder what you have to do to be deemed the worst Canadian.

All right! Time to wrap 'er up. I know, I missed a lot of stuff, but how often can one story include Kobe, Martha, Curling and Uzbekistan? Have a great 2005.

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