

Stupid Cupid

In a recent study, 100% of Canadian men polled hate Valentine's Day and all it stands for. The poll was accurate to 100 percentile, plus or minus nothing (because it was conducted solely with guys I know)

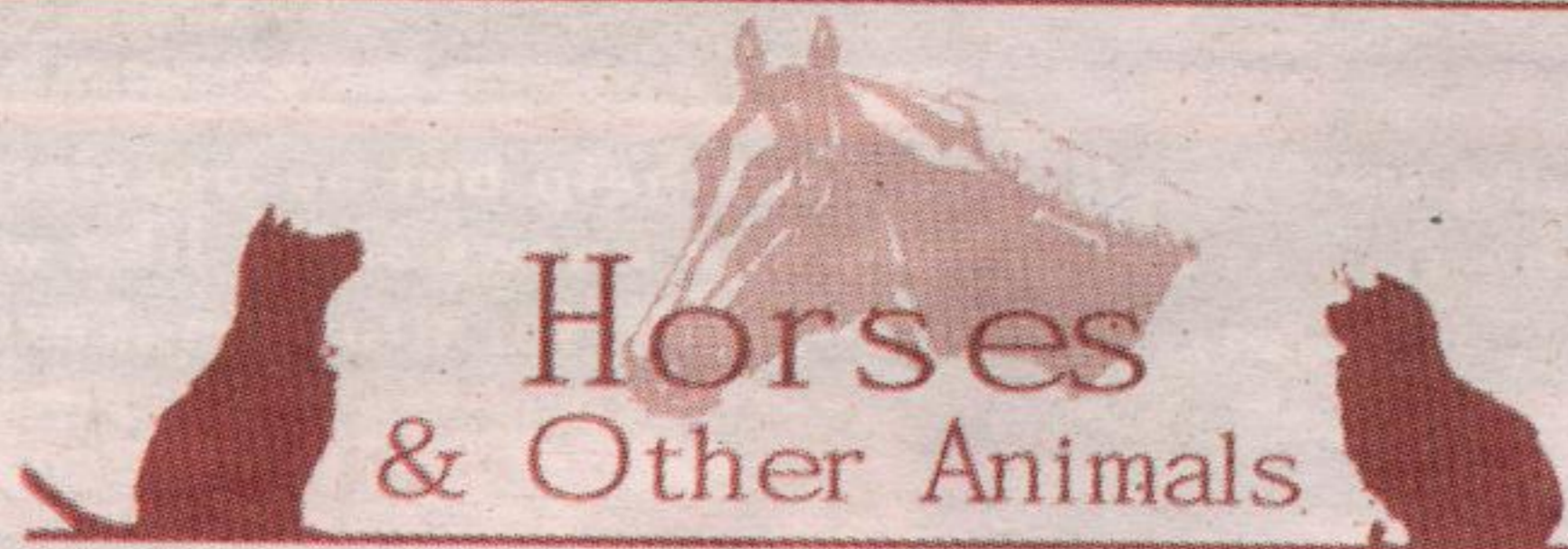
I don't mean to come across as a cupid basher, but let's face it, Valentine's Day could easily be renamed *Chic Day*. There is very little in it for the fellas. And for me personally, anything remotely interesting just flew out the window with the publishing of this article.

Actually one of the main differences between men and women is the importance put on any date of even questionable importance. Women love dates and what each one represents. We've been married almost 16 years (I think) and I still get quizzed regular-

ly. "What is June 8th?" "Ah, the first time I threw up your mom's sausages?" "No, our first date!" "Oooh ya!"

"What is November 3rd?" "The first time I passed wind in front of you?" "No, the first time you said 'I love you'." "Yes, the windy one was November 10th right!" "NOVEMBER 10TH IS MY BIRTHDAY!!!!!!!" "aaaaah, look a deer!!!"

See men just suck with dates. Why do you think I got married in 1990? Easy math. My wife, on the other hand, is a date mensa. And to make matters worse she remembers other forgettable fine points about those dates. You think I get nervous with "the date quiz", you should see me sweat when she starts in with the detailed questions. "What was I wearing on our one year dating



The Thoroughbred

Apart from being the world's supreme racehorse the Thoroughbred has played a vital part in the upgrading of numerous old horse and pony breeds as well as establishing new ones. In the sixteenth century, Henry VIII set the process in motion when he founded the famous Royal Paddocks at Hampton Court. His daughter Elizabeth I, founded another stud at Tutbury, in Staffordshire. Both monarchs imported horses from Spain and Italy to cross with the native stock. Under subsequent monarchs James I, Charles I and Charles II - horse breeding and racing gained impetus. By the seventh century regular race meets were held at Newmarket, Chester, Doncaster and Lincoln. Noblemen took up the breeding of horses for racing. Records report the following imports: Barb, Barbary, Arabian, the Irish Hobby and Galloway horses were famous "running" horses of the day. It was on this blood that the famous modern Thoroughbred was founded. Height is variable from 14.2 hh to over 17 hh the average 16 - 16.2 hh.

The Scot's can declare themselves sporting heavyweights after winning the Elephant Polo World Championship in Nepal. The weeklong tournament attracts crowds up to 5,000 daily.

Up to two million new species that swim, crawl or simply exists in the world's oceans could be discovered by the end of 2010. An international team of about 1000 scientists from 70 countries are assembling the first database. The Census of Marine Life is a \$1 billion US project.

A. W. FINN IS THE PUBLISHER OF THE RIDER, ONTARIO'S ALL BREED HORSE PUBLICATION

Food poisoning remains the chief suspect in the massive bird kill on the shores of Lake Ontario last fall. The postmortem examinations of the birds from the Hamilton/Burlington area were similar to the carcasses from Prince Edward County where botulism was confirmed.

A bevy of swans were rounded up on Alister, an inner city lake in Hamburg, Germany. The swans were transported to winter quarters, where they are fed and cared for until spring.

The SPCA is continually having to cope with abandoned animals and seizures from puppy mills. Please keep in mind that the last thing the SPCA want to do is to destroy these wonderful animals. Give generously to their cause, volunteer your time or adopt. The same request for your assistance is extended to all animal rescue organisations.

Canada's Magna Entertainment and Churchill Downs Inc., are teaming up on a TV deal that will send North American horse racing to European fans. Racing from 18 of the two firms' operations will be featured. The entertainment company is from Aurora, Ontario and is part of Magna International, founded by Frank Stronach - a Thoroughbred racehorse owner and breeder.

A rare Siberian tiger was shot and killed after it escaped from a Copenhagen zoo by climbing over a 4.8 metre electrical fence. The animal was on the loose for less than 75 minutes when it was surrounded by veterinarians and rescue officers who shot it.

Jeff Lumby's view from the country

anniversary?" "I CAN'T FEEL MY LEGS!"

I think the thing men find especially annoying about Valentine's Day is that it isn't even 2 months after Christmas. We've just blown the mother lode being thoughtful in December and just as we're paying our Christmas VISA bills, BANG, we get nailed having to be thoughtful again. That's just far too much thoughtfulness in far too short a time span. Now you know why we spend the entire summer fishing and golfing. Being thoughtful is hard work.

The other annoyance with Valentine's Day, or as I call it V-Day due to its close sounding resemblance to D-Day, are the desired gift choices. It's the romance holiday so the odds of me getting a hammer drill or plunge router are next to nothing. What about a sawsall, it even comes in a red case. No, that just wouldn't be romantic. So, I put on a brave face and act like the gift is cool. "Wow a battery operated tie rack, just what I've always wanted. Now, for that one time a year I wear a suit, I'll be able to easily find one of my 3 ties. Excellent! Good choice honey."

And men are just a bunch of lost puppies when it comes to Valentine's gift giving. Especially if it involves lingerie. Most men would rather go to war than walk into a lingerie shop alone. The last time I was hovering outside one of those lacey boutiques scraping up the courage to go in, strange thoughts began cycling through my head. *It's not too late to alter your appearance with plastic surgery, forge a new passport and fly to the Congo never to be seen again.* Then the clerk snaps you out of your vision and there you are, in the middle of the store.

"Hi sir, so are you looking for something for your wife on Valentine's Day?" "s'afw9qw'fbiugfdahferejpk t32jvlf... yes!" "What is your wife's size?" *swallow the suicide pill... now!!!* "Aaahh, I think she's sort of like you... except a little shorter and..."



Flu bug or luv bug?

smaller... I think" "So a size 4, like this" as she holds up a pair of mauve, see-through panties. "Yes, that's perfect, I'll take it." "Would you like a matching bra?" "Sure, actually I'll take both bras!" If the Summer Olympic committee is truly interested in discovering the worlds fastest man they need only situate themselves outside a lingerie shop and time the guys leaving.

So, the stage is set. You've already wooed her with the flowers and remembered her favourite roses with no baby's breath. She smiled at your thoughtful collection of designer chocolates. The dinner was fantastic, nice low lighting and cozy ambience. Now the moment of truth, her reaction to your considerate lingerie gift. She unties the ribbon, lifts the box lid, removes the tissue paper... and... "What am I supposed to do with this, dress up a Barbie?" "CHECK!!!"

But you know something, it's all worth it. *Cause my wife cracks me up on a regular basis.* She's the best friend I've ever had, and if Valentine's Day makes her happy, that's good enough for me.

Running out of alternatives

A PERSONAL VIEW OF FARMING BY GERI KAMENZ, VICE-PRESIDENT, ONTARIO FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

Ontario farmers are running out of alternatives to keep their farms in production. They have called on their organizations to lobby government, but government ignores them. They have conducted tractor rallies and highway blockades, but government ignores them. They have staged orderly demonstrations, but government ignores them.

Ontario farmers are at a crossroads in their farming career, trying to decide what to do next with their businesses. They can't continue producing food for less than it costs, and if they stay in business, they will be buried under an avalanche of restrictive legislation and regulation based more on political agendas than solid science.

Economists tell us that agriculture and the auto industry are the two engines that drive Ontario's economy. Engines require fuel to run, and for any business, that fuel is profit. Maintenance is also vital to keep an engine running smoothly, and for agriculture that's a regulatory framework that creates opportunities. Instead, Ontario farmers increasingly find barriers and obstacles placed in their path.

Agriculture's engine is being starved of fuel and choked by ill-conceived regulations, and will soon sputter and die on the side of the economic highway - unless our governments show some understanding of the problems and decide to take action.

I could run through each of the 264 commodities produced in Ontario and for each one either pull Agriculture Canada's number that show there is no profit, or list the regulatory barriers either in place now or in the works. In any case, we are all being pushed to the edge of a very dark and deep abyss.

One of the easiest examples to understand that reinforces this is my own farm. I am a corn producer. My cost to produce a


tonne of corn is 143 dollars per tonne. This is not based on inflated input values or the more expensive land west of me, but on what are real and reasonable costs.

The market price for corn, as I write this, is 94 dollars per tonne. Using my yield average, I am subsidizing the consumer, the Ontario economy at over 150 dollars per acre, or on my small farm I will subsidize the Ontario economy to the tune of 75,000 dollars on corn alone. It's both too discouraging and depressing to run through the other commodities we produce, but the outcome is the same - this is not sustainable.

We are at a junction and must turn. In very simple terms, one path will lead to a new reality in Ontario, which is the disappearance of the people and the industry that built this province and made it the world leader that it is. The other path, the one we need to take, will guarantee Ontarians a safe, affordable, and nutritious supply of food produced locally and an industry that, through profits, is both willing and able to pay its share of rising environmental standards that are based on solid science.

The only way for us to accomplish this is for all farmers to work together. It is time for us to set aside the petty differences that divide us, work together, and put our shoulder to the wheel and push. We can do it. Rural Ontario and the 30 or so rural ridings cost the federal Liberals a majority government in the last federal election. It is now up to us to insist on the legislative changes that we need in Ontario.

As I drive the roads, I read Ontario licence plates that say either 'Keep I Beautiful', or 'Yours to Discover'. If we don't pull together and work together through the winter, the next generation of licence plates may read 'First to Kill Farming.'



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