

To be 12 again

After tipping the scales at 'lard-ass' a few weeks ago, I decided it was time to get back in shape. For me that means 45 minutes on the treadmill three or four times a week. Believe me, it's not because I love exercise, it's because I love beer. Exercise allows me to stay thin; staying thin allows me to enjoy beer. There's a certain monotony the treadmill offers that can either cause you to sleep or cause you to think. Hopefully, for the sake of your body and the gym walls, the latter wins out.

The last time I ran, my mind wandered back in time to my childhood in the prairies at a time where there were no computers, little TV and a whole lot of outside. I got to thinking that at 46, the time of my life that I would most like to relive would be somewhere around 12 years old. Not to say that I would do anything any differently either, quite the contrary. I'd like to go back to the late 60s and relive that part of childhood exactly as it happened the first time. My wonder years were that good.

I think it's a given that as we get older, life gets more complicated. You acquire more things, take on more responsibilities and grown-up anxieties accumulate. The most stressful thing at 12 was uneven teams of street hockey. One of the reasons wives often refer to their husbands as children is,

first of all because we are, but secondly, most of us remember and deeply relate to our childhoods. I know it sounds stupid, but it wouldn't take much coaxing to get me outside building snow tunnels or playing some football right now.

I grew up on the outskirts of Saskatoon. Actually, everyone from Saskatoon grew up on the outskirts. My routine consisted of walking home from school around 3:30, telling my mom what happened that day, having a quick snack and heading back outside until dinner. The activities that occurred in that small window of time are ones I'll cherish forever. They ranged from sports like baseball, football or hockey to dirtlump fights, hikes to the river, fort construction, and hide and seek. We did it all. As 6 o'clock drew near we'd begin to hear the moms calling our names. "Brian", "David", "Ray, come on in it's dinner time." I could never play long enough. I never wanted it to end. High-strung? I guess you could say that. I'm sure glad I grew up then and not now, I'd be on every one of today's quick fix drugs. Back then the antidote to hyperactivity was, "get the hell outside!" Worked for me. Worked for my folks.

Even though we always had neighbours back in Saskatchewan, we were also right across from fields and ponds. I know that played a huge part in my longing for a coun-

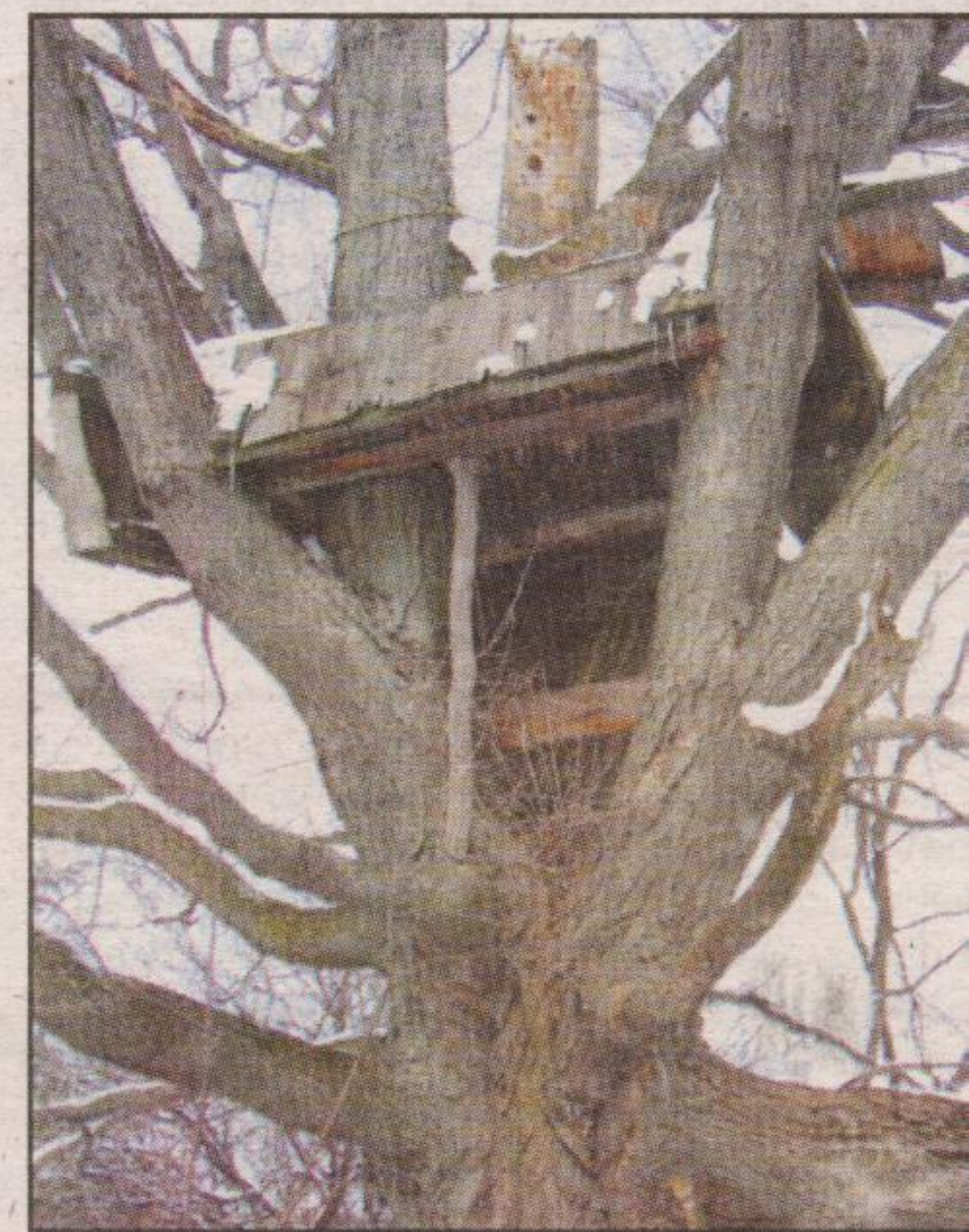
Jeff Lumby's view from the country

try property. When we finally settled on our place outside of Rockwood, it had a lot of the qualities of my surroundings as a kid. Chief among them, space. When you spend as much time as I did in Saskatchewan, you get used to lots of space. Hell, there are only a million people in the whole province. And as a result you become acutely aware of situations where that space is taken away. I can't tell you how many transplanted stubble-jumpers I've met who have encountered the same issue.

I feel closed in at crowded movie theatres, in traffic jams and, yes, even by immediate neighbours. I don't know if that's a claustrophobic or anti-social behaviour. Probably a bit of both. What I do know is that when we first walked the property we now live on it had it all. The house is nearly a kilometre off the main road. On one side is forest; on the other is a cornfield so much like the one across from our first house in Saskatoon. There was an old building I've since converted into a workshop, a pond, and all the space a tormented little hermit could ask for.

I remember standing in the middle of the yard mulling over the pros and cons of purchasing this place when I looked up into one of the many beautiful maples.

Precariously perched in amongst the branches, held together with some rope and rotting planks was an old tree fort. Sold!



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HALTON REGION



NOTICE OF ROAD CLOSURE

Fourth Line, Town of Milton At Derry Road and CPR Tracks

The Regional Municipality of Halton and the Town of Milton are jointly recommending the permanent closure of a section of Fourth Line in the Town of Milton. Fourth Line will be closed as of Tuesday, March 1, 2005 (10 a.m.) at the following locations:

- at Derry Road (Regional Road 7) north approach of intersection
- north and south of Canadian Pacific Railway crossing (approx. 650 metres south of Main Street, and north of Croft Avenue)

The closure is due to the forthcoming commencement of construction activities in the area, particularly the reconstruction of Derry Road (Regional Road 7) and new sections of James Snow Parkway (Regional Road 4).

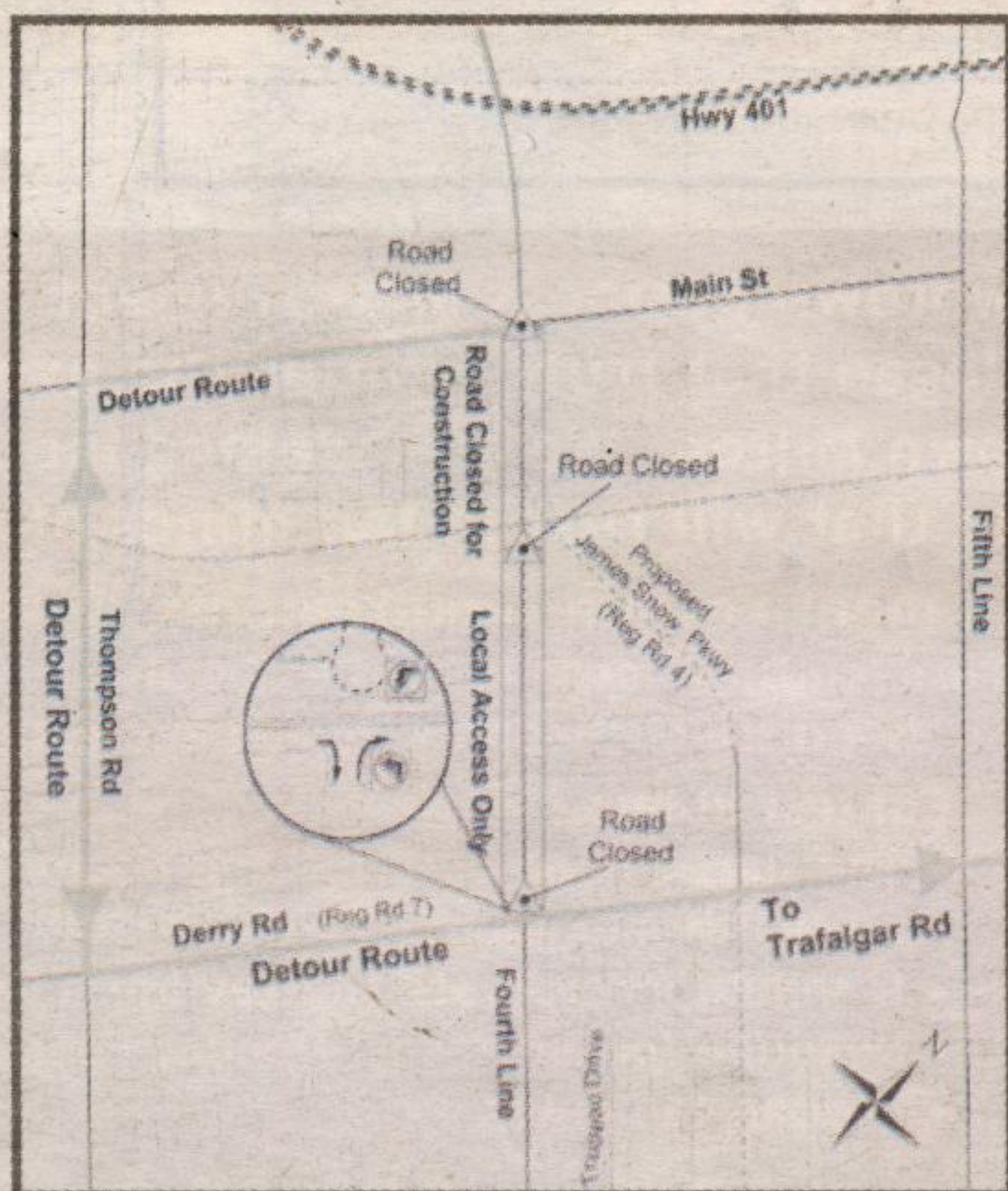
Northbound and southbound through traffic will be directed to use Thompson Road as a detour route. Traffic bound for Highway 401 will be directed to use the Trafalgar Road interchange. Local residents will use the signalized intersections at Trudeau Drive or James Snow Parkway to access the residential areas along Derry Road. Fourth Line south of Derry Road will be restricted to right-in, right out access only, with all left turns in and out prohibited. Warning and detour signs will be provided.

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Frederiksborg

The stud for which the Frederiksborg is named was founded by King Frederick II of Denmark during the 1560's who was famous as a provider of quality horses to the courts of Europe. The stud's foundation stock came from Spain and was crossed with the Spanish horse's close relative, the Neapolitan. The horses produced were both elegant and spirited and was well suited to the dual requirements of the day: as a work horse and a mount for the cavalry. The breed continued to develop through the introduction of eastern and British half-bred stallions and for several centuries the Frederiksborg was one of the most sought after horses in Europe. The exports from Denmark were so numerous that the stock became seriously depleted, with the result that during the first half of the nineteenth century the stud turned instead to Thoroughbred breeding. Height 15.3 hh to 16 hh.

The North Atlantic right whale, western wolverine and the dromedary jumping-slug on Canada's Pacific coast will soon share a dubious distinction. They are among 76 species Canadian environmental officials say they plan to add to an official list of animals and plants that are environmentally threatened or at risk of extinction. The decision will bring to 309 the number of species that receive special protection, and the government is considering a recommendation to add 44 more species this year.

The strange antics of a family dog saved the life of a Hamilton, Ontario teenage girl. Dakota, an Alaskan Malamute began acting



weird and was running from the front door to the basement door, which he kept hitting with his nose. When the door was opened the girl was hit by a blast of dense black smoke. Dakota was rescued from the Guelph pound where he had run out of adoption time and was set to be put down.

Fans at Flamboro Downs honoured Classic Tyler, a 14 year old bay Standardbred, who, years before, was destined for places unknown after the owners were convinced that injuries ended his racing career. The horse was purchased and eventually returned to racing. The horse raced for the last time and placed seventh. In the two years when he returned to racing his winnings were \$40,000. All this for a \$500 investment in a sick horse.

A mystery disease is killing many of the world's rarest penguins, found only in southern New Zealand. The illness has killed 80 % of this springs hatch. The population is estimated at less than 5,000 with about 3,000 breeding pairs. The illness has not effected the adults.

A Texas woman paid \$50,000 to have her pet cat Nicky, who died in 2003 at the age of 17, cloned. DNA from Nicky was used to create the clone named Little Nicky. The owner believes he is identical to her former pet. The American Veterinary Medical Association says it's impossible to create exactly the same characteristics.

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

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