

Jeff Lumby's view from the country

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Bringin' home the 'hardware'

It was nice to see the boss and the rest of the Compass crew getting a little face time on the front page last week. Milton Chamber's 2004 small business of the year cleans up pretty good don't they.

Yes, nothing beats winning, although I believe a Canadian coined the phrase, "hey it's just nice to be nominated!" That expression has second place written all over it. And believe me, I know all about finishing off the podium. I picked St. Louis to win the World Series, I was the guy who voted for Kim Campbell and I was always last picks in shinny as a kid. But don't feel sorry for me, it made it that much more satisfying when I scored.

The last, and only, sports award I ever won was the league championship in our Old-timers Hardball final in Hamilton a few years back. I went 3 for 3 with a walk, 2 runs and 2 rbi's and the final out foul tipped into my glove. After nearly 30 years of coming up short in one sport or another, I practically wet myself that day. Not a good look for a 40 year old.

So needless to say it's an absolute thrill to be involved with the success of the Compass. And I'll never forget the day our relationship began.

The paper's publisher and editor Stephen Baker and Donna Danielli came out to the house to do a profile on me and Winston, my alter ego from the *Red Green Show*. The three of us really seemed to hit it off and the conversation jumped from one thing to another, eventually settling on "so what do you do with yourself when you're not shooting *Red Green*?" A question I get asked a lot actually.

I mentioned that I had just contributed a couple articles to the *Your Homes* section of the Toronto Star. The editor Rick Orchard and I are old high school buddies from Saskatoon. How else do you think they got published? Steve and Donna both wanted to check them out so I rummaged through some boxes and dug up my only copies. After skimming through my stories Steve said, "Ya know Jeff, we're currently looking for a humour columnist for the paper." To make a long story short, they went with me instead.

Since then I've enjoyed writing about everything from Spanish lessons, to bad vacations and even the death of my dog. Steve has been there each and every week to look the other way. In fairness, I think I keep him busy enough correcting spelling mistakes for there being any time left to deal with content. I'm sure Steve has second-guessed his decision to hire me on occasion. Like a few weeks ago when I submitted a story extolling the virtues of Duluth Minnesota and misspelled the subject of my column every time it came up. Way to impress the boss Jeff.

After working for twenty some years in radio, I strongly believe that the true mark of a successful manager is one who allows creativity to flourish by taking a more hands off approach. When imagination is overshadowed by the minutia of the business it invariably has a negative impact on the product.

When Steve took over the paper in March of last year, his ambitions were positive right off the bat. He wanted to do it for the fun of it, and I think the business side has looked after itself because of that. His efforts to continue the increase of readership to over 50,000 households, and a switch from bi-weekly to weekly publication has really helped put the Compass on the map. I don't think the interest in the paper would have been there had Steve spent his time hovering over the writers 24/7. Looking at the photo I see a lot of proud faces and that only happens when people feel they've made a contribution.

So congratulations Steve, and all the happy folks who work for you.

I understand publishing awards are like curling, it's the winner who buys the first round. Just mentioning.



By A.W. Finn

The Camargue

The tough little native horse of the Rhone delta in southern France was not recognised as a breed until January 1968. It is certainly of ancient origin. It bears a recognisable resemblance to the horse paintings depicted in the cave paintings of Lascaux, dating from 15,000 BC.

Skeletal remains unearthed at Solutre in southeast France in the nineteenth century could well be those of the breed's forebears, which were dated as older than 15,000 years.

During its long occupation of the marshlands, the indigenous horse must have been influenced by the influxes of North African blood, but it has retained certain characteristics of the primitive horse, in its rather heavy square head.

These horses have always played an integral part in the everyday life of the

Camargue, providing the guardians, or herdsman, with strong, sure-footed mounts. Despite its relatively small size, the horse has the strength and courage to carry a man safely over treacherous wetland terrain.

These horses enjoy a semi-wild existence, being rounded up annually for inspection, branding of the young stock, selection of suitable breeding stock and gelding of non-breeding males.

In recent years they have taken on a new role as mounts for the increasing number of tourists to the Camargue, which is famed for its wildlife.

Breed description: 13.1 to 14.1 hh, grey in colour, Conformation:

Large square head with short, wide - set ears; short neck; short upright shoulders; short back and deep chest; muscular hindquarters with a short sloping croup and long, bushy tail; very hard sound feet.



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

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