

Jeff Lumby's view from the country

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The grass has riz

The ice is off the pond, we've bumped the clocks up an hour and found winter reminders from my dogs, evenly spaced every two feet or so on the lawn, awoken from a long hibernation under the snow. Yes these 4 or 500 seemingly indestructible coils of fun are clear victors in a 5-month game of hide and seek.

The arrival of Spring means different things to different people. For some it signals the end of the best season of the year. To those folks I say, "Seek professional help."

The notion that a season whose qualities include road salt, sub-zero temperatures and layers of clothing, could be someone's favorite is mind numbing. Can you comfortably sit around outside and enjoy a nice barbeque in the winter? NO. Can you go swimming in your pool in the winter? NO. Can you drive around with the top down in the winter? Only if you're an idiot. So, to summarize, winter bites.

I'm not suggesting that Spring is the best season, but there's no denying it's the season of the most hope. It's the season of renewal.

People are happier. Colour is slowly returning to the lawns, there are buds on the trees and the songbirds have their voices back. It's not often you hear people say, "Geez, I wish those damn robins would shut up!" That's another black mark on winter. Of all the many birds we can hear in the summer the only ones who seem to stick around through the cold months are sparrows and crows. It's like going to see the 4 tenors and having Rosanne Barr and William Shatner come out and sing a Neil Young duet.

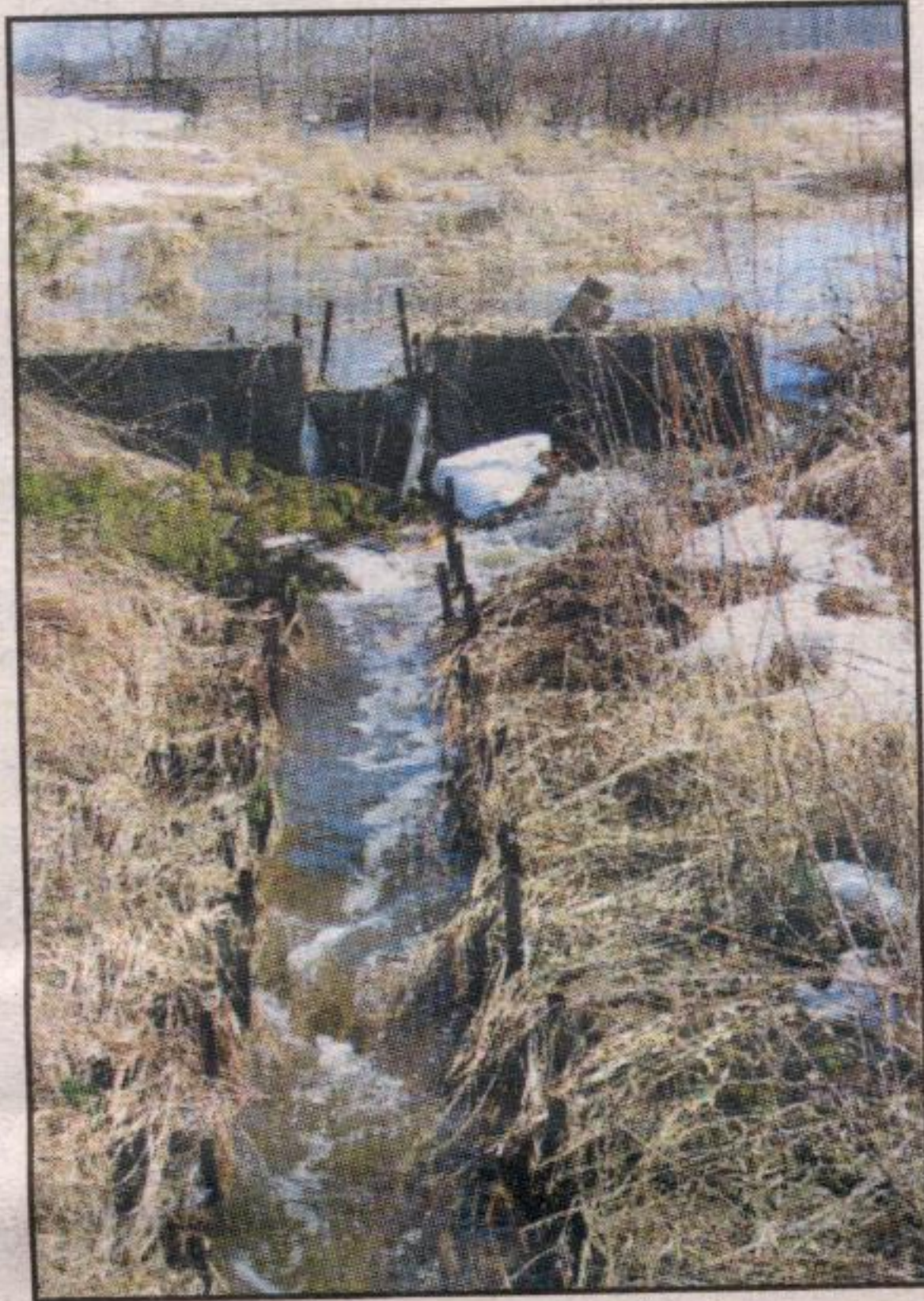
Even Spring jobs are more fun to do than fall jobs (with the clear exception going to cleaning up the topic of the 1st paragraph). Spring jobs are all about opening. Fall jobs are all about closing. It's much more exciting putting a fountain in a pond than taking one out. Other Spring jobs in the country include removing the snow blower from the tractor and attaching the lawn mower. That's a one-sided trade if I've ever

seen one. All the deck and lawn furniture comes out of storage. Screens go back on the windows. And I'm always amazed how much raking has to be done in the Spring. Didn't I just haul away 30 trailers full of leaves a few months ago? It's as if half of them snuck back on to the property over the winter.

The object of fall jobs is to get your stuff hidden away from the harsh elements of the ensuing season. Then stand by, shivering, and guard it for the next 6 months. Sounds like you're preparing for war doesn't it? But in April there's this great emancipation of teak lounge chairs, table umbrellas, barbeques and flowerpots. THE WAR IS OVER, THE WAR IS OVER. VIVE LES GOLF CLUBS!!

Sometimes the Fall Gods team up with the golf Gods and enjoy a real belly laugh at the expense of Spring. I look at it as the perfect storm of embarrassment. The best thing for your long winter is to play exceptionally good golf on your last round of the fall. But it's bad news from a Spring point of view. See, you've had all winter to gloat about and embellish that superb round in late September. Your memory has had plenty of time to become distorted, your ego is writing cheques it can't cash and your confidence has moved out of its once humble surroundings to a much larger home. One, you might say, that is a little too big for its size. All of these points converge at that exact moment when you make contact with your first ball on the driving range in April...and promptly hit the guy next to you. Memory vanishes, ego goes bankrupt and confidence puts his new house up for sale.

So to all you winter lovers, I guess we're just going to have to agree to disagree. I don't mind being that insane kook down the road who enjoys crazy things like laying in a hammock, eating a Popsicle before it melts and inhaling the fragrance of freshly cut grass. Oh, and one more thing, writing articles celebrating the return to warmth.



Spring water has a mind of its own



Horses & Other Animals

By A.W. Finn

Jutland

Except for the feathering of its lower legs, Denmark's heavy horse bears an uncanny resemblance to the British Breed, the Suffolk Punch. This resemblance is perhaps not so surprising, because the present-day Jutland was greatly influenced by the Suffolk blood introduced by the English stallion Oppenheim LXII, who stood at stud in Denmark during the 1860's. The breed goes back much further than that, however. Heavy horses have been bred on the Jutland Peninsula for many centuries, as far back as the twelfth century, when they were in great demand as war horses.

Combining enormous strength with the most willing nature. The Jutland horse made the ideal mount for the Middle Ages. Cleveland Bay and Yorkshire Coach Horse blood is said to have been used in the development of the Jutland, but it is unquestionably the Suffolk which has been the dominant factor, even to its chestnut colouring. Height 15 - 16 hh dark chestnut with light main and tail.

A Yorkshire Terrier was almost an evening meal for an owl. The dog was in the rear yard of an Ottawa home when the owl swooped down on the unsuspecting dog. The owner happened to notice the shadow of the owl and went outside, grabbed the bird and managed to shake the dog loose from its talons. The bird is believed to be a great horned owl, which had moved south looking for food.

Thailand - The economy of a frog-farming village almost failed when the price of its product dropped on the international market. The village raised frogs for live export, but in 2000 the price of live frogs fell. The village invested their money and started producing canned, ready to eat frog meat.

Ponies and horses have been dying in the Simcoe County area. Veterinarians from the Guelph Veterinary College and OMFRA have been working on the deaths. It has been suggested that they died from encephalitis, rabies and even meningitis was found. Clostridium Difficile, which breaks out in hospitals has been named in the autopsy of one of the ponies. Also suspect is the presence of Arsenic in the stomach contents of the equines autopsies, which is known to have been used in horse feed as an appetizer.

A program has been established through Friends of Animals - Mississippi to neuter 100 puppies by chemical means. A \$6,400 grant from a pet store chain provided the funding for the effort, intended to familiarize veterinarians with the non-surgical procedure which was developed at the University of Missouri.

A Halton hunter has been fined \$2,000 for baiting migratory birds in a marsh near Peterborough. The hunter pleaded guilty to a charge of unlawfully depositing bait under the Migratory Birds Conservation Act. He was also banned from possessing a migratory game bird hunting licence for one year.



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