

# Jeff Lumby's view from the country

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## Red Green goes Dark

After 15 seasons, 300 episodes and 2 1/2 really good jokes Possum Lodge has finally closed its doors. November 5th marked the end of a chapter of Canadiana for thousands of Red Green fans, and the end of an experience one could only dream of for me.

Steve Smith (Red Green) and I met quite by happenstance. The year was 1992, and we were both asked to judge parade floats at Kitchener's Oktoberfest Parade. Steve was in year two of the Red Green show and I was the morning man at Hamilton's new Classic Rock radio station, Y95. We hit it off instantly. I guess beer at 10:30 in the morning will do that for you. Our hosts made us feel like royalty as we toured the Festhalls surrounding the KW area. Everywhere we went we were welcomed with open arms. It was during this fun time that I discovered I was traveling around with the funniest man I'd ever met.

I'm not just talking about 'write a joke' funny. Sure Steve has authored or shaped over 10,000 pages of script. No, I'm talking spontaneous, off the cuff, gut-clutching funny. I have never met anyone quicker on his feet than Steve. I remember laughing a lot during my 8 years at Y95, but that fall day in Kitchener easily stood out as the funniest day of my life to that point. There were many more to come.

We remained in contact the following few months with Steve occasionally guesting on my show with radio versions of some of the stuff he was doing on TV. One time in particular Steve came down when we were broadcasting live from the parking lot at 875 Main St. W. The idea was for married couples to drive up and renew their vows without leaving the comfort of their car. Steve conducted each ceremony with humour and the Possum Lodge sensitivity we've all come to love.

About a year later, Steve asked me out to lunch in Burlington. He said, "Jeff, I need a sewage guy for the show and you're the first person I thought of." I think that was a compliment. Steve already had in mind the unique character traits of this guy. He was the one Septic Sucking guy who absolutely loved his job. I remember calling my sister shortly after our lunch and she suggested that this fellow needed a regal name. Soon after, Winston Rothschild III was born. It's hard to imagine that a hard-hat, bowtie and

hip-waders could change your life, but they did.

Also debuting on Red Green that year, were Bob Bainborough (Dalton Humphrey) and Wayne Robson (Mike Hamar). It soon became apparent that together with Pat McKenna (Harold) we would form the nucleus of the cast. I didn't know it at the time, but we would also develop wonderful friendships that will take us long past the Red Green wrap party.

In the 12 years that I've been associated with the show, some strangely wonderful things have occurred. In the late 90's I began receiving invitations to speak at conventions and trade shows. It began in Peoria with the Illinois Onsite Wastewater Conference in January of 2000. This January, I'll be returning for my 4th visit. Similar requests came from Minnesota, Nova Scotia and here in Ontario. Members of the cast have been asked to help out with PBS pledge drives in a number of American cities. Red Green has been broadcast in as many as 100 U.S. markets over the years. Finally, in 2001 we started rolling on the Red Green movie, *Duct Tape Forever*.

This past season has flown by. One minute I can remember performing my first word game in early September, the next minute we're singing Karaoke and taking things off the set. As sad as we all were to see it end, there was no question it was time. Steve had the rare luxury of calling his shot instead of having some network exec pull the plug unexpectedly. The show was also able to leave on a high note. Red Green consistently pulls in respectable numbers on CBC and probably would have for another few years. But after dedicating the last 15 years of his life to keeping the show alive, Steve was ready for a few rounds of golf.

This year's Red Green show can be seen on CBC, Friday nights at 7:00. The final episode will be broadcast on April 7th, 2006.

Fittingly, this year, Steve was appointed to the Order of Canada, and last weekend received a Gemini for lifetime achievement. These awards, he claims, were offered him only after he promised to quit.

Red Green will forever be considered a part of this country's entertainment fabric. It was a privilege to be a small part of it.



From left to right: Wayne Robson, Jeff Lumby, Steve Smith (Red Green), Patrick McKenna and Bob Bainborough.

# TIS THE SEASON TO BE DOWNTOWN!

## Best Dressed Window Contest

Tuesday November 22  
- Saturday December 10

Come Downtown and vote for The Best Dressed Christmas Window

Your completed ballot will automatically be entered into a draw for \$50.00 in Downtown Dollars - Just in time for your Christmas shopping! No purchase necessary. Ballots can be picked up at participating stores.



## Victorian Open House

Saturday December 3

Be our guest! Go back in time with Victorian carollers and guided horse-drawn wagon rides\*.

Pick up a passport and you could win one of several amazing prizes, donated by Downtown merchants. Drop by Waldie's Blacksmith Shop from 11 A.M. to 2 P.M. for more details and to hitch a ride! Waldie's Blacksmith Shop: 16 James St., beside St. Paul's Church. Be sure to dress warmly!



## Come Ride with Santa and Make Pioneer Crafts with Mrs. Claus!



Saturday December 10

Santa and Mrs. Claus will be visiting downtown Milton. Enjoy horse drawn wagon rides\* with Santa and crafts with Mrs. Claus! Mr. & Mrs. Claus will be at Waldie's from 11 A.M. to 2 P.M.



## Decorate Cookies with Mrs. Claus



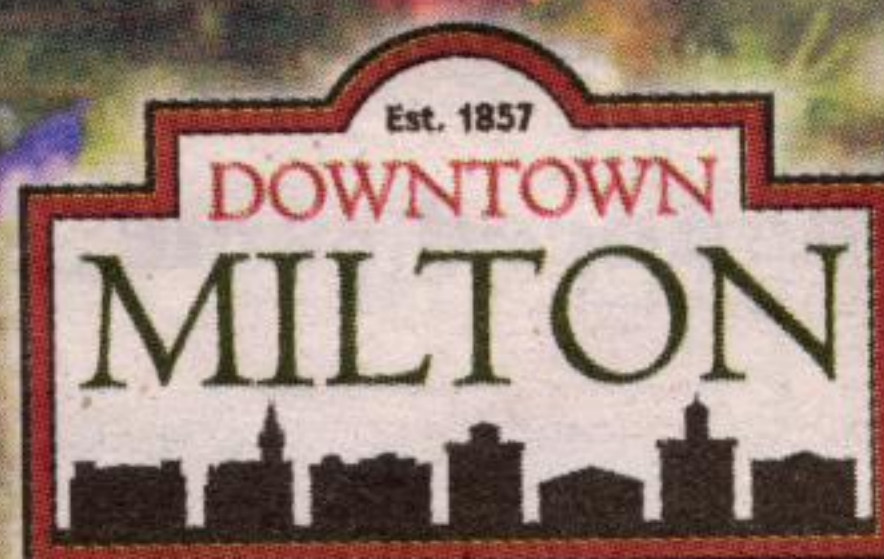
Saturday December 17

Let Mrs. Claus help you get your Christmas baking ready! Santa will be there too, ready to take you for a ride in his wagon\* through downtown Milton. Join us at Waldie's at 11 A.M. to 2 P.M.



All these events are free! However, we will be accepting donations of non-perishable food items and unwrapped toys. \*wagon rides, weather permitting.

## Go Downtown! Shop, Dine and Enjoy!



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