

# Frozen fingers and spring

Through the centuries, society has identified a number of natural phenomena which have come to be universally accepted as sure-fire first signs of spring.

The red-breasted little robin in search of the worm has been an age old favourite, (except this year— I saw robins in January, so I think that one may be inaccurate this particular spring.)

My dad always claimed the return of the red-wing blackbird was his sure-fire 'spring indicator' while others claim the bare earth, the presence of buds breaking out and sighting of little crocus pushing through the snow as their own private indication spring ain't too far away.

Personally, I tend to take a more base approach to the first signs of spring— and my signs always center around watching people, 'cuz people are animals, too.

The human male species is the easiest to read, since they tend to work on instinct, rather than mask their moves by emotion.

To observe these aforementioned animals in their natural habitat, I need go no further than the local car wash to see my sure-fire, indisputable first signs of spring.

Being a member of the same species, I can also take part in the ritual, while scientifically observing their behaviour, comforted by the fact that the male bastion of society is still rock-solid and well established in his own arena.

This week, I was drawn by that uncontrollable urge to clean my SUV, and I could tell, by the inner hormonal impulses that raged through my body, that spring is indeed in sight.

(Mind you, the urge to clean my car is something that possesses me most days— it's just the damn weather that deters me.)

My first move was to drag out the shop vac and brave the nippy weather to suck up all the dregs of winter from the carpet in my vehicle.

I swear, if the Town of Halton Hills Public

**Ted Brown**



Works Department could recycle road sand, we could easily shave a couple hundred thousand dollars off the winter sanding budget— starting with the load in the carpet of my vehicle.

Next, I took part in Phase Two of the ritual, which involves driving to the car wash, waiting in line for 20 minutes, then soaping, scrubbing and wiping for another 20 minutes.

As I perused my handiwork, and scanned the area for like-species performing the same age-old ritualistic first rites of spring, I was comforted in the fact that the car wash was indeed very busy, as male colleagues wiped, polished, wrung out their chamois and, in doing so, generally kept the tradition alive.

(I do think the guy who brought along a small step ladder to wipe down the roof of his monster diesel 4X4 is a tad fanatical, but I'll cut him slack and think of him as a purist.)

There is a sense of peace that envelops the human male when his 'ride' is shining and the roads are dry, since it seems to feed a primal urge we all experience at one time or another.

The outdoor temp readout in my SUV displayed 2 Celsius, but I wondered if it was defective. Ignoring my frost-bitten hands, I carried on until it shone, oblivious to my seized up arthritic joints, oblivious that is, until later.

And driving home, I really wasn't the least bit undaunted as another natural phenomena of spring occurred, called rain.

I had been sated— at least for now.

(Ted Brown can be reached at [tbrown@independentfreepress.com](mailto:tbrown@independentfreepress.com))

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