

stouffville comment

Is Mulroney really gone for good?

Is he really gone? When word came that Brian Mulroney had handed us his own walking papers, many could scarcely believe it.

Here was the man who stated he was staying, denied he was leaving, and complained of persistent rumors to that end.

It seemed odd that he received little of the common praise lent to Joe Clark. In fact, very little was said, except from the citizenry who were most vocal in their relief at his departure.

But was Mulroney the demon he was often made out to be? History will tell, but one thing is certain. Aside from his handling of the economic and constitutional crisis, the GST and free trade, Martin Brian Mulroney will likely be best remembered as the architect of his own demise, but not the country's.



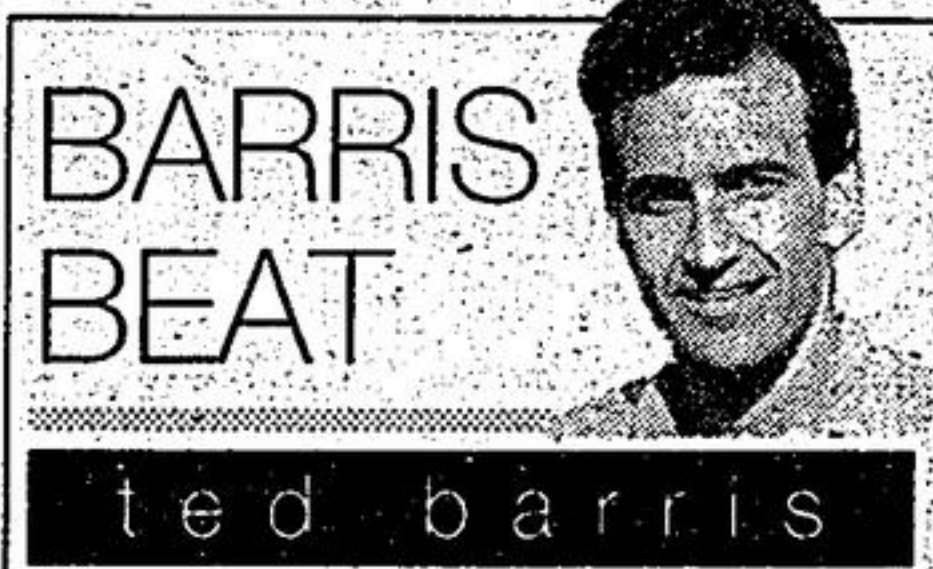
Spring's arrival just can't be quick enough

I know I should be a better Canadian, but I'm desperate for spring!

I knew how bad things were, last Monday morning, when I woke up to face yet another trek across the tundra (from my side door to the garage) for the snow shovel. Knee-deep in snow (that blew in my tracks almost before I reached the garage) I thought to myself, do we really need this? Have we really been that undeserving? Wouldn't a lilac ... or even last fall's leftover leaves be a little more refreshing to look at right about now? And with each heave-ho of the white stuff, the recent words of a friend of mine echoed in my throbbing brain: "Whatever happened to real

winters," he had said to me last week, "winters when we'd have five or six really crippling snowfalls?" Well, Monday, I was so tempted to call him and tell him what he could do with his snow (and mine, for that matter) ... because I have had enough!

I'm even beginning to look forward to my T4-A income slips and the Revenue Canada tax return deadline; at least by then, I should be able to make it to the street without skis and a St. Bernard ... and by then, the streets and backyards should be turning to that wonderful springtime gucky brown color, that at least signals the end of white! "Come on mud!" I say. Suffice it to say, I am desperate



for a harbinger of spring ... Even the flurry of music festivals, this past week, didn't really help (last Monday night was so cold at the festival hall, that the adjudicator was wearing a blanket to stay warm) ... I've tried the spring seed catalogues. I've tried the tool section of the hardware store (I can

usually find a nifty power tool or something to lift my spirits about working outside without a jacket on).

Then I had an idea: I hopped into my car (after shovelling my way to the garage again) and drove to the local shop in town that specializes in repairing small engines. When I got there, I had to wade through a snowmobile sale before I found the sales guy.

But I finally found him and blurted out: "Can I bring in my lawn mower for an overhaul?"

"Sure," he said, "... there's a spring tune-up sale."

My heart quickened at the

thought. And I almost raced for the door, thinking I could be back in five minutes with the lawn mower in question, my head full of thoughts of lush green grass, sunshine and ... But he stopped me.

"That won't be 'til the end of March," he apologized.

I should have known. Even lawn mower mechanics don't come out of hibernation until after March 21.

So here I sit, waiting in vain for a harbinger of spring... counting the notches in my snow shovel instead of robins. And it's still 19 days 'til the lawn mower tune-up sale. Then I'll know spring can't be too many more snowfalls away...

Sensitivity police are at it again

It's hard to think of anything nice to say about the crumby old '90s.

We remain mired in a recession that Stats Canada insists is over; we're told what to think by extremists whom nobody (with the possible exception of John Crosbie) seems willing to challenge; we're tirelessly monitored by language police, joke police and sensitivity police.

Every public utterance which contains a modicum of humor is deemed 'inappropriate' by some crusading vigilante group, which feeds it to obsequious media pundits all too willing to blow it up out of context and out of proportion.

John Crosbie himself, who is now making noises about leaving politics - and who can blame him - is on most media people's hate list. Mr. Crosbie, I venture to suggest, was simply venting some of the frustration a lot of us



feel over the ludicrous extremes to which definitions of 'sexual harassment' have been stretched.

If a man wants to make complimentary remarks about what I'm wearing or how I look, I'm not going to call my lawyer, I'm going to celebrate. Flirting is good for the soul.

But in this loony era, women who go to the trouble to look their best are expected to spurn any man 'insensitive' enough to comment favorably on the results.

Sometimes, when the bank balance doesn't, I consider suing the

guys I used to work with in the dark days of unbridled exploitation. I, too, suffered harassment at the office, but I was so dim I enjoyed it. Risque comments, appreciative glances and yes, even a hug or two, were part of everyday life at the den of vice where I worked. And if some meat head overstepped the line between fun and crudeness, I was quite capable of telling him to take a hike, unaware that I was a hapless victim of abuse.

It seems ironic that while schools celebrate the importance of self-esteem, no one is allowed to hug a child for fear of being sued. And what better way is there to bolster self-esteem than a spontaneous, affectionate hug?

While we're on the hot topic of exploitation, a final thought from Victoria Wood's one-woman show: "Sexual harassment at work - is it a problem for the self-employed?"

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