

# Comment

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## A day in to celebrate needed in February

January, believe it or not, is almost in the record books. With the recent cold snap, we often turn our thoughts to sunnier days or an upcoming vacation.

But if you go by the calendar, that vacation won't be here until Easter.

The long, cold Ontario winter could easily be made far more bearable if our politicians would revive the ages-old idea of a holiday in February.

Talk of a Heritage Day or a Flag Day erupts around this time each year, yet little is ever done about it.

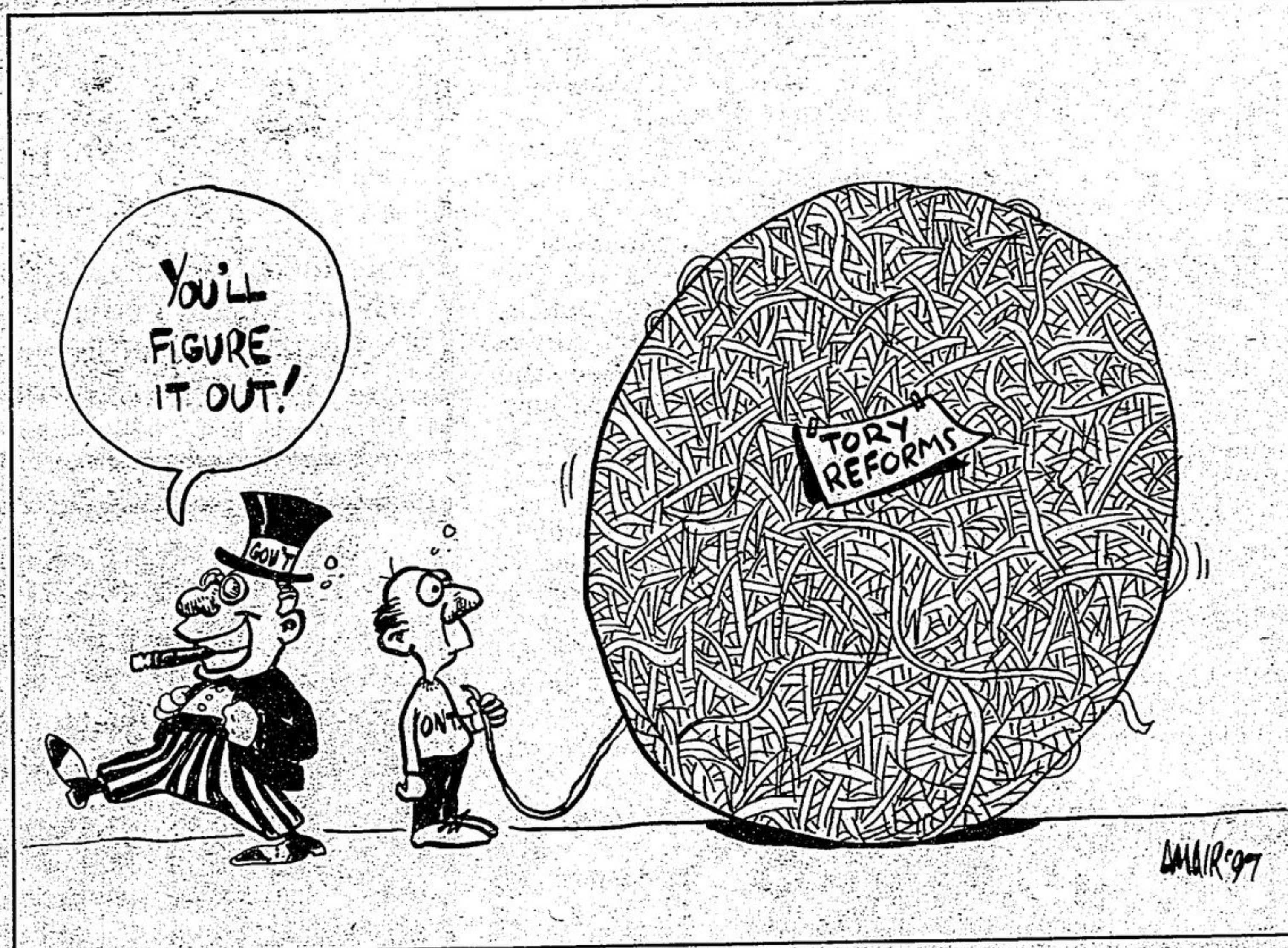
We have plenty to celebrate in the country, but like many other things involving our national identity, we do not proclaim them, we do not celebrate them and we do not attempt to build up any notion of national pride.

What we need in the middle of our harsh winter is a day to enjoy it, and to celebrate the fact that so much of Canadian life revolves around our winter. A day to call our own would lift the collective spirit.

Canada Day is fine for a summer holiday. However, we need a winter holiday to bridge the span

between New Year's Day and Easter. A little bright spot in the bleakness of the season would do this

country a world of good and add something to our sagging sense of national unity.



## My days of cheese and chocolate are over

I'm a big ol' tub of goo. For those of you who know me, this will come as no revelation. But you may be surprised to know that after 10 years I have decided to do something about it.

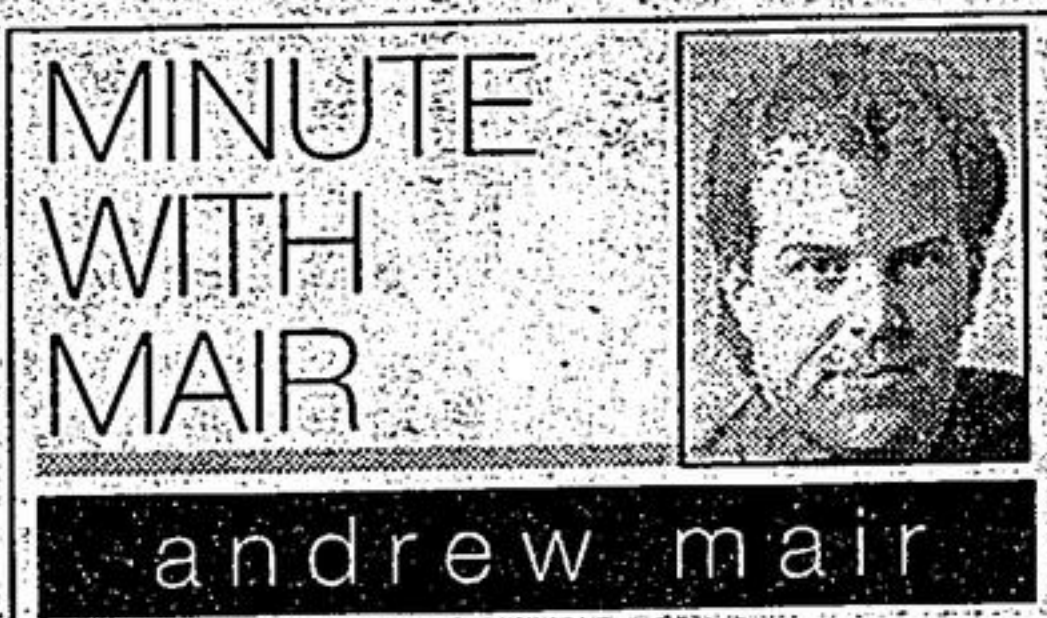
It sort of came to me during the holidays when, after a particularly fine meal, I leaned back in my chair and took out a chandelier bulb with the button off my pants. Also, my dog didn't recognize me anymore.

It's not simply that I tipped the scales at around 215, I have been heavier. There is a charming photo of me at the Metro Zoo. I was at my weight zenith, a full 227, and leaning against the elephant enclosure. I still have to tell company that I'm the one with the short nose.

No, I figured it was time when my 23-year-old brother-in-law had his first cardiac "incident" over the holidays. I realized that this otherwise healthy lad consumed similar foods to myself. (Although he did wake up Christmas morning and helped himself to a big slab of beef pie and gravy.) I simply had Cheerios with three teaspoons of sugar.)

But I was almost as bad. I used to have Mars bars at work, rest AND play. There's a plaque with my name on it at the drive-thru Buffet restaurants would see me coming and call in auxiliary staff.

Lately, I have been getting chest pains, shortness of breath. I use the railings when going up stairs, and I also noticed that in my night school classes, I was having trouble getting in behind the desk.



Enough fooling around. I've done the required reading, and think I have found the right diet/exercise regimen. I must say have met with some initial suc-

## Getting in some down time at the downhill

Last weekend, five people and four sets of skis abandoned Chateau Gilderdale for the thrills, spills and unique educational opportunities afforded visitors to Blue Mountain.

While our hosts, my family and a visiting friend took to the slopes, yours truly was busy upgrading her knowledge of world affairs by studying the latest issues of People. The official 'zine of the conscientious chalet owner, People is one of the fundamental reasons the designated non-skier is willing to risk life and limb being driven through the fiercest snowstorm to reach her holiday haven.

When my brain was no longer capable of processing another riveting revelation of infidelity, strange sexual proclivities or plastic surgery among the rich and famous, I perused People's pictorial history of the ubiquitous Diana, ex-Princess of Wales - once again one of the 25 most intriguing people of the

cess, but now I've become a little fanatical. I've managed to drop 15 pounds on this program, which is great, but I find myself walking through food courts screaming at people. "You're digging your grave with your knife and fork," I'll rant, or, "Why should I pay for your health care when you're eating that slop!"

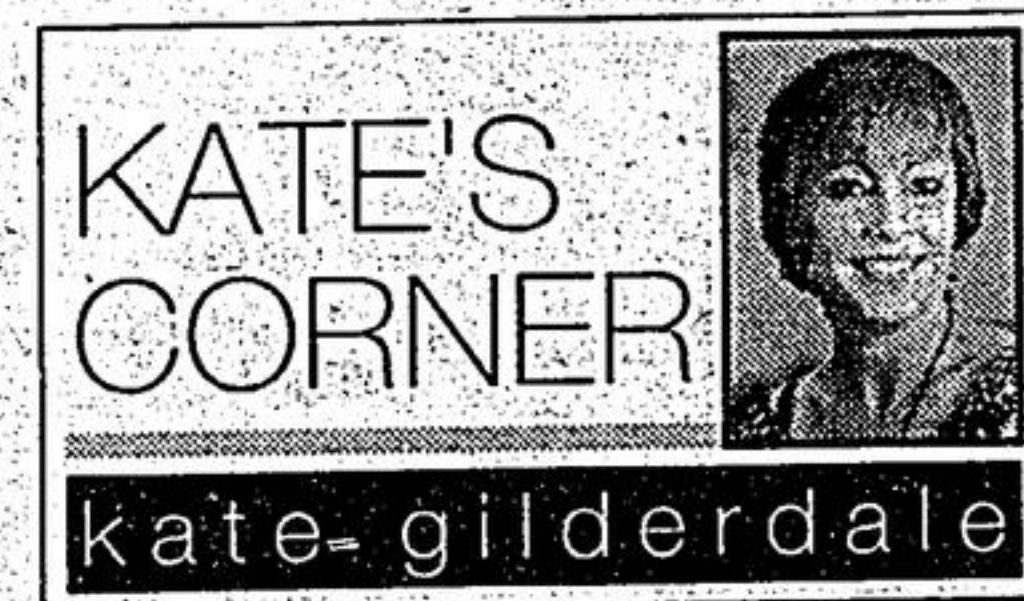
I'm not strengthening the family bonds either. At a family dinner at a fancy downtown restaurant last weekend, I scolded my

brother for his steak and mushrooms (as I picked at my collard greens and dry toast). I cuffed my sister for ordering the French onion soup and made my dad send back his fat-laden stuffed chicken. Finally, in disgust, they all ordered huge chocolate crepes out of spite. I realized then that I had become something of a food Nazi, and am now full of remorse. Why, just a mere two weeks before, I would have had gravy dripping off my chin with the rest

of them. Besides, I'm not out of the woods yet. I have hamburger dreams. I actually like those cheese ads on TV and just saying the word 'lasagna' sets off my salivary glands' version of the Deluge.

I have miles to go before I eat, to coin a phrase.

There is another downside to all this downsizing of mine. While I can see my feet again, I've had to let the person who used to put on my shoes go.



ing's masochism, he returned to the task later in the day, but this time managed to avoid life-threatening injuries. By the time he got back, he could hardly walk, but he was still gamely extolling the virtues of exercise and fresh air.

Silently resting my case for the sedentary life, I embarked on the intellectual (comic) section of the Toronto Star. Still, I must admit I was impressed by the old man's fortitude. Mr. Wallethead, who had not attempted to hurtle down a hill on skis until he was well past 50, had gone so far as to invest in his own equipment for the 1997 ski season.

Undeterred by the rigors of

cold and the sheer effort involved in getting off one's duff and spending half an hour getting kitted up to go out into a wind-chill of minus 33, he displayed the same enthusiasm he once reserved for rugby. Rugby is a sport which brings the kind of smile to the eyes of British dentists that hockey does to Canadians in the same profession.

Although I'm assured that there are rigorous rules, to the uninitiated the game seems to consist of beating members of the opposing team to a pulp whilst rolling around in a sea of mud.

Inexplicably known as a sport of gentlemen, rugby makes skiing look wimpy.

And as long as he doesn't expect me to join him, Mr. Wallethead is welcome to snowplough the ski hills of the world while I surreptitiously catch up on real life, brought to me by Time Warner, Disney and the House of Windsor.

## Stouffville Tribune

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