

Speaking Of Spring

Stouffville Garden Club starts its new year at 7:45 p.m. March 18 at Christ Church Anglican on Sunset Blvd.

"We have as our guest one of our favourite speakers, Leonard Teengs," said

club member Diane Ward. "Leonard has the ability to put plant material into a container, while telling us amazing stories about his clients or friends, one of whom is Elton John."

Newcomers are welcome said Diane, "especially those who think they don't know anything about gardening. We love to share information and plants."

Annual membership is \$20

and non-members pay \$5 for each meeting to cover the cost of speakers and rent. Visit www.gardenontario.org/site.php/stouffville for more information and details of upcoming events



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Appointment with Pohlman



Out With The New, In With The Old!

By Ralph Pohlman

So, here we are in the early stages of what I'm told is the New Year. Well, forgive me if I don't jump up and down with excitement.

First of all, for me and for almost everyone I know, the year really starts in September, just after Labour Day. I would prefer not to call the first day of 2013 New Year's Day. No, I would prefer "Another Year's Day." This is because the very mention of the word "new" tends to give me a rash. I'm tired of "new." I like old. It's familiar.

To me, a movie star is John Wayne or Gary Grant or some other dead guy. A singer is someone who, when they do what they do, I can understand the words. And there is a tune.

When I was a kid, my mother would occasionally describe a relative or neighbour as "set in his ways." I knew what that meant. Mostly it meant he was a dull old stick who liked things to be a certain way. It never occurred to me that it would one day describe me. But it does. I recently realized I have become resistant to novelty.

A while ago I was talking to a friend of mine who owns a bunch of restaurants. Well, some are restaurants. The others are sports bars and pubs. Place with names like The Milkmaid's Bucket. You get the idea. I like it when he invites me to have lunch with him because I know the price will be right. Anyway, he told me he's thinking of selling some of his places.

Why? Because he figures they're at their peak and will start to lose their clientele unless some novelty is introduced. Like an Irish theme, or southwestern or something like that.

Now, to be honest, I do remember a time when I was eager to try a new restaurant whenever one opened. No longer, thank you. I've spent a lot of time and money finding the restaurants I like and I don't want them to change a damn thing. Time has become too precious to risk new ones. Let my kids experiment. I prefer the familiar. And I'll have the salmon, please (again).

By the way, I'm not very enthusiastic about new foods, either, or new ways of serving them. Like, would they please stop bringing me my meal looking like a hydro tower made of biscuits, which I'm told is the new style of "vertical presentation," intended to give the food "height" on the plate. What inspired that culinary eureka? Viagra?

It will happen to you too, if it hasn't already. Folks become less receptive to new ideas over time. By the time they are 30, most people have chosen the music they will listen to for the rest of their lives. Who do you think buys those "Best of" anthologies that you can only order from late night TV?

Young revolutionaries, having taken over their country and changed the system, spend the rest of their lives defending their status quo against new revolutionaries who want to change the system. And old institutions, like the church and the senate, don't change. They are run by old guys.

I know why I'm like this. First of all, I'm over 35 and, second of all, I'm a first born.

All kinds of studies have shown that most of the great scientific breakthroughs, the brilliant creative bursts, are made by the young and rebellious (the later born).

You see, the first born get to mark out their turf, the parents' attention, and defend it against all comers. The later born have to make an end run to succeed, to think laterally, to colour outside the lines.

So, when did this happen? When did I become so narrow? When did I begin to ignore fashion for comfort, to wear an old sweater to work, and to want things to be the same? I used to want to travel. Now I want to go home. If I do have to leave the country, I want it to be to a place I've been to before where they speak English and where I know the restaurants.

My son is right. I've become a DOMOF - A Downwardly Mobile Old Fart. Besides, you don't really want to see me with a new tattoo and a tongue stud, do you?

Anyway, have Another Year. Remember, you now have one less. (Or is it one fewer?)