

# It never gets old

by SHERALYN ROMAN

Ever wondered about that expression 'it never gets old'? Like, where did it come from? Why do we say it? And what does it refer to? I ask, because while plowing through yet another 18 inches of snow (might have been more, definitely wasn't less) a fellow weary shoveler commented on the severity of the weather this year by saying something unprintable in a family newspaper, followed by, 'it never gets old.' Still shovelling hours later and with nothing better to think about, I began to contemplate the origins of the various versions of this oft-overused phrase.

Under the category of things that never get old, it's a cold, hard truth that Canadians WILL ALWAYS have the weather to talk about and that winter weather in particular tops the list.

When it comes to weather related stories, most of them are a bitter, frosty, windswept lament about how \$\*%&\* cold it is, how deep the snow is and how much worse it is this year than last year. Let's face it, we say that last part every year. Finally, the winter weather monologue is usually followed by an ungodly-sounding, keening, wail of despair when, after all that shovelling, the snow plow comes by creating a mountain of snow and ice equal in height to base camp on Mount Everest. Yeah, it's winter and talking about the weather 'never gets old.' Or does it?

Oscar Wilde is alleged to have once said, 'conversation about the weather is the last refuge of the unimaginative.' Well colour me 'sans imagination' then. When one is surrounded, nay even buried, in a deluge of the white stuff (and it's cold enough for your nostril hairs to freeze your nose shut) your brain also freezes, losing more and more capacity for reasoned and rational thought with each degree below zero that the temperature plummets. Given that the average sane person (skiers and snowmobilers excluded) doesn't exactly want to stand around outside talking to anyone, especially about how bleeping cold it is, I challenge even Oscar Wilde to come up with something witty! It should be no surprise that we're pretty unimaginative, perhaps even downright dull, when we're finding it hard to breathe in gale force winds and are blinded by blowing snow.

Shovelers experiencing this 'winter wonderland' first hand, I ask you: Neighbourly or not, do we really need to lower the scarf blanketing most of our face, risking frostbite, to acknowledge the obvious? What's to be gained? Certainly not any new insights as to how to deal with all the snow. It's snow. There are no 'strategies' for dealing with it outside of another old adage, 'don't eat yellow snow.' The only true strategy is to wait. Snow's not going anywhere until it decides it's good and ready to leave, and that might not be until March, perhaps even April. It doesn't care if you're running out of places to put it. It's snow. Cold, hard and unfeeling. Much like your fingertips after an hour of shovelling it.

Since we're quoting tried and true analogies, here's another. We're at that point of winter when you might as well just 'hunker down.' Stay indoors binge watching whatever it is that tickles your fancy. I hear 'ER,' popular back in the good old days, is enjoying a resurgence, no doubt due to the popularity of The Pitt, and the actor they share in common, Noah Wylie. The Pitt is a good show, but what really strikes my funny bone is that it is single-handedly teaching this next generation of kids and young adults what it was like to be a kid 'back in my day' when you had to WAIT A WHOLE WEEK between episodes! Oh, the horrors! Thank you Crave TV for helping teach Gen Z and Gen Alpha about the value of patience.

By the way, have you been keeping track of the number of other useless idioms, metaphors, expressions and phrases I've used throughout this column? I'll reiterate them here: 'tickles your fancy,' 'back in my day,' 'funny bone,' 'hunker down.' Do you ever wonder where all of those phrases come from? Are there similar equivalents in other languages that are equally overused? I'm quite sure there must be. As for things that 'never get old,' it clearly must be meant sarcastically when said in the context of snow because the 'definition' of the saying includes all kinds of pleasant things like: baby snuggles, watching a beautiful sunset, holding the hand of someone you love, or things that are similarly enjoyable, interesting or exciting. In my opinion, snow is none of those things.

This winter really has been the worst one ever. Until next year that is. Perhaps you're tired of talking about it and I'm sorry I took up

a whole column devoted to snow. However, given that in addition to being tired of shovelling snow, I'm also really, really, tired of all the nonsense going on in Caledon, it's an election year, and it's too early to be this disillusioned, I thought perhaps I'd get away with a quick little lament about the weather. Maybe not so quick though? Chances are in the time it took you to read this column another 12-14 inches have fallen.

\*and yes, I used imperial measurements throughout because in metric, 12 - 14 inches becomes about 30+ centimetres and that just sounds way the heck worse!