

A new season springs to life in Halifax, perhaps prematurely

DON'T GET ME STARTED



ANGELA MOMBOURQUETTE

THE CALENDAR on my desk says it's officially Spring.

Outside my window, on the other hand, it's snowing. In a lovely, Christmassy kind of way.

Not that there's anything wrong with that. But yesterday (not today's yesterday, but the day before I wrote this, which are two entirely different "yesterdays"), yesterday it was 10 degrees C. And sunny. And you, I, and everyone else who ventured outdoors on that day were certain that Spring had finally, truly, Sprung.

Everywhere I looked, I saw the Official Signs of Spring.

First of all, there were the "shorts" sightings. I don't know who you people are who keep your short pants handy all winter long, so that the moment the sky clears and the sun peeks out just a wee bit, you can whip them on and head jauntily out the door, regardless of the actual air temperature — but there are a lot of you out there.

Have your calves simply been withering, all pent-up in long pants and confined in high boots for so long?

Have you been dying to air those ashen legs out, dust them off, give them that little bit of freedom they have been so desperately craving since August?

Perhaps we should keep in mind that this was the first nice-ish day in, oh, four months of sub-zero temperatures and miserable weather. So yeah, relatively-speaking it was warm out. Relative to Tuktoyaktuk.

Hand-in-hand (or, I guess, foot-in-foot) with the short pants went the flip-flops. Flip-flops! In the month of March, in Canada. I applaud your optimism and, again, the wealth of storage space which allows you to keep your flip-flops at the ready posi-

tion near the front door, poised for a frisky frolic on the first day the temperature rises above freezing.

"Socks are for wimps," you assert, regardless of the several centimetres of slush that persist just a flop away from where you're flipping.

"Bare feet are cool," scream your naked toes. Yes, you've got that right, my chilly friends.

But the flip-floppers were not the bravest of all on this particular day.

No. On this day in March, while it was still, I remind you, Winter, I saw a runner in shorts and sneakers and . . . uh . . . nothing else. This runner was a man, but still, I was shocked to see his bare nipples all over the path where I was about to walk my dog.

Seriously, bare man-chest is something you don't necessarily want to see even on the sweatiest of days (or, perhaps, particularly on the sweatiest of days). I had to adjust my reality-meter as I shivered and zipped up my fleece hoodie.

Perhaps he was simply concerned with aerodynamics and didn't want to create drag with a bunch of unnecessary fabric.

Perhaps he had chafing issues. Perhaps he was just extremely proud of his pasty pecs.

Whatever his reasons, I wasn't able to eat lunch for several hours.

And on this, the first sunny day in months, I also witnessed: four chihuahuas in the park (I believe they keep this model of dog indoors all winter, for the same reasons you keep your Miata in the garage: low suspension and susceptibility to internal freezing), several hot dog vendors, and, oh yes, potholes on Bell Road big enough to lose a Miata filled with chihuahuas in. More proof that Spring had actually arrived in Halifax.

Not that I'm complaining. The potholes, I guess, are inevitable, and I'm in awe of the early-adopters. And it's understandable that we might jump the gun a bit when we see the sun in Halifax.

Heaven knows, it could be September before we see it again.

Angela Mombourquette is a freelance writer and documentary maker living in Halifax.

(community@herald.ca)