



Former prime minister Brian Mulroney speaks with Peter Mansbridge at a gala celebrating the opening of the Mandela exhibition.

MIKAELA MACKENZIE / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS FILES

Mulroney shares insider stories at CMHR

COSY CHAT WITH BRIAN MULRONEY:

Former Canadian prime minister Brian Mulroney provided lots of humorous stories in a Q-and-A with Peter Mansbridge at the Mandela's Struggle for Freedom opening gala at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights on June 4.

Mulroney doesn't have to worry about letting fly these days, and he started off by ribbing the retired CBC anchor, saying that talking to him was "like finding an old flannel shirt." Not exactly what a former journalist wants to hear, but Mansbridge quickly got into the casual banter, referring to his past as the "days when I had a job."

Mulroney was there to tell stories about the days when he was in power, busy cajoling G7 world leaders to push for South African leader Nelson Mandela's support and release, and for an end to apartheid — and he was totally relaxed and on a roll. The audience got a kick out of him calling former heads of G7 governments by their first names — like "Margaret," as in Britain's former prime minister Thatcher.

He also shared some insider stories, such as the time Mandela — right after getting out of prison, where he'd been incarcerated for 27 long years — phoned Mulroney in Ottawa. The PM's people said, "Somebody who calls himself Mandela is on the phone and wants to talk to you!" They seemed to think it might be Mulroney's friends playing a joke on him.

Mulroney also told a story about Mandela's sense of humour. When he asked Mulroney for \$10 million for his cause, the PM let him know Canada would be pretty much tapped out for the project after giving that amount. Mandela responded, "Well then, could you give it to me in American dollars?"

SPOTTED: David, Ruth and Gail Asper, of course. It was their father Izzy's dream to build the CMHR, and they helped carried that dream through. Also making the scene: president and CEO of the CMHR John Young, Justice Minister Heather Stefanson, Mayor Brian Bowman, former foreign affairs minister Lloyd Axworthy, Lt-Gov. Janice Filmon, former premier Gary Filmon, former premier and ambassador to the U.S. Gary Doer, and Stuart Murray, president and CEO of the City of Human Rights Education.

Master of ceremonies was Monique La Coste, with grace said by Kenny Daodu, president-elect of the Congress of Black Women of Manitoba. Christopher Till, the director of the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, attended, as did South African High Commissioner Sibongiseni Dlamini-Mntambo. Chief Wilton Littlechild from Alberta, a CMHR board member and former MP, and Pardeep Singh Nagra (a human rights champion and former boxer from Toronto now on the CMHR board) came to dinner, as did "Friends of CMHR" board chairman Arni Thorsteinson and Calgary's Stuart Clark, a major donor to the museum.

The Free Press table party included CFO Dan Koshowski, reporter



Sparky the rescue dog at Sage Garden.

Jill Wilson, print and distribution consultant Lionel Zelic, artist Leesa Dahl, Adriana Koshowski of the Asper Foundation, Jon Gerrard's constituency assistant Shandi Strong, New Directions' Claire Wilson, reporter Jen Zoratti and Kim Lentowitsch of Investors Group.

GRADUATING AGAIN! Clad in a grad gown, singer Ray St. Germain, well-known host of NCI-FM's long-standing Saturday radio show *Metis Hour x2*, received his 20th plaque, an honorary diploma from in Creative Communications from Red River College, on June 5 at the Centennial Concert Hall.

"Most of the plaques are in honour of my career, and for my show going on for its 21st year," says St. Germain, 77, still a sought-after solo performer and leader of his big family band of musicians.

The show — with co-host Naomi Clarke — has helped to give Métis people of Manitoba a profile, a feeling of unity within the province and a stronger identity.

NCI broadcasts right up to the northern borders of the province. *Metis Hour x2* includes music and call-ins from Métis folk all over the province, literally giving them a voice, and the music they love. St. Germain's famous composition *The Metis* was one of the first songs to contain the term and gain recognition Canada-wide.

Asked if he has plans to retire, he replies, "No, I enjoy doing the show so much I don't intend to quit. I like the fact I get to talk to people all over the province and it gives them a chance to say hello to their loved ones. I also get to pick the music I think listeners will love — mostly fiddle music and country. Sometimes we have guests who sing live on the show, and I do, too!"

SAGE GARDEN DOG PARTY: And now for something completely different! Sage Garden greenhouses, the funky folk at 3410 St. Mary's Rd., are hosting a Dog-and-Owner Toxic Plant Lesson & Party on Wednesday from 5 to 8 p.m. It's also a fundraiser for a



Ray St. Germain

local pet rescue called Jenn's Furry Friends. Feature plants are for sale and 100 per cent of the sales will be donated. Last year they raised \$1,000 for this little rescue operation for dogs and cats.

Toxic plants include oleander, dieffenbachia, castor bean and others that will be blacklisted at the lesson. Then it's a big friend-making party, says owner Dave Hanson, well known for providing gardening advice on phone-in radio shows.

"The idea is to have fun and make it known we love it when our customers bring their pups to Sage any day. At the party we'll have free dog treats, do some education, provide refreshments for the humans, and we'll be doing lots of Instagramming (cute doggie pictures).

FATHER'S DAY SURPRISE: Mother's Day is a well-celebrated big deal. "But fathers are the forgotten parent!" says Phil Spevack, who co-runs the monthly Grant & Wilton Coffee Houses.

"We wanted to honour dads too with a special concert."

The night is called Music Awakening, Heartstrings, Father's Imagining. It takes place Saturday at 1077 Grant Ave. in the basement of Temple Shalom and will feature local classical music stars (both vocal and instrumental) plus a jam afterward for musicians and audience members alike to get onstage and play rock, folk and blues. "Come well rested. We're going to tear the place apart!" Spevack says.

The feature act is baritone Sven Buller, with sopranos Ashley Rees and Katrina Tempagi, mezzo soprano Geneva Halverson, and Megan Dufart on piano. The opening act is Bariah Penner (violin) Cadence Penner (cello) with Sam Goertzen on piano and special guest Indra Egan.

Doors open at 7 p.m. — the lineup often goes out the door and down the block for these coffee-house shows. Music starts at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$17 at the door; \$15 in advance by calling Spevack at 204-488-0207.

Got tips? Cool events happening in your world? Been rubbing shoulders with the stars? Write Maureen's Tips at mscurf@shaw.ca.



Hereditary star Toni Collette says none of the horror elements

Family drama in disguise

MONICA CASTILLO

At first glance, *Hereditary* hardly looks sinister. It begins quietly at a grandmother's funeral. Annie (Toni Collette), an artist with a fondness for creating miniature dollhouses, feels tired but emotionless. That worries her.

She asks her husband, Steve (Gabriel Byrne), whether she's supposed to feel sadder over the death of her mother. He says that will happen in due time. But the events in *Hereditary* will bring no comfort for Annie, her husband or their two children, Peter (Alex Wolff) and Charlie (Milly Shapiro).

While the movie's trailers and poster paint it as a thrillfest, *Hereditary* is actually a family drama in disguise. Director Ari Aster, in his first feature, marries the horror and melodrama genres into an unnerving movie about grief.

"I pitched the film as a family tragedy that curdles into a nightmare, in the way that life can feel like a nightmare when disaster strikes," Aster said. "In that way, the film owes a greater debt to domestic melodramas than it does to the horror movie."

Hereditary caught moviegoers' attention at Sundance, where it was one of the more buzzed-about titles among industry insiders and press. It was not unlike the demand for fellow family-horror film *The Witch* a few years back, when even late-night screenings filled up early. Some have floated the idea that both titles — put out by the indie studio-of-the-moment A24 — are part of a recent spate of creative, critically acclaimed horror movies including *Get Out*, *A Quiet Place* and *It Comes at Night*.

Aster, however, doesn't buy the talk that we're in a time of "peak horror."

"The horror genre had developed a bad name because so many of them are made so cynically," he said. "They can be superficial exercises, but I feel like we've always had exceptions to that. It's nothing new that the horror genre is lousy with duds. Even when *Rosemary's Baby* or *The Exorcist* came out, those were the exceptions."

Collette said the script caught

her eye different her way Aster, w much of planned every sl ance," C pages an

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