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A Ted Bit

Life, a rambling event, punctuated by milestones

Some time ago, I came to the realization that life is a rambling event, punctuated by milestones.

We're born, we grow, we attend school and we fall in and out of love.

We lose things, we find things.

We become parents and grandparents, we become in-laws, and we watch our families grow, mature and stretch their boundaries, as they too create their own milestones.

I looked at my calendar to prepare this column— today's date, January 23, 2014.

I thought back to January 22, 1982, the day I walked into the office of the *Georgetown Independent* at 30 Main Street South.

My purpose was to meet then Managing Editor Hartley Coles, to inquire about doing some freelance work for him.

That was 32 years ago—and unknown to me at the time, that would become a major milestone in my life. It was the beginning of more than three decades with this newspaper.

And now, I'm approaching yet another milestone.

As of Friday, January 31, 2014, I'll be retiring from *The Independent & Free Press*.

It's something I've been contemplating for a while.

A friend of mine once told me, "You'll know when it's time to retire Ted— your body will tell you."

He was right.

These past few years I've found my body has been mentioning it, a bit louder every once in a while, as I haul 30 lbs. of camera gear on my shoulder for hours at a time.

And I'm also finding my job has a great deal of repetition in it, something that can be tiring. I find myself yearning to explore a few things on my 'bucket list' so to speak— while I'm still able to do it.

So I'm going to take the leap.

In a way, I'll be going full circle.

When I was hired full-time at the *Georgetown Independent* and *Acton Free Press*, I was leaving behind a life of milking cows in partnership with my dad— that was another milestone.

At the time, my dad had heart problems and I was fighting allergies. Both our bodies were telling us it was time for a change. I became a photographer, he retired.

Now I'm leaving my position here as a

reporter/photographer, to return home and carry on with another similar but slightly different farming operation that follows in the footsteps of my forefathers many years and generations ago.

It's not an easy decision to make, hanging up those Nikon cameras after 32 years.

During those years, I've had some great times, and conversely some sad times, while being the eyes of this newspaper, observing and recording history as it evolved around me. I've seen people at their worst, in the middle of the night at a motor vehicle accident or a house fire.

I've photographed people at their best, exploding with jubilation, after having achieved some great personal goal, or beat the odds to win.

Good or bad, I've always come away from an event feeling privileged to have been there to witness it— and most importantly, ultimately share it with our readers.

It's been a great high, working with countless talented colleagues as we teamed up to produce a great product, each and every week.

I used to say there were times I felt a bit embarrassed being paid for what I do. It's sometimes a lot of fun. At the same time,

the job can induce brain numbing boredom with repetitive assignments— also a part of the business.

Growing up in Limehouse, I've had a huge advantage, living in the geographic cen-

tre of Halton Hills. I've had lifelong friends and contacts in both Acton and Georgetown, as well as the rural areas in between.

Next week will officially be my last week as a staffer with *The Independent & Free Press*. After that time I will no longer be out and about shooting news or ad assignments around town.

But I will promise you that you haven't seen the last of Ted Brown.

I'll continue writing for our quarterly *Sideroads* magazine, and who knows I might just return to this spot from time to time as a 'guest columnist'.

Next week's column will be dedicated to my farewells and thank-yous. It will be my time to recognize those who have made a difference in my career, and helped me to do the same for others. I'll see you all then.

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TED BROWN

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