

33 years to get up the nerve

You know, when it comes to fixin' something, I'm usually ready to give it a try.

Most times, I'm good at starting the project, but sometimes have problems putting those last finishing touches on it...

But I'm not talkin' about that today.

This time, I'm talking about jobs you would NEVER see me tackle at home.

This past weekend, we had a job done that I simply wouldn't, or perhaps more accurately couldn't, attempt to do. This one involves climbing on the barn roof.

Backing up a bit you might recall that wild wind storm we had about three weeks ago Saturday. I was upstairs in the barn, when it was at its worst point in the storm.

Standing there, a bit worried, I could hear the steel roofing chattering in the wind, like a big vibration. I took a walk around to the windy side of the barn and looked up.

It was a downright scary.

The steel sheets weren't exactly lifting, but they certainly were moving.

And anyone who owns a barn knows, if the steel roof is moving, it ain't too far from blowing right off the barn.

And that ain't cool.

With a whole lot of worrying, the roof made it through that night, and remained intact. I was annoyed that it had gone that far— I'd tried to contact a barn roofer in the fall and had no takers, but the situation was to a point I couldn't wait any longer.

I did a search and found Donald Hall of Erin was still in the business. My dad and I had used the Halls to roof part of another barn about 25 years ago— and they were good roofers.

I gave Don a call. The same day, he was at my place accessing the barn.

He called me and said he'd have a crew there as soon as he could, and my fears were allayed for the present.

And early Saturday morning, two of his guys, brothers Don and Dan, arrived to start the roof. They only got an hour into it, and a light shower put them off the roof. Steel roofing gets really slippery when it's wet.

But bright and early Monday morning (yup, on Victoria Day) they were back, and

Ted Brown



1,500 roofing screws later, they finished the job of tightening down the roof.

When I talked to Don and Dan, I mentioned the job the Halls had done for us 25-odd years ago. It was memorable, as Jim, Don Hall's dad, had stepped on a rotten place on the roof and one foot went through.

He injured himself pretty badly— Halton Hills Fire Department had to respond to rescue him off the barn roof to be taken to hospital by ambulance.

At the time, I thought Jim was a bit too old to be up there on a barn roof, but talking to the two guys at my place this weekend, I was amazed to learn more.

"Oh yeah," said Dan. "Jim had to quit working on barn roofs last year."

"Last year?" I said. I was incredulous. "How old is he?"

Oh, he's now 92," said Dan in his matter-of-fact way, "He had quit roofing after he had some health issues..."

I think my mouth fell open. A 91 year-old was climbing on a barn roof up until last year?

Wow, I felt really inadequate.

Geez, at 58, I'd no more think of working on a barn roof, than I'd ride a wild rodeo bull, or go a few rounds with a sumo wrestler.

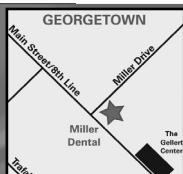
But Jim has been pounding in roofing nails, and later roofing screws, into those sheet metal roofs for all those years. Geez, I think he's earned the bragging rights for that one.

So now the barn roof looks good, the steel no longer vibrates, and I can actually get a good night's sleep when it's windy.

But now I'm curious. Like, I wonder what the world looks like— up there on the barn.

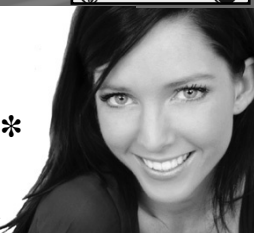
At 58 years of age, I figure I've still got 33 years to get up the nerve.

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