

Breaking the night silence

Tuesday I had a 'sleepy' day, one of those days when it's a struggle to keep one's eyes open, or to concentrate.

And I blamed a pack of coyotes for my lack of sleep.

Monday night, I had a symphony of coyote music performed in the field behind the house. They howled, they barked, they went into a chorus, then one did a solo—and it continued long into the night.

And they kept me awake.

Now The Sidekick has an enviable talent. Seems her head touches the pillow and she's off to dreamland in seconds.

Personally, I have a habit of laying awake to contemplate the problems of the world—long into the night. And finding a deterrent to the coyotes in the field behind the house was one of those contemplations.

Naturally, I never came up with a viable solution... (unless a rocket launcher with a night vision sight was an option—but I'd probably miss and make a big crater in the middle of the field.)

I thought about the sheep in the barn, comfortably housed in their pens, safe from the pack of marauding coyotes out trying to find a free meal.

I wondered about poor Hamish, our border collie. I'm sure he heard them, and was most certainly burrowing deeper into his straw bed, in the safety of the barn, next to the sheep.

I lay there thinking about Paige, our 'veranda' cat, who has yet to make the transition into 'barn' cat, something she does when the nights get colder.

She's always been pretty 'street wise' for a cat. I hoped she'd taken refuge in a tree or on the roof of the house as soon as she heard the howling start.

Since becoming a shepherd, I find myself more mindful of the coyotes.

Predation has become a real issue for Ontario farmers, as sheep, goats and cattle are being killed by packs of coyotes.

Even guard dogs can't totally alleviate the problem. Coyotes are very smart. Part

Ted Brown



of the pack will draw the guard dog away, while another coyote makes the kill.

And they get more and more brazen.

About a month ago, I was raking some hay in the field in the early evening. As dusk descended, I noticed a form in the darkness out behind the rake. The form got closer, as I drove around the field.

When it finally got dark, I switched on the tractor's field lights.

With the lights on, I could see a coyote trotting along, just yards behind the rake, catching mice as the hay was turned over.

Before I finished the field, three coyotes were following a few metres behind, like a bunch of old farm dogs.

Now that's pretty bold.

Over the past few years, we've published stories of urban folks losing a cat or a dog, snatched by coyotes right out of their own fenced back yards.

There was a time I enjoyed the mystic sound of the coyotes. And in spite of the fact they sound neat, I'm starting to dislike what they stand for, as they leave the wild and venture closer and closer to our residential areas.

When I was a kid, we never heard of a coyote venturing anywhere near this area. They were only seen in northern Ontario.

But they are here now, and here to stay.

So as those distant howls break the stillness of the night, just make sure your pets or livestock are safely housed inside.

Because if they're not, they might not be there in the morning.

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Catholic School Trustee
for Halton Hills
Monday 25 October

ATTENTION

HIKERS AND USERS OF THE BRUCE TRAIL

The Bruce Trail is a public footpath entirely built, and maintained, by volunteers for the purpose of protecting the Niagara Escarpment, the most significant landform in southern Ontario.

The Trail runs from the Niagara River to Tobermory and passes through the Towns of Milton, Halton Hills and Caledon.

The Bruce Trail is a footpath. Bicycles and motorized vehicles are not allowed except in some very limited areas. This applies to both the main Trail (marked with white blazes) and Side Trails (blue blazes). There are three compelling reasons for this: owners' wishes, safety and ecology.

More than half the Trail is on private land with the permission of the landowner. This permission is for a hiking trail only. Use of the trail by motorized vehicles or bicycles could cause the landowner to require removal of the Trail from his land.

The Trail has many bends, twists and steep hills. Sharing it with bicycles or vehicles is very dangerous. Our priority is the safety of hikers so that they don't have to worry about what is coming around the next bend.

Bicycles and vehicles have negative ecological effects along the Trail. They damage plants and animals and create much more erosion than the boots of hikers.

To summarize, the members of the Bruce Trail Conservancy respectfully request that everybody refrain from using bicycles or motorized vehicles on the Trail.

For more information please contact:

Peter Leeny
Executive Vice-president
Bruce Trail Conservancy
905-822-1877

Brian Popelier
Conservation Stewardship Officer
The Bruce Trail Conservancy
1-800-665-4453 ext.30

Websites - www.bruce-trail.org www.torontobruce-trailclub.org



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Close to home.

THE BRUCE TRAIL
CONSERVANCY

Stag and Doe for Chris House and Lindsay Almand



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Happy 40th Anniversary Barb and Henry Hutzal

1970 ~ October 24 ~ 2010

Love

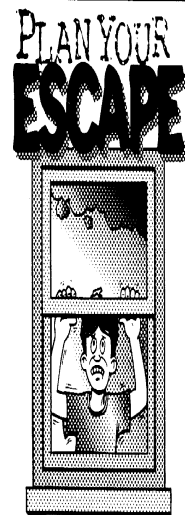
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Petawawa, Ontario



If you plan to use a window as a second way out in a fire, make sure it can be opened easily!

