

# Psst, wanna buy some hens?

Okay, it's official, I'm sick of winter.

Oh, right, we're not even into winter yet—I forgot. But it's cold like winter, and without any snow, it's a bitter raw cold.

A trip to the barn Monday evening illustrated exactly how cold it really is.

In the barn, the sheep have three water bowls—two heated; one ain't.

Well, actually, by the time you read this column, that third one might very well be heated as well.

Monday night, after I finished my day job, I went home to feed the sheep.

Since the weather hasn't really been all that cold, I hadn't yet turned on the power to the two heated bowls.

(Note: it's on now.)

When I walked past the first water bowl, I was a bit surprised to see a sheen on the water—it was the beginnings of ice forming. I checked the second, it was fine.

Then I checked the third, you know, the one with no heating system on it.

Frozen solid.

I have a thermometer in the barn to keep track of the temperature. Monday morning it had read 2C—right on the money, a perfect temperature for sheep with their wool coats.

As a rule, it usually takes -2C or colder to freeze the pipes in the barn, but I'd left the ventilation fan turned on all day, and healthy as it was that the sheep had clean fresh air, they also had frozen water as a result.

So my procrastination is costing me in annoyance. I should have thought of the temperature dropping like a stone.

And it's a nuisance to have to install heat in that last water bowl, to line the water pipes supplying the water bowl with a heat strap, and to extend an electrical wire to that pen.

The up-side is that pen has only four ewes in it, so watering 'em with a pail for a few days isn't the end of the world.

But Tuesday morning was the cold

## Ted Brown



weather kicker.

It was the chickens.

Stepping out of the barn onto the crisp, crunching frozen lawn, I headed to the henhouse with a pail of water and egg basket in hand.

The henhouse has been a bit of a problem of late, as we've had a weasel coming to visit. So far the score is weasel: five dead hens and numerous broken eggs. Ted: zilch.

He's a wily weasel I can't catch, so I'm already having negative vibes.

And as I opened the door, I was greeted by a frozen waterer.

Out came the heat lamp, out came the extension cord, and away went Ted's patience.

Jack the rooster was indignant that his water pail was frozen, as he clucked and strutted in protest before me.

With frozen fingers, I fought to open the waterers and chip out the ice. I was finally able to top them up to make sure the hens had enough drinking water.

(When you consider an egg is about 90 per cent water, it's pretty important for hens to have water.)

As I latched the door to the henhouse, the heat lamp warmly glowing, fresh water in the waterer and the rooster happily scratching for whatever he scratches for, the raw biting cold once again hit me in the face, and a profound thought went through my mind as a chill ran up my back.

Someone could buy a bunch of hens realllly cheap today...

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# ATHLETES of the week

Acton High School		Christ the King		G.D.H.S	
Alicia Golden	Niki Tremblay	Mitchell Christopher	Vytautas Stasiulevicius	Alex Garvey	Bailey Davis

**Acton District High School** Athletes of the Week are Alicia Golden and Niki Tremblay. The Grade 12 students are first-year players on the Bearcats' girls' hockey team and have shown rapid improvement at their respective forward positions.

**Georgetown District High School** Athletes of the Week are Bailey Davis and Alex Garvey. Davis plays the setter spot for the 3-0 Rebel junior girls' volleyball team. Garvey's buzzer-beating shot gave the GDHS senior boys' basketball squad a 50-49 victory over Brampton's Cardinal Leger in the semifinals of the Rebels' Tip-Off Tournament.

**Christ the King** Athletes of the Week are Mitchell Christopher and Vytautas Stasiulevicius. Christopher is a goalie for the Jaguars' senior boys' hockey team and the Grade 11 student posted a shutout against St. Peter's at a tournament in St. Catharines. Stasiulevicius, a Grade 12 student, plays point guard for Ctk's senior boys' hoops team and led the Jags in scoring at last weekend's GDHS Tip-Off Tournament.

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