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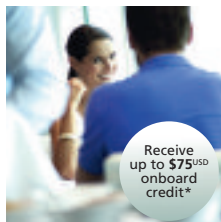
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# Ya gotta count your blessings

I've come to realize that we should all count our blessings, each and every day.

Case in point—I had great plans for a productive day last Saturday. I planned to fire up the skid steer loader and clean out a couple of the large sheep pens. When I clean pens, I move the manure out the back door with the loader, piling it on the paved yard. Once I get a pile outside, I move it into a storage pile with the tractor loader.

That was Saturday's plan— until late Friday afternoon.

When I got home from work, I took the tire chains off the loader tractor (okay, a bold move in mid-March). I then used the tractor to grade the potholes in the lane.

I stopped to talk to my neighbour and her little girl, who were out for a walk. We chatted a bit, then I put the tractor in reverse to back up to the barn.

Suddenly there was a pop sound and the tractor started to lean over.

I could see a stream of liquid flowing out of the side of the tractor tire— I knew exactly what it was.

It was calcium— the tire had blown off the valve stem and the liquid calcium in the loaded tire was squirting out several feet. I quickly backed it up further, stopping it with the valve opening at the top of the tire and got off the tractor to survey the damage. My neighbour and her daughter were still standing there.

I explained what happened, and after we spoke for a bit, a chill ran up my spine. I realized that if that tire valve had blown 20 seconds earlier, that stream of calcium could have sprayed all over them.

I shuddered at the thought.

It then occurred to me that if that valve had blown off in the shed, where the tractor is stored, it could have sprayed calcium over the other tractors, or the Lil Red Rocket. (Calcium eats paint like it's a delicacy.)

**Ted Brown**



I had taken the tire chains off 15 minutes before it happened. If they were still on the tractor, it would have been a job from hell to remove and repair the tube and tire.

And the place where the tractor stopped was not only on the driveway, where the calcium wouldn't ruin the lawn, but it was also within distance of the garden hose, so my tire guy could top up the calcium after repairing the tube.

And as it turned out, by parking the tractor where it was, and placing blocks under it to take the weight off the flat tire, I was able to save most of the calcium.

Every scenario I thought of, I realized how lucky I was that the valve had exploded precisely where it did.

I've come to realize that at the moment something annoying or stressful happens in my life, I can usually find a reason to thank the good Lord that it happened when it did, instead of earlier, or later.

It's called counting your blessings.

Oh sure, the tractor required a visit from Stan, my mobile tire guy.

And to be proactive, I decided to replace both tubes on the tractor— if one blew out, the other probably wasn't too far behind.

And naturally, it all costs money.

But I can still look on the bright side, and in doing so, count my blessings.

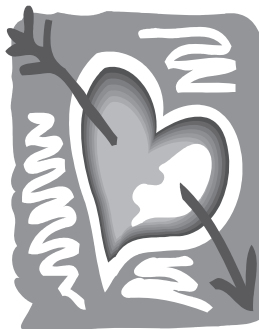
We have them around us every day— it's just a matter of looking for 'em.

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