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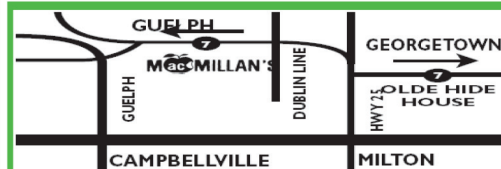
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# A Ted Bit Reflecting upon the tired old face in the mirror

I sometimes wonder if I'm really busy— busier than usual— or that I'm just getting older and 'feel' like I'm busier than usual.

The Sidekick and I discussed it Sunday night, after another very long and busy weekend.

We tried to be objective, and came to the conclusion that it's been an incredibly busy summer at Brown Farm— certainly not an ordinary, 'normal' summer by our usual standards.

In mid-June, we hosted a wedding on the farm for The Sidekick's son. That in itself was quite an undertaking, with months of planning and several weeks of cutting grass, tending flower beds and ultimately getting the grounds in shape for the day.

Once it was over, we figured we were home-free, and could concentrate on taking off the hay crop.

Naturally, we've had THE wettest summer in recent memory, (second only to the summer of 1967, the year I turned 16, and sprained my ankle days after getting my driver's licence— oh yeah, and the hay took forever to take off that year, due to constant wet weather.)

As I watched the incessant rain fall throughout June, I wondered how we'd ever get the hay crop off.

Two weekends ago, we had a break. We baled up most of the hay— I admit, we were finally blessed with ideal weather, but it was a tiring weekend, spending several hours on the tractor.

Yes it was air conditioned, but it was still a long drawn out gig, planting my backside on the tractor seat.

The Sidekick decided to tally up the number of hours I'd spent in the tractor cab, from Thursday evening through until Sunday night.

I kind of wished she hadn't— it was 23 hours.

No wonder I was feeling weary. I'm not suggesting that it's unique for a farmer to put in those kinds of hours during peak season— I've actually worked those kind of hours in the past.

But that was 30 years ago— when I was 30 years younger.

Adding a minor overheating problem with one tractor into the mix, a couple acres of hay was left.

Last weekend, we hosted a surprise birthday party on the farm for my eldest daughter, organized by her sisters, and held at the farm. It was a success, oh, yeah, we got her good.

As fate would have it, that same Saturday The Sidekick had to work— she works one Saturday a month and that was 'it', making us short a set of productive hands getting ready for the party.

Adding to the challenge, a huge willow tree blew over during Friday night's storm, blocking the lane.

With 35 guests expected to show up for a surprise party around 5 p.m. Saturday it was a stretch to get it moved off the lane in time.

We were also invited to another birthday party on Sunday, and got home at 8 p.m., in time to do chores.

Around 9 p.m. Sunday, I discovered I was beat.

Early Monday morning, I stared at the guy in the mirror with the bags under his eyes, and a tired, wrinkled facing staring back at me. I was tempted to ask him "Hey buddy, are you totally nuts?!!!"

I think he's ignoring me— or simply too whacked to comment.

I'm not alone.

The Sidekick isn't any better.

Usually she starts to nod off around 9:45 p.m. in front of the TV.

But these past weeks, she's been dozing off an hour earlier than usual.

Early Tuesday morning, she was trying to drag herself out of bed, and get ready for work.

"I just wanna stay here," she mumbled, curled up with her eyes scrunched shut against the early morning light.

I asked if she knew of any upcoming social events that involved the farm.

"Nothing comes to mind," she said.

"Good. This weekend, we're doing nothing— just what we want to do, here at home," I proclaimed.

Of course we both know the truth.

Something will come along to mess it all up.

—Ted Brown can be reached at [tbrown@theifp.ca](mailto:tbrown@theifp.ca)



**TED BROWN**

*'That was 30 years ago— when I was 30 years younger'*