

# Like shooting fish in a barrel

*Ted Brown confirms that sheep can't pee on a stick*



**TED BROWN**  
Column

I know there aren't very many sheep in Halton.

There might be a half dozen flocks in the area between Halton Hills and Guelph.

But most people I run into during my travels about town like to take part in a 'sheep conversation' in some way, shape or form.

It invariably follows after an acknowledgement of the state of the weather, then comes the question, "So, how are the sheep?"

I know it's simply acknowledging we have sheep, so I usually reply with something simple like "Oh, they're doing fine."

But there are times I really want to throw out something bizarre, like, "Well, we've been experiencing a bout of melancholy in the flock - I suspect it's from SAD, you know, seasonal affective disorder, a depression related to changes in seasons. Our sheep had some symptoms starting in the fall and continued into the winter months, so I suspect if they don't snap out of it soon, I'm going to have to call in the sheep psychologist from the University of Guelph."

OK, I know it could be cruel to throw out a line like that, but recently I did have a golden opportunity to 'play' with one person regarding the flock.

It started with the same intro, "So, how are the sheep?"

And since it was the perfect time in the sheep season to actually have something truly interesting to reply, I said, "Well, actually, tomorrow Dr. Jeff, my vet from The Veterinary Farm Services (at the University of Guelph) is coming to conduct a pregnancy check of the entire flock."

Now this is something most lay persons wouldn't have expected, and it was 100 per cent true. Jeff and two vet college students were booked for the next day. (Vet services like to use local barns as teaching venues to give students experience in the field.)

"Really?" was the reply. "And how exactly do they do that?"

Suddenly my mischievous side emerged and I said "Oh, it's simple, we just have them pee on one of those little blue sticks from the drugstore."

Insert vacant stare here. "So ... you have to catch them, right?"

"Yup" I replied, my face poker-straight.

That was as far as I could go with my ruse with the next question.

"So how do you get them to pee on the stick on demand?"

That was it for me. I lost it and started to laugh.

I then explained that Dr. Jeff brings in an ultrasound machine to check them. (By now, others had gathered.)

Of course, my credibility had gone south and they didn't believe the ultrasound story, they didn't believe anything I said.

After another person entered the conversation (who did in fact have some farm experience) and it was established that yes, our sheep were going to be checked for pregnancy by an ultrasound machine, but no, they weren't peeing on a stick. Nor were they experiencing SAD due to a lack of sunshine, and the 'sheep psychologist' would not be paying a visit to my barn any time soon.

It's sometimes quite entertaining when you can pull the wool over the eyes of someone (pun definitely intended), and still maintain some credibility.

So to wrap up the story, the next day, Dr. Jeff was joined by two students, and in the space of an hour and 20 minutes, they determined that 92 per cent of our ewes were actually pregnant, which is a pretty good percentage.

And in the future, for those who ask about the welfare of the flock of sheep, well, I will behave and not pull their leg.

But dammit, every once in a while one has to have some fun - it's human nature. And I just gotta take a shot at those fish in a that barrel.

*- Ted Brown is a freelance columnist for the Independent and can be reached at tedbit@hotmail.com.*

## THE WAY WE WERE



7 | The IFP - Halton Hills | Thursday, January 25, 2018

EHS/photo

As clearly demonstrated by this photo from 1916, driving a convertible in the dead of winter is never a good decision. This gentleman found his Ford convertible stuck in a snowdrift in Glen Williams, and his rescuer obviously felt a photo should be taken to commemorate the auspicious moment.

### • LETTER •

#### Sometimes disabilities aren't visible

I want to educate the public about accessibility parking permits.

Post surgery, it is a gift especially in the winter to keep the recipient safe.

It is interesting the negative response from people who assume if they cannot see the disability, then it must not exist.

One incident was a "drive-by" woman shouting

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at me, "You will get a \$5,000 fine!" She didn't even bother to look at my dashboard.

However, the most distasteful interaction was from a medical secretary.

This employee at a walk-in clinic, stood up behind her glass counter and shouted at me, "Do you know where you parked?" I had just entered the office for an appointment.

People in the waiting

room were looking at this point. I hid my humiliation and answered, "Yes, I do."

Awareness and sensitivity should be first and foremost, especially at a medical centre.

Human rights are a platform for people to launch a complaint.

I feel for the residents in town who have experienced the same issue.

**Dianne Cameron**

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