

Observations of spring from another generation

Sheep and ice don't mix, writes Ted Brown



TED BROWN
Column

It's a no-brainer that we've experienced quite possibly the most bizarre winter and spring of all times.

It was mild and green in February and we were pounded by a huge ice storm in April.

Seems that Mother Nature might have got her wires crossed or something.

In my grandfather's generation, many people had a number of observations of when spring was going to arrive and when it was safe to start certain duties in the spring.

One of the phenomena he checked every spring was a small area between the barn and the old hen house. In that space between the two buildings was an area that didn't receive any direct sunlight.

And because of that lack of sun, there would be a small lump of snow or ice there, long after the snow was gone and the grass was green.

My grandfather always

maintained if the snow wasn't melted in that spot, the ground was too cold to plant any spring grain crops.

And I never saw him grow a poor crop of grain.

On a similar note, I usually turn the sheep outside in early April. However, I've been putting it off, as it was pretty nasty to suddenly turn them out of a warm barn, into raw weather outside.

So, I figured I'd wait until April 23.

The feedlot the sheep occupy is positioned similar to the little patch of snow by the hen house.

And as I tried to open the outside door to the feedlot - it was blocked.

I walked around the barn to investigate and discovered, like beside the hen house, that area had a layer of eight inches solid



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Sheep can be easy prey for dogs. A Powassan man's flock was devastated after two dogs got into his barn on Jan. 14 killing ewes and unborn lambs.

ice.

After hours chipping away at the buildup of ice, I finally managed to find bare concrete, which is safer for the sheep going outside.

Ice and sheep don't mix - that's a pretty certain recipe for a broken leg.

It can be amazing how long a pile of snow or ice can last, even during 18 to 20 C weather.

The Sidekick and I visited Quebec City ten years ago in the end of May.

As we spent our time in the old city, we noticed a little trickle of water running down the edge of the old street. The rest of the street was dry, except for that tiny 'river' that was about an inch or two wide.

The lawns around the sidewalks and street were green and they had been

mowing the grass.

The trickle was coming somewhere from the top of the hill, at least a few blocks from where we first spotted it.

Being curious, we followed it up the hill, to find the origin of the "stream."

As we approached, the water turned a corner and was coming out from between two old stone buildings.

Between those two buildings was an accumulation of snow and ice that had built up during the winter.

The snow was likely three- or four-feet deep in that alley which was only about four-feet wide.

It was quite bizarre that there'd still be that much snow in the final week of May, with the temperature in the mid-20s C. At the rate it was melting, that pile of snow was going to be there for several more weeks.

As I chipped away at the ice on the feedlot so the sheep could go outside, I was reminded of that pile of snow in Quebec City.

And then another thought struck me.

I walked around the end of the barn to that space between the barn and the hen house.

And sure enough, my grandfather's observation still rang true.

Once again, there's still a small strip of icy snow, waiting to melt and signal it's time to plant the crops.

– *Ted Brown is a freelance columnist for the Independent and Free Press. He can be reached at ted-bit@hotmail.com.*

Georgetown residents have heart

On April 20, I was in a car accident at the intersection of 5 Sideroad and 3rd Line. Although no one was injured, my car was badly damaged, and I was very shaken up.

Before I could even bring myself to get out of the car or call the police, it seemed like countless witnesses pulled over and asked if I was okay.

Finally someone told me to get out of the car, since it was leaking fluids and in the middle of the intersection.

They directed me to call 911, someone handed me a bottle of water, and someone else suggested I have a seat off to the side of the road, since they could see how upset I was.

One man in particular

pulled over and took control of the situation.

He talked to the other driver and myself, making sure we were okay, and then proceeded to direct traffic around the scene, where the road was reduced to one lane to be used for both directions.

I have no doubt that he prevented further accidents, and more than that,

he helped to keep me calm and I will forever be grateful for that.

Another hero pulled over a few minutes later - a nurse on her way home. She asked if we were okay, and I said yes through tears. She took my pulse and told me I was okay, just in shock.

She stayed with me until my mom arrived, and the

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way I remember her, she might as well have been an angel who floated in just when I needed her.

Shortly after that, another woman driving past asked if everyone was okay, and offered her house just down the road if anyone needed anything.

The final wonderful kindness came from the tow truck driver, who was so friendly and reassuring.

I feel so lucky to be living here, surrounded by some of the most caring neighbours I have ever seen.

Emma Slykhuis

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