



These three Georgetown hockey players were captured on film in February 1961. They are (from left) Mike Cummins, Kent Robinson and Terry Lane.

Jay's Studio/photo

OPINION

## MY DOG HAS BECOME A WIMP

HAMISH CHANGES MIND ON SNOW, WRITES TED BROWN



TED BROWN  
Column

This winter, I'm finding I have to reprogram myself to my surroundings - the biggest adjustment being life without sheep.

As many of my readers know, The Sidekick and I dispersed the flock last summer, and they are living a content life on a farm in Prince Edward Island, where they will likely be delivering their lambs in a

few weeks.

Not having any livestock in the barn was a bit of an adjustment for me. For 10 years, I headed to the barn, morning and night, seven days a week, feeding the sheep and tending to them, twice a day, sometimes more. And at this time of year, I'd be spending several hours a day in the barn, overseeing the ewes giving birth to their lambs.

As the last sheep left the farm, I knew I'd have to make an adjustment, but I didn't realize how easy it would be. Within weeks, I was basking in my newfound freedom, not having to be home at 5 p.m. to feed every day, or better still, not having to rise and shine

early in the morning.

I think I made the transition very nearly seamlessly. But I did have some concerns about Hamish, our dog.

A border collie's purpose is to work, herding sheep every day. And with Hamish suddenly becoming the only animal in the barn when I went to town or overnight, I knew he'd have to adjust.

He would have adjusted quite well, except for The Sidekick stepping in.

"He can't sleep in the barn all winter," she said. "It's too cold. He'll have to move to the house."

Now, giving good old Hamish full credit, he has never had an "accident" in the house during the almost nine years he's been here. He is really well-

trained.

But something has suddenly happened to him, with the recent snowstorms and freezing rain/ice storms we've experienced.

The dog has become a complete wuss, a total wimp. It's almost embarrassing that he'd be that way.

In the past, I'd walk to the barn after a fresh dump of snow, and the "old" Hamish would burst out the door and dive headfirst into the snowdrifts, chasing sticks, returning to the barn door with a totally white face with two eyes poking out of the snow, his tail wagging in delight.

Now he's fussy about the snow. I'll open the door to let him out, and if it's the tiniest bit inclement out

there, he peers into the snow, then looks back at me, more or less saying, "Do I really have to go out there?"

Yup, a total wuss.

Early this morning, he came to my side of the bed (it's usually my side) at 6:30 a.m., prancing and dancing a bit.

He had to pee. And since he didn't stay out very long the night before, I suspected the "need" was becoming a tad urgent.

"I'll take him out," I said to the lump of covers on the other side of the bed. I think it was probably my turn to let him out, anyway.

I flipped the lock, and Hamish stood there, looking at the sugary snow collecting on the front step.

I could read his mind - and I pointed to the out-

side. With his ears flat against his head, he made a quick trip to his favourite place, to mark it.

I kid you not - back in 30 seconds.

Later, after breakfast, I took him out for a more serious excursion: "No. 2."

This is where I suddenly realized having a wussy dog wasn't all bad.

Usually, Hamish has to scour the countryside to find the "perfect place" to do his business. But since becoming a wuss - well, I timed him: one minute and 30 seconds.

So now I have a new pastime.

I'm timing the dog ...

*Ted Brown is a freelance journalist for the IFP. He can be contacted at tedbit@hotmail.com.*

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