

Restoring a bit of history

Back from a week's vacation, I discovered I physically work harder while on vacation than I do while at the office.

But I figure it's a good thing, giving the brain a rest and letting the muscles take over. Last week I was a barn carpenter.

The barn at home is a big building, measuring 54 by 96 feet. The peak of the roof is 40 feet from the ground and the eaves are 30 feet high.

Doing any work to the barn is always a big job.

And after 126 years braving the elements, the old barn doors were in dire need of replacement.

Two winters ago, both doors blew off their track, and I had to enlist my daughter and son-in-law to help me push them back up in place and wire them to the old track—in the middle of a raging snowstorm. Consequently, the past two years the doors have been wired shut making the barn virtually useless.

For those who don't know, leaving the doors open on a big old barn is a recipe for disaster, especially if it becomes windy. High winds can create a high pressure area inside the barn, and if the conditions are right, that pressure can blow the roof (or the barn boards) right off the building.

The time had come to replace the old doors and make them functional again. The two original doors, each measuring 12', 8", x 7' 6" wide were made of 11"-wide pine boards.

I looked into the options available, and decided, in the interest of maintaining the barn's originality, I'd replace them with the same.

With a load of help from my brother-in-law Ray, we removed the old doors and took down the original track, replacing it with a new one.

Tuesday morning, a truck loaded with 11"-wide rough cut pine boards arrived and we were ready to start building those doors.

We created a jig on the barn floor, nailing down a 'square' of 2x4s, and laid the boards and braces in place, before screwing them together.

Two days and lots of sweat later, Ray and I stood back and surveyed our handiwork. The doors hung on a new steel track and silently rolled

Ted Brown



back with the ease of a baby carriage.

It was a moment of quiet satisfaction.

I remarked to Ray how times had changed, as we'd used cordless drills to screw the doors together, as well as Skil saws and an electric impact wrench to set the lag screws into the header beam.

My forefathers would have stood in disbelief.

At the same time, Ray reminded me we also used the old hammer and hand saw, not to mention a crowbar to lift the doors into place. I guess some things never change.

Caring for an old barn can be a daunting task, and if one takes a drive in the country, it's common to see how quickly those majestic old abandoned buildings collapse with neglect.

As I survey my barn, I can only imagine how stately it must have looked 126 years ago, with its new pine lumber glowing in the sunshine.

But after last week, it's once again standing proud, its new set of doors in place to protect its interior from the ravages of Mother Nature.

People have mixed emotions when I talk of restoring the barn. Some are supportive, while others think I'm nuts, throwing money away. But I'll persevere. I feel that barn is a little piece of history—and it's only right to preserve it.

Unfortunately, as I look around at other old stately buildings around town, falling victim to the wrecker's ball, I come to a sad conclusion.

I'm certainly in the minority.

(Ted Brown can be reached at tbrown@independentfreepress.com)

Letters to the editor

Neighbours thanked...

Dear editor,

I just want to thank some of my neighbours for saving my baby. I always knew I lived in the best neighbourhood in Georgetown but that was confirmed recently.

I mistakenly locked my baby in my van (the windows were semi-open) on a hot day. I hadn't realized my keys had fallen on the driver's seat before I closed the door. With some quick thinking and helpful neighbours, the keys were hooked by a hanger and pulled through a narrow opening of a back window... and Belle was saved.

She was hot and scared and I am not sure who was in worse shape, her or I.

Thank you so very much to all who helped... Karen, Chris, Emily, Arnold, Carol and Mariah. Knowing how hard you worked and how much you care means the world to me.

Melissa Harvey-Daniell, Georgetown

...and so are strangers

Dear editor,

On Friday, July 21, my son was riding his bicycle to work when he wiped out in front of Zellers.

He called me and I was there in under 10 minutes. He told me that in that time, five people stopped to see if he needed help, and one lady gave him a bandage from her car for the worst wound.

Thank you all very much. Georgetown is a great place to live.

J. Graham, Georgetown

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THE CONSERVATION ZONE

GET MORE FOR YOUR A/C DOLLAR

Peter Love
Chief Energy Conservation Officer of Ontario

The dog days of summer are here, and now more than ever, every kilowatt counts. Did you know that air conditioning adds up to 50 per cent to your household electricity consumption? If you replace your old central A/C system with a new ENERGY STAR 14 SEER or (higher) system before August 31st., the Conservation Bureau will send you a \$500 rebate. Click on Cool Savings at www.conservationbureau.on.ca for details.

SEER Efficiency Saves Money

Running an inefficient A/C system is like throwing money out the window. How do you know if your central air conditioning unit is energy efficient? The SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio) tells you at a glance. The higher the number, the greater the efficiency. Check your owners' manual or the label on the unit.

A new A/C system can pay for itself in just a few years, but only if you choose wisely. Older units with a 10 SEER rating use at least 30 per cent more energy than a 14 SEER-unit. You'll be paying for this extra energy for the next 15 years or more!

All newly-manufactured A/C units must have a 13-SEER rating, however you can still find units with lower SEER ratings for sale. Ask your contractor to confirm the SEER rating and to install an ENERGY STAR unit to ensure that you are getting an energy efficient model.

Service Your A/C Regularly

Make sure a qualified technician services your A/C unit each year. Replace your furnace filters regularly – they're part of most central A/C systems. And keep cooling fans free of debris.

My role as Chief Energy Conservation Officer is to ensure that conservation and energy efficiency play a vital role in Ontario's ongoing energy strategy. "The Conservation Zone" helps you find ways to use energy more wisely and become part of Ontario's growing conservation culture. I issue a friendly challenge to all Ontarians to think about how you can use energy more wisely this summer.

The Conservation Bureau develops and delivers programs to help Ontario residents conserve energy and save money. Please visit: www.ConservationBureau.com

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