

Knee-deep in 'compost'

When most people ask that Monday morning question 'what did you do on the weekend?' they're usually expecting something bland, mundane or even boring from me.

Most times I tell them how I just mowed the lawn, maybe did something constructive around the farm, or just pattered about the house. But last weekend, I found myself knee-deep in sh..., er, ahem...well, let's just call it 'compost' for now.

You see, the old barn at my place hasn't had any domesticated animals in it since April 1988, when my Dad and I sold our milking herd. The building has been maintained, but for the most part it's been only used for storage.

But one part of it has been annoying me lately. It's the old box stalls that housed young cattle and calves. You see, they were never cleaned out after the cattle left. And after close to two decades, a number of rodents had taken refuge deep in the manure in those pens. It was time for some action.

As a rule, cleaning calf pens and box stalls is usually a 'fork' operation, where one takes a dung fork in hand and manually pitches the pen out.

Not a lot of fun, to say the least. But I'm a firm believer that when it comes to one's back, if there's a choice between using brawn, or hydraulic fluid, to move heavy immobile objects, (like a box stall full of 18-year-old cow manure) then hydraulics will win every time.

When we had the dairy operation, we also had a little skid-steer loader that was tiny enough to maneuver inside the barn, entering through the narrow 42-inch doorway at the back of the barn.

Dad had sold the skid-steer years ago, but in a flash of brilliance I decided to ask the owner (who still uses it) if I could, for old time's sake of course, perhaps have the use of it for a weekend.

He agreed, and last Saturday morning, as the rest of the world grumbled about a cold, rainy long weekend, I was in seventh heaven as I climbed aboard that skid-steer, prepared to do battle with the calf pens (and any residents who might be hiding under the foot or so of manure.

I must admit, 20-odd years ago, I really enjoyed

Ted Brown



using that little loader. I was quite proficient at scooting through the narrow doors like a rat in a maze. Taking to the controls again was somewhat like reminiscing with an old friend.

I plunged the bucket into the first pen, and rolled it back to see it emerge filled with well rotted manure—I then negotiated the narrow door.

Hadn't lost my touch—matter of fact, I only hit the edge of the door once or twice. Okay, maybe more than once or twice, but still within reason. Besides, the wood on that doorway was getting weathered and rotten—it was time for a new doorstep and weather-stripping anyway.

First the calving pen, then the big box stall, followed by the three smaller calf pens. I was on a roll—and the pile outside the door was building.

After three hours, the pens were all cleaned out, and I switched on the ventilation fans in the barn to air it out a bit.

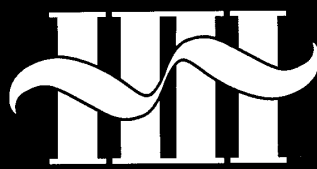
It'd been raining all day, yet I was enjoying the dry interior of the barn, only experiencing a little rain each time I took a bucketful outside.

The material piled outside doesn't even resemble cow manure anymore. After 18 years of composting, it's virtually topsoil. And next spring, the lawn and flowerbeds around my house will have a nice topdressing.

But I must admit, one thing really disappointed me as I finished up the job.

Not one single rodent scurried from the pens.

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



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NOTICE OF APPLICATION OF PESTICIDES ON TOWN OWNED PROPERTY

In accordance with Council Policy for Pesticide Application in Turf Areas, the Parks & Cemeteries Section of the Engineering, Public Works & Building Services Department will conduct the application of Pesticides in select areas meeting week threshold requirements of the following parks, cemeteries, civic facilities, and sport fields between September 13 and September 29, 2006.

| PARC | LOCATION | PIONEER CEMETERIES | LOCATION |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Gellert Community Centre Park | 10241 Eighth Line | United Presbyterian Church | 9018 Third Line |
| Maple Creek Park | 14 Watson Road | Methodist Cemetery | 10579 Trafalgar Rd. |
| Miller Park Drive | 87 Miller Drive | Hornby Wesleyan | |
| Barber Drive Park | 271 Barber Drive | Methodist Cemetery | 8008 Eighth Line |
| Eaton Neighbourhood Park | 41 Eaton Street | Hornby Presbyterian Church | 8021 Eighth Line |
| Norval Park | 479 Guelph Street | Worden Cemetery | 11013 Highway 7 |
| Croatian Centre | 9118 Winston Churchill Blvd. | St. Paul's Anglican Church | 9995 Adamson St. S. |
| Mold-Masters SportsPlex | 221 Guelph Street | Acton Pioneer Cemetery | 30 Park Avenue |
| Emmerson Park | 52 Carruthers Road | | |
| McNally Street Park | 12 McNally Street | FACILITIES | LOCATION |
| Fairgrounds Park | 1 Park Avenue | Civic Centre | 1 Halton Hills Drive |
| Berton Boulevard Park | 40 Berton Boulevard | Halton Hills Ambulance Services | 17 Guelph Street |
| Trafalgar Sports Park | 11494 Trafalgar Road | Georgetown Fire Hall | 53 Maple Avenue |
| Limehouse Park | 12169 Fifth Line | Robert C. Austin Operations Centre | 11620 Trafalgar Rd. |
| Sir Donald Mann Park | 58 Mowbray Place | Acton Yard | 1 Commerce Cres. |
| Acton Rotary Park | 24 Elizabeth Street | Hornby Community Centre | 13526 Steeles Ave. |
| Prospect Park | 30 Park Avenue | Dominion Gardens Park | 135 Maple Ave. |
| Cedarvale Park | 181 Main Street South | Ontario Street Gateway | Ontario Street and Main Street |
| Hornby Park | 12790 Steeles Avenue | Halton Hills Cultural Centre | 9 Church Street |
| Joseph Gibbons Park | 87 Weber Drive | | |
| Lions Club Park | 11 Dayfoot Drive | | |
| Mary Street Park | 30 Mary Street | | |
| Calvert Dale Parkette | 17 Cotswold Court | | |
| Smith Drive Park | 88 James Young Drive | | |
| Standish Street Parkette | 80 Standish Street | | |
| Durham Street Parkette | 46 Durham Street | | |
| Greenore Park | 66 Greenore Crescent | | |
| Birchway Place Parkette | 73 Birchway Place | | |
| Barber Mill Park | 75 River Drive | | |

PAR 111, registration #19810, and Roundup, registration #13644, will be applied in liquid form on turf areas. Signs will be posted and application carried out by licensed applicators per the terms of the Pesticides Act R.R.O. 1990, REGULATION 914.

For further information on the turf management program for Town of Halton Hills owned properties, please contact Susan Wilson, Parks & Cemeteries Supervisor at (905) 873-2601, extension 2614, or visit the Town website at www.haltonhills.ca

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New Hours: Tues. - Fri. 12 pm - 7 pm, Sat. 10 am - 4 pm. Closed Sun. & Mon.

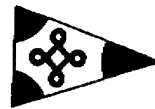
BOATING CLASS REGISTRATION

Georgetown Mall
East end near Zellers

Wednesday Sept. 13
and
Thursday Sept. 14th, 2006
7:00 PM



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