

# Like the death of an old friend

First things first, I admit I'm a sentimentalist. I tend to cling to things for the damndest reasons, as they tug at my heart strings, making me a pack-rat in the process.

I think the Brown family has been that way for generations 'cuz the place is loaded with old treasures (a.k.a. junk) that some might say they collected, whereas I'd venture to say they were just like me— too chicken-hearted to throw 'em out.

Three years ago, I kept the old cat around longer than I should have. I simply couldn't face taking her on that one-way trip to the vet's office.

Last year I wrestled with myself at tearing out some of the old wooden stabling in the barn, to make way for new livestock pens— only because those old wooden stalls had been there for years. (The fact they were half rotten was totally lost on me, but I finally caved in and saw the light.)

But my latest quandary is a bit more difficult—it's the old farm truck.

The little 1986 Ford Ranger XLT has been around for years, bought by my dad to replace the old '79 F150 that died a slow death with mechanical problems and rust.

It was relatively new when he purchased it in the early '90s. He and Mom took it to town for errands, like picking up chicken feed, a sheet of plywood, or perhaps to fill up the gas can for the lawn mowers. Being an XLT model, the interior was pretty posh, a mighty sharp little truck when it arrived on the farm.

All my kids learned how to drive with it in the back fields, and they later drove it to after-school jobs. They also used it to move to and from university.

That same little truck proudly starred in my nephew's movie which he filmed on the farm during his stint at Ryerson. It consequently graced the silver screen at a couple film festivals across Canada.

And I'd guess that little Ranger has probably made more trips to the waste transfer station in Milton than any other vehicle in Halton Region.

But over the past few years I've been torn with

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indecision. It's now 22 years old, and I have an inner turmoil as my sentimental side battles with the fiscally responsible side. I ask myself if it's feasible to license and insure a 22-year-old truck to draw a load of garbage to the dump once a month or so. A trailer hitched behind my SUV could do the same for peanuts.

But the Ranger has less than 190 Ks on it! It's just nicely broken in! It's like an old friend!

This battle has raged for years, but the final blow came a week before the insurance was due.

It blew a transmission cooler line, and leaked all the fluid on the ground. The little Ranger was suddenly dead in the water, unable to move. I called my insurance broker (who happens to be my daughter too) and told her to NOT renew it.

She expressed her condolences and asked if I was gonna be okay. I said I would... in time.

The next hurdle for the sentimentalist in me was 'what do I do with it now?'

I recently brought a scrap metal bin in to dispose of the old scrap pile. A friend suggested I wheel the Ranger into the bin first, then pile the scrap on top. That was the plan, until I thought of the heavy metal scrap piled on it, flattening the hood and roof of the little truck. Images of my parents driving it to town got to me. I couldn't do it.

I know I'll have to deal with it soon, when the time is right. Until then, I've been thinking.

It'd make a great flower planter...

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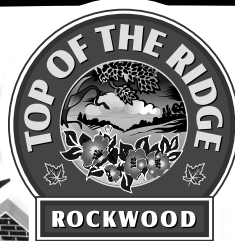
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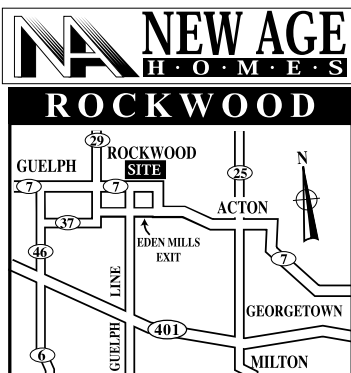
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