

A run-in with little rascals

Years ago, in rural areas, barn-raising was a frequent community event, that involved the participation of many to help one or two. This year, the Middleton Curling Club is planning on its own version – a roof-raising (or at least replacing) with a crew of volunteer curlers wielding hammers and drills to replace the existing shingle roof with one of steel. The story behind this is familiar to those in this area. It comes from a struggle between man and nature that has gone on for several years, with nature winning.

Yes, I am talking about racoons.

There is a healthy and thriving population of racoons in the area, not just in Middleton but in all the neighbouring towns and villages too. And being territorial, racoons will insist on being present on your property if they have established their place as their territory. The curling club has had the dubious honour of being the territory of a particularly enterprising clan of racoons for some years now. Each incursion into the club has been met with stiff resistance from the crew who look after the building maintenance, but in each case the racoons have gone off and formed an alternate plan. Every time a vent is

covered, a hole is blocked, or a roof joint repaired, eager racoon scouts have tirelessly reconnoitred and in a short

time, found another entry. Trees have been pruned to eliminate high level access to no avail. In the war of wits between curlers and racoons, the racoons always seemed to win.

Then this past summer, the closing of possible entries into the club was so good and so complete, there really was no way to squeeze your way into Middleton Curling Club. What do you do if you are a racoon who has been denied your territory, and cannot find a way in?

Well, you MAKE a way in. And that is what they did. With the weather being so wet in September, the shingles on the roof were nice and soft and so over a period of several weeks, racoons chewed and gnawed through the roof in order to make the entry into the club to which they felt they were entitled.

Hence the roof-raising. Headed by Ian Reesor, a work party of volunteers will replace most of the club roof with steel so that the problem of deteriorating shingles will not be an issue. But members will be keeping an eye open in the future for racoons with drills and metal snips. Watch this space.



Throwing Rocks

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