

## Bill Rea ? That was summer

Sorry kids, but facts are facts.

By the time these words appear in print, you will be back at school, confined to a regimented routine for the next 10 months, with occasional breaks in late December and March. And I'm envious.

I realize some people might have the feeling that we haven't had much of a summer yet, and I can appreciate such sentiments. On the other hand, things have not been so bad, have they?

Apart from one Sunday afternoon event at Caledon Equestrian Park that went a little longer than I anticipated, sun burn has not been much of an issue this summer. And while it did alarm my wife a wee bit, that sun burn was rather easy to deal with. I've had a lot worse.

Since I am a married man living in the Dominion of Canada, I am frequently pressed into service to cook family meals on the barbecue on the back deck. If I do say so myself, I'm getting quite good at it. I cook burgers and hot dogs and steaks and chicken breasts rather well, and I think I'm improving. One of these days, I'm going to tackle the task of barbecuing a roast on a spit. My late uncle had mastered that, and I hope one day to measure up to his standards. If there is any such thing as an artist on the barbecue, it was my uncle Bill (no, I was not named after him).

A lot of our dinners over the last couple of months have been cooked in our back deck, and that's likely to continue for the next little while, as long as the weather (such that it is) holds out.

Being a married man living in the Dominion of Canada, I know my place. I should also state that Beth does appreciate my cooking, or at least she says she does. I believe her.

We have had rain over the last couple of months; lots of it; probably more than we needed. But we shouldn't complain. We've been hearing stories for the last couple of months about how badly they want rain in the western areas of the country. On the other hand, think of what people in Texas have had to put up with over the last several days. The fact is we have very little business complaining.

Besides, the rain has helped produce a lot of hay. My brother-in-law is a farmer, and he needs the hay for his operation. True, the rain has complicated his life a bit, as he's had to time things. But I don't think he's complaining about quantity.

There was one week when we couldn't have complained too much about the weather. It was the week my wife and I were able to get away for a couple of days. It did rain the last day, preventing me from having that last swim in the lake to which I had been looking forward. It was not the greatest disappointment I have endured in my life, and it won't be the last.

Sleeping has been a lot easier this summer than has sometimes been the case. Our house is not air conditioned, but we keep a fan handy in the bedroom this time of year. Actually, it is a bit of a source of disagreement in our otherwise happy marriage because I like to have the fan on at times when Beth would prefer it not be on. It all goes back to the days before we cohabited, when I lived in a high rise and always had the window near my bed open just a crack for ventilation, even in the dead of winter. I had extra blankets if things got too cold. But opening the window at night has been a little controversial over the last 19 years, since Beth is not as big a fan of open windows at night. As I stated above, I know my place.

I was actually a little taken aback last Thursday at the Peel-Dufferin Plowing Match at the number of people who were wearing jackets; myself included. In late August, we all should have been sweltering.

It is a fact that there have been very few heat alerts this season. There have not been many news releases from the police warning about leaving dogs unattended in hot cars (there have been a few, but nowhere near the number I would have normally expected). That's good, because I hate reading them.

It is, after all, possible to have a nice summer without having to deal with extreme heat, is it not?

And according to the calendar, summer still has a couple of more weeks to run, meaning there are probably going to be a few more nice days to enjoy, even if kids have to enjoy them while doing homework.

Incidentally, I wrote this column at home over the weekend. Does that qualify as homework? If I can handle it, so can you kids.

The days of sleeping in late and going about a leisurely pace are done for another year, at least as far as school kids are concerned.

They now are back at work, as are their teachers. At least the teachers get paid for what they do. When I was a kid and it came to my homework, all I ever got was threats from my parents and teachers.

As I indicated above, the good days are not completely done. There will be a couple of opportunities to enjoy comfortable temperatures in the outdoors. Fall fairs are coming, and they are always a source of good fun.

Many, many years ago, when I was a lot younger and smaller and had dark hair, I dreaded this time of year. Yet I now look back at those times with a certain amount of yearning. And I am pretty sure I'm in good company.

And don't despair kids. There will nee another summer vacation starting in about 10 months.

