Grampa's Browns Corner
Daily Blab 4/22/20 PM

Yes, Campers, today there is a special second edition to pick up on some things that didn't make the morning Blab.

TRACTOR RACK REPAIR

I don't know if I posted Uncle Tim's suggested alternative to the tool rack. He said

It occurred to me that maybe you could empty the rocks or pellets or whatever are in your weight box, and instead put some lengths of pipe in there to hold tool handles, like a golf bag. The housing would provide good protection for the bottom couple feet, and you could remove it easily when you didn't want it around. This prompted me to see if others have had this idea, and voila:

I thought I could improve on my rack design so I did:

1. **I moved the ag vehicle reflector to the right to make room for the rack.**
2. **I moved the right signal light up to make room for the cargo crate.**
3. **I moved the backup light up to clear the ag vehicle reflector.**
4. **I mounted my wooden rack on a steep angle so that gravity keeps the tools in place and nothing protrudes beyond the tires**
5. **rack is mounted with TEK screws as is the cargo crate.**
6. **I mounted the suction cup rear view mirrors Tim gave me last year, lubricating the suction cups with weather stripping cement for permanence.**
7. **I mounted the Ratchet Rake for the first time. Those of you who are not Uncle Tim may appreciate the video https://youtu.be/A2kNTv2JD5s**

The video is not mine, not me. The tractor in the video is comparable to mine, however.

This afternoon I worked until dinner with the ratchet rake pulling up smilax, smoothing bumps, and roughing the surface of all the recently cleared paths along the northeast border. I found several remnants of former *electrified* barbed wire fence along the property line. Future editions will delve further into that subject.

The intent was to sow perennial wildflower seeds but time did not permit.

MAILBOX DOOR CLOSER

Remember the pruning of the overhanging branches over the driveway with the battery powered pole saw? While I was cutting up those big branches I kept a lookout for a piece of Mulberry with a natural intersection of branches at about a 90 degree angle. I had this vision of a counterweight closer for the mailbox door.

The oversize mailbox, first deployed in 2006, has been the victim of assaults, including the brutal blast of snow and slush from passing Highway Department plows in winter. I have beaten it back into shape several times but the plastic door retainer had lost the ability to keep the door closed so too often we would find the door hanging open following a rainstorm and our mail soggy from wind blown rain.

The vision was of a counterweight hanging off to one side and projecting toward the back of the mailbox so that rather than falling open the door would tend to fall shut.

When the mailbox door is opn, the weight is on the street side from the hinges and tends to keep it open. We have not found the mailbox open since putting the closing device on.

Comic Strips

From time to time I have sent emailed images of particularly fun issues of *Non Sequiture.* I have come to think about copyright issues and will no longer be sending copied images of copyrighted comics. So I wrote to Tyler:

I start my day reading three comic strips, *Dilbert*, *Doonesbury*, and *Non Sequitur*. I access them at http://comics.azcentral.com/slideshow?comic=nq&feature_id=nq

Lately Non Sequitur has been doing a series something akin to a graphic novel, involving a little boy who is "on the spectrum" and appears to have magical powers. I think that people who enjoy Calvin an Hobbes are likely to enjoy this. Here are the first few entries in the current series.

Happy to discuss if you want.

Love, Grampa

I'm repeating this because there have been a couple of Non Sequiturs in the past week or two which I would have liked to share.

BROWNS CORNER PRESS

Nana reports that as of April 20 the numbers of people who had watched Dr. Toughlove's Read Alouds on her You Tube channel were:

- Playground Heroes - 100
- Jamal and Me – 421

It is pretty exciting living with a famous author. Please tell your friends to check out www.carolfranksrandall.com.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST
More about The Big Oak

The ongoing investigation of the age of The Big Oak

I decided that rather than counting growth rings in a photograph, I would bring a log in to the shop for careful study.

After dressing up the saw cut with a belt sander, I counted 75 growth rings.

75 ÷ 14 = 5.357 years per inch

At this rate our 44 inch diameter Big Oak would have taken 44 x 5.357 = 236 years to grow. So that particular acorn fell in 1784. George Washington would have been 52 years old and pretty well known.

I did some on-line research about growth rates for trees on The Eastern Shore. This was a helpful read :
https://academic.oup.com/treephys/article/29/11/1317/1649017

I think my revised calculation may be misleading. If you study the first 8 years' growth, it takes up 3.25 inches. 2-1/2 years per inch. The remaining years, (75-8=67 years) increased the diameter by 10.75 inches. The later 67 years had a rate of (67 ÷10.75 = 6.232 years per inch).

Applying that logic to our Big Oak, [44" – 3.25" = 40.75"] x 6.232 = 254 years. Plus the 8 years of early growth makes 262 years. The acorn fell in 1758 when old George was 26 years old. Probably closer to the truth. The sources in the linked reference say that as the tree gets bigger, radial growth gets slower. I have no way of accounting for that mathematically other than to say that the tree probably was born about the same time as G. W.

How do you type "divided by" symbol (÷) ? **Go to** https://www.font-generator.com/symbols/maths/

RESEARCH

As I write this, I'm thinking of Lila, who has shown a remarkable interest and ability to research things on line. I recalled having read about a famous oak tree in Wye Mills, about twelve miles from Browns Corner known as The Wye Oak. I looked it up on line https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wye_Oak **and learned that it was toppled in a thunderstorm in 2002. It had been designated the biggest oak tree in the USA, 96 feet tall, 32 feet around, and estimated to be 460 years old. There is some fascinating information there.**

That got me curious so I went out and measured our Big Oak and found it was 98 feet tall, taller than the Wye Oak. I will outline how I measured the Big Oak later in this issue.

In the course of reading about the Wye Oak, I learned that an organization called American Forests maintains a Champion Tree Registry. I decided to nominate our Big Oak which turns out to be a willow oak, *quercus phellos*, based upon my 1987 Golden Guide, *TREES a guide to familiar American trees*. (The Wye Oak was a white oak, *quercus albus*, a different type of tree altogether.)
In the process of filing a nomination for Champion Tree status I found that there are three willow oaks already registered and based upon a point system used to rank trees, our Big Oak gets 519 points, considerably more than those three which have scores of 452, 457, and 469. Check it out at https://www.americanforests.org/get-involved/americas-biggest-trees/champion-trees-national-register/?search_area=adv_search&bt_page_id_reset=1&species=OAK&scientific_name=Quercus+phellos&common_name=Willow&state=&state_opt=eq&species_opt=eq&search_val=&prim_order=Height&order_by=DESC&submit_search=Search&bt_page_id=1

The application has to go through a formal review process with American Forests and I have no idea how long or how involved that may be.

Well this has certainly been exciting. But also of great interest to me is that Zoe and Elle have a huge willow oak in their front yard which I think might get an even bigger point score. If their mom and dad approve, I will help Zoe and Elle measure their tree and nominate it as well. Imagine that, dueling Big Oak trees!

I think I know why Big Oak Road, a block away from Zoe and Elle's house got its name. And I'll be surprised if we don't conclude that their Big Oak grew from an acorn dropped before George Washington was born.

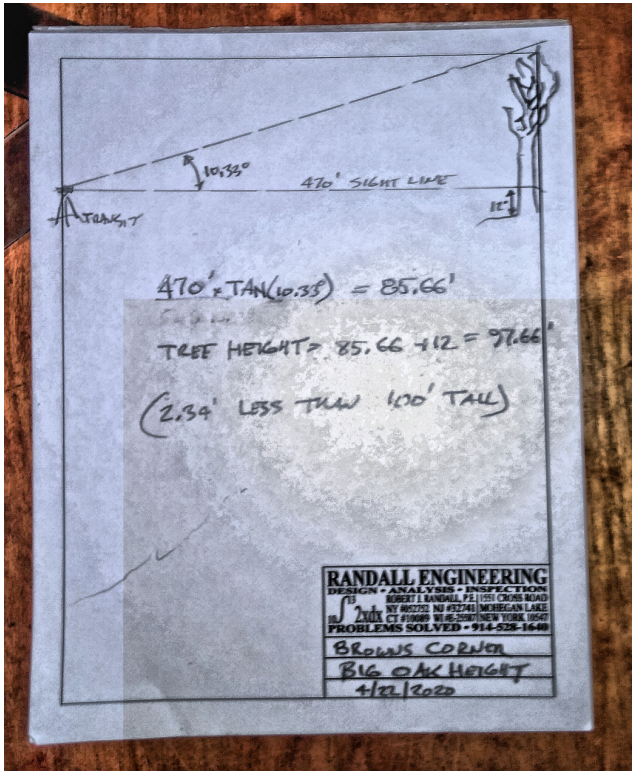
I certainly did not know when I started this issue how it would end!

MEASURING A TREE

Trying to find out how tall a tree is can be a challenge. Here are the ways I can think of:

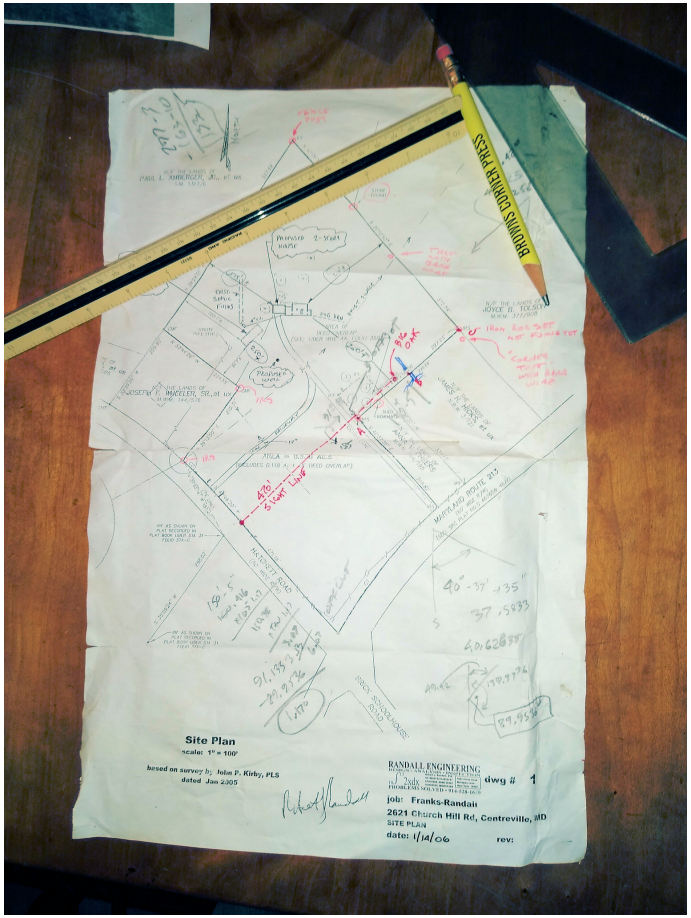
1. **Tape Measure (not really practical if you don't have a very tall ladder)**
2. **Geometry (what I used, aided by my surveyors transit, described in a prior issue)**
3. **Photometrics – take a picture from a great distance with a measuring stick in the picture (I have used this as a verification)**
4. **Helium balloon raising a measuring string. Not a bad idea but there is no party supply store near Browns Corner. Maybe some other day.**
5. **Shadow analysis. I am hoping to have a chat with Uncle Tim who knows more about image analysis. This blow up from the QAC Property Viewer shows the light colored images of the tree itself and the dark shadows from the sun on the clear winter day it was taken. Food for thought.**
6. **Cut it Down please, no!**
7. **Tyler – do you have any other ideas?**

I chose #2 – Geometry:



The picture above is the actual geometry calc. The picture to the right is the worksheet I have been using for weeks. It is a scale copy of the survey plan used as a site plan when we applied for the building permit back in 2006.

The red dashed line is the sight line for the transit setup.



This is the tree book. And this is also, THE END.

Love,

Grampa