

The PIT:

By Mark Lawton

Well "the pit" saga has finally ended and here are the results.

1999

- Former owner installs fish pond.

2001

June

- Mark and Ann buy house and quickly realize the pond looks like a swamp.

July

- Swamp drained, name changes to "the pit"

August

- Contractors start using the pit as a dump for various and sundry debris
- Mark protests

September

- Ann hires "The Atomic Girls" (or some such name) to haul away previously mentioned debris. Mrs Atomic does the work while daughter atomic stays in the truck talking on the cell phone looking very pregnant.

October

- Ann buys 10 cubic yards of dirt to fill the pit.
- Note: despite many years of math teaching, Mark almost requested 30 cubic yards of dirt due to a mis-calculation using area not volume.
- Dirt arrives within minutes
- Mark constructs ramp from planks and garbage cans
- Mark starts moving dirt at approximately 10 loads per day
- Mark feels weak and incompetent
- Mark arrives at great idea: Hire one of his soccer players to move dirt.
- Dan (left defender) arrives on a Saturday from his cushy life in the suburbs. Dan drives up in brand new Mercedes SUV for his \$8 per hour job. Dan states that he had no idea how to get to our house. When asked how he figured it out, Dan responds that he "just used the in dash GPS system" (Side

note: Dan is wearing sweatsuit that is immaculate. Perhaps it has never been worn. Mark wonders if Dan has ever done any manual labor.)

November

- Dan no longer available to move dirt due to History paper comparing one esoteric figure to another.
- Mark seeks help from teenager living next door. Turns out that John is a sweet kid but has some disabilities that keep him from taking full control of the wheel barrow. John lasts 1.5 hours.
- Mark notices a place nearby that offers day labor for hire. Inquiry yields a reference number for a laborer available at \$12 per hour. Mark decides to ponder the price. Mark continues to ponder price while backing out of parking place. Mark backs into the car of an Eastern European dissident who responds with "Hello" "Hello" "What you doing." "Don't you watch what you doing." (Apparently "hello-hello" sarcasm is acquired early these days.)
- Dissident calls to determine how to proceed with insurance transaction. "What you not call insurance company yet." "Hello" "Hello" "You not acting responsible."
- Mark contacts insurance company and learns that, in light of new accident, rates are likely to rise \$500 per year starting in January.
- Mark and Ann drive around Portland and notice authentic (no reference numbers necessary) day laborers sitting on the side of the road. Mark, using decade old Spanish, hires Gustavo for \$8 per hour to move the dirt. Gustavo is short in stature but burly in mind and body. Five hours later, Gustavo, accomplishes the three month old goal - all dirt gets moved. Mark, John, Dan, and Dissident all sleep better. "The pit" becomes "the garden"