

Home Country

The art of digging a hole

When Jim Kennedy uses his big backhoe, a crowd usually gathers. He's an artist.

He runs his massive-toothed monster gouging holes in the backyards of his neighbors, putting in their pipes and even the occasional swimming pool, and does it with the grace of a surgeon.

At Bud McFarland's place the other day, he was there to install Bud's new septic tank. This was to be a massive septic tank, Bud said, "big enough so if I want to put in a hotel, I don't have to worry."

It was a balmy day in May, past coffee time, and the backhoe master was at work. Bud was standing there watching Jim work his digging magic in the backyard, along with half a dozen others, including us. Now and

then Jim would just do something to show off his skill. At one point, when Jim's backhoe cut through a buried tree root, there was about a foot-long section of root lying alone at the bottom of the hole.

"Hey," Bud yelled at Jim, good-naturedly, "firewood!"

Jim grinned and reached his long steel arm down into the hole, gently picking up just the one piece of wood, lifting it out of the hole, and delivering it to Bud's outstretched hand as though it were the crown jewels.

As we watched, Jim lifted the massive concrete vault of the septic tank and placed it gently in the hole. Then his helper hooked a chain to the septic tank lid

and Jim lifted this into the air and swung it over the hole. But instead of lowering it, Jim stopped the machine in mid stride and hollered at the new septic tank owner.

"Hey Bud!" he yelled,

"Got any bodies you want to hide?"

The perfect place for a murder victim. Agatha Christie didn't even come up with that one.

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