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Matt Smith: How hot is it? It's SO hot...

Only in the dog days of summer in Livingston County can you say it's hotter than Hell in Howell and not be accused of exaggerating.

Truth be told, the county's favorite ironically named town is plenty hot nowadays, as is Howell, Brighton, Hartland and pretty much anywhere you turn. The days are sticky; the nights are rough for sleeping. It's like somebody took the atmosphere and replaced it with tapioca.



These days remind me of the summers when I was growing up, staying up late because I couldn't get to sleep because of the heat, and watching Johnny Carson. He didn't help me get to sleep, but he did make a lasting late-night impression.

I remember times he would be delivering his monologue and slip in an offhand reference to how hot it was in California. The audience would recognize this was an appetizer for a big comedy entrée, and reply, in unison: "How hot is it?" Then would come the punchline. Comedy is served.

So, on one of those sleepless nights this week, I got to wondering: How hot is it?

Now, longtime readers, wait a minute and cool your jets before you fire off a letter to the editor. I realize I did a column on the same premise around this time last year, and I suppose there's a special spot in Columnist Hell for writers who do this on a regular basis.

On the other hand, I'd be willing to bet that it's cooler in Columnist Hell than it is outside right now.

So, again, how hot is it? It's so hot that:

- People are going to start flashing at the Brighton Roundabout just to catch the breeze.
- Another three weeks of this heat, and you're going to see the ice cream man get a ton of write-in votes in the Aug. 8 primary election.
- The "Decision Pending" sculpture by the Brighton Mill Pond has gone from being the most reviled piece of art in town to the most envied. No clothes, no cares, right?
- It won't be long until video stores report skyrocketing demand for the movie "Be Cool," followed by a record number of returns from patrons who are disappointed when they find out it's not an instructional video.
- Some absent-minded congressman is bound to forget the amendment about banning gay marriage and introduce a resolution in support of the sanctity of central air.
- Housing starts are plunging in Livingston County, but that's only half the story. Right about now, they're plunging into a nice cool, chlorinated pool.
- If the Wicked Witch of the West were here right now, she'd be practically begging Dorothy to throw a bucket of water on her — regardless of the consequences! Hey, at least when you're a puddle, you can evaporate: none of that icky sweating anymore.
- Any day now, somebody is going to take the sculpture of the geese in the Brighton Mill Pond and rename it from "Hot Landing" to "Landing." Everything is hot right now. Any further modifications would be gratuitous.
- Faster than a speeding bullet, Superman is making a stop by the Fortress of Solitude to ditch the tights and go straight to the thong.
- If this heat keeps up, next year's LACASA Garden Tour is going to consist of a walk through a cactus patch. There just won't be any vegetation remaining in Livingston County at this rate.

- The homeland security threat level is going to be upgraded from yellow to orange sherbet.

How hot is it? You tell me at mattsmith@gannett.com. Your responses might be featured in a future column — assuming we all don't wither away by next week, that is.

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Originally published July 19, 2006

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