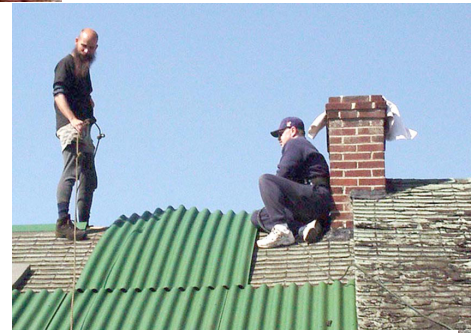


Pumpkins are just one other item that we pick up in October and November. Everybody at Rikki's Refuge, except the stuffy old cats and dogs, loves pumpkins. Good nutritious fresh food. And just at the right time of year when all the fruit and veggie stands are drying up, the pumpkins roll in by the truckload. If you think picking pumpkins sounds like more fun than trick-or-treating, please join us Halloween night as we convoy to Richmond to pick pumpkins at Trinity United Methodist Church.



I learned so much from all the projects we've done over the years. And I bet you have too. I am always surprised when I go back and look at the old pictures, to see how far we've really come. Remember the horrible ditch project, in the middle of winter, with the ice and snow melting just enough to make a horrible muddy mess in the middle of the day? We sure were thankful to have a ditch witch lent to us for the weekend. Well over half a mile to get water to every animal area. The project seemed to drag on forever!



Then came the new roof on the house, much needed and long overdue. Thankfully the Ondura was donated to us. The new green roof made the old moldy wood siding look horrible and so it got a coat of bright white paint.



Cat House Number One was built completely from scratch, both the barn and the run. It took us almost two months, usually working only weekends, to make it ready for the first feline occupants. The second group of cats who wanted to come to Rikki's Refuge had less than two weeks to move or they were going to be exterminated. The couple who'd been caring for this feral cat colony came to look at what we had to offer. We needed a quick solution, we couldn't wait to build a barn, and that's when we discovered Capital Sheds. Instead of building the run from four by fours, two by fours and fencing, we used dog pen panels and were able to build a Cat House in less than two weeks. Doesn't that look like a dinky little house now?



But it was adequate to save their lives and give them space to live until luxury facilities could be built. One thing led to



another and after ten temporary Cat Houses were built, we put new construction on hold until we built the luxury facilities. Volunteers dug the holes and set the 4x4 verticals, then cut and nailed up the horizontal 2x4s, then stapled the fencing in place. Sometime during this project (which spanned a couple of years) we got our new tractor, and that helped to speed lots of things along.



Hoops were bent and fastened into place and the aviary mesh roof went up. Gates were mass-produced. The finished product was a fully equipped, 2,000 square foot playground ready for running, climbing, and playing. Each cat run is 100 feet long (long enough to get up to a full speed run), 20 feet wide (plenty of room to zoom) and 12 feet high (for lots of climbing space). These runs would last through many snow and ice storms.

