

INSIDE AURORA: Complex Inferiority

By Scott Johnston

So, did you find the same problem as I did with the Home Show last week-end?

Contrary to the fears expressed by the organizers when they lost their traditional Community Centre venue to the Aurora Tigers' playoff run, the issue wasn't finding it. They made sure of that by outdoing themselves in the directional signage department, festooning the Town with a bazillion boulevard signs.

I guess they feared folks unaware of the venue change to the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex would instinctively home in on the ACC, and spend too much time falling down on the arena ice wondering why there were so many fewer exhibitors this year. No, the problem was the same one as every year; you go there feeling proud of your home, and come out feeling that it is more like Petch House. That would be the "before" Petch House, consisting of a decaying pile of logs on Leslie, not the spiffy unrecognizable new structure now located on John West Way.

I don't expect that making you feel badly about your home is the intent of our local Chamber of Commerce, who put on the Show every year, but that's the end result.

Thought your current patio did the job? Well, apparently it's not even worth spending any time outdoors on your property unless you have a deck built of tongue and groove BC old growth cedar, with built-in eight person jacuzzi hot tub, a barbeque large enough to roast a small water buffalo, a sunken fire pit, full wet bar, several of those standing heaters that look like they're the source of 17% of the world's global warming, a retractable canopy, and a matching patio set hand made by seventh generation Swiss craftspeople. And a deck is just the tip of the your-home-is-inferior iceberg of products on display: windows, doors, roofs, landscaping, driveways, interlocking brick, water softeners, lawn care, hardwood floors, water features, countertops, rain barrels, screens, signs, siding, millwork, furnaces, appliances, parging (look it up), window coverings, and much more.

And that's just the obvious stuff. There are also home improvement opportunities you probably would never have considered.

How about a koi pond? That would certainly be popular with your neighbours' cats and other local wildlife.

Or perhaps an outdoor speaker system disguised either as rocks, or more likely to draw dismayed looks from your neighbours, hidden in a series of garden gnomes?

Or an inuksuk for your garden made of Precambrian Shield rock guaranteed to last thousands of years? Which coincidentally is about how long it will take to pay for it.

Or a topiary shrub shaped in the likeness of a squirrel, or an elephant, or your favourite member of Council?

Overwhelmed by all the options, it was a pleasure to get a break from it all by coming across the odd non renovation-related booth such as one for a community group, or a local politician.

I suppose the latter booth could be considered to represent a different type of "selling", but at least I wasn't made to feel inadequate about the timers on our exterior lights.

By the time I was finished visiting all the booths, I was exhausted, and stumbled out into the parking lot loaded down with a bag full of at least 50 kgs of written materials, and an overall feeling of residential inadequacy.

On the plus side, I have a year to consider everything I've seen. And if I do ever decide to put in a fire pit, at least all the paperwork I collected will provide enough fuel to keep it going for a while.

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