

BROCK'S BANTER: Buyers' Remorse

By Brock Weir

The time has come to put away the smart phone, or, at the very least keep it out of the bedroom.

Over the last little while, I have developed a habit of keeping it on my bedside table just in case anything urgent needs to be addressed. You might snicker at that, but there was a practical reason for doing so.

The habit became truly full-blown during the course of the Federal Election when flying visits to Aurora's ridings by any one of the Federal leaders looking to become the next Prime Minister could turn on a dime.

These notices would often come after midnight and could be tweaked well after any reasonable person's bedtime. So, whenever I happened to roll over, I naturally grabbed for my iPhone before dozing off again to see if there would be any disruptions to my morning routine. It was a bit of an inconvenience to check at intervals between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m., but it ensured the winks I was able to get were sounder and kept nightmares of missing an important event at bay.

But there was one unfortunate side effect.

Once you get into the world of online shopping with any variety of online retailers, whether Amazon, eBay, or Indigo to pick just three, your email address is theirs and they show no qualms in luring you back into their cabinet of curiosities with once-in-a-lifetime offers and too-good-to-be-true deals.

So, when a 4 a.m. email check came around, there were all sorts of goodies to choose from in my inbox, including 80% off TV box sets, one-of-a-kind items up for grabs on eBay with only a few hours left to bid, trade paperbacks (a particular weakness) knocked back to bargain basement prices?

In my haze, I eagerly perused these deals and, once the sun came up, occasionally found I had placed orders ? and a bid or two ? on items I probably wouldn't have given a passing glance in the hard light of day.

Thankfully, most retailers allow you to cancel orders before they ship. Ebay, on the other hand, is a different story. In those cases, I just sent up a few prayers ? a practice I am not particularly versed in, truth be told ? that some other sucker would outbid me.

Thankfully, it usually worked.

It has been my real introduction to buyer's remorse.

Increasingly these days I am seeing more people becoming particularly vocal about this phenomenon, whether it is an ill-advised online purchase of spray-on hair to give a helping hand to your scalp, an impulse buy of a tabloid magazine at the supermarket checkout to read about the impending birth of Jennifer Aniston's 79th child, or a chicken wing once touched by Elvis Presley that has allegedly been vacuum sealed since 1974.

The morning of this writing, in fact, the CBC ran an online story about one particular sports fan in Oshawa who had Jose Bautista and his now-iconic bat flip tattooed onto his thigh. 50 years from now, it will be interesting to learn how this dude will explain to his grandchildren our temporary euphoric blue wave and what possessed him to immortalize it on his person. Not to mention the other fellow featured who had an image of Rob Ford wielding drug paraphernalia etched onto himself. Justifying that one might be a tougher row to hoe.

Nearby, Aurora seems to be experiencing its own unusual case of buyer's remorse.

As you can see in a letter this week, and indeed letters that have populated the last three editions of The Auroran, there are no shortage of opinions regarding Aurora Council's recent agreement to a pitch made to them by the Queen's York Rangers' Regimental Council to help finance the placement of a retrofitted, disabled, decommissioned light armoured vehicle (LAV) at the Aurora Cenotaph.

The Department of National Defence announced up to 250 decommissioned LAVs would be available to communities across Canada with the intent they be placed in prominent locations to recognize the service and sacrifices of those who serve in Afghanistan over the 13 years of conflict, many of whom had connections to York Region.

Council enthusiastically supported the idea, voting in favour of spending \$15,000 for a concrete pedestal on which to place the disabled vehicle and a brass plaque to explain its significance, with very little debate. In fact, most members of Council were bubbling over with their enthusiasm for the plan.

Since the first half of October, however, these bubbles have been steadily pricked.

Personally, I thought it was a nice idea, and one which would not only serve as a visible way to commemorate those who served at a monument that serves as a memorial for the war dead from Aurora, King Township and what is now Whitchurch-Stouffville, but also a way to drive home to younger people that veterans are not just our grandparents and great-grandparents, but can also be our

parents, aunts and uncles, cousins, neighbours and teachers we might see in the community every day.

The concept of a veteran is not as remote as it now seems with all of our First World War veterans now gone and our Second World War vets in increasingly short supply.

I would be lying though if I said the thought, 'It's an interesting choice to put a tank at what is supposed to be a 'Peace Park,'' didn't cross my mind at least once, but over the years the latter-day repurposing of this greenspace seemed largely forgotten.

Not so, apparently. That was a pleasant surprise, but it puts Council in an unusual position.

Following the (continuing) mild backlash against this plan, Councillor John Abel last week questioned when might be an opportune time to bring this back to Council for reconsideration to find a more suitable location within Aurora.

This month, with Remembrance Week observances and activities in the forefront of people's minds, it will be an interesting discussion to have, and one which should not be taken lightly. For all those individuals passionate about finding a more suitable location for the LAV ? such as the Aurora Armoury or outside the Royal Canadian Legion ? there will be an equally passionate contingent for whom the Aurora Cenotaph is the most logical place for it.

There is no option that will please everybody and in this particularly sensitive month, Councillors are not in an enviable position. For the thousands and thousands of dollars that are spent at Town Hall each year for consultants and consultants studies on issues that seem like no-brainers to many and barely cause a ripple in the public conscience once their recommendations are brought forward for implementation, who would have known that arguably the issue most in need of a public consultation is a \$15,000 proposal brought to Council on the fly with the best of intentions to commemorate those who nobody would dispute should be lionized at every opportunity.