

INSIDE AURORA: A Clear Problem

By Scott Johnston

I was walking through the arboretum recently, and as frequently happened when I was there this time of year, I spied a familiar figure sitting on a bench; the Easter Bunny.

He had regaled me with tales of woe over the years associated with his annual event at the Seniors' Centre. He had gotten behind on preparations, hidden his eggs at the wrong place, gotten the date wrong, even been worried about competition from Santa. He really was an issue-prone mammal.

Noticing he looked stressed yet again, I paused when I reached him.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

He sighed heavily.

"The Town's not introducing the clear bag program," he said at last, looking up with red-rimmed eyes.

That was the last thing I expected to hear. I sat down beside him.

"When I heard that Council was considering a clear bag program," he explained, "I looked into it further, and found that it applied to a number of different municipal containers, including Easter baskets.

"Easter baskets! Those brown wicker things? Really?"

"It was in the fine print of the proposal about other containers, and maybe it was borderline for inclusion. I could have argued it, but it was part of a municipally-sponsored program, so I decided to play it safe. The last thing I wanted was to show up on the big week-end, and be turned away. Think how disappointed all the kids would have been."

"So, I did some research and managed to find a manufacturer who would create baskets out of clear plastic strips. Here, take a look."

He reached under the bench and pulled out a beautiful basket that looked like something that would have come out of a glass blower's artisan studio in Venice. And yes, you could see right through it. I was very impressed.

"These look great!" I enthused, trying to cheer him up. "So, did you make enough, and are they all ready?"

"Yes," but Council decided not to go through with the clear bag program. After discussing it for months and it looking like it was a sure thing, they voted against it at the last minute."

"Well, these things happen. But you've still got the baskets in time, so what's the problem?"

I could see tears welling up in his eyes.

"I used up my entire budget on the baskets!" he wailed, hiding his face in his little paws.

"What, all of it?"

The sobbing continued, until he finally managed to control himself a bit, and looked up.

"Do you know how much work this was? The research, the design, the manufacturing, the delivery? I only got the minimum number I thought I'd need, but it still cost a fortune."

"So you'll have baskets to give out at Easter, but no eggs or treats to put in them?"

He nodded quietly. "Not even a jelly bean."

We sat in silence for a while. Eventually, I stood up, and reached into my pocket.

"Here's twenty bucks," I said, handing over the bill. "It's not much, but you've a couple of days left. Maybe you can find a few more people to help out."

"I sure hope so," he sniffed, taking the money. "Thanks."

As I walked away, I hoped maybe he would check in on some of our Council members. I know it wasn't their fault that he'd used up his entire budget unnecessarily, but chipping in a few bucks would still be a nice gesture.

Feel free to e-mail Scott at: machellscorners@gmail.com