

INSIDE AURORA: Duck (et al) Season

By Scott Johnston

Who would buy a slightly used stuffed duck?

We all have stuff to get rid of, whether it be well-used but still functional items that are no longer needed, or things we've been given that we graciously accepted, even if we didn't necessarily want them, or objects enthusiastically obtained in the heat of the moment that subsequently had us scratching our heads as to why we allowed that impulse to come over us in the first place.

Often these unwanted things end up cluttering closets, garages and basements, until eventually they will be pulled together for disposal. If you're crafty, they can be re-gifted, but most will be thrown out or donated to charity.

But for some people, they provide the perfect opportunity for a garage sale.

I've participated in running some sales over the years, and my memories tend towards them being a lot of work, for little financial return. And one never gets rid of everything.

But some people are obviously unfazed by and even thrive on spending hours finding and tagging items, setting them out on tables, and having people scrutinize their lives (?what were they thinking having one of these??), just to sell 20 things for an average of 50 cents each, then having to dispose of all the unsold items.

Maybe it's the social aspect of meeting new people. Or perhaps it's the result of some sort of excessive haggling gene being expressed.

But you can't discount these sales' popularity.

This likely explains why the ever-imaginative folks at Town Hall came up with the idea of holding a community garage sale. This idea isn't necessarily new in Town. After all, the annual Street Festival on Yonge Street had its beginnings as a sort of mega-garage sale.

So, the first Saturday in June, I headed over to the SARC to check it out, passing masses of signs along the way encouraging folks onto the side streets for other local garage sales.

Despite getting there just

after it opened, many people were already returning to their cars armed with purchases. Others were poking hopefully amongst what was on offer from the few dozen or so sellers on hand.

For the most part their tables were laden with the usual garage sale fare: kitchenware, books, cds, movies, clothes, artwork, knickknacks, sporting goods, toys and games.

In their zeal to sell, it even looked like some had taken to stripping their houses, as there were also floor duct covers, hardware and electrical fixtures.

But it was the stuffed duck that drew my attention.

The taxidermy job wasn't bad, and the pose, with wings outstretched as if in flight, was a nice touch. I'm sure in its prime it was a fine specimen.

But it was obviously a mallard of a less than recent vintage, as it was now somewhat faded, shedding some plumage, and just generally bedraggled looking. I didn't see a price on it, but I expect it had a more than motivated seller, so it would be a bargain for whomever was interested.

But having passed the table a few times in my wanderings, it was still there when I left.

Since there was a fair-sized crowd, people seemed to be enjoying themselves, and it's probably one of the less expensive activities put on by the Town, I'm sure it will be back again next year.

As, no doubt will be most of the items purchased there last week, as their new owners remove them from storage and return to try to offload them.

Who knows; if you're really interested, you may even have another crack at that duck, although it may be a little dustier and few more feathers lighter by then.

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