

INSIDE AURORA: In The Bag

By Scott Johnston

‘It’s an idea that could change the look of Aurora.’

I glanced over at my friend John as he nodded his head sagely at this pronouncement.

We had gotten together for dinner, and as often happened, we ended up discussing the various quirks and complexities of life here in Aurora. Although not the best meal topic, our conversation had turned to waste and recycling.

‘You know that the Town is considering no longer allowing residents to use the standard green and black garbage bags you see every other week at the curb?’ he continued.

‘Yes, next year, I think. Aren’t they concerned that people are throwing out recyclable or dangerous objects? Now they want us to use clear plastic bags, so you can see what’s in there. Ugh,’ I concluded with a shudder at the mental image.

‘Exactly. No one wants people looking at their garbage. It’s not only unsightly, but kind of an invasion of privacy.’

‘Well, there’s not much you can do to hide your personal life if it’s in plain sight like that. Unless you want to conceal your denture and hemorrhoid cream containers in an old Cornflake package?’ No wait,’ I paused, ‘cereal boxes are recycling...’

‘There is a way around it,’ John smiled.

‘What’s that?’

‘Pre-printed garbage bags.’

Seeing the quizzical look on my face, he continued. ‘You take what looks to be a clear bag and you pre-print pictures of trash on it: Styrofoam, plastic packaging, broken china, toothpaste tubes, rags? anything. That way when you look at the bag, it appears like you’re seeing a clear bag with items visible inside it.’

‘But it’s really a solid bag that you can put anything in, and no one will know,’ I said, making the mental connection.

John nodded.

‘That’s neat,’ I agreed. ‘But won’t a street full of bags apparently filled with the same garbage look suspicious?’

‘That’s why you have them printed with various designs. There’s a ton of things people throw out, and no end of different products. Throw in odd sizes and different combinations, and it won’t be hard to come up with a number of different looks.’

‘Each package of bags could contain several different styles,’ he explained, ‘so if you left a few bags at the curb, each would look unique.’

‘You could even customize them, with certain types of bags that suggest different users. Everyone could have pictures of tissues and plastic packaging on their bags, but growing families could also have diapers and broken toys, and those with teens could have take-out food containers.’

‘There are a lot of possibilities,’ I admitted. But what if people take a really close look. They’ll see it’s just a picture.’

‘Who’ll want to get that close to someone else’s old smelly garbage?’ John asked. ‘Do you do that now? You said it yourself earlier; ‘ugh’.’

‘True. But do you think there’s a market for this? After all, Aurora’s only one town.’

‘But it’s not just Aurora. I think Markham has already introduced this clear bag system, and it’s bound to expand to other municipalities.’

‘Mark my words,’ John nodded. ‘Take a closer look along the curbs when the Town introduces the clear bag system. I’ll bet you someone’ll have these pre-printed bags available by then.’

Our conversation moved on to other subjects, but as I was heading home, my mind turned back to our waste discussion. I wasn’t sure if this proposal would necessarily change the look of Aurora, but it was an interesting idea.

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