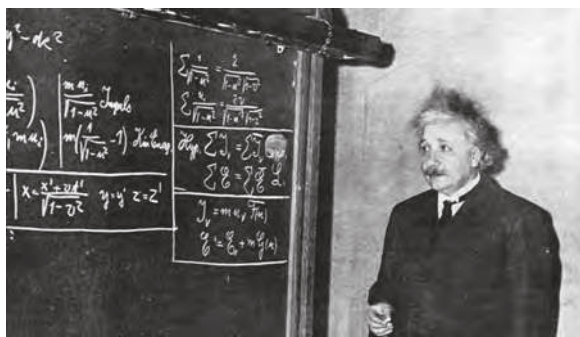




When stupidity smarts!

More rants and raves by our mild-mannered reporter, Ralph Finch.



You don't have to be a rocket scientist to be on eBay...or know how to spell scientist, but...I'm addicted to stupid, stupid, stupid eBayers.

I know, I know, I've promised—many times—that I would not get upset when I strolled through eBay and found...

More reasons to be reminded that Darwin was wrong, and it was the weak-minded people who would not only survive, but thrive, thanks in large part to eBay, which does not require anyone to have even a minimum high school SAT score.

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The other day, on eBay, an item was offered as “semi antique.” That left me “semi confused.” And there are other times that cause my head to spin (and my blood pressure to rise).

Example 1: A “RARE-Taarget-ball” was offered on eBay and I thought...there goes my hope that only smart people will be on eBay...once again, my hopes were dashed.

The required opening bid was \$135 which, no big surprise, was not met.

The “target ball” was described as “A very large and unusual 6” target ball where pontil broken off a hole with a rop in ita deep blue colorno cracks.” Yep, that was the description, word for word. The only thing this...item was missing was a “barnacle.”

Its condition was rated as “very goo.”

And helping(?) the description was a photo of...OK, I've looked at the photo a dozen times and still don't know what it is.

Had you won this bit of...goo, it would have also cost you \$10.50 to be shipped from West Virginia. (I won't comment, except to quote from Wikipedia: “West Virginia underperforms the national average by more than 100 points.”)

Sigh. Only two months before, an eBayer offered a “RARE GURG AND SONS GLASS TARGET BALL.” That, of course, should have read: “GURD & SON 185 DUNDAS STREET LONDON ONT.” A product of the Hamilton Glassworks, these rarely found balls run \$500 to \$1,300.

Gurd vs Gurg—that reminds me of the bad pun about cheese: “Was it Gouda? It wasn't Bada.”

And, as for the last many years, listed on eBay was one of those small, 2.2-ounce ketchup bottles. The last one could have been had for \$3.50 plus \$4.66 shipping! Remember, these bottles come free at hotels (or on cruise ships) offering room service! Don't ask me why (Janet often asks me why), but I have about 100 of them artistically displayed in a wicker basket. (Stop by and I'll give you one for free.)

Also, what irritates me? Words and descriptions that mean little: “Vintage,” and “as found.”

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This one is common on eBay: “Overall Used Condition Consistent With Age.” So, if you buy something that's a hundred years old, you can't expect it to look goo? Can't it be mint, and not look like my grandmother when she died?

And, in late December (2021) a description of “Lot 305: 10.5 inches TALL DARK OLIVE GREEN CASE GIN BOTTLE” was said to have “NO MAJOR ISSUES, IN SEA WORN CONDITION”

What is “major,” and what would be a “minor” problem. I don't see it.

Also, a Norwalk, Conn., auction house said a “large papier-mâché milk bottle” was 26.25 inches tall, and that was it. Interested in condition? The auction house admits: “The absence of a condition statement does not imply that the lot is in perfect condition or completely free from wear and tear, imperfections, or the effects of aging.” In other words, you’ve been warned.

Bits and pieces prove that; indeed, America is going down the tubes. Each day. And, as dumb as we have become, some politicians want to cut educational support even more. Now that’s dumb!

April 12 (+2020): An eBay seller offered a bound volume of *Forest and Stream* from February to July of 1884. He said of the book: “BOARDS ARE LOOSE AND SPINE IS ABSENT. FIRST FOUR PAGES, VOLUME TITLE, INDEX AND FIRST PAGE OF FIRST ISSUE ARE LOOSE. BOARDS WORN AND SOILED.”

Then he said of the condition: “Very Good.” Very good???

“Rare. A pair of glass cubes that look to be glass target balls.”

April 30: A seller from Apex, North Carolina, offered this confusing description: “Old blue cracked glass fly trap; not sure of the age.” Yet, he is sure enough to say it’s “old.”

Should he move from Apex and find a town named...Perigee?

May 9: A seller who is not as bright as a fifth-grader—or a well-trained monkey—offered two glass squares with this description: “Rare. A pair of glass cubes that look to be glass target balls.” Amazing. He says they are “rare,” then added...“Not sure what else they could be or have been used for.” Yet he’s sure enough to say they are “rare” and to place an opening minimum bid of \$99 on them.

What’s rare? Common sense on eBay. Circles vs. squares? Yep, that’s a complicated idea to grasp. When I entered basic training a hundred years ago you were given an aptitude test and—I’m not kidding—you were shown a picture of a hammer and a screwdriver and were asked to identify them. (Of course, knowing the Army, if you identified them correctly, I think you were sent off to become a cook.) I failed the Morse Code part of the test, so what did I do for the next 2 1/2 years? Listened to Morse Code!!

FYI: Old square-head couldn’t get \$99, so he did the next best(?) thing: On May 17, he again listed his pair with a buy-it-now price of \$129.99! Sigh.

A few hundred years ago, people were arguing whether the earth was round or flat. I will bet that some eBayers are still not sure.

One thousand secrets? It’s really no secret: some eBay sellers are either stupid, greedy, or lazy (or a combination of all three).

In the late 1890s, C.A. Bogardus (aka “Champion Quick Shot of the World”) wrote *One Thousand Secrets Revealed*. It took many editions, many book covers (in different colors), different pages and even variations in the book’s size. But it is common! (I have a half-dozen editions.)

Around July 17, “catlynn2” failed to sell an 1898 edition for \$59.95. A week before that, “evesfinds” offered what likely is the 1908 edition for \$45, then dropped the price to \$40.50. Then, in late-July, “diamondantiques” ignored what was currently listed and offered another 1908 edition, but this one was for \$145! Double sigh...

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And, another auction house recently warned: “All condition reports are based on general observations only, and are not meant to serve as a detailed analysis of condition.”

What does that mean? A “general observation?” When George Custer was dubbed the “Boy General,” that would be like him making this general observation: “I think there may be Indians...” And soon he’d be wearing an arrow shirt. Smart.

When George Custer was dubbed the “Boy General,” that would be like him making this general observation: “I think there may be Indians...” And soon he’d be wearing an arrow shirt.

If I was smart, I’d stop looking at eBay.

