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OPC

» GLANBROOK GLIMPSES

Some lessons just don't seem to stick with me



TAMARA BOTTING
FOR THE GAZETTE

You'd think by now, I would have learned to save my work as I go.

The other day, I was having one of those days where I couldn't seem to focus on writing.

I was getting oodles of small, fairly unimportant tasks done, like cleaning my camera lenses, cleaning out my purse, etc. but as far as actual work that I had to get

done, it wasn't looking good.

So, I opted for a change of space. I grabbed my laptop and went to a coffee shop, and sure enough, just being somewhere else was enough to get the creative juices flowing again.

I polished off an article or two in seemingly no time at all; I just kept writing them in the same Word document, cutting the lot, pasting it in an email and sending it to myself.

Then I started in on the next article. I got about 90 per cent of it done, and suddenly my laptop's battery died.

Later when I was back at home and able to plug

my laptop in, Word had helpfully saved what I was working on, so thankfully I didn't have to start back from scratch. But, the auto save feature only backs up every few minutes. Apparently I got a lot done in those last few minutes, because the article that was almost finished was now just half-baked.

Years ago, when I started at The Sachem and Gazette, I was given a computer to work on that was as old as dirt, give or take.

This beast was slow and ornery, and would regularly go into 'beach ball mode,' where the (aptly named) cursor would transform

from a useful little arrow into a colourful, spinning ball of frustration.

I actually timed it one day — I was literally at half productivity, because it spent as much time working as not.

When it was acting particularly loathsome, it would randomly turn off, and I would have to go through the agonizing rebooting process.

During my time with the electronic tormentor (which was actually fairly short, but for the level of irritation it inspired felt much, much longer), I would compulsively save my work every 30 seconds or so.

When the glorious day came that I got a new (to me) computer, I rejoiced that I made it through a whole shift without it beach balling or restarting on me even once. As time went on, I became complacent and lost my work-saving vigilance.

Now that my personal laptop's battery seems to be showing signs of spotty-at-best dependability, it looks like I'll have to retrain myself to save as I go (though the great irony of this column is that while I've written 400-odd words extolling the virtue of saving work throughout, I haven't actually done so once).

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OPC
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It's like a closet on wheels!



TAMARA BOTTING
 FOR THE GAZETTE

I've come to the realization that you're either the sort of person who cleans your car regularly, or you're not. I fall firmly into the latter category.

Recently, one of my brothers purchased a new car. Not just "new to them," but brand spankin' new. It's really a nice colour, runs like a dream and - because there has been an edict of no food

or drink is to be consumed by children in the car on pain of death - still super clean, even though they've had it a couple of weeks.

My car... my car. Well, it's another story with my car.

I bought it new to me a few years back. They had it all shined up for me when I picked it up, and since that day until now, that's as clean as it's ever been in my possession.

It's not that I'm opposed to cleaning my car. I just never really think about it.

About a year after I got the car and the newness of it had worn off, I started being a bit less vigilant about removing clutter. This was the

start of a downward spiral.

As I've shared in the past, I'm an avid fan of yarn arts. This means I usually have a knitting or crocheting project stuffed in my purse. But not always. So, I keep an emergency project (or two or three) in my car if I end up lingering somewhere unexpectedly (for some reason, my friends and family don't want me leaving emergency projects at their houses...)

I also have a book (or two or three) in my car for the same reason.

I drive my niece often enough that it made sense for me to get a booster seat for her, so that's in there too.

There's also a snow brush, a partially but not entirely broken umbrella, and a box of shoes too small for my niece that my sister in law gave me to pass along to a friend of mine with a younger child.

I won't get into discussions about how often I consider tasks like dusting and vacuuming in my car.

Recently, I offered to drive a carpool of Sachem employees to a meeting in Brantford. The day before, I looked at my car and realized that while everyone knows the outside of my car is usually filthy (I operate on the theory that salt and dirt is urban camouflage),

I wasn't quite prepared for them to see my car in what was its current state.

It took me about an hour, but I cleaned my car. I tossed a few errant, empty water bottles that had been hiding under the seat. I also pitched the Cheerios and French fries I found in the back near the booster seat (I'm working on a theory that children actually shed these items, like a snake does its skin). I even cleaned off the dash, vacuumed the floors and seats, and splurged on a car wash. My car hasn't looked this good in ages!

Just don't look in the trunk.

Anthem should include everyone

I've been following the debate over adaptations to the lyrics of our national anthem and I don't understand something. Why should we even contemplate changing the word "native" to "cherished"? Our nation is native (as in indigenous) land and we shouldn't erase that fact.

In contrast, reverting to the original lyrics should be common sense. It's about time we came full circle to the original, inclusive message that was written in 1880: true patriot love thou dost in us command. If modernizing that to "in all of us command" proves necessary, that's fine but we should all feel free to sing our anthem without receiving stares for acknowledging everyone.

Our great nation doesn't deserve to have its history erased and none of us should be rendered invisible.

Amy Soule, Hamilton



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Having worked retail, I knew what would have happened



TAMARA BOTTING
THE GAZETTE

have been creeping up?). Just when I was about to give up on the store for the day, I realized that footwear was on sale. Mattresses and footwear are two things that I don't mind spending a bit more on for better quality, simply because you spend so much time on/ in them. I decided that even if I did have to spend a bit beyond the value of the gift card, I was OK with that. For the longest time, I've been meaning to buy a pair of fashion boots. (This being Canada, there is no such thing as just boots; as far as I can tell, they fall into three main categories: winter, rain and pretty, with a host of subcategories in between.) I saw a pair of ugly boots and decided to try them on. (I know that may sound funny, but it's been my experience that oftentimes, clothing and

footwear that is kind of ugly on the rack somehow transforms into gorgeous after you try it on. Hangers just can't make some shirts look right.) My feet are big and wide, thanks to the genes from my dad's side; I didn't get the dainty tootsies gene from mom's side. This means that depending on the style of a shoe, I take anywhere from size 9 to 11. These boots were 9 1/2 and narrower, which put them on the doubtful, but maybe part of the "will these fit me?" spectrum. After a bit of a struggle to get them on (which I justified by telling myself that if they were super comfy and looked good after I go them on, the stiffness in the heel would soften with use), I walked around a bit and decided that while they were less ugly than they had initially appeared on the shelf, they were still not quite what I

was looking for. I sat down and tried to take them off; "tried" being the operative word there. Yup. They were stuck. The store was fairly crowded at this point, and I was shopping alone. This meant that I had no one with me who could help me pull the boots off, and while I found the situation hilarious, I figured laughing by myself in the middle of the store might scare a few people. I debated my options. I could just buy the boots and tell the clerk that I loved them so much that I wanted to wear them out of the store (and afterwards, live in them always until they were so worn that they fell off in pieces). This seemed a bit extreme. I could pretend that the boots were actually some sort of carnivorous animal that were trying to eat me from

the feet up. Then, I could cut them off and maybe even be able to sue the store for allowing wild animals that devour customers to roam free. The problem would be convincing anyone to believe such an outlandish tale. The last plausible option had the least appeal for me: I could ask the sales staff to help me pull the boots off. Once, while I was working as a cashier at the big box store, a customer said or did something... I don't even remember; something she found embarrassing or stupid or whatever. She apologized profusely for it, and I told her it was no big deal, and that even if it was, I would wait until I was in the breakroom to laugh about it and tell my coworkers. She was shocked to learn that staff talked about customers in the breakroom.

I had no other response for her but to say, "Well, we are human." Unfortunately, I knew that while it was a different store than where I'd worked, it would be no different here, and I had no desire to become a breakroom conversation fodder. After considering my options, I decided to give it one more go. With a prayer and a yank, the boots finally came off (along with my socks, but a victory is a victory). I quickly abandoned the ugly boots on a shelf, to taunt the next customer who dared. (Happy ending: I did find a pair of pretty boots, and the total with tax was a dollar under the value of the gift card. Sadly, while I tried to wear them the next day, I only got as far as the parking lot before I admitted defeat, went back in and changed to my winter boots. Stupid snow.)

I recently had a gift card for a store I don't frequent. I wandered around for a while, trying to decide what I would get. The rational, logical part of my brain suggested that I purchase something responsible and useful, but when I looked at the responsible, useful items, they were pretty much all priced beyond what the value of the gift card was or cost more than I was willing to spend on an item (sorry, but I can't justify \$25 on a mug, especially when the buck store has them for... well, slightly more than a buck. Has anyone else noticed how the prices there

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COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT



Five-year-old Denis Kouznetsov enjoyed playing in the snow by the water tower. It's his family's first winter in Binbrook; they just moved to the area from Burlington. SUBMITTED PHOTO