

A word on Mr. and Ms. In-Between

BROCK'S BANTER

By Brock Weir

Once or twice a week, I feel like I'm eagerly awaiting the numbers to roll in on the latest Lottomax.

It's certainly not a new feeling, but it's one I haven't experienced since I was maybe a tween, or just a little bit older.

A collector of ?things? from an early age, my collecting journey took a dramatic turn when we first got the internet and discovered a little website you may have heard of called eBay. At the time, it was not the worldwide marketplace it now is. It was instead a destination for people looking for very specialized things, there weren't all that many sellers, and, as such, there were far fewer listings than today's standard.

Demand almost always exceeded supply and depending on what you were looking to offload or acquire, your wallet was bound to either become much lighter than you anticipated or brimming over with cash received from something that was once mouldering in your basement.

I wasn't immune to the frenzy.

In those early days, I found a few items that still take pride of place in my collection, but I also got rid of a few things as well. One of my more surprising sales involved a comic book I picked up from a nearby convenience store that derailed me from my mission of buying a popsicle. I read it, enjoyed it, kept it for unclear reasons, but decided to list it just for kicks.

This comic, a satirical spin on the drama surrounding Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding, was picked up at the height of the Lillehammer Olympics, but it still packed a punch four or five years later, re-selling for more than a \$100 more than its suggested retail price of \$3.95.

The only thing that tempered my excitement at this pre-teen windfall was being too young to officially use the online seller. Naturally, as the virtual bouncers kept anyone under the age of majority from joining in the frenzy, my mom's credit card had to be used for all transactions, the money order from the U.S. Post Office had to be made out in her name (this was before online pay systems like PayPal became standard), and I didn't get the thrill of a cheque made out in mine.

This was to be the case until I came of age. Until then it was a countdown until I passed that all-important threshold of 18 and could hold an account myself.

Given the number of weird and wonderful items I acquired at the time, my mother hasn't disclosed whether or not she regrets helping to feed the habit and all but fudge my age, but now I almost wish I was in the position to return the favour and do a little bit of an age switcheroo for her. But I won't because I know and follow the rules, despite my early e-commerce track record.

As I joked to a friend last Friday when he received his first dose of the Pfizer vaccine at a Scarborough clinic due to a pre-existing health condition, she is just a bit too old for current guidelines surrounding doses of AstraZeneca and, as far as Ontario's vaccination plan is concerned, just a bit too young at the moment for Pfizer or Moderna.

There's nothing to write home about on being Ms. In-Between ? particularly when her elder sister, just two-and-a-half years her senior was due to start this week off right with her first dose.

It's no bouquet of roses either being a child of someone in this age bracket as, if I am being completely honest, the worry that comes

with each and every outing, particularly with rising numbers, is nothing short of frustrating when success stories from vaccinated friends and family alike in the 60 ? 64 age bracket and the 70+ demographic are all around us.

I don't have to look too far, either.

On Thursday, my dad, who is a resident in Simcoe-Muskoka just inside the 70+ demo finally got the green light from the local Public Health department to pre-register for his vaccination with an appointment booked for the middle of this month.

So, that's my situation ? the son of a man in one age bracket with some degree of certainty that he has a place in line to receive a life-saving jab, and the son of a woman who was stuck in limbo more or less waiting for her number to come up as people just a little bit younger than her march towards that light at the end of the tunnel.

For the past several weeks, I have been wading through almost innumerable messages from the Provincial government on the vaccine rollout, successes and shortcomings alike, eyes trained not only on news to impart with readers but news and numbers that would be nothing sort of game-changing in my family.

As I wrote the above on Sunday evening, it was clear the game-changer could happen every day. And it came just before press time on Tuesday afternoon with news York Region would begin accepting reservations for the 65+ this week.

I'm feeling good about those metaphorical Lotto numbers, but I'm not taking anything for granted until the registration is complete on Wednesday and, whenever it ultimately arrives, a date is assigned.

It's a strange time we're living in now.

It wasn't all that long ago when people of a certain age ? and, yes, I am counting myself in that group ? were rather reluctant to reveal their age. Now, if it can get you your vaccination sooner rather than later, we're more inclined to shout the digits from the rooftops.

And what about those of us who have pre-existing conditions?

It seems a bit of a crap shoot right now on which pre-existing conditions will get you to the front of the line like a Disney Fast Pass, but how many of us who live with them and were once more comfortable keeping them under their hats, are now more eager to wave them around to their doctors like a flag just in case?

Will the arthritis that has been a thorn in my side since my own tween years finally pay off? After all these years, it's really the least it could do?