

Bill Rea ? What to toss and keep?

Many of us collect things, while there are others of us who just hoard them.

I'm a hoarder, as just about anyone who knows me will tell you.

I hate throwing things out.

It's true, there are some things I grow attached to. But my real justification and motivation for being hoarder is I hate to part with something I might find a use for some time later. There are other items that represent a task, which I hope to get to at some point (in most of those cases, my gut tells me I never will). The habit, which I acquired from my mother, used to drive my father nuts.

A good case in point involves my emails.

I have an arrangement by which I get all my work-related emails sent also to my gmail account. That means if it's work related, I usually get it twice. That can be helpful, some times.

Like many, if not most, of you, a good part of my day in the office is spent going through emails. I get a lot that are purported to be from Justin Trudeau. In reality, they are from the federal Liberal party, and they are generally aimed at telling me how swell they are, and why I should send them money. I usually give them a quick glance, and then put them in the trash, resolving to pay a bit more attention to what the Grits are saying when the next election rolls around. Until then, I can rely on the media releases the government issues.

I also get a lot of emails aimed at my vacation dollars. I get quite a few promoting Ireland, the land of my ancestors which I visited many years ago. I also get fairly frequent plugs trying to get me to visit the state of Virginia. I've been there once, almost 30 years ago. Arlington National Cemetery is, of course, in Virginia, and I toured the cemetery when I spent a couple of days in nearby Washington, D.C. (very interesting couple of days). Virginia seemed like a nice place, but I'm not much of a traveller, and I don't see that changing. These ones go into the trash with very little reflection.

And then I get a bunch of emails per day from an outfit called Freedom Watch, or from its founder Larry Klayman. I occasionally read these pieces, although I confess I'm having trouble figuring out where Klayman is coming from a lot of the time. He hates Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, and I sometimes wonder what he stands for. For a while, I would read his pieces, wondering how I had managed to get on his mailing list (I did nothing to seek a position on the list). I would normally get a couple of paragraphs into the thing. I would either get infuriated by what I was reading, or get a feeling of nausea. I would usually set it aside, resolving I'd get back to it when I had time. If I was too busy to waste my time with this garbage, I would just keep it in my inbox, with a plan to read it in more detail when time permitted.

Such time, off course, has never materialized. Thus, in the last week, in an act of cold-blooded practicality of which my late father would have sworn I was incapable, I started immediately pitching every email from Klayman and Freedom Watch that came in. If I have time, I will still read a couple of paragraphs, but once I've had enough, it's into the trash with it.

Now that has helped to unravel the backlog mess that characterized my work emails.

But there is the aforementioned gmail account, which I normally access from my laptop.

Again, my reluctance to throw anything out has resulted in a backlog of emails there.

Some time ago, I got somewhat bold and resolved that I had to start spiking some of the items on my account. Realizing some of these emails might still be of value, I decided to keep them for a specified period, and then dump them. I arbitrarily chose a year, and skimmed through the emails that were older.

Some I kept. There was personal correspondence that I did not want to part with. There were some emails from people telling me what a swell guy I am and what a great job I do. They always make me smile. There are others that tell me what jerk I am and what a lousy job I'm doing. They usually make me laugh.

That purge did the trick for but a short time. My server kept giving me messages that I was running low of storage space. So I got bolder, swallowed my hoarding pride, and resolved only to keep things for only 11 months. I'm currently down to 10, and am pretty sure I'll have to soon knock it down to nine in the very near future.

As Kenny Rogers once observed, 'The secret to survivin' is knowin' what to throw away and knowin' what to keep.'

Thus I also resolved to go through the stuff I had kept, looking for all the garbage from Klayman and Freedom Watch, and sending each item into oblivion. I had actually been saving this rubbish for upwards of two years. But common sense was telling me I would never get around to reading almost any of it, and that which I might have gotten around to reading would probably have made me sick, or angry.

So I'm purging a lot of otherwise useless emails, and that task is going to take a while. But in the meantime, keep the compliments coming. And those of you inclined to call me something negative shouldn't get discouraged. I was called worse things in the school

yard than any of you will ever manage.

