

Community Comment – December 5th, 2016

By Jon Sapper

Christmas Shopping

The Christmas Season is in full swing. A quiet serene time of year where each of us can recharge our batteries and not be stressed with the daily pressures we all face. It sure is nice there aren't many ads wanting us to buy things. Please excuse the attempted humor and let me get back to reality. Have you ever seen anything like this manic marketing before? I value the free market system, but do I really need to know or care that my bagels, in celebration of the Holidays and for this week only, have 20% more poppy seeds than normal? Enough already.

A friend of mine got 19 catalogues in the mail he didn't ask for and each one was chock full of must have things for Christmas. I don't think you could read through all of these magnificent deals and be done by Christmas. Then there was Black Friday.....which started on Wednesday. Cyber Monday started on Friday and Small Business Saturday, actually started on Saturday, but goes every day through Christmas.

I do most shopping locally, but use the Internet on occasion. The way they develop these little gremlins to infiltrate websites based on what you search for in Google or look for on Amazon, is amazing. In fact, I used the Internet to order some Chinese food the other evening and I kept getting pop ups saying people who buy Chinese food have also bought mahogany chopsticks, porcelain bowls and lotus flowers. All I wanted was some broccoli beef and pork fried rice.

I did need to order 33 kettles for an event I'm helping with and couldn't find them locally. Apparently, not many people buy 33 of these things. When checking out, I was first asked by the computer, "Are you sure you want 33 of 'em"? I clicked yes, then it said, "That is a large order, please confirm the accuracy to proceed". I confirmed the accuracy and the rest of the checkout went fine.

I then noticed when I went to other websites, whether it was for news or weather or to get something else, a picture of those kettles kept popping up on each site. It's pretty tricky how that happens, but wouldn't they think I've already bought enough of those things or maybe they're thinking anyone who buys 33 could certainly be a patsy for buying some more. It didn't work. But the icing on the cake was when I went to Facebook to see a picture my daughter posted of my grandson and sure enough, his picture was surrounded by 4 pictures of these

stupid kettles. And for the last week, every time I go on the Internet regardless of what site I'm on, a picture of those kettles comes up. It's getting a little annoying. Thank goodness I wasn't doing a search on Victoria Secret's website looking for a Christmas gift for my wife. On second thought.....

This has been Jon Sapper for Community Comment.