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A Ted Bit

Is it mandatory to be quiet at a silent auction?

You know, there's nothing quite as exciting as an auction.

The sound of the auctioneer's voice, the subtle gestures some people use to bid, and watching some fool overpay for an item is all part of the fun.

Years ago my uncle had a farm sale, and the morning of the sale, one of his tractors wouldn't start. One of the overly anxious guys there rushed off to town, to pick up a new battery from the local Canadian Tire.

While he was gone, my dad looked at the battery cable connections, cleaned them, and started up the tractor.

The other fellow returned with the new battery, but rather than return it, they just put it on the wagon to be sold with the junk.

They made \$5 profit on the battery. Now that's an old farm auction.

But last weekend, The Sidekick and I attended the Limehouse Hall barbecue and corn roast, complete with a silent action.

I find silent auctions a bit boring—there's no exciting interaction between the bidder and auctioneer. And I often wonder—is it mandatory to be quiet at a silent auction?

I will say, a silent auction is the only type of auction I let The Sidekick run free. If it's a typical auction with an auctioneer—well I'm tempted to duct tape her hands to her belt, preventing her from putting a hand in the air—an action that can cost money.

The Sidekick perused the tables of items she could bid on. A juicer caught her eye, and she decided that would be the item she'd zero in on to purchase.

I figured an innocent juicer couldn't be that much in demand.

She placed her bid.

Minutes later, as she was casually making the rounds to make sure her juicer was safe, she was aghast to find another bid—from bidder #23.

A 'one' dollar bid at that.

Like a crazed pit bull, The Sidekick scribbled another bid—another dollar higher.

"Two can play this game," she muttered to herself. It was gettin' personal.

For the next hour, she made the rounds. If the juicer bid increased, she'd raise it.

One of the veteran bidders suggested she just hold back until the last minute and as they were about to call for final bids, then she could swoop in and slap the winning bid on the coveted juicer.

As she discreetly hung around the juicer, avoiding eye contact with the world, she found another woman was doing the same thing.

"I think that's #23," she whispered to me.

As the final minutes ticked down, The Sidekick took a different approach.

She befriended #23.

They discussed the various uses for a juicer, and #23 admitted she didn't want to spend much more money on it. They made an agreement—they could share it!

At that point I was wondering why I didn't bring the duct tape to tape her mouth, not her hands.

The imaginary gavel silently came down and The Sidekick was the proud owner of the juicer—with the option of #23 using it too—I think. I'm not really sure of the exact terms of the agreement.

We headed home and The Sidekick set up the juicer on the kitchen counter, all set to magically turn apples into juice.

She cut up some apples, and fired up the juicer. I guess

squeezing the juice out of an apple is tough work—man, it made enough noise to do it.

I think I've heard quieter chain saws.

I really feel one should wear hearing protection when running it.

After pushing three or four apples through it, she was rewarded with a small glass of apple juice. I admit it had great flavour, but it would take a whack of apples to make enough for a family breakfast.

But as she was proudly sipping her glass, she made an observation.

"You know, I just think we might also be able to make apple cider with this thing..."

At that point, she was finally speaking my language...

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TED BROWN

**'Like a crazed pit bull,
The Sidekick scribbled
down another bid...'**

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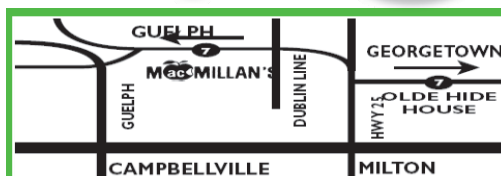
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