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INSIDE AURORA: The End is Near

By Scott Johnston

?So, this is where the parade starts, eh??
The older staffer looked over at his younger colleague and confirmed, ?yup?.
?But doesn't the Town have the Canada Day parade every year? Don't people know where it is??
?They used to,? agreed the older man, grabbing an extra sandbag from the truck. ?I mean, it's always been on Yonge Street. But, ever since 2016 when the Town started shortening the parade route, the public is never sure where it starts and stops.?
?That's why we're doing this,? he said, indicating the sign they had just erected, and dropping the sandbag at the bottom to better support it.
?'Parade Starts Here',? read the younger man. ?I guess that makes it pretty clear.?
?Let's get the other sign set up, and we can head back to the JOC,? said the older staffer, referring to their base on Industrial Parkway, ?and we'll be done for the long weekend.?
Then, seeing his colleague open the door on the far side of the truck, he exclaimed, ?Wait a second. What are you doing??
?Aren't we putting up this other one?? the younger man asked, pointing to the sign in the back of the truck.
?Yeah, but we don't need to drive. It's a beautiful day. We can walk.?
?Walk? Carrying that? Isn't the end of the parade route several kilometres from here??
?It used to be,? agreed the older staffer. ?Here - give me a hand.?
The two men shifted the sign out of the back of the truck, and the staffer continued.
?When they shortened the route in 2016, crowds were more condensed. There was a more festive party atmosphere. As well, parade participants didn't spend hours in the hot sun, and as an added bonus, the Town's costs were reduced. It ended up being a huge success all around.?
?So, the next year they reduced the length by another intersection.?
He pointed to the top of the sign. ?Grab that end and let's go.?
They picked up the sign, and started walking south along Yonge Street.
?And wouldn't you know it, it was even more successful.?
?But that doesn't explain why we're walking, when we could have driven. Does the parade route now go down some side streets and loop back to near where it started??
The older man paused, and set down the base of the sign.
?No, but the route's not as long as it used to be. Based on the growing popularity of each successively shorter route, they kept chipping away at it each year, until the end point wound up where it is now.?
?And where's that?? asked the junior staffer, looking ahead down the street.
?Right here,? said the older staffer, indicating the spot where they were standing.
?But this isn't even a block from where we started!? exclaimed his colleague, pointing to their truck less than a dozen parked cars away.
The older man shrugged, as they started the short walk back. Not a lot surprised him, anymore.
?You know,? he said, ?I hear if the parade's a success this year, they may shorten the route a bit more.
Looking over at the first sign they set up, as he stepped into the truck, he shook his head and concluded, ?If they do that, it may not be long before we only have to put out one sign that has ?Parade Starts Here' on the front, and ?Parade Ends Here' on the back.?

Feel free to e-mail Scott at: machellscorners@gmail.com