

# INSIDE AURORA: Face It & Embrace It

By Scott Johnston

I'm afraid, Aurora, that it's time to face and embrace the inevitable: it's now Christmas season.

I know it's barely mid-November and we just got through Remembrance Day. In fact, you're probably still finishing off the last of the leftover Halloween candy.

But with six weeks to go and no other major holidays or other events in sight to slow down the momentum, there's no stopping the oncoming festive juggernaut.

As much as most people want it to be at least December before digging out the ornaments, or discovering that most radio stations are playing Christmas music 24/7, there are some advantages to getting into the spirit early.

After all, it's much nicer to put up the outside lights and decorations on a sunny fall November day. It doesn't mean you need to light them up every night to much eye rolling from your neighbours, but at least they'll be ready to go.

The alternative is to perch precariously on a slippery ladder on a windy, dark, sub-zero December day.

And when you're outside setting this up, if you do find that you need a new string of lights, you're likely to find them at your local hardware store this month. I know from experience that if you try to pick up some specific bulbs in early December, you're likely to find the supply already completely sold out with no more expected in until October 2019.

You snooze, you lose.

Although on-line shopping has taken some of the physical running around out of the gift giving season, at least one trip to the mall this time of year is inevitable.

Making this trek in November makes it much easier to get there on the more lightly travelled and less snowy roads. When you do get there, you're much more likely to find a parking spot, or at least, one within sight of the mall.

Once inside, there are fewer jostling crowds, smaller lines at the stores, and the general levels of anxiety and panic amongst shoppers are at a lower ebb.

Similarly to the availability of decorations noted above, the shelves in all stores are full of product, whether they be clothing, jewelry, tech items, sporting goods, or anything else you may be looking for.

In contrast, we've all seen the annual pre-Christmas news reports of mobs of people fighting over the last available copy of the latest must-have children's toy.

And if you can't stand the thought of listening to Christmas carols being played over tinny sound systems in the mall, you can always use your ear buds. That will also help mitigate the risk of listening to the mind numbing calypso version of Frosty the Snowman playing as an ear worm in your head for the next three days.

Better yet, you get to sit back through December and enjoy the passing parade, when everyone else is running around in a tizzy trying to cram decorating, shopping, wrapping and every other activity else associated with the season into a rapidly decreasing window of opportunity.

Speaking of parades, Aurora's Santa Under the Stars parade will be upon us in no time. Why not use that as your unofficial deadline to get, if not everything, at least a good chunk of your festive 'to do' list done.

Then you can just sit back and enjoy the season.

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