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INSIDE AURORA: Groundhog Daze V

By Scott Johnston

Curious to see how the trees in the arboretum had survived the ice storm earlier this winter, I decided to go there for a stroll.
I thought I might also run into Aurora Annie, our local weather prognosticating groundhog, as she was often to be found in that area this time of year. And not surprisingly, there she was, perched on a bench, scribbling on some papers.
?What's that you're working on?? I asked, sitting down next to her. ?Are these the weather forecasts and other information you use to predict if winter will be around for another six weeks??
?No,? she said, signing the top page. ?I'm putting in my nomination papers to run as a candidate for Aurora Council.?
?Council!? I exclaimed, looking over at the document.
?Yup. The nomination period just opened this month, and I wanted to make it official as soon as possible.?
?But you're in the weather business. What do you know about Aurora politics??
?You forget I've been around for ages. I've seen councils come and go. Why, Dick Illingworth and I used to discuss this sort of stuff all the time.?
?Besides,? she noted, spreading her little furry arms wide, ?how different is politics to weather? You just predict which way the winds are blowing, and go in that direction.?
?I figured it was time for me to get involved,? she continued, shuffling her papers into the correct order. ?There are some big issues I think should be discussed this year to help out the town.
?Like what?? I asked.
?Well, for starters, artificial turf playing fields.?
?I guess they are kind of expensive to install.?
?It's not the cost, it's the taste!?
Seeing my startled expression, she continued, ?There are a lot of Aurorans out there like me that eat grass. I don't know what those fields are made out of but they taste awful. I think there should be mandatory requirements in all future Town requests for proposals for new fields that they be better flavoured.?
?I'm not sure that issue will be at the top of voters' priority lists.?
?Well then here's an idea that has a lot of merit,? she said. ?Aurora needs another leash-free park.?
?Isn't Canine Commons big enough?? I asked.
?No, not for dogs. For cats.?
?Cats!? I exclaimed.
?Yeah. Avoiding local foxes and coyotes is bad enough, but people let their cats roam free all over town. It makes smaller wildlife like myself uneasy?, she said, taking a nervous glance over her shoulder.
?But, instead of banning cats completely, which was my first solution, by the way, I decided we needed a solution that would work for everybody. I can understand that residents like their cats, and want to give them some freedom, but the rest of my fellow animals have rights in Aurora, too. What better way to make everyone happy than via a designated leash-free cat park??
?I suppose that's one way to look at it.?
?Oh, I have lots of similar ideas that will get the public talking.?
I was sure of that, if the rest of her ideas were in the same vein.
Not wanting to spoil her enthusiasm, as she packed up notes and hopped off the bench, I just commented, ?Well, that certainly is a unique platform you have.?
?Thanks,? she said with a smile. ?I better get off and file these papers.?
As I watched her head off towards Town Hall, I wasn't sure if Aurora was ready to have a rodent on Council, and tastier artificial turf, and leash-free cat parks may not be the key issues on people's minds this election, but I guess that's all up to the voters to decide.

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