

BROCK'S BANTER: Brave New World

The other day, for reasons unknown, my mind was cast back to a very insignificant thing that happened just before Christmas about two years ago.

I had just arrived at the Downtown Toronto GO Bus station armed with my Visa ready to blitz the city for the last three gifts I had been unable to find up here ? or online, for that matter, with any semblance of a reasonable delivery date. Heading to the subway, I crossed the street at the top of Front and decided to take a small detour through an otherwise clever shortcut to avoid construction. Things were going along just fine until a heaved paving stone appeared in my path, caught the corner of my boot, sending me careening nearly head-first into a Coca-Cola delivery truck.

After averting having the mirror image of the iconic soft drink logo imprinted on my forehead for the rest of my life, I got up close and personal with the curb below the vehicle. As I was sprawled out on the ground waiting for my spine to fall back into place, my first thought was not of my hurt pride, the fact I blew out the left knee of my favourite pair of jeans I had recently broken in just right, or the flap of skin dangling where my actual knee used to be.

My first thought was, ?God, I hope nobody was around to put this on YouTube!?

As I lay there, I could see the video ? rather than my life ? flash before my eyes. There it was, going viral, number of hits rapidly rising, and remixes breeding like rabbits, more often than not with optional tuba music mixed to blend in nicely with each of my steps. Then it hit Twitter, the world's virtual high school cafeteria, generating its own family of hashtags.

When I finally got a grip on my imagination, it then seemed like a sensible idea to get one's butt off the road, get some first aid for the knee and get on with my life, tourists with flip-cams be damned. Thankfully these fears proved unfounded* but I couldn't help but shake my head that my first thought was of YouTube humiliation. If that's not a sign of the times we live in, I don't know what is.

While the events depicted in the preceding paragraphs are real, this basically just a long way around to announcing The Auroran has made a brave leap forward and launched our new website!

Following a soft launch on Friday, March 22, many of the bugs have been worked out (although it is a continual process to get things just right, so please be patient!) and people have been steadily making use of the bells and whistles in our new digs.

To the people that have already accessed the site and sent in your comments, I thank you for your feedback and your input has been taken into consideration.

The new website, which can still be reached through www.theauroran.com, has each week's edition of The Auroran downloadable as one convenient PDF file to read at your convenience. Regular polls are available, as are links to some of our supplementary sections such as Motoring.ca and the recently launched Resale Homes and individual links for stories.

It is through these individual stories we hope the new website becomes more of a community hub and an extension of the conversations that can be generated through these pages. Since its launch, readers have been slowly but surely taking advantage of these features and indeed continuing the discussions, whether responding to articles themselves or even our columnists and letters. Go to the website, take a gander, and let us know what you think. You can contact us through the website or you can send your comments directly to me at brock@auroran.com.

FEEL FREE TO JUMP IN!

On March 26, we ran an article about an intriguing new initiative from the York Region Food Network to bring fresher food to the tables of their regular clients. With new warehouse space secured in Newmarket, the Aurora-based charity will raise fresh tilapia to share with clients as well as sell to local restaurants. Water, fertilized by the fish, will be filtered through grow beds to cultivate varieties of lettuce and greens that will be distributed in the same way. Online, Tricia of the York Region Food Network, was enthusiastic about her group's initiative.

?We are very excited about the possibilities for fresh, super local food with this project,? she wrote. ?We are still in the beginning stages of building, so if you have the ability to donate materials, time, etc., please contact us at 905-841-3101, ext. 204.?

Last week's article about local historian David Heard's suggestion to work towards having Aurora's pet cemetery in the south end of Town ? and possibly the first one in Canada ? designated a national historic site has also generated a flurry of interest, both through emails and online comments.

?I would love to see this cemetery,? wrote Nancy, a genealogist. ?This should be preserved and protected.?

Jump into the conversation!

*Unless you have seen otherwise. If so, you know where to find me!