

BROCK'S BANTER: Climbing down from the musical mountain

By Brock Weir

Social media can be a curious beast.

As members of the West Wing continued to eat each other ? and themselves ? alive last week, an amusing image kept popping up in my various feeds. Appearing in practically every other post related to the ongoing mess was Dame Julie Andrews, complete in her nun's habit, standing on the top of that Austrian mountain blasting of a few machine gun rounds, ostensibly to the opening theme of the Sound of Music.

Taking no prisoners? Burning down the house? It was a visual representation of metaphors for all seasons, and, oddly enough, it never seemed out of place.

I first saw it pop up in this context following The Great Canadian Song Book vinyl dance party at the Aurora Community Centre. A beautifully produced event by David Heard and Chris Watts, the party, a wonderful addition to our local Canada 150 calendar, and a good time was had by all, but the sight of this image on that particular night was fitting.

Why, you might ask? Cast your mind back to the crazy days of 2013.

In this space, around that time, came the following:

?I often wonder if there is something in the water here in Aurora,? I wrote in the midst of the implosion of the Aurora Live Festival of music, which rolled into Town ? and then out again ? with all the razzle dazzle of a cruise ship floorshow without the staying power, leaving nothing but bickering in its wake. ?Recent reports from the Town suggest all is well, but it's the only explanation I can think of on why issues pertaining to culture in this Town seem to either send everyone haywire or result in nearly inexplicable results.?

When it came to culture, here I was talking specifically about music ? particularly live music ? in our otherwise peaceful burgh. Ahead of the Aurora Live implosion, enthusiasm was rife and one of the councillors of the day said, ?Hey, it looks like the Town will be alive with the Sound of Music again.?

?I rolled my eyes at this analogy, but after the events of the last few weeks, I take it back,? I continued. ?What would happen if Julie Andrews herself appeared in character atop Aurora's highest peak proclaiming, 'the hills are alive' with what she had on offer? What a reception she might receive!?

Indeed, I ventured that had she come down off her mountain to ask for a permit to hold a music festival on the local hill of her choice, she ran a significant risk of being told to get back whence she came.

Not only did that particular music venture implode, but there were still bitter feelings and ongoing arguments regarding former music festivals of other varieties, both for and against, and logic was confused by just about every emotion.

But, at that time, Aurora had some growing up to do and it seems maturity is finally setting in. The page appears to have decisively turned on all that mess and Aurora, as a collective, is contentedly moving forward with tapping the musical potential in this community with barely a hitch.

After many blockages, water is finally flowing smoothly under the bridge and the community continues to reap the rewards. The Aurora Winter Blues Festival, for instance, continues to go from strength to strength each year with the 2017 offering being, in my view, the best yet ? not only in terms of the talent that descended upon Aurora for the many events held throughout the winter months, but also in terms of the huge community support they garnered.

The Great Canadian Songbook is another example of this.

Neighbours came together to support this unique endeavour which, I think it is fair to say, turned out to be more expansive, elaborate and festive than anyone dared anticipate.

It generated a significant amount of goodwill, community support, sponsorship, all-important foot traffic, and much needed financial support for Kerry's Place Autism Services.

It proved once again that, if done correctly, the Aurora Community Centre has untapped potential ? or atrophied potential ? as an event venue outside of its enduring hockey legacy.

Personally, I hope this goodwill continues to roll through this weekend with the re-boot of the Aurora Music Festival at Town Park set for Saturday, starting at 4 p.m.

With a new location, a more varied ? and youthful ? lineup, attractions for people of all ages, and powered by the minds behind the Aurora Music Festival, it seems to have everything going for it.

If you're looking for something to do on a long summer night, why not try something new, pack up your lawn chair and head to the

park. It might be just the ticket to not only a good time, but a chance to listen to some great acts from around Ontario and cheer on young Aurora musicians who have every chance of being our musical stars of tomorrow.

Not sure what Aurorans have to offer? Come out and discover for yourself.

Aurora seems to have aspirations of being a sport destination, but it also has the talent to become a music destination as well. If harnessed correctly, fostered gently and timed perfectly there is the potential to rise to the occasion ? but in order to do so, the community needs to be rowing in the same direction.

Every butt in a seat is another page turned and, I think we're on the cusp of reaching a new chapter.

Maria, it might soon be safe to come down!

Brock's Banter returns August 17.