

BROCK'S BANTER: Diane Buchanan. Really.

By Brock Weir

Diane Buchanan is a woman who is rarely at a loss for words. Therefore, I wasn't quite sure what to expect on Saturday night. As many of you are probably aware through reading these pages, or via inevitable encounters at a steady stream of community events, Diane is an integral part of our sales team here at The Auroran, and a prominent presence within the Town.

If you have read this far, you now know she was named Aurora's Citizen of the Year Monday.

In a recent shakeup, the award is now presented annually as the culmination of Aurora's Community Recognition Awards. That is all well and good, but what happens when the Guest of Honour is otherwise occupied?

That was a question I began to ponder at a Council meeting late last month when Diane mentioned to me in passing she would be on a golfing holiday starting on May 23, stretching well beyond Monday, May 25, the appointed evening of the awards ceremony.

I could feel my eyes widen slightly at the mere mention of this tidbit ? followed by a slight, and hopefully undetectable sputter ? and I hope I didn't betray anything as I patiently waited for Council to bring their meeting in for a landing. On this one-off, I was thankful they continued their discussions longer than necessary as it gave me a bit of time to figure out how to quietly alert Mayor Dawe there might be a snag in his office's plans.

That was the last I heard on the matter until late last week and I was eager to see how this potential snafu would be finessed. Upon making a few phone calls to those in the know, I learned a pretty creative solution had been hammered out between the Mayor, his office, and those who nominated Diane.

She would, as it happened, be presented with the award by some of her nominators at a beachside ceremony at their ultimate holiday destination on Saturday night. A photo would then be taken of the recipient with her award and this photo, in turn, would be sent back to Aurora to be projected onto the screen at Monday's ceremony. There, the Citizen of the Year would be broadcasting live from Myrtle Beach as the Mayor called in before an expected audience of approximately 200 people.

With that in mind, I still had a few days left to inform the rest of our office team about the arrangements, all the while keeping word from the Lady of the Hour.

Ms. Buchanan is often referred to lovingly by those who know her as ?Telephone, Telegraph, Tell Diane? so, truth be told, I ? and, really, our entire company complement ? got a particular kick out of being in on the secret, with Diane, for once, being none the wiser.

I was confident we pulled it off at our end, I had no doubt her savvy nominators were going to succeed in following suit on their end, but by the time Saturday rolled around, the anticipation started to grate.

Would she be thrilled with the honour? Would she be a bit embarrassed? (After all, she doesn't go around tooting her own horn. Often.) Would she be overwhelmed receiving such prestigious recognition from the community she has served for so long, or would she be absolutely miffed we all proved ourselves more than capable of keeping a secret?

Then my phone dinged, followed by an unexpected vibration, presumably for an added dramatic effect.

It was a text message.

?Thank you for the heads up?

The lack of an emoji, much less any trace of punctuation at the end of that sentence made Diane's statement a bit inscrutable, so I played innocent asking how her golf game was going. No response. Finally, not being able to wait any longer, I contacted one of the Operation Diane team ?on the ground? to get the scoop. Thankfully, as it turned out, she was elated.

This was confirmed in a phone call the next day when a surprisingly serious Citizen of the Year granted The Auroran an interview in her honour.

It was a relief, to be sure, but I have a feeling we haven't heard the last of this ruse. Spare a moment, dear readers, for those of us in this office as we await Diane's return this week. We'll probably need all the help we can get!

Now, Diane, in all seriousness, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to you not only for all you have given to the community, but also for being a friend. Now that you'll soon have the glass trophy on your mantle, I look forward to seeing what you'll do for your next act!

(Brace yourselves.)

GROWING PAINS

As time marches on, and complaints continue to mount, so too does evidence Aurora is going through what can only be described as

a phase of teen angst; bristling at the rules imposed on them by Mom down in the Ontario Legislature, and Pop up in the House of Commons.

Seeds of resentment were sown in the last term of Council when they lost their fight to retain a bona-fide post office in Aurora, with their protestations seeming to fall on deaf ears. Similarly, their efforts to get the Feds to change their course on redrawing Aurora's Federal electoral boundaries also went unheeded.

More recently, with the Highland Gate redevelopment, angst has been renewed towards the Province and the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).

?We help build our community, and they need to be collaborative with us rather than assume we're the little kid in the family and ignore us,? said Councillor Michael Thompson in a recent Council debate over Aurora potentially battling Canada Post over community mailboxes.

Council recently renewed a request to the Province to take back some of their authority to be the final say when it comes to planning matters, particularly in curbing the authority of the OMB.

?There are always opportunities to make comments [but] whether the Province is actually paying attention to some of those is another issue,? responded Marco Ramunno, Aurora's Director of Planning. Given Aurora's track record, chances are these concerns will once again fall on deaf ears, but somebody has to be the mouse that eventually roars. Maybe this is Aurora's time. If not, this municipal teen is going to be itching to break out of the confines imposed on it.