

INSIDE AURORA: Best Stressed

By Scott Johnston

It was a fine spring day (finally) and I was out strolling through the arboretum, when I spied a familiar figure slumped on a bench. It was the Easter Bunny.

His fur was clumpy, his right foot was twitching, his ears were drooping, and he was wringing his little hands together constantly. He looked stressed.

Understandably curious, I sat beside him.

?What's the matter?? I asked.

?It's my annual visit to Town for Easter,? he sighed. ?It may never be the same again.?

My eyes went wide. This was serious.

?Why's that? Have you had an issue with getting ready? I know there's a lot of preparation involved for your big day April 15 at the Seniors' Centre, but you still have two weeks to go.?

?No, it's not that. As usual, the Girl Guides and Town staff have been a big help in organizing everything. We're all set.?

Then he said four words I wasn't expecting to hear.

?My problem's Activate Aurora!?

?You mean the local group who's working to improve fitness, and get kids out into the fresh air? They have pretty positive goals. How can they be a problem??

?You know they're pushing a healthy agenda in Town??

I nodded.

?Well, last year they targeted sugary drinks, and lobbied for the Town to ban them from the vending machines in Aurora's sports centres and other public buildings.?

?So??

?Don't you see?? He placed his paws on his chest. ?I deliver chocolate and jelly beans and all sorts of sugary goodies to kids every year. While they haven't done so yet, it's inevitable that Activate Aurora will target me next,? he concluded, sighing dramatically. We sat quietly for a minute. He looked the other way. I think he was crying and didn't want me to see.

Then I thought of something.

?Don't you have a lot of things lined up for your visit to Town??

?Oh, yes,? he said, briefly coming out of his funk. ?We pack a lot into our half day at the Seniors' Centre. There's the ?hopstacle' course, bunny bowling, duck pond toss, feed the bunny game, and all sorts of other crafts and activities.?

?And of course,? he smiled, ?the egg hunt itself. Everyone always has a great time.?

?I think that's your answer,? I said. ?The children will be running around and expending tons of energy with the excitement of seeing you and enjoying all those events. I'm sure that the folks at Activate Aurora will be pleased with that, and for this one day will overlook the kids having a few treats.?

?You think so?? he asked, looking at me with red rimmed eyes.

?Absolutely,? I assured him. ?You've got nothing to worry about.?

?Maybe you're right,? he said, getting to his feet. ?We'll see how the next two weeks go.?

With that, he bid me goodbye and hopped slowly off up the trail.

As I watched him disappear around a bend, I thought instead of being a potential target, he might almost be a good spokesperson for Activate Aurora. If only all those calories he was burning off himself weren't due to stress.

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