

BROCK'S BANTER: New Year's Reality Check

By Brock Weir

The clock is slowly ticking down on the last few hours of 2013. By the time you have read this, the sands will have already flown down to the bottom of the hour glass, only to be flipped over for a fresh 2014.

Like many of you, I have my own personal goals for the upcoming year. I hesitate to list them here, as my one remaining vestige of superstition always kicks in around stuff like this ? that if I breathe life into them with words, vocal or written, I am somehow jinxing them.

So, I will wisely reveal my personal checklist at the end of this year. Stay tuned, if you are so inclined!

With that in mind, I will take a break from chiseling the last few inches of ice off my driveway and get down to business.

Whether you are reading this in your own hot hands, or scrolling down some unusually lengthy PDF files to take in this week's edition, you might have noticed some changes around here. We hope you enjoy our new format, and feedback, is of course, always welcome.

It's a fresh format to get off to a fresh start in a fresh year. But this freshness is built on solid foundations over nearly 14 years of serving the readers and residents of Aurora.

On a personal level, I am going into this brave new world ? 2014, that is, and not our switch to a broadsheet format! ? with some lessons learned over the past 12 months. But how many of us actually put these lessons in action? Take a moment to imagine a few of these possibilities:

CUNNING BUSINESS STRATEGY

The first lesson is to take a page out of the book of Canada Post CEO Deepak Chopra, who stated in the last week of the 2013 Parliamentary Year that all the upcoming changes to the Crown Corporation will be for the better. It takes a special kind of keen business tactician to discern that the best way to combat the ill-effects of people no longer feeling best served by the service you provide to nearly double the cost for your remaining customers to utilize said service.

They will also strive to better serve the Canadian consumer, apparently, by eliminating door-to-door service to not only save operating costs, but also, philanthropically, to get seniors get out of their la-z-boys and hustle their buns down the block so to receive the monthly postcard featuring Ed McMahon and/or Pat Boone selling accessible bathtubs. On a personal level, when I received one from Ed on December 23, it made the trip to my own community mailbox all worthwhile. After all, if he can come back from beyond the grave not only to alert me to the dangers lurking in my bathroom, but also a convenient way to rectify said problem, it is a true testament to his dedication as a pitchman and public servant.

As such, in an effort to get people up on their feet, our regular carrier service will be streamlined to include one dedicated youth on a bike hauling a wagon. To get your copy, you have to chase him or her down. We promise it will be worth the effort.

EASE OF ACCESS

In further efforts to make the news fresh, innovative and interesting to Aurora residents, we have pondered new features to augment readily available computer devices to aid the visually and hearing impaired. So far, our efforts to reach a certain South African sign language interpreter, who might be in need of steady work, have been unsuccessful.

PLAY BY PLAY

Not to be outdone by Toronto, what with their crack deals, tumbling councillors, all-you-can-eat buffets of a dubious variety, vague yet oddly precise insinuations about children, and the list goes on and on, it's time for Aurora to get a piece of the action. As such, we will soon install a permanent reporter-cum-videographer to have his or her finger on the pulse of the second floor of Aurora Town Hall. Once Town Hall renovations are complete, they will be joined in a sports box overlooking the Council chamber by Auroran founder Ron Wallace and columnist Alison Collins-Mrakas to provide very ?colourful? colour commentary on the proceedings. Pending an insurance liability review of former Councillors getting whacked over the head with rolled up newspapers, of course.

REALITY HUB

I vividly recall walking into the esteemed Hillary House National Historic Site on a beautiful, sunny morning last summer only to hear unusual words coming out of the front parlour. They were not words I expected to hear coming out of Hillary House, with people having a grand old time discussing old devices using electrodes with the end product being, shall we say, to spice up a listless marriage.

Although I wasn't allowed to fully round the corner to see just what these people were doing with a variety of Victorian sex toys (no, really), it became clear that this was what promises to be a very lively upcoming episode of *Storage Wars Canada*.

Let's face it, Aurora. When this episode airs ? and re-airs ad-nauseum as most Canadian reality shows do these days ? it is likely to give Canadians a whole new? well, respect isn't quite the right word, but a new perspective on our only National Historic Site. As such, the time is ripe for Aurora to capitalize on any notoriety that will come from this and hop on the reality bandwagon. Here are some suggestions:

? ?Chris My Grits? ? A fly on the wall docu-series charting Councillor Chris Ballard's efforts to secure the local Provincial Liberal Nominations and ride it all the way to Queen's Park, all the while juggling his responsibilities as Councillor. Incumbent Progressive Conservative MPP Frank Klees, of course, would be a natural nemesis and an NDP candidate could be introduced to the cast with just two episodes remaining in the season

? ?Anything You Can Do?? ? Motley teams of local and national celebrities and notables fight a series of escalating and bloody challenges all for the right to use Town Park for a music festival in and around the August Holiday Weekend. To the winner goes the glory, to the losers?having to provide free valet parking to all comers in Aurora's downtown core. As a surprise twist, the season finale will reveal places like Machell Park and Ada Johnson Park actually do exist! Which brings me to?

? ?Hansen's Landing? ? It was a sight to behold as the skies opened up and drenched the grand finale of Aurora's Sesquicentennial Celebration almost beyond recognition last September. The show went on, however. Attendance was limited at Ada Johnson Park, but the amount of curtains flickering and windows opening in the homes surrounding Ada Johnson Park made me wonder just what was going on beyond those curtains. I bet that cul-de-sac on Knott's Landing would have nothing on the homes surrounding Rick Hansen Public School.

Merely a few silly thoughts, but the possibilities are endless. Happy New Year! (But, seriously, any further reality TV suggestions for Aurora are always welcome...)