

BROCK'S BANTER: Remain Calm, All Is Well

By Brock Weir

Kevin Bacon's contributions to the film industry are often overlooked.

Through countless film and television credits over the last four decades, he is all too often boiled down to two things: Footloose and being related in some way to everyone in the world within six steps. Yes, we know all about Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon and, thanks to the internet, we probably all know our own personal Bacon number. For those keeping score, my Bacon number is three (or two, depending on how you count): Kevin Bacon starred in *She's Having A Baby*, which featured Holland Taylor, who had dinner with me at a New York restaurant.

At adjoining tables, but ?with? doesn't necessarily mean?. Well, you get the picture.

However small our own Bacon numbers, I think the universal moment in the Bacon canon is near the end of *Animal House* where, in the midst of mass panic and chaos, the be-uniformed Mr. Bacon is standing in the middle of the mayhem pleading to the masses: ?Remain calm! All is well!?

Of course, all is not well, as the increasingly harried pleas can attest, but we have all found ourselves in similar situations from time to time when we have a gut feeling that there is a crisis on the horizon, know we have already crossed that thin line and we have a metaphorical fire to put out before anyone notices something is amiss, or in a last ditch effort to try to take control over a situation when, in reality, you know it is a lost cause.

Rarely, as in the case of Mr. Bacon in *Animal House*, to we ever get crushed by a stampede of people flatter than Wile E. Coyote by a falling anvil, but sometimes it does feel that way.

I had visions of Kevin Bacon as I sat on a plane on Wednesday morning. The plane was supposed to take off from Pearson at 7.05 a.m. but was delayed for a little while, at first for no given reason. These reasons eventually became clear, however, when one of the flight attendants announced a pre-flight inspection noticed that one of the plane's panels was coming off.

She assured us that it was a minor issue, we should be able to take off shortly, and that a crew was applying some ?lubricant? to fix the problem. As I pondered in a semi-sleep deprived state how lubricant would help fix a panel that was coming off the airplane, I looked around and didn't see anyone else concerned, so I fired up my laptop and got down to some of the work I was taking with me: going over my notes from the previous evening's General Committee meeting.

Therein was my second Bacon moment in 24 hours as I went over Councillors' comments regarding the evergreen issue of traffic and parking in the Town's downtown core. Council tackled a recommendation which would have seen the many balls currently hovering above Aurora's historic centre coalesce into one large boulder ? lot unlike an Acme anvil ? to be approached from a holistic perspective.

Parking, or lack thereof, is a perennial problem whenever this issue rises to the surface, and this was no exception.

?Parking study completed in 2007 did not identify a need for additional parking in the Yonge Street core based on total parking inventory in the area,? proclaimed the accompanying staff report in big, bold letters. What followed was something of a gymnastic exercise.

?A parking study for the downtown core area was completed by the Town in 2007 to provide a snapshot of the parking utilization in the area,? reads the report, noting it surveyed an area from Wellington Street to Kennedy Street to the north and south, bordered on the west and east by Temperance and Larmont Streets.

?The study results conclude that there isn't a parking problem and there is an ample supply of parking in the area to meet both residents' and businesses' parking demand. It was also concluded that parking along Yonge Street and other sections of the downtown was underutilized with the exception of the Library parking lot.?

It adds recent changes made by Council should ?significantly improve? the parking situation that apparently does not exist.

?Parking demands have not changed appreciably since that study based on staff knowledge of the parking patterns observed,? it concludes. ?However, ongoing parking demands caused by Metrolinx activity will be a concern and needs to be addressed in the Master Plan.?

Based on resident knowledge, people who live in and travel within the area on a daily basis, they might be able to tell a different story. Parking demands have indeed changed appreciably since the study for many reasons. First of all, the success of programming at the Aurora Cultural Centre, which was not even on the table in 2007, has brought significant traffic into the area, particularly into the bustling Library parking lot which was already a victim of its own success well over a decade ago.

That out of the way, there is exponential increase in parking demands not as a result of Metrolinx activity, but by the exceptional

growth in other areas of Aurora and, as a consequence, the rapid and steady increase of commuters from all corners who have the GO station ? and its surrounding streets ? as a very important destination.

Parking problems in the area have been a constant problem since this study was completed, and a problem which complaining residents are consistently told does not exist.

There might be 1,200 parking spaces in the area, but when multiple residents come forward saying they can't even find a parking spot for one overnight guest, it is a problem that can't be denied, ignored, or left unaddressed.

Despite what Kevin Bacon might tell you.