

BROCK'S BANTER: Snow Angels on Yonge

By Brock Weir

?Snow always inspires such awe in me.
Just consider one tiny snowflake alone ? so delicate, so fragile, so ethereal.
And yet, let a billion of them come through the majestic force of nature?
they can screw up a whole city.?

- Sue Ann Nivens

I could feel the top of my head grow heavier as the inches of snow came in for a landing.

I could barely see more than eight feet clearly in front of my face, but there was a bit of a glow, a charge of electricity in the air. If only one could see it.

?I'm going to eat you, Mr. Peanut!?

The voice came from the vicinity of my waist.

Looking down, there was a snow covered child in a striped snowsuit. I wasn't sure what he was looking at, or whether to be insulted. After all, looking like a peanut by this point was not out of the realm of possibility.

Before taking his exclamation as a declaration of hostility, I took strained to look around. Indeed, coming south down the street, off in the distance, through the billions of flakes coming down from the heavens, indeed there was a vague outline of the Planters Peanut.

Crisis averted.

Before Saturday, I never thought I would see the day when there would be kids lying down in the middle of Yonge and Wellington making snow angels. Ordinarily, that would be a recipe for disaster, but this was no ordinary evening. It was Santa Under the Stars.

This week that was just a name. There was no way even the sharpest sighted of us could have made out a star in the heavens.

I'm sure I was not alone Friday in hoping the dark, grey, dreary and rainy day that was would make way overnight for some sunshine and clear skies the following evening not only for the kids and their parents, but also for the hundreds of volunteers and participants marching their way down Yonge Street to spread the holiday cheer ? not to mention also for the jolly man in red himself!

The day was promising, beautifully sunny, but that later made a sharp turn.

After spending the morning at the Indoor Farmers Market, meeting local Amnesty International members at the Trinity Anglican Church, and then making the rounds of a few errands too banal to mention here, I settled into an afternoon of writing before heading out.

My personal tradition is to stake out a spot on Yonge Street near Centre Street. This is purely strategic. The view from the east side of Yonge Street towards the LW Plaza is certainly no oil painting to look at, but behind me is Bonsai Hill. Seasoned parade-goers know that it is simply good planning to be near a ready source of hot drink and shelter.

Thoroughly wind burned before making it to the foot of Centre by the driving force of Mother Nature, I made inroads through the snow and the growing number of kiddies, I was greeted by, ?No iced tea today?? Apparently snow brings out the best in owner William Tang's sarcasm. I appreciated it.

Then it was time to wait.

In any regular year, there is usually nothing to see ? but this was no ordinary year.

Children were bundled and having a great time. Glow sticks handed out to the crowds caught the snow, blending a blue aura in with the orange-tinged atmosphere from the streetlights bouncing off the falling flakes. The aforementioned snow angels were just taking wing with enthusiastic belly flops onto the road (I'm not one to question this unusual method ? it seemed to do the job just as well!) and faithful spectators, clinging defiantly onto their prime places alongside the route were becoming shrouded and shrouded with each passing minute.

Taking pictures during this bizarre and relatively sudden snowsquall was no mean feat, as Pages 3 and ___ can attest, but there was so much to capture, from the fun and funny street scenes, to people huddled in doorways just waiting for the right moment to quickly run out of their storefront ? or York Region Transit ? shelters in time to catch their longed-for glimpse of Santa Claus.

They were duly rewarded as he and his reindeer deftly made their way from Orchard Heights Boulevard to Murray Drive, the once red velvet suit now a soggy salmon pink glistening in the night.

Sure, it was a veritable winter wonderland, but not everything was rosy as Santa's cheeks. By the end of the day, I had repositioned myself back at my regular Bonsai haunt, just a couple of doors down from that welcome warm refuge, and next to a very nice young family. They were in a group of kids, I'm not sure who belonged to who, and all were having a good time aside from one little guy watching events unfold from the comfort of his stroller, slowly but surely being buried.

He was having none of it. He had reached his breaking point. He wouldn't have cared if Santa was floating past on the crest of a wave with each reindeer surfing on the backs of dolphins while boss man was hanging 10. He was out of there ? you know, if he wasn't strapped in.

So, as much fun as I was having, as soon as Santa had gone past, so did I ? as a proud journalist, covering Aurora, now covered from head to toe in snow, my cheeks literally encrusted in ice, and actual icicles beginning to form on my glasses and sideburns.

Although I didn't experience a semblance of warmth again until 2 a.m. the following morning it was, all things considered, certainly a parade to remember!