

## INSIDE AURORA: A Word of Difference

**By Scott Johnston**

I just returned from a month out of the country.

When I left Aurora, the temperatures were in the low 20s, and the leaves were just starting to turn. Jackets were not required, and the days were still reasonably long.

There was a bit of a change when I got back.

The thermometer was hovering around freezing, the trees were bare, and the ground was carpeted by an interesting sandwich of fallen leaves covered by snow, that was in turn covered in more leaves. I didn't know whether to bring out a rake or a shovel.

It was like I had been away not for a few weeks, but for a number of months. We seemed to have leapt directly from summer to winter, or at the very least, autumn had only lasted a day or two, before making a hasty departure.

Worst of all; it was suddenly Christmas.

Don't get me wrong; I love this time of year. The hard part was the sudden mental shift in gears.

To go right from short sleeved shirts and sandals to holiday ads, strings of coloured lights, and carols being played in stores, was a bit jarring, especially as I didn't experience any evidence of this festive cheer when I was out of the country.

I guess it also didn't help that I completely missed both Halloween and Remembrance Day, which serve as a bit of a buffer before the most wonderful time of the year.

But however it got here, whether it crept up on us, or in my case, arrived with a bang, with less than six weeks until December 25th, the holiday season is upon us.

Why, it's only a few days until Aurora's Santa Under the Stars parade. If recent weather has been any indication, it should be a wintry evening for participants and spectators this Saturday night.

When I left for my vacation in October there was talk of tagging a Christmas Market onto the week-end of the parade.

It was not surprising to subsequently read that this was not going to happen this year. It's an intriguing idea, and certainly has the potential to bring new life to the downtown core, at least for a short time. But the Town's Special Events team would have had to enlist all of Santa's elves to pull this together from scratch in just a few weeks.

Perhaps the biggest surprise I discovered upon my return was that the Town's annual Tree Lighting Ceremony had now become the Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony.

The ceremony itself is basically the same. The only real change is the addition of 'Christmas' to the title.

That the decision to add that one word was reached so quickly was hard for me to believe when I read the article in The Auroran. Normally, a change of this nature could only be rendered by Council with the benefit of stacks of reports, dozens of consultants, extensive public feedback, months or even years of discussion, and much repetitious debate.

It got me thinking that if consensus could be reached so rapidly on this change, then perhaps there are other decisions around Town that can be similarly expedited. The future of Library Square, for instance.

I know it sounds far-fetched, but the precedent has been set, and after all, this is the season to believe in holiday miracles.

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