

INSIDE AURORA: Aurora By The Numbers

By Scott Johnston

We are all aware of many of the numbers associated with Aurora.

For example, our population is 55,000ish, we recently celebrated our 150th birthday, and the latest percentage budget increase was 3.75.

But, there are numbers associated with almost everything in our town. Here are a few of the less obvious ones:

On the Aurora Cenotaph are inscribed the names of 132 men from Aurora and the surrounding area who lost their lives in two World Wars. It has links to even older conflicts as far back at the 16th century, as the land was previously owned by William Graham, who fought in both the War of 1812, and the American Revolution in the late 1700s.

For 44 consecutive months to date (yes, and counting) there have been active and often very public lawsuits underway between our elected municipal officials and various defendants over perceived slights that have arisen during the politicians' time in office.

There are 84 geocaches, small containers housing tracking documents and sometimes small objects, hidden in vegetation, and in and around various structures within our borders. These are just waiting to be discovered by those armed with the appropriate coordinates, a GPS, a sense of adventure, and some time on their hands.

Many of these caches are located in the town's 57 various parks, parkettes and related green spaces.

In the 25 years it has been run the annual Magna Hoedown has raised over \$8,000,000 for local charities.

As of the 2011 census, Aurora was the 95th largest municipality in Canada.

The longest road fully within the town's borders is Industrial Parkway, which runs for 5.3 kms between St John's Sideroad and Yonge Street.

In 2013, most Council meetings, which start at 7 pm, didn't wrap up until after 11 pm, with the latest one adjourning at 11:58. That the sessions appear even longer is only an illusion suffered by those who sit through them.

As identified during the town's Sesquicentennial, there is at least one tree in Aurora, a Burr Oak, that is almost 200 years old.

One of the longest golf holes in Ontario is number 14 at St Andrew's, at 624 yards.

Over 150 different species of bird have been observed in Aurora.

Although some areas are obviously higher than others, the town lies approximately 900 feet above sea level. That we're so far above salt water still doesn't explain our annual summer fresh water-related bans.

Somehow, no matter what the weather or other factors, it is always subsequently, some might say traditionally, estimated that the attendance at either the annual Street Festival or Santa Under the Stars parade is 50,000 people.

It's been 133 years since the telephone first appeared in Aurora. That was back in 'the good old days' before annoying personalized ring tones, 10 digit dialing and daily dinnertime calls offering discount duct cleaning.

Historically, Aurora is famous as the home of the Fleury plough, but there wasn't just one. Our early pioneers had options, as this company produced no fewer than 22 different models of single-furrow walking plough, which were sold around the world. If you want to take a look, there's one on display in, not surprisingly, Fleury Park.

We're not alone, as there are at least 30 communities called 'Aurora' just within the U.S., and many more around the world.

Want to know why you keep running into kids in soccer uniforms during the summer months? The town maintains 69 soccer fields.

In 1869 our town of 1,200 people had 4 hotels. If we had the same ratio today, there would be about 184 hotels within the town's borders.

And for those who want to bone up on the issues in preparation for casting their ballot, there are only about 172 days left until the municipal election this fall.

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