

INSIDE AURORA: Birthday Town

By Scott Johnston

As Brock suggested in his column last week, the Town has been a bit tardy in preparing for Canada's upcoming 150th birthday. We have lots of ideas: a military tattoo, an indigenous peoples ceremony, fireworks, a big parade, repainting the mural at Yonge and Wellington to depict former Town councillors.

Okay, so maybe that last one hasn't been raised yet. But there are many suggestions.

In fact, we could literally have anything money could buy. If only we'd thought to set aside money to pay for any of this, instead of going to the Federal government at the last minute along with hundreds of other municipalities with a cup with 'please give?' scrawled on it.

In any case, despite much discussion, with time running out to get things lined up, there's a bit of a scramble.

This shouldn't really come as a big surprise. After all, Aurora is well known as the Procrastination Capital of Canada. I'm sure that wording will be added to the signs on our borders... when they get around to it.

There have been a number of examples over the years of the Town's aversion to prompt decision making.

Library Square? Discussions have only been underway since the last century. But we're almost to a decision. Definitely before the twenty-second century.

Yonge Street redevelopment? Another one that dates back to the late 1900s. Sadly, adding a few planters and banners has done little so slow the exodus of businesses to Bayview.

Petch House? It took over a decade to agree on where and how to rebuild it. Unfortunately, the decision didn't include the most important part: what to do with it. Give us another ten years and we're bound it figure out a permanent use for it. Well, twenty years, tops.

Which got me thinking, based on our Town's aversion to making decisions at a rate any faster than glacial speed, we really need to start thinking now about what to do for Canada's 175th birthday.

So to get things rolling, here are a few ideas for our demisemiseptcentennial.

Nothing says 'birthday?' like a 'party.' We could hold it on Yonge Street. Since there will probably be no businesses left along there by then, traffic should be minimally impacted.

In fact, we may not even need to formally close the road. Just like we did when we were kids playing street hockey, participating bands, vendors and party goers could just yell 'car!' every ten minutes when a lone vehicle passes through.

If cash is a problem when it comes time to celebrate our 175th, we could always go with the less expensive option of renaming something. For example, Diamond Jubilee Park used to be called Civic Square Park.

It doesn't even have to be a location with a formal name. After all, Municipal Way was once just the Town Hall parking lot.

But if there is funding (and yes, we should start saving now), an obvious idea is a memorial project.

In 1967 for Canada's 100th birthday, we built a library. This year for our 150th, we'll tear it down as part of the Library Square redevelopment (I know; you can't make this stuff up, and I guess we'd better think of a more appropriate name for 'Library Square?').

To maintain this tradition, in 2042 it's likely that we'll be planning to bulldoze whatever we put up this year. So we might as well start thinking of something appropriate to replace it. Perhaps a Memorial to Procrastination.

Even that we should be able to pull together in time, but we will need to start planning now, or else it'll have to go on the bicentennial anniversary idea list.

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