

INSIDE AURORA: Christmas Spirit

By Scott Johnston

If you're a Grinchy soul, who mutters a ?bah, humbug? at the thought of Christmas, then you may want to get out of Town for a few weeks, because the holiday season is in full swing in Aurora.

For those who relish a little festive stimulation, the Town and its various organizations have provided a seasonal smorgasbord of festivities to enjoy.

Even Mother Nature has chipped in, providing a mid-November blanket of white to get things started.

As is tradition, the season kicked off with the Santa Under the Stars parade. This year's was even bigger than ever with more floats, bands and politicians. For those who didn't make it, and there can't have been many because Yonge Street was packed, you're bound to come across a replay of it on TV this month.

This was followed shortly after by the tree lighting ceremony at Town Hall.* This was complete with reindeer, fire jugglers and a reading by Mrs. Claus of that C.C. Moore classic ?Twas the Night Before Christmas?. Of course, there was also the centrepiece; a big Christmas tree.

And that is by no means the only form of ornamentation in Aurora. The Town has once again decorated the lamp posts along central Yonge Street, and the remaining merchants on that stretch have gone all out with enticing window displays.

Although the Town no longer pits neighbour against neighbour with a best decorated house competition, there still seem to be ongoing rivalries. Inflatable Santas and snowmen on people's lawns appear to be reaching Macy's parade balloon proportions.

And recent talk of high hydro rates does not seem to have stopped people from hanging lights on every available tree, eaves trough, porch and fence on their properties.

Few of these illuminations will match those at Town Park when the switch is flipped in a couple of weeks on the annual Aurora's Borealis, with festive lights adorning the trees each evening.

Apart from decorations, there are other visual reminders of the holidays throughout Town in the form of Salvation Army kettles, Christmas tree lots and people fighting over parking spots at our local retail outlets.

The seasonal barrage is not restricted to the outdoors. There are no end of activities inside, if you prefer warmer temperatures and less wind.

Parents and grandparents will be aware that their kids' and grandkids' festive concerts and plays are coming.

There will be other opportunities to hear seasonal music than at your local school. A quick scan of the ads in The Auroran will reveal a variety of choirs, concerts and other live music to choose from.

Theatre Aurora is even getting into the act with a couple of Christmas themed evenings in December.

Another indoor activity that really ramps up this time of year are the various bazaar and craft sales. Wandering through the pervasive seasonal smell of cinnamon, you can pick up just the right holiday wreath, or handmade gift.

Just make sure you get exactly what you need, as it may be challenging returning them on Boxing Day.

Even when we're penalized this time of year, it's for a good cause. The bylaw folks have even gotten into the spirit of the season by allowing overnight parking on nights that it doesn't snow. And if you do get a parking ticket, you can pay for it with a toy that will be donated to a child in need.

Or, if you want to dispense with that pesky ticket thing, just drop off a new toy at your favourite charity, or some non-perishables at the local food bank.

If that doesn't get you in the Christmas spirit, nothing will.

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*(Editor's note: Mr. Johnston's crystal ball is back in working order, as the Tree Lighting Ceremony will take place on the evening of Wednesday, December 7, in the forecourt of Town Hall. Scott knows you'll have a good time!)