

INSIDE AURORA: Ghost Town

By Scott Johnston

In only a few days I'll practically have the Town to myself.

At least, it will seem that way.

It's never ceases to amaze me what a ghost town Aurora becomes on summer long week-ends.

The streets are empty, there are no lines at the grocery stores, and you can always get a table at your favourite restaurant.

It's equal parts delightful and eerie.

I suppose a lot of people must have cottages, or better for them from that pesky

having-to-do-all-that-icky-maintenance-like-fixing-the-septic-system perspective, get invited to other people's cottages.

Or maybe they take advantage of the week-end GO train service and disappear southward to the big city for a few days.

For whatever reason, it's their loss, because they're missing out on a lot of fun right here in Aurora.

Take this week-end, for example. Our country's 151th birthday may not have the cache of last year's 150th, but it's still reason to celebrate.

Although technically not part of the Canada Day festivities, the week-end's fun in Aurora starts with the Farmer's Market.

While all the Town's escapees are either still sitting bumper to bumper on the 400 inhaling idling engine exhaust on Saturday morning, or already collapsed in flimsy deck chairs up north swatting mosquitoes the size of small pterodactyls, those of us who are left in Town can enjoy fresh local veggies, baked goods and other goodies.

Later in the day, Town Park will transform from produce to party as it hosts the Dance in the Park. Even if you're not too graceful on your feet, you can still enjoy live bands, food and (or maybe just) a beer garden.

The following day is the big event. As kids chalk their personal visions of Canada on the sidewalk outside of the library, the patriotism will continue with the annual parade of local bands, multicultural community groups, dignitaries and others down Yonge Street.

From there the fun moves to Lambert Willson Park and the Leisure Complex. There's pretty much something for everyone through the day, including concerts, horseshoe contests, kids crafts and activities, swimming and several musical performances.

And, in what seems to be the tradition of all events in Town, there will be more food, starting with a late breakfast (pancakes) or early dessert (birthday cake).

Of course, the day winds up with a bang ? literally ? with fireworks at dusk. Better yet, since you can see the fireworks from virtually anywhere in Town, you have your choice of vantage points. And there's no worry about staying up too late, because the next day is a holiday.

All that's just this week-end.

The next two months will feature no end of things to do in Town.

For example, I'll definitely be taking in some of the Concerts in the Park, which yes, do have food options, as well.

As an added bonus, many of the activities, including the concerts and Movies in the Park, are presented free, courtesy of the Town and generous corporate sponsors.

And just in case there's still some room on your bathroom scale at the end of August after partaking in all the special event-related food the Town has to offer, the summer winds up with Ribfest.

Despite the food-related name, it's not just an eating event, as it also includes bands and children's activities.

So, the next time you're considering joining the exodus from Town this summer, you may think you're getting away from it all, but what you're doing is missing out on a lot of good times right here in Aurora.

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