

INSIDE AURORA: Snow Long

By Scott Johnston

So, are you ready for spring, yet?

If you're like most Aurorans, you're sick of winter. And why not? It has been unseasonably long, unseasonably cold, unseasonably snowy, and although I doubt there's any scientific proof to back up this next statement; unseasonably dark.

Winter doesn't usually faze Canadians, who take pride in embracing this northern season, but this year has been extreme.

This is evidenced by the fact that earlier this month, when the groundhog stuck his head out of his hole, he took one look around, and booked the next flight to Tahiti.

More than anything, it's been the sheer volume of snow that has set this winter apart.

For example, residents, who during the warmer months claim the narrow strip of land between their properties belongs to their next door neighbours, at least when it comes to mowing and related yard maintenance, have suddenly become all possessive about it, as they desperately look for places to pile the snow from their driveways.

The related mountains of snow at the edges of our roads have also posed some problems. When turning onto a major street, by the time you have nosed your car out into the road far enough to see past them, you've already encroached into at least two live lanes of traffic.

As for the piles of snow themselves, I don't really want to know what's in there.

Of course, there is gravel and salt and dirt, and everything that makes it that yucky brown colour. But as the ploughs have continually added to them following subsequent snowfalls, they have no doubt also buried larger items such as recycling bins, garbage cans, cars, and other things foolishly left at the end of people's driveways.

Another issue is that the ever-increasing piles of snow take up a lot of space. How many times this season have you gone to your local mall or dentist, and found that half of the normal parking area is occupied by a mini-Everest, which will be with us until at least May?

As for the side streets in town, with each successive snowfall, they've gotten progressively narrower, making it a challenge to squeeze by oncoming traffic. And if anyone's parked on the street, even if it looks like they're snuggled up to the edge, the amount of snow between them and the curb means they're technically somewhere in the middle of the road. So good luck getting around them. The town has gamely tried to keep up, hauling away piles of the stuff at every opportunity. But there are only so many places to put it. With the Leisure Complex currently closed, I wouldn't be surprised if, in desperation, it's being stored in there, unless this facility is already full of bark chips from all the downed trees hauled away following the ice storm.

Whether we wanted it or not, one thing this winter has encouraged is a longer Christmas holiday season. Normally, there's a bit of a weather break sometime after the 25th to allow folks to take down their seasonal decorations, but no one's been able to do that this year.

Those festive features are either hidden under or behind snowdrifts or, thanks to the December ice storm, and ongoing freezing temperatures, solidly adhered in place till the spring.

Fortunately, winter can't last forever. The days do seem to be a bit longer, and the temperatures did creep upwards last week, however briefly. So the end is in sight.

So, if you are missing your garbage bin, with luck after a bit of melting it may just turn up in the near future, right where you left it in December.

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