

INSIDE AURORA: Water World

By Scott Johnston

Here's something you probably weren't aware of as we continue to get drenched during this particularly wet spring and summer; Aurora's under a water ban.

Yes, according to Bylaw 4420-03.E, since May 15 Aurorans have been restricted to watering every other day (on odd days if your house is an odd number and vice versa on even days). Even on the days you can water, you can only do so for the four hour periods between 6 and 10 in the morning or evening.

It's not that our aquifers, lakes and reservoirs are running dry, or that the local politicians can't look out the window and see that it's raining pretty much every day, the bylaw kicks in each year regardless.

But it does seem incongruous to think the ban is in place when municipal catch basins are filling up with debris faster than it can be cleaned out, and a popular recent Youtube video showed the terrified reaction of drivers traversing a rain flooded stretch of Wellington Street west of Yonge.

I'm out and about in Town a lot, and this is the first year I can ever remember in Aurora where I don't recall seeing anyone watering their grass.

This year the process for laying sod, which normally has to be drenched for weeks to help it get established, is probably just to simply roll it out and walk away. There must be tons of unsold stock of hoses and sprinklers at our local hardware stores.

Despite the lack of watering, the Town's lawns are greener and lusher than ever. They're so thick, that weeds, which usually spring up everywhere as they over-compete with stressed grasses, have not been as prevalent as they usually are.

In fact, when I'm doing yardwork, I seem to be mowing down more mushrooms than dandelions.

As for other outdoor chores, no one seems to be washing their driveways, patios or windows, and there are never any lines at the car wash places.

A cleaner, greener, more weed-free Aurora has been a benefit of our monsoon-like weather, but it hasn't all been good news.

Unfortunately, the almost double the usual amount of rainfall has meant flooding in some areas, and it's done damage to various trails and other vulnerable infrastructure.

On the agricultural front, farmers are having trouble keeping their fields drained properly. And I guess it's too late for them to turn them into rice paddies.

Of course, it hasn't been fun for kids who have had to play outside more in the rain, and run from the soccer pitches and baseball diamonds as the almost daily late afternoon thunderstorms roll in.

One group that has benefitted from the wet weather is our local mosquito population, which has been using the increased amount of standing water to its reproductive advantage. I'm not sure if ticks like wet weather, but they seem to be on the increase in our area, too.

On the plus side, this wet weather can't last forever, and whether we need them or not our water restrictions only go to September 30, so we only have about 10 weeks to go.

Looking ahead, if this watery trend continues in Aurora next year, perhaps we can embrace it by renting that giant yellow rubber duck that was recently featured on Toronto's waterfront.

I'm sure it would make a great tourist attraction bobbing around in Salamander Pond.

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