

CONTINUING

The Aurora Probus Club meets every second Wednesday of the month (except July and August) at the Aurora Legion. Memberships consist of retired and semi-retired PROfessional and BUSiness people, hence the name Probus. It is a fun fellowship with well-chosen speakers. New members are welcome. For more information call Marilyn Munslow, 905-727-9344 or Bob Saunders, 905-841-3558.

Currently on display at the Colleen Abbott Gallery, located on the second floor of the Aurora Public Library, is an exhibit of paintings by Aurora's Philippa Hajdu. The paintings are selections from the artist's self-portrait series and her novel series inspired by the works of James Lee Burke and Janet Evanovitch. This exhibit will run through May 30.

A selection of landscape works from the collection of Albert Chiarandini is currently on display at the Aurora Cultural Centre. Chiarandini, born in Udine, Italy, in 1915 was a prolific painter until his death in December, 2007. The display will continue until May 1.

Alateen meets every Sunday at 8 p.m. at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, corner of Victoria and Mosley Streets. Al-Anon meets every Tuesday at 8 p.m. at the Aurora United Church on Yonge Street. For more information go to al-anon.alateen.on.ca.

The Aurora Garden & Horticultural Society meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 8 p.m. at the Royal Canadian Legion, 105 Industrial Parkway North in Aurora. Visitors are welcome for only \$2. For more information call Ray at 905-727-6168. On May 26th, Master Gardener from Brantford, Nancy Lee-Colibaba, will speak on Gardening for Health.

York Highlands Chorus is an award-winning a cappella Sweet Adelines chorus, a group of women who gather Tuesday evenings at the Old Firehall, Newmarket, to sing, share in the harmony of friendship and learn the barber-shop art form. York Highlands is always looking for new women who share the love of a cappella music. Call Karen at 905-726-2113 or Vikki at information@yorkhighlands.com.

The Upper Canada Chordsmen, Aurora-Newmarket's award winning chorus, is looking for male singers. The group meets every Wednesday from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Old Firehall, 140 Main Street South, in Newmarket.

The Optimist Club of Aurora meets the first Wednesday of each month at the Aurora Legion. New members are welcome. Call 905-727-5012 for more information.

The Aurora Lions Club meets the second and fourth Thursdays at the Aurora Lions Hall, corner of Mosley and Victoria Streets. Co-ed club welcomes new members. For further information, call 905-727-6079.

Every Thursday, Martha's Table serves home-made soup, sandwiches, and dessert in St. Andrew's Hall at the Presbyterian Church, corner of Mosley and Victoria Street. Cost is minimal, and the volunteer-run program enabled the church to give more than \$5,000 to local charities in 2008 alone. You can enjoy lunch, conversation, and a sense of community between 11.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. weekly.

The York Regional Police Male Chorus is looking for new members. You do not have to be a police officer nor are you required to read music to volunteer. The group rehearses Monday evenings between 7.30 and 9.30 p.m. For further information, contact the chorus supervisor at 905-727-9676 or the coordinator of volunteer services for YRP at 905-830-0303, extension 6717.

Aurora's Air Cadets meet every Tuesday night at Cardinal Carter School from 6.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m., and offer a program for 12 years and older boys and girls.

Aurora Opera Children's Chorus welcomes treble voices. It is a choir dedicated to nurturing and providing opportunities for children to express their musical abilities. The chorus is open to boys and girls ages 5-17. Contact the general director at keepsinging@rogers.com

Community Home Assistance to Seniors (CHATS) is looking for volunteers to assist with the activities in its Adult Day Program. The positions call for a commitment of a few hours a week at its Aurora location. Various times are available. Call Christine at 905-713-3494.

Every Wednesday from 6.30 to 8 p.m. the Pioneer Club for boys and girls, age three to Grade 4 and the Junior High Club for boys and girls, Grades 5 to 8, will be held at the Aurora Cornerstone Church, 390 Industrial Parkway South. For more information call 905-841-8884.

A drop-in centre will operate every Wednesday at the Community Bible Church on Bathurst Street just south of Henderson from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information e-mail Judy Hoffmann jhoffmann@sympatico.ca.

Scottish Country Dancing on Tuesday evenings at 8.15 p.m. at the Aurora Heights Public School and on Friday mornings at St. Andrews' Presbyterian Church beginning at 10.30 a.m. No partners are needed and beginners are welcome.

Aurora Rotary Club meets every Monday at 6.30 p.m. at Gabriel's on Yonge Street. New members are welcome. For further information call 905-841-1352 or 905-713-9356.

Independent Order of Odd Fellows Lodge 148 meets the first and third Tuesday of each month at 8 p.m. at 15216 Yonge Street, south of Wellington. For more information call 905-830-9205.

COMING EVENTS

Masonic Rising Sun Lodge meets the first Thursday of each month at the Rising Sun Temple, 57 Mosley Street, Aurora at 7.30 p.m.

Robertson Masonic Lodge meets the third Saturday each month at 57 Mosley Street at 10.30 a.m. Coffee Club at 9 a.m. and lunch at noon. Call

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MP 1123 (10/2007)

With markets continuing to deliver turbulence, even the most level-headed investors among us may begin to second-guess their financial strategies. It is precisely during times like these that a long-term financial plan becomes more important than ever.

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Jennifer Christensen B.A., CFP, CDFA, TEP
Executive Financial Consultant
jennifer.christensen@investorsgroup.com
Phone: 905-726-8236

Please call for upcoming seminar information

Town and HiTor near agreement

Aurora is moving closer to securing the long-disputed Anne Bartley Smith lands,



Armand La Barge Police chief to retire

At its meeting last week, the York Regional Police Services Board announced that after 37 years of service, Chief Armand La Barge will retire in December this year.

He has served as York Regional Chief of Police since December, 2002.

"It's been an honour to have served in this organization for the last 37 years and as Chief in the last eight years," he said. "I will be retiring at the end of this year and will have more to say at my last Board meeting in November as my retirement approaches."

Board Chairman Danny Wheeler said that Chief La Barge has supported the development of senior officers who will be potential leadership candidates.

The York Regional Police Services Board is a civilian governing body that receives its authority under the Police Services Act.

The Board has specific legislated responsibilities, including the recruitment and appointment of the Chief of Police and Deputy Chiefs of Police.

after councillors at last Tuesday's meeting supported the move to go forward and hammer out a custodial agreement with the Ontario Heritage Trust.

The land in question, a 97-acre parcel of land, commonly known as HiTor, on the east side of Bathurst Street near Bloomington Road, was willed by Ms. Bartley Smith to the Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT) in 1992 with the condition that if the Trust did not want the land, it should be donated to the Town of Aurora.

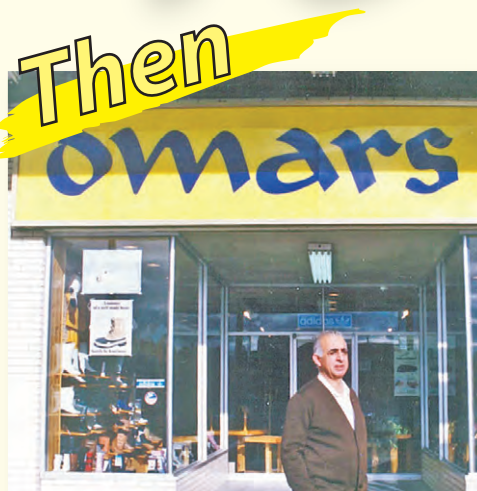
"The Ontario Heritage Trust holds the property in trust to protect the significant natural heritage features and archaeological resources of the property in the long term, said Aurora CAO Neil Garbe in a report.

"The Smith property, part of the Oak Ridges Moraine, helps serve an important function as the headwaters for more than 30 streams flowing into Lake Ontario and Lake Simcoe. Approximately 60 per cent of the land has natural heritage features."

The property supports deciduous forests "dominated by a mix of ash, maple, red oak, trembling aspen and basswood", as well as mature white pine and Norway spruce, and it also supports deer and other mammals.

The purpose of the project, according to Mr. Garbe's report is to "establish a mutually beneficial relationship between the Town of Aurora and the Ontario Heritage Trust that ensures the long term protection, enhancement and public enjoyment" of the lands.

Please see page 20



Omar Khamissa
1970



Owners Raz and Mae Khamissa
and their staff at Omars Shoes
and 5 Below Jeans & More

For 40 years now, Omars Shoes has been the destination of choice for Aurora and area residents looking for comfortable, stylish footwear for the entire family.

It all began in 1970 when Omar and Amina Khamissa opened their modest 'Mom and Pop' outlet in a 1,200-square-foot store front.

Now operated by Raz and Mae Khamissa, Omars boasts a staff of seasoned, professional shoe-fitters, all busily and happily operating in a 7,000-square-foot centre for fashionable footwear that has sustained its leading reputation by offering outstanding customer service, knowledgeable staff, quality products and a great selection. And, their history of helping to ease common foot problems has added to their small-town, retail family tradition.

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The three pictures shown here represent the last students who attended Wells Street Public School when it was Aurora's only high school. The photos were believed to be taken in the fall of 1951, and were given to The Auroran by Ted McClenny, who is somewhere in one of the photos...a Grade 10 student. They are shown here in three sections because the pictures don't match up...and Poor Ronnie had nothing to write about this week. Ted advises the teachers are in the second row of the photo at the right top of the page and include, left to right, Frank Gregoire, Wilfred Adams, Arnold Miller, Miss Griffin, Miss Fletcher, Miss Spooner, J.H. Knowles, Principal, R.O. Smith, Jean Cameron, Miss Wilkie, Norm F. Johnson, Vice-Principal, Mrs. Gerrow and Roland Moddle. The photo was taken on the front lawn of the Wells Street School and it was in the Spring of 1952 that the transfer to the new school on Dunning Avenue was made. In that era, students were bussed to Aurora for high school from King Township, King City, Nobleton, Schomberg, Holland Marsh and Whitchurch Township.



Letters to the Editor

Columnist's views no joke: reader

To the editor,

Whilst reading Stephen Sommerville's column "party politics in municipal races?" in the last edition of The Auroran, I had to keep checking that this wasn't the April 1st edition and that this column wasn't an April fool's joke; however, after

having read the entire column I realized to my horror that this was no joke, this guy is serious!

First of all, I don't think there is any room in municipal elections for party politics, but this is just my opinion.

What really bothered me is that Mr. Sommerville is sug-

gesting that we actually, deliberately elect candidates to vote in a block--- for the mayor to pick a slate of four candidates who would, for all intents and purposes, become yes men and women when the mayor wanted a motion passed.

In Aurora, five votes is a

majority so this would mean the mayor and his or her slate of candidates would control the agenda.

This is hardly the democratic process that I think we should strive for.

Surely we want independent thinkers on council.

Are we the voters that

incompetent that we need a mayoralty candidate to pick a team of councillors whom we should vote for?

The past three or four councils have been accused of and criticized for conspiring to vote in a block on issues and yet Mr. Sommerville not only seems to condone this action but encourages the practice.

I have no idea what he meant by his comment that Aurora does not have a "strong" mayor system in place.

Surely that would depend on the individual who is mayor and their ability to lead, to work with councillors to build a consensus, to build a team out of the individual councillors, we, the voting public have elected

in order to work together for the betterment of Aurora.

Mr. Sommerville goes on to say "under this current setup our mayor merely has one vote on council".

You mean there are some jurisdictions where mayors have more than one vote?

Isn't the basis of democracy, one person, one vote?

It seems that under Mr. Sommerville's preferred set-up the mayor would have five votes, their own and their slate of four councillors.

I think that system has already been invented, it's called a dictatorship...and that's no joke.

Graham Wride
Aurora

Arboretum seeks volunteers to plant trees and shrubs

To the editor,

More roots in the ground this spring at the Aurora Arboretum, helping toward a greener region.

A major opportunity for community help will be Saturday, May 15, when 350 trees and shrubs will be planted near

Industrial Parkway in co-operation with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.

In the meantime, we need volunteers on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday morning starting Wednesday, April 21.

Check aurora.arboretum.ca for details and directions.

Last winter the little rodents were busy in the Arboretum, as well as about town, nibbling at tender young bark.

Many of these plants will struggle and survive, but mortality is with us always.

While checking on the hundreds of trees and shrubs planted over the last 13 years, we

discovered an east/west path, constructed in the Scots Pine Plantation, northwest of the Town Hall.

We would like to know who should be thanked for gathering up all the fallen wood for us.

Gordon Barnes
Aurora

Mayor explains disappointment over planting and litter conflict

Mayor Phyllis Morris expressed her disappointment at Tuesday's general committee meeting over comments made last week regarding Saturday's Neighbourhood Network tree planting event and the Mayor's Anti-Litter Day being held the same day.

As The Auroran reported last week, the conflict with the two events was brought up at the previous week's council meeting with questions being raised over the clash in dates and the accommodation of both events.

Mayor Morris objected to suggestions that she had "thwarted plans" for Neighbourhood Network's event.

"That is the impression that may have been left in our com-

munity," she said.

"I [stated] unequivocally that [Neighbourhood Network] had not come forward to ask permission at council," the Mayor said. "I was perfectly clear in the meeting with [Tom] Taylor that I suggested the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex could be used - and in fact we have a lot of open space out there and a lot of us have planted acorns out there. I tried every possible way to accommodate this."

"Mr. Taylor, in fact, apologized to me for being put in that position," the Mayor also said. "He apologized because he felt like I had been put in a terrible spot."

In a meeting with Mr. Taylor, Neighbourhood Network ambassador who is a former Newmarket Mayor, Aurora CAO

Neil Garbe, Parks Manager Jim Tree, and John Clement of the Arboretum, the mayor said they "tried very hard to accommodate Mr. Taylor's request at that point, which was: is there a way we can resolve this because he knew there were no permissions granted."

"Mr. Tree and our staff indeed advised Neighbourhood Network in writing which was shared with Mr. CAO and myself that they would need permission," the mayor said. "They had been advised, I think, on March 18, so the Chief Administrative Officer, myself, and Mr. Tree were put in a very difficult spot."

Mr. Taylor said he did apologize to the Mayor "inasmuch as the [events] were on the same day."

"We didn't do it intentionally or anything like that, but I said I was sorry they occurred on the same day."

While he acknowledged there was an e-mail sent by Mr. Tree, Mr. Taylor said Neighbourhood Network had already been to the high schools by that time.

"We had met with staff a week or two weeks before that and we were at the high schools," he said.

Neighbourhood Network reached their goals of signing up between 20 and 30 volunteers at each of the area high schools in Aurora and Newmarket.

Approximately 100 Aurora student volunteers planted trees at the north end of St. Andrew's Golf Course.

THE AURORAN

“Aurora’s Independent Community Newspaper”

Published weekly by The Auroran Publications Inc.
at 95 Edward Street,
Aurora, L4G 1W1

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Front Porch Perspective

By Stephen Somerville

Seeking municipal office

Although the municipal election is not until this November, we already have a number of folks registered for the mayoralty race; it should make for an exciting fall.

I certainly hope that we also have a good number of people vying for one of the council seats. Nothing against the current crop of municipal politicians, but having races is good for our democracy.

It also shows that we care about our community.

In 2006 three candidates sought the Mayors' chain of office while 20 of our fellow citizens contested the eight council seats up for grabs.

I hope we have at least that number again!

Many trees have been felled in the study of democratic renewal and re-invigorating both our electoral process and our public institutions.

There have been a myriad of reports, studies, focus groups and polling done on this issue.

But whether or not we have good government fundamentally comes down to the occupants of the elected seats.

We don't necessarily need to be governed by the best educated or by those with the highest incomes.

In fact, if you look at the experience of our contemporary leaders, they come from many different backgrounds.

The current Prime Minister is an economist by training, while the last one was a millionaire businessman.

The premier of Ontario is a lawyer while the premier of Alberta was formerly a farmer.

We do need, however, to elect people who represent and reflect the best qualities of our community.

We need people who truly are of our community, in our community and for our community.

They need to put the Towns' interest ahead of their own narrowly defined self-interest.

And the people we elect should have as their goal simply quality of, and selflessness of service, rather than longevity of service.

Our council needs people from all walks of life, who have enthusiasm and energy to burn, and who, although possessing strong opinions are at the same time consensus builders, who work hard and get things done.

This fall when I am looking for someone to support I begin the process by reviewing the brochures or simple pamphlets produced by the respective candidates.

I look for information on four broad areas; education, professional/vocational background, volunteer endeavors and accomplishments and the issues and answers that the candidate has identified as important.

We should be looking at the whole person.

For instance, someone might not have much of a formal education, but their professional/vocational or volunteer accomplishments would make up for it.

Or their stance on three or four important issues maybe particularly compelling.

Regarding education: - Do they have any post secondary training? If so, in what area? Do they have any specialized knowledge,

i.e. energy, public safety, health, social work, education?

What have they done in their private life? What type of career have they had? Do they belong to any professional organizations?

Have they participated in any volunteer activities? If so, for how long and in what capacity? Are they or have they been in the past a coach, referee or administrator for any of the local sports organizations?

If not presently a member of council, have they attended any of the public council meetings?

Do they sit on any of the community committees? Are they part of any ratepayer group?

Have they taken the time to write letter(s) to the editor on a particular issue in the past? What was the issue that made them write?

And finally, what are the key issues that they are seeking office on?

The brochure does not necessarily need to be expensive or ornate, but it should be visually appealing to the eye and should attempt to provide a balanced view of the candidate.

For those who are seeking office for the first time, spend time on making the brochure/pamphlet a good one.

For many candidates it is the first point of contact with the voting public, and as my mom always said, first impressions are important.

Stephen can be contacted at:
stephengsomerville@yahoo.com



Inside Aurora

By Scott Johnston

Cleaning up this town

Call me civic-minded, but I decided to sign up for Aurora's clean-up day this year.

After all, the town can be a bit of a mess in the Spring once all the snow melts.

It was a beautiful Saturday morning as I arrived at Town Hall to see what I could do to help out.

It was already busy, and I had to wait until some people ahead of me were taken care of, first. When I finally reached the counter, the staff member there thanked me for participating and handed me a list.

I expected to see some options of parks or other green spaces in which to pick up trash, but instead, was surprised to see other tasks.

"What's 'playground equipment maintenance'?" I asked, reading one at random.

"Repairing the swings and slides in the children's area at Town Park," she replied.

Seeing my puzzled expression, she explained; "You know; tightening bolts, sanding down rust...that sort of thing."

"Or," she continued, referring to her list, "if you don't want to do that, you can cut the grass in Fleury Park, wash the windows at the library, clean out the eavetroughs at the Seniors' Centre, or scrub the stains out of the grout in the Leisure Complex change rooms."

"I wouldn't do that last one, though," she confided in a whisper. "It's pretty nasty."

"Wait a minute. I thought the intent of these special clean-up days was to pick up trash?"

"That's part of it, but every year we expand the program."

Before she had a chance to go on, a family came in, and stood behind me.

"Excuse me for a second," she said, before asking if she could help them.

After a brief conversation, the children excitedly chose a task from the list.

Smiling, the staff member handed them all some work gloves and shovels, and directed them to a clogged storm drain near McKenzie Marsh.

Turning back to me, she went on with her explanation.

"We started out with people just picking up garbage in town. Then we added various graffiti clean-ups, where participants remove paint and other graffiti from public property. Next we had residents planting trees and doing chores in the arboretum. There are even volunteers now who help maintain the leash-free dog park."

"So we figured that if Aurorans already voluntarily did all that clean-up and maintenance in town, why not

everything else?

"After all," she concluded, indicating the list in my hand, "there's lots to do."

"But isn't staff supposed to be doing all this?"

"Oh, they still do, but it's especially busy in the Spring, which results in a lot of backlog and overtime. So if residents are willingly going to volunteer to do this work for us, we figured why not take advantage of it?"

Seeing even more folks come in for tools and something to do (which turned out to be putting up new signs on the trails in Sheppard's Bush), I realized the town was on to something.

I didn't want to see a child hurt because of my shoddy teeter totter repairs, so I didn't think playground equipment maintenance was for me.

But I didn't want to feel like the only Auroran who wasn't pitching in.

So if you see some parking spaces near Town Hall where the newly-repainted lines aren't exactly straight, my apologies.

I promise to do better at the 2011 clean-up day next April.

Feel free to e-mail Scott at:
machellscorners@gmail.com

Letter to the Editor

Moraine in jeopardy over these plans

To the editor,

For over 20 years, under the corporate name, Westhill Developments, Mr. Lebovic, a well-known developer and builder in and around Aurora, has been trying to obtain approval to build, in an area off Leslie Street, between Bloomington and Vandorf Roads, designated only for estate homes on at least two acres of land.

Over these many years, as Mr. Lebovic's plans have been denied, he has altered his plans in an attempt to make his proposal more palatable to the several authorities involved, both elected and non-elected.

The latest proposal, which has been under intense discussion for several years calls for 75 town home units to be built on 12.5 acres and a completely unnecessary golf course, on the restricted Oak Ridges Moraine, in an area that has neither sewers nor water services.

The proposal abuts an estate property that has one home on a 25-acre parcel whose owner is prohibited from selling his property to build even one more home on his property, but Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) is using all its available tools to allow a seasoned developer to build 75 units on a parcel half the size of this current resident. I kid you not!

Well over three years ago, on May 19, 2006, at a meeting at the site between officials of the developer and officials of the Ministry of the Environment, MOE declared that there was not sufficient ground water at the site to support the proposed development.

Relevant minutes of that meeting state, and I quote:

--"MOE indicated that a PTTW (Permit to take Water) from groundwater sources for irrigation is unlikely to be granted. The ORM (Oak Ridges Moraine) has significant pressure on water levels due to increasing municipal uses and an incremental allocation for recreation (read golf course) is not supported at this time."

--"Given the relative high demand for ground water in the area, the MOE is unlikely to support the

use of wells to supplement irrigation supply in dry years.

-- "Due to the intense competition for groundwater in this area, existing high capacity takers (i.e. municipal wells, golf courses) are under close scrutiny under the condition of their permits with little, if any, remaining capacity to accommodate changes to their operation."

In other words, on May 19, 2006, the MOE was taking a very logical and justifiable approach: namely, that groundwater in this area of Aurora is a limited resource under pressure from multiple users, the Oak Ridges Moraine is in jeopardy and the taking of this limited and precious resource for recreational purposes was ill-advised and inappropriate.

Mr. Cherniak, an official of the developer, has chided the opponents of the proposed development, stating that they do not understand the water problem and he and the hydrogeological experts on the Lebovic payroll insist that the water situation at the site is not a problem.

This partisan opinion is completely opposed by everyone else with an interest in the project, not only citizens residing in the area, but other professional bodies that bring immense expertise, experience and understanding to the question.

I refer here to groups such as Earthroots, Ecojustice, STORM (Save the Oak Ridges Moraine), Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust (ORMLT), Oak Ridges Trail Ass'n (ORTA), Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment, York Region Environmental Alliance, Concerned Citizens of King, among others, all of whom disagree wholeheartedly with the views of the developer.

Additionally, the Town of Aurora, after having studied, assessed, analyzed and seriously considered the proposal for a number of years, dismissed the proposal on March 4, 2008.

Even a ground water neophyte has trouble with the judgment of the developer who states that the surrounding wells will not be affected by adding a vil-

lage of 300 new residents, milking the fragile groundwater system for their everyday needs and the imposition of a thirsty, storm water guzzling golf course.

And we must not forget that, even without this "village of 300" and the unnecessary golf course, each year the Town of Aurora has to restrict the use of water by all residents.

When the Magna golf course was developed some years ago, surrounding wells were, in fact, seriously affected, even resulting in some residents' wells running dry and having to be re-dug at considerable expense.

And let us not forget that for over 20 years the developer has been unable to convince the MOE to issue a PTTW.

Oh sure, on April 30, 2007, the MOE mistakenly issued a PTTW, but less than four months later the MOE realized the serious error that it had made and rescinded the PTTW.

It has not been re-issued. The developer cannot proceed without a PTTW. After 20 years, one would have thought that the message is clear.

In spite of the foregoing, the developer is persisting in his (fruitless) quest and is clearly abetted by the OMB, even though they must know that, under present circumstances, the proposal cannot be brought to fruition.

The approach followed by the OMB is particularly puzzling.

Since day one, the OMB has been chairing what we refer to as "partial" hearings. By this, we mean that not all parties needed to make a final decision have been included in these meetings, i.e. neither The Environmental Review Agency nor the Ministry of the Environment, whose approval must be granted before the development can proceed to finalization have been invited to attend the hearings.

In fact they have been deliberately excluded

by the OMB.

Not surprisingly, no final decision has been able to be rendered in over 20 years.

The lawyer representing some of the residents in the area of the proposed development has been trying, for more than two years, to convince the OMB to allow for a full hearing, but his efforts, including resorting to legal action in the court system, have been rebuffed at every turn by the OMB. In this application, there are not just planning issues to be debated, but also, and just as important, environmental issues.

My understanding of the Consolidated Hearings Act is to provide for such situations and save the parties involved, government authorities and courts, time and money by hearing the merits and demerits of the case at one hearing rather than dragging on and on through various levels of approval.

For some reason that I cannot fathom, it appears that the OMB will search every nook and cranny to find some obscure justification to prevent the holding of a joint and fully served meeting.

I can't imagine a clearer case for a joint hearing than this one. There are very serious environmental issues, the Oak Ridges Moraine is in jeopardy, MOE has declared that there is not enough water at the site to support the proposed development, no PTTW has been issued, the environmental assessment is incomplete.

I firmly believe that it's time to stop playing with a partial deck and call a joint hearing with all necessary participants to make a final decision, all sitting around the decision table at the same time.

Over the last two years, I have written many letters to various and diverse senior appointed and elected officials throughout the province but not one has addressed the issues that I have raised, and these questions have been presented with clarity

and transparency.

To be more specific, I wrote to two senior officials, who are classified as "members" at OMB and to the Chair (person) there, and received not even the courtesy of a reply.

My letters were completely ignored.

I then wrote what became a series of letters to the CEO of OMB who did reply to each of my letters, but did not address one iota of my clearly enunciated issues. These were ignored.

During this two year period I also wrote to other officials who I believed could, or should, have some influence to convince OMB to get serious and find a cost-effective solution to this unnecessary and long-simmering aggravation.

These included the CAO of the Regional Municipality of York, the Ombudsman of Ontario, the Provincial Member of Parliament for our area, the Minister of the Environment, the Premier of Ontario, the Provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Provincial Attorney General, among

many others.

The only positive reply that I received was a gracious acknowledgment from the Premier who passed my letter to his responsible cabinet member for his action.

Not one of these responsible officials addressed, in any way, any of my concerns.

The apparent lack of interest or concern shown by these senior executives indicate, to me at least, that the common reaction to my pleas is "don't look to me to do anything which might be regarded as interfering with, or intruding into, the space of OMB."

In effect "hands off OMB". This is scary.

Surely there is someone or some jurisdiction in the elected or appointed bodies in the Province of Ontario who is charged with the responsibility to supervise and direct this non-elected body, OMB, to ensure that it does not operate with complete impunity with respect to the lives and well-being of the taxpaying citizens of Ontario.

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Williams' music teacher to retire

By **BROCK WEIR**
Auroran staff

In the dying days of winter in 1990, Penny Sedore was scrambling to find an extra \$5,000 to finance her students' trip to Vancouver. With her jazz band having won a gold medal in a competition that February, she and her kids were invited to perform at another Festival that May, but it would cost an additional \$20,000 to get everyone to the west coast.

With the help of local businesses and family contacts Ms Sedore collected \$15,000, but with six weeks to spare she was still \$5,000 short.

"The week before I was going to have to cancel the trip and give all the money back, my guitar player's mother walked in with a cheque for five grand," Ms Sedore said. "She said, 'My father passed away last week and this is my inheritance.

"Your jazz band has kept my son in school. If it wasn't for playing in the jazz band, he would not have come to school, so he is graduating because of you.' She handed over her whole inheritance to me and we

made Vancouver."

This is just one example of the active community support Ms Sedore has experienced as the head of Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School's music department.

After 30 years at the school, she is planning on hanging up her baton this semester, with her final music concert being held at the school May 12 at 7 p.m.

"I'm going to be a wreck," she said on her retirement. "You don't leave anything after this length of time and not feel sadness. I still wake up every morning and love to come to work. A lot of people as they approach retirement age are happy [counting down the days], but not me.

"I questioned whether I really should retire, but I've made my decision and hopefully I won't regret it."

The kids, she said, were the primary doubt factors in her mind.

"They say, 'You can't do this!' or parents come in and say, 'I have a kid in Grade 7, you have to stay!'"

The kids are the reason she has stayed at Williams

since 1980. The music students, she said, are often the top kids in the school and Ontario Scholars.

"I wouldn't have stayed at this school for 30 years if I didn't love the kids, and I love the staff members here," she said. "I love working with kids and I always have. I'm going to miss them terribly."

Ms Sedore comes by her music and teaching roots honestly. Both the Windsor, Ontario, native's parents were teachers. Her father was the vice principal of a local high school and her mother was a night school director. She said they were great supporters of the arts and turned her onto the piano when she was eight years old.

By the time she was 12, she was playing Mozart concertos with the Windsor Junior Symphony and holding her own private music lessons.

"I've always loved [the piano] and I think they were kind of training me to be a concert pianist, but I liked too many other things," she said. "I had so many other interests I didn't want to devote five hours a day to playing. I loved sports and socializ-



Penny Sedore will retire at the end of this school year, after teaching music to thousands of students at Aurora's Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School but not before she handles one more spring concert. The event is scheduled for May 12 in the school's cafetorium and will feature one of her former students musician Gregg Lawless, right.

ing."

Ms Sedore attended the University of Western Ontario for four years before going to the University of Toronto for teachers' college. At university she learned how to play all the different instruments a school might have.

"I'm awful at the violin, but I'm pretty good at a lot of other instruments," she said. "How can you teach kids unless you play them yourself and know the intricacies of the instrument?" Ms. Sedore, whose husband was raised in Aurora, arrived in town in 1976.

When she joined Williams four years later, she had 20 kids in the music department, half of whom were flautists. ("I'm glad we didn't tape that commencement!") 30 years later she has 30 kids in her Grade 9 class, in addition to the senior jazz band, senior concert band, and a Grade 10 intermediate band. The junior band alone has 75 members.

Over the years, she has devoted herself to exposing her students to the best of the Canadian and international music scenes, including musicians who have worked with everyone from Frank Sinatra to Wynton Marsalis, to Gino Falconi, music director for

the Royal Regiment of Canada, members of True North Brass, and even her former student Gregg Lawless.

"I want these kids exposed to the best," she says. "I want them to hear the best and the finest. It gives them a shot in the arm and it gives me a shot in the arm, too. "With me telling them what to do all the time it is like their mother telling them to pick up their socks. If someone new comes in fresh for the two hours, they're rejuvenated and I'm rejuvenated."

Relating to students has been a key to her success, she added.

"Treat [students] with respect and you'll get that back."

For a teacher who has over the last 30 years led her students to festival awards from coast to coast and internationally - and receiving the rank of Honorary Kentucky Colonel direct from the State's governor "for fostering the goodwill of the arts internationally" in the process - her retirement plans might seem surprisingly open.

"I want to travel a little bit more and my husband wants me to relax a little more," she said. "There is never a good time [to

retire] but I think this is it. I used to be a very good bridge player. [I want to] exercise more, get out and do and do a little bit more sports. It's going to be a feel-your-way kind of thing.

"I'm not going to be cleaning my house more, that's for sure. It's a no-win situation with two animals. I'll figure it out along the way."

She's not done with music completely, however, saying she would welcome the opportunity for some supply teaching. She also hopes to become an adjudicator in American music festivals.

"I think the best thing about being an adjudicator is, well, I've taught high school kids for so long and I know how to relate to them, to help them lead the festival, to make them feel good about themselves," she said. "I've had some people in the past that just maybe expect these kids to be professional musicians and they're not. They're high school students who just love to play. That is a big difference."

The May 12 event is her final Spring Concert at Williams. It is being held in the school's cafetorium.

"Hopefully we'll have some tissues around the room for me."



Dylan Teacher, left, and Carly Wiitala, both members of Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School student council, helped set up the 2nd annual Rummage Sale in the school's gym Saturday.

Auroran photo by David Falconer



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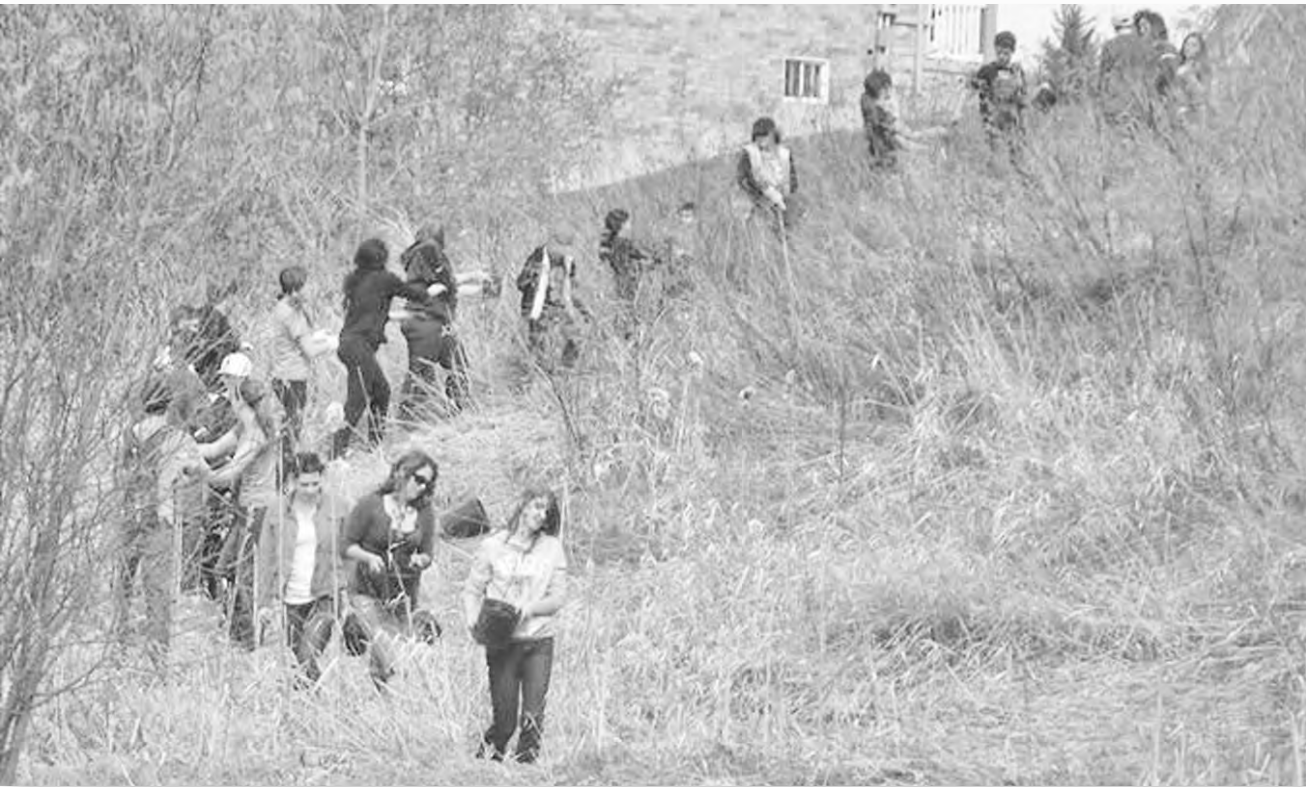
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Nearly 100 students with representatives from each high school in Aurora signed up to plant trees on environmentally sensitive lands at St. Andrews Valley Golf Club Saturday morning. Neighbourhood Network partnered with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority to mark Volunteer Week and Earth Day with the first of what will become an annual event. See story page 19.

Aurora firm benefits from federal grant

Newmarket-Aurora Member of Parliament Lois Brown last week announced two projects in Newmarket and Aurora that will move forward thanks to an investment of more than \$2.1 million from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) to stimulate local economies.

"These investments continue to build on our government's efforts and commitment to support Southern Ontario's ongoing economic resurgence," she said. "Newmarket and Aurora will directly benefit from immediate and sustained employment opportunities as well as diversification of our local economy."

In Aurora, Your Solar Home Inc., 270 Industrial Parkway South, will be funded more than \$132,000 that will allow the hiring of 43 people over two phases.

The company also expects to acquire and install machinery and equipment to upgrade the assembly process for building the Solar Sheet solar thermal air heating collector.

"We are very pleased

to receive funding from the FedDev Community Adjustment Fund Intake 2 program," said Your Solar Home Inc. President and CEO Todd Kirkpatrick. "This funding directly provides needed new local green jobs in Ontario and allows us to develop next generation solar energy products and expand plant automation. This funding will also enable us to help consumers and businesses with increased energy costs and fight climate change".

The two projects will be supported through the Community Adjustment Fund, a two-year, \$1 billion national program aimed at addressing the short-term economic needs of communities hit hardest by the global economic recession.

Approved projects must meet the terms and conditions set out in their contribution agreements.

FedDev Ontario was created as part of Canada's Economic Action Plan to support economic and community development, innovation, and economic diversification, with contributions to communities, businesses and non-profit organizations in southern Ontario.

Committee says no to ward question

From page 1
the Open House on March 31," he said. "Some of those were from the same families. We had no speakers at the designated time at general committee on April 6 and with the submissions we have received including this evening's written submissions and speakers, I count 10-3 in favour of no change. I don't think that is a big groundswell."

"It seems apparent to me that the public is not upset with our current structure of representation and the public has been given an opportunity to give us input. I have received no emails directly, no phone calls about this, so I don't really see the reason to include a question about wards on the ballot."

Although she said implementing a ward system is a question that comes up once or twice every term, Councillor Buck applauded the consultation process.

"I think the exercise has been worthwhile," she said. "It's a good thing to give the public the opportunity to express their views on it and I would like to commend all the residents who spoke in favour of and against a

ward system. That is democracy at work."

While Councillor Alison Collins-Mrakas also applauded the process noting the process afforded a number of opportunities for members of the public to come forward and present their thoughts, she too noted no one has contacted her on the issue personally.

"Unfortunately we haven't heard from a significant number of community members," she said. "Myself, I haven't heard from anyone directly, no one has contacted me about it. I do think the current system works. That is my own personal opinion. I don't think it is a burning issue for the community, however I am not comfortable in just thinking something like that. I'd like to know. So, in that sense, I do think it should be on the ballot."

"We've gone through the exercise, why not just put it on the ballot and see what the community thinks and get on with it?"

While the question appearing on the upcoming ballot seems unlikely, councillors did learn something from those speaking in favour of a ward

system: they need to get out more.

Gary Johnson, a resident living on Vandorf Sideroad, said he was in favour of a ward system because it would make knowing your candidates easier.

"In my area, I haven't seen in 13 or 14 years of living on Vandorf Sideroad any representative knocking on my door, soliciting my vote, nothing," he said. "The only thing I get is a few postcards in the mail. How am I going to make a decision on who to vote for if I only get a few post cards in the mail?"

"So you go out to an all-candidates meeting and it is like a cattle call. Everyone gets an opportunity to speak. It might be 3-5 minutes of questions and it is a free for all. How, as a resident, can I make a thoughtful, reasonable decision as to who to vote for based on what I am getting?"

Resident Marie Leone echoed Mr. Johnson's sentiments.

"We've never seen a campaign piece, we've never had anyone ask us to put an election sign on our front lawn, and when it comes to election time

the first guy on the list gets selected and the next ones down," said Ms. Leone. "So, I think election time just means, 'Gee Whiz, if my name was Adams I'd be on there. I'd be a shoo-in.'"

"In the 13 years I've lived here, I probably haven't spoken to anyone but the mayor and that is because I don't know the rest of you and you haven't made it particularly easy for me to know you."

Councillor Buck said, however, there isn't a councillor at the table who does not welcome the opportunity to offer assistance to anyone who asks.

She encouraged those in attendance to think of her as their neighbour and to call to chat about something, noting "most of us are available for that at any time and all of us appreciate the opportunity to speak with you personally."

"For the people who say they haven't heard from anyone during an election I think you'll probably have a lot of people knocking on your door this year," said Mayor Morris. "Mental note to self: Walk down Vandorf... again."

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Members of the area pharmaceutical family were on hand Friday to discuss the impact of recently announced cuts that will affect their livelihood and to develop a plan that would lead to a resolution of the issue. The meeting was called by Newmarket-Aurora Member of the Provincial Parliament Frank Klees. Taking part at the meeting were, left to right, Jonathan Chiu, a University of Toronto pharmacy student; Ben Shenouda, president of the Pharmacists Association of Ontario; Darryl Austin, from Dixon Pharmacy in Newmarket; Farid Wassef from Stouffville IDA, MPP Klees; and Michael Khalil from Aurora Pharmacy.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Your water bill could increase

Aurora residents are likely to experience a 14.11 per cent hike in their household water bill if a proposed cost increase occurs, councillors learned at last Tuesday's general committee meeting.

According to a report by Town Treasurer Dan Elliott, a residential household "that is billed an average of 400 cubic meters of water per year" will see \$115.12 tacked onto their bill, an increase to \$930.88 from \$815.76.

"\$49.16 of the average increase is attributable to the Region of York whereas \$65.96 is attributable to the Town of Aurora, water loss, and the adjustment factor," said Mr. Elliott in his report.

Residents who receive both water and wastewater services from the Town will see their wastewater service charge bumped up by 18.8 per cent.

This will be combined with the water charge on bills issued after May 1 to "reduce inquiries regarding the separate service charges" on current bills, according to Mr. Elliott. "One of the main influences on this increase is the 10 per cent rate increases for wholesale water and wastewater services purchased by Aurora from the Region of York. All rate increases are to be effective for billings issued on or after May 1, as is the normal practice."

At last Tuesday's meeting, councillors asked staff members to come back to this week's council meeting with a Power Point presentation to explain the actual increases to residents.

Mayor Phyllis Morris and councillors also expressed concern that water loss and those not paying for water could have contributed to an undue increase at the expense of other residents.

"Before we increase one penny of anyone's water rates, I think it might be helpful if we discover if everyone in the town who is getting water is paying for water," said Mayor Morris. "How do we know that everyone who has access to water is actually

being metered and paying for it? Before we increase any rates, we want to make sure we're not overlooking anything."

Mr. Elliott assured councillors that staff members and meter readers monitor properties regularly and any irregularities are reported back to the department.

"It's rare to find them, but periodically they will arise," said Mr. Elliott. "I suspect there is only one or two in town, [but] I'm thinking there are not more than 10. The impact of the one or two accounts on the rates that are proposed in this report would not change to any material amount in my opinion. That is an issue I can take back to my staff and work with the engineering and operations groups and the meter reader contract to ensure that we remain vigilant and enhance our techniques of discovery."

Councillor Evelina MacEachern said that even knowing council was legislated to move towards full cost recovery on water, she was "sure most members of council were alarmed by the increase" and wondered if there were gaps in

the present system.

She noted causes for water loss, which Mr. Elliott's report estimates between 11 and 12 per cent of water in Aurora.

These causes, according to the document, include pipe leaks, water main breaks, fire department use for both training and fire fighting, "own use of unmetered supplies for landscaping, parks and road maintenance", theft of water from hydrants, and water meter slippage.

"Some of these listed uses...are not part of the revenue stream but are part of the consumption stream," she said. "There is some usage that makes up what I think was called the 'unbilled 12 per cent' which we're having the users pay for but yet there are benefitters who are not paying towards it, so at the end of the process, which will probably be next week, I would like to ask staff to look at this for the next cycle."

Theft of water is a reality, said Mr. Elliott, but added line loss of unaccounted for water at 12 per cent for Aurora is "a fairly reasonable number to be working with".

204 Aurorans respond to poll

Aurora candidate for mayor Roger Clowater conducted a survey at his booth at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce Home Show recently, and 204 people participated.

Most of those who entered said council accountability was the most important issue in town.

A total of 35 people selected that item from a list of nearly 20 issues.

Twenty-two responded on Friday and Saturday and 13 picked that issue Sunday.

Second on the list was vacant downtown businesses which attracted 28 votes, followed by repairing town infrastructure, which included

streets, lights, water and sewage.

That issue attracted 20 responses.

A total of 128 citizens responded to the poll Friday and Saturday while 76 responded Sunday.

Only criterion set by the mayoralty candidate was anyone responding to the survey had to live in Aurora.

So far, Clowater will challenge Nigel Kean for the top spot in the municipality, although current Aurora mayor Phyllis Morris said Saturday that even though she has not officially registered, she will seek to be re-elected as Aurora mayor.

St. Kitts calls police after verbal attack

Sher St. Kitts called the police on Bren Marsh, husband of former Aurora Councillor Grace Marsh, at the Aurora Home Show last weekend after a vocal confrontation at the Windfall Ecology booth.

"I felt attacked by the words that were spoken," said Ms. St. Kitts when contacted by The Auroran last week. "People around me were frightened, so you can imagine how I felt especially since I didn't know who he was. He basically said he doesn't want me in the town, he doesn't think I have any right to do the things I do in town."

"He called me a liar and was just a big, huge man that was coming into my space far too close and when I tried to get away from him he followed me

and continued to berate me loudly in public. That's bad form. I didn't know what his beef was. If that isn't bullying, I don't know what you call it.

"I didn't create this; I did not ask for this, I was the one that received this onslaught of verbal diarrhoea in public loudly and in a threatening manner. The police were called and unfortunately they weren't called to the scene which is too bad."

Ms. St. Kitts said it was unfortunate and not something she would like to see happen to anyone at an event like a home show where "we're all supposed to be working together."

When contacted by The Auroran, Mr. Marsh said simply "I just told someone what I thought of them."



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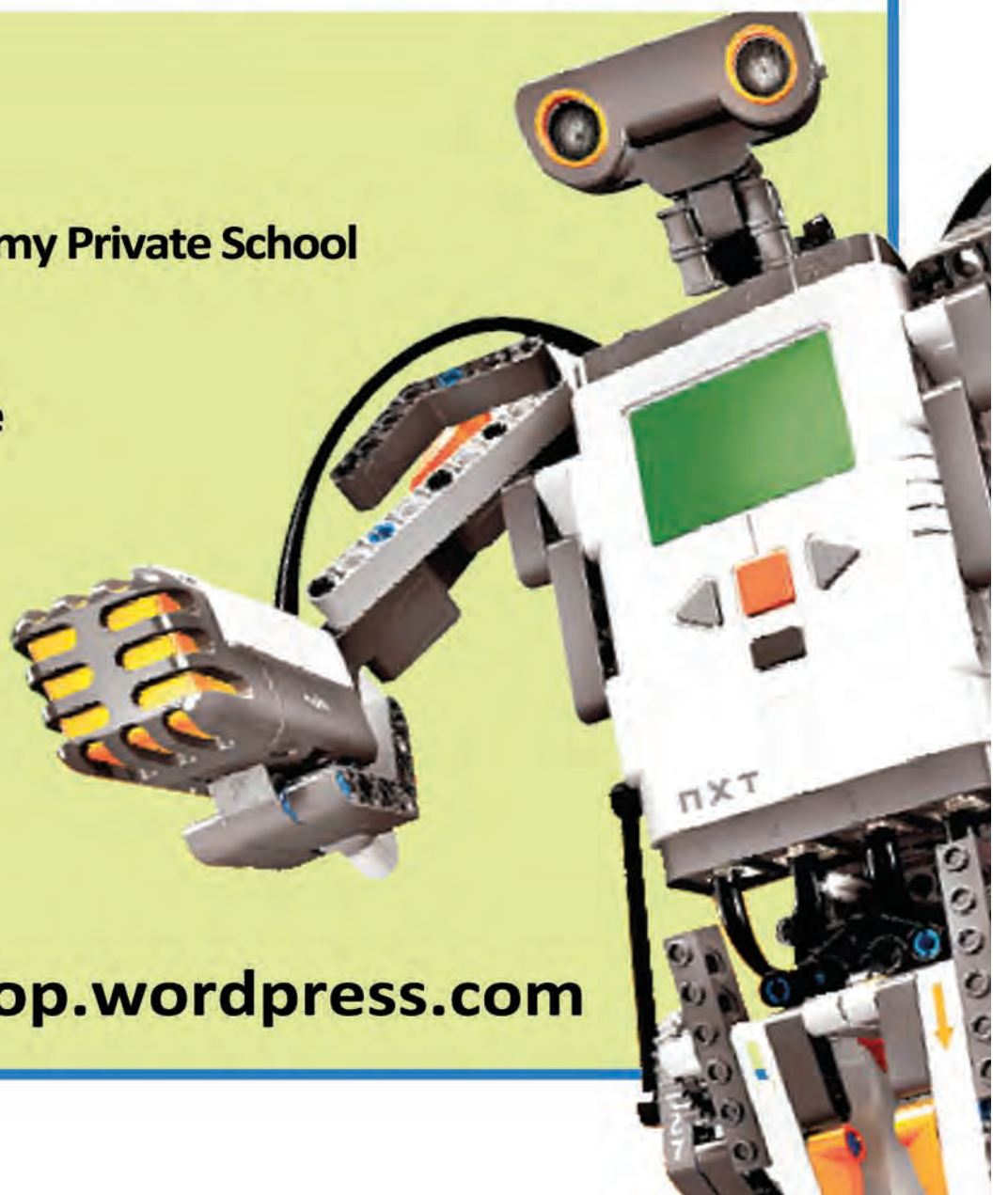
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Two participants at icamp intently working on their stop-frame movies for the Animation Alive Adventure. After having taken many hundreds of still captures, the girls are using additional software to add music, movie titles and special effects to create a complete end product.

Lead a crew to Mars to search for life on the Red Planet, or explore an Egyptian pyramid for lost artifacts. Dream up and film a blockbuster movie, design your own clothing or create the latest and greatest video game. This is just another regular day for a child at icamp.

icamp is not your ordinary computer-based learning environment. There are laptops everywhere, but the kids, instead of staring blankly into screens, are using their laptops to create something – movies, LEGO® robots that move, video-games and more.

Thanks to the Children's Technology Workshop (CTW), children today can explore these Adventures during their summer at icamp. icamp gives children the opportunity to develop creative skills in programming, engineering, video game design, storyboarding and problem solving.

On the first day of icamp, children individually select one of 10 theme-based Adventures. Examples of Adventures include Mission to Mars, Gamemaker Guru and Animation Alive. Each Adventure is made up of hundreds of individual projects focusing on Engineering, Robotics, Video Game Making, Movie Making or Digital Art. One of the first tasks that every icamper does is to create a story for their chosen Adventure. For example, a child who selected the Architect Adventure may be looking to engineer the tallest building. CTW's trained Instructors help children through their entire Adventure and guide them

towards fun and engaging projects.

"Children will build a wide array of skills which they then use for something creative for their Adventure - such as building a remotely-controlled robot to search life on Mars," says Nazar Hossain who operates CTW programs across York Region. "The fact that the children are in charge of their Adventure gives them a sense of ownership, which is very meaningful to them."

Watching a child work on their Adventure is highly gratifying. For example, during a recent workshop, a young girl was working on her Fashion Designer movie – a stop-frame based movie using props that she had fabricated. Her mom watched her reposition the props in careful detail to shoot the next frame of the movie. "It's incredible, she's completely immersed herself into her story and is learning about all this technology that honestly, we (my husband and I) would have a hard time teaching her about at home." The end result was a 3-minute long movie shot at 12 frames per second – for those of you doing the math, that means the girl shot more than 2,100 pictures to create her masterpiece.

icamp Instructors keep close tabs on each individual child and the progress they are making throughout the week. Progress Charts are kept of exactly what the campers do and the skills they learn so that parents and children alike can celebrate their achievements at the end of each day at icamp. Look through a typical Progress Chart and one will find entries

such as "built a LEGO® race-car and programmed it to avoid walls" or "added a new level to video game including 3 new characters".

"We want the kids to be really creative users of technology – that's the goal," says Nazar. The philosophy is that the computer should be an enabler – a tool to achieve a creative objective. CTW feels that one of their key differentiators from other technology-based programs is the focus on being creative with technology. "We like to focus more on getting kids to be creative with technology because we feel that it will help them embrace the technology around them and feel empowered."

Let's take a close look at one of the projects – for example, a Lego rover with a video camera mounted on it. That Lego rover was built by two children as part of the Mission to Mars Adventure. The rover is being used to drive around on a simulated Martian surface. The two kids are working together to control the rover remotely via a laptop – but they cannot see the rover themselves. They can only monitor where it is heading by watching the live video feed displayed on the laptop from the camera mounted on the rover. Just like NASA would do during a real mission to Mars.

The icamp environment is laid back – kids will walk around, checking out one another's projects and even offer unsolicited opinions. Physical activity and breaks are part of a regular day, where kids will go outside and play a healthy mix of camp games. "Time outdoors is just as important as the creative learning being done indoors – the last thing we want to do is sit a child down for the whole day," says Nazar.

In addition to operating icamp during the summers, Nazar also operates year-round programs across York Region including after-school workshops, birthday parties and weekend workshops. "Year-round programs are more focused in specific areas of our curriculum, such as movie-making, robotics or video-game making." This spring for example, CTW is offering an NXT LEGO Club workshop where participants work in teams of 2 to 3 to build an autonomous robot capable of completing a series of challenging mis-



Testing an autonomous Lego robot can be a challenging task. Trial and error mixed with fine-tuning of the robot's sensors will eventually allow the robot to successfully find and retrieve the red ball.

sions. The 8-week workshop culminates in a friendly, but intense, competition.

Another workshop, being offered at a private school, is teaching children aged 8 and 9 years old, how to create their very own video games. Children arrive promptly at 3.35 pm eager to continue creating their ideal video game that they can then take home and share with their friends. "Technology is so advanced these days, we are not looking to teach kids the rudimentary underlying code language – there are a lot of tools out there in the real world that will continue to abstract the code. We want to focus more on the concepts and logic that goes into something simple like making a character jump – for example, there has to be the concept of gravity so that the character falls back down. And the floor that the character lands on has to be solid, so that they don't fall through it. All these concepts that the kids need to think about while creating their video game are quickly translated into the real world around them."

Believe it or not, one of the most popular questions that CTW gets is from parents wanting to register themselves as well as their kids. Until CTW introduces workshops for parents, we will just have to live vicariously through our kids engaged in one of their many programs. This summer, CTW will mark 8 years of summer icamp in Aurora – icamp will be running from Aurora High School, as well as several other locations across the GTA.



icamp is a fluid, laid-back environment where kids will walk around and provide feedback and help to their fellow icampers.



Kids can work individually or as part of a small team on their projects - here a group of boys are working together to figure out how exactly to construct a LEGO helicopter.



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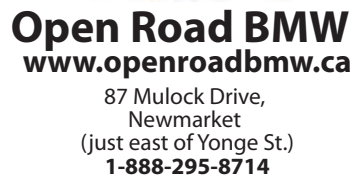
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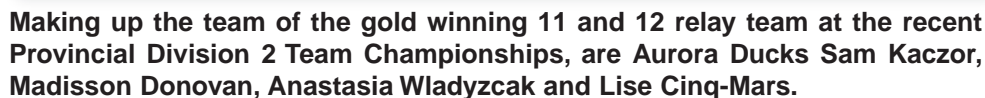
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THE AURORAN

SPORTS



Seniors hockey group wants a deal on rinks

Seniors hockey is coming to the Aurora Community Centre November 17, with the qualifying tournament for the Ontario Seniors Games being held at the arena.

But the Town of Aurora could provide the group with some financial assistance.

Representatives from the York Regional Senior Games program, Joan Best and Bob Inkster, were on hand at last week's general committee meeting to request that the town waive or at least reduce the \$1,653.12 it would cost the group to host the seven-hour event on two ACC ice pads.

"We expect that eight teams will enter a qualifying tournament being held to November 17," said Mr. Inkster. "This year for the first time there will be two divisions - 55+ and 65+. One team from each division will qualify to participate in the Ontario Senior Games.

"In previous years, [the] Al Palladini [Community Centre] has donated to us. That is not the case this year, so Joan has done an extensive search of arenas and prices. The best price to date is in the Aurora Community Centre. Our cost

for the two pads of ice from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. is \$1,653.12. We respectfully request the cost of the price of the ice be waived for this tournament.

"This is to help us promote our seniors and keep us involved and active."

If the fees are neither waived nor reduced, the York Region Senior Games will have to increase the cost for teams to enter the tournament, which currently stands at \$25 per person, said Ms. Best.

But that would be contingent also on the number of teams planning on attending.

"Being a non-profit organization we do try to keep the prices down so we get the seniors to come out and compete," she said.

"I think we've had similar requests in the past and council handled it in the same fashion to refer it back to staff and get the direct and indirect costs with respect to the facility and then allow council to either waive completely or reduce the fees based on actual cost," said Councillor Evelina MacEachern to the delegates.

"That information should

be readily available to staff, especially in light of the recent pricing policy review, so it shouldn't take that long to get information back to council."

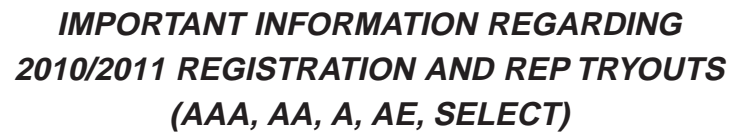
Councillor Evelyn Buck expressed her support of "providing whatever support we can" but added she would like to see the possibility of finding sponsors investigated as well.

The matter was referred to Town Staff to provide council with a cost report at a meeting in the near future.

The Ontario Senior Games was founded in 1982 out of an idea from the Older Adult Centres Association of Ontario to promote activities for seniors across the province.

The events are intended to provide Ontarians 55 and older with opportunities for increased social interaction, increased physical and mental wellbeing, and to encourage wellbeing through participation in activities and sport.

The summer games - Actifest 2010 - are being held this year in Oshawa from August 10 to 12, while the winter games - Winterfest 2011 - are taking place in Haliburton from February 15 to 17.



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Historic school loses hearing

From page 1

When closed, three years ago, the school had a capacity of 306 students.

The school has beautiful architectural features and has served the community for many decades. "However, serious structural safety issues were discovered," Cooke said in his 12-page report. "The Board decided that the students needed to be temporarily moved to another school (on Stone Road) when these potential structural issues came to its attention."

The author of the report toured the school and was impressed with the beauty of the street view of the school.

"It is truly a classic and I understand completely why the community would want to preserve this gem," he said. "However, when touring the inside of the school, it becomes very clear as to why the building was declared 'prohibitive to repair'. The structural issues would require immediate attention if the school were to be used again by the public."

The 198 students using the school at the time were relocated to Aurora Grove Public School for the 2007-2008 school year.

Over the years, Wells Street Public School has experienced a gradual decline in its enrolment but the Board has directed overflow enrolment from other schools in the area to maintain its viability.

In June of 2007, parents of Wells Street Public School were informed that their students would be temporarily relocated to Stone Road.

The entire student body, teachers, principal and support staff were relocated.

The move was necessary because of concern about structural issues at Wells Street Public School and the potential safety issues that had to be investigated.

In the summer of 2007, invasive testing of Wells Street Public School by R.J. Burnside and Associates was carried out to determine the extent and cost of any potential work that would be necessary to deal with the structural issues.

The report was completed and presented to the Trustees on October 25, 2007.

Following this report, R.J. Burnside and Associates, along with IBI Group Architects, completed a Feasibility Study to determine the options and costs to restore the school and its heritage architecture.

In May of 2008, the Feasibility Study was completed and was presented to the Trustees at a Board meeting.

On June 19, 2008, the Trustees were informed of the intention to undertake an accommodation review process, and on September 25 that year the Board approved the establishment of an ARC.

The Board Staff recommendation to establish an ARC was

based on three considerations: the school required major capital expenditures; there were serious safety concerns and structural deficiencies and the school continued to experience declining enrolment.

The committee was chaired by Denese Belchetz, Coordinating Superintendent of Education, and had two trustees as members.

In addition, the ARC had a councillor from the Town of Aurora, a business representative, two school council representatives, and the Principal and a teacher from Wells Street Public School.

Additional Board staff attended each meeting of the ARC to support the review process.

On October 22, 2008, the ARC held its first meeting and over the next six months there were 11 working meetings, examining issues such as the structural condition of the school, enrolment projections, residential growth in Aurora and financing options.

Public meetings were held December 3, 2008, January 14, 2009, February 19, 2009, and March 9, 2009. Attendance ranged from 45 to 150 at these public sessions.

The committee used several tools to inform the community about the public meetings, including flyers.

ARC focused on options that would see Wells Street Public School remain open and strategies to increase enrolment.

A decision was made by ARC members not to look at any options that would involve the closure of the school.

In late March of 2009, the ARC report was submitted to the Director of Education and a staff report in response to the ARC report was then completed.

This was followed by seven delegations appearing before the Board on April 30, 2009, and a Trustee public meeting to listen to community views.

A follow-up staff report to the Board resulted in six delegations at the Board meeting July 6, 2009.

On September 10, 2009, Board Staff and Trustees met with representatives of the Town of Aurora. On September 14, 2009, the Board met and 19 delegations presented their views.

Ten days later, the board made its final decision to close the school.

The ARC Report called for Wells Street Public School to be rebuilt as a JK-8 school.

The accommodation review process was seen as frustrating by the parent representatives on the ARC who met with him, Cooke said.

"They felt that their work was not valued by the board," he said. "They used as an example the limited debate that took place at the Board meeting on September 24, 2009, where the trustees made the final decision. They would like to have heard

the reasons as to why 10 of the 12 Trustees decided to vote for closure of the school."

The ARC process would have worked better if the Board had presented its preferred alternative accommodation plan at the beginning of the review, he said.

"The ARC members did however admit that they decided not to explore any options that involved the closing of Wells Street Public School," Cooke said in his report. "Mixed messages were communicated by the Board regarding the funding of a re-built Wells Street Public School according to the parent representatives on the ARC. It would cost millions of dollars to rebuild Wells Street Public School while at the same time its enrolment was declining."

The petition presented to Cooke outlines concerns that the ARC did not receive "satisfactory" answers to questions that were asked by members.

The petitioners felt that the responses by Board staff were inadequate.

"The major focus of the petition was that the ARC process and the Board decision making process violated the principles of procedural fairness," Cooke said. "The petitioners believe that the elected Trustees are similar to a quasi-judicial body when dealing with school closures. As a result, the role the Trustees perform is to decide the question before them in a similar fashion to that of an independent tribunal. This would mean that the Board Staff proposing the closure are on one side of the issue and those opposed to the closure on the other."

Petitioners also expressed concern that the date for the Board to make the final decision was changed from July to September because of a scheduling problem.

They argued that they should have been allowed to present responses to the Board staff responses before the Trustees made the final decision September 24.

The Petitioners expressed concern that the Trustees did not engage in sufficient debate and gave no reasons for their individual votes to close the school. They feel this demonstrates that the decision was made before the process was complete.

"On a technical basis, I feel that the Wells Street Public School accommodation review was satisfactory," Cooke said in

his report. "Clearly the board had no alternative other than to establish an ARC given the structural problems at Wells Street Public School, the costs to make repairs or to rebuild and the declining enrolment situation."

Mr Cooke said the weakness of the review was that the board did not provide an alternative accommodation plan.

"The process is strengthened when the board is clear and up front regarding the issues that need to be considered, the mandate of the ARC, and what the board believes is in the best interest of the students and public education," he said. "I suspect the board was concerned that if it provided an alternative accommodation plan that this might result in the community concluding that there already was a final decision."

"Instead, the Board's approach resulted in a review that gave the community the impression that declining enrolment and finances didn't matter. In the end, the Board staff's response to the ARC report made it clear that finances and enrolment did matter."

The Board has amended its Accommodation Review Policy to reflect changes that the Ministry of Education made to its Guideline.

"I certainly understand the strong feelings that the petitioners have about Wells Street Public School closing. The school and the park across the street are beautiful. The school has for many decades provided thousands of students with a great public education. The efforts to save the school are understandable. I also understand that some members of the ARC feel that their work was not valued and that they felt the Board was not clear about what options they really needed to consider. I urge the Board to work with the members of this ARC and the community to better understand how future accommodation reviews can be strengthened and developed into a real partnership between the parents, the community and the Board."

"It is my conclusion that there is no evidence that the Trustees were biased or that the process was procedurally unfair," he said. "There is no evidence that one Trustee, expressing his views before the process was complete, tainted the entire Board's decision."


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Member of Parliament Lois Brown listens to Aurora resident Wayne Hemington during a well-attended “Coffee with Lois Brown” event held Saturday morning at the Second Cup in Aurora. Mr. Hemington’s major concern dealt with the problems in downtown Aurora.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Prohibiting sod laying may save Town water

The Town of Aurora is considering a number of ways of limiting water consumption during the summer, including prohibiting laying sod in new subdivisions between June and September, and curtailing the selling of bulk water during water restrictions.

This came one step closer to fruition last week as councillors approved a number of recommendations at last week’s general committee meeting stemming from the April 1 meeting of Aurora’s Environmental Advisory Committee.

The Environmental Advisory Committee, following a September, 2008, presentation by Aurora resident Rebecca Beaton, recommended that the Town “investigate implementing a by-law to be included in all future subdivision agreements” prohibiting the laying of sod within new subdivisions between June 1 and September 15.

In a report sent to the Advisory Committee April 1, Ilmar Simanovskis, Aurora’s Director of Infrastructure and Environmental Services, noted that Newmarket “has a similar condition in their conservation bylaw.”

He recommended staff investigate Newmarket to explore including similar wording in Aurora’s subdivision agreements “as well as revisions to the bylaw.”

The recommendation also called for a ban on selling bulk water during times of water restrictions.

Additional recommendations from Ms Beaton outlined in the report ranged from including commercial, industrial and institutional properties be included in the water restriction by-law - a move supported by staff - to requesting the region to move forward on grey water usage.

In his report, Mr. Simanovskis thanked Ms Beaton for researching supporting material for the committee.

He also noted that in recent meetings with Regional staff, it “has come to our attention that there will not be a unified water restrictions by-law created for the Regional municipalities.

“We have recently obtained support by the Town’s by-law enforcement department to update this by-law to include commercial, industrial lands and

golf courses according to these recommendations. Staff members recommend Aurora’s water restriction bylaw should be

St. Kitts confirms market resignation

Rumours flying around town last week regarding the Sher St. Kitts resignation from the Aurora Farmers’ Market proved to have substance as Ms. St. Kitts confirmed her decision to The Auroran.

“I just stepped away from [the Market] because they’re ready to become self-sufficient and self-serving,” she said. “I am so busy with the Canada Day Parade this year because it is going to be bigger than ever, and the Jazz Festival is now going to be a two-day event, that is causing me a lot more work.

updated to meet the current needs of our community. We no longer need to wait for a joint effort to accomplish this.”

“I just wanted to focus myself rather than being with the Market where I was doing twelve events. That’s a lot.

“I was there almost every Saturday morning and I don’t get paid and I don’t make money there. I think I have become invested heavily in the market and I was happy to do it, but now I think the market is ready to become autonomous.

“[The Market] would probably have to hire someone to do what I did for them and that’s fine. Or, if they’ve got people that want to do it, that’s lovely.”

First-time local author launches book May 6

First-time Aurora author, Joanna Boldt, will launch her first book Thursday, May 6th from 5 to 8 p.m., at the Aurora Cultural Centre, once the historic Church Street School.

The new book, called “I See Me!”, was inspired by her daughter, and takes the reader down a path of self-discovery with a powerful message that is timeless.

A long time resident of Aurora, Boldt is thrilled to be able host her event at the Centre. Guided by Wise Elder,

the reader witnesses Wise Child’s awareness expand and unfold to a level of wholeness that includes all beings and all things.

“Wise Child mirrors for us our greater belongingness to all that is,” said Boldt.

Her book was recently released in hardcover from Looking Glass Press.

It is 32 pages, and will be available for sale at the book launch party.

Along with a reading, there will also be activities, games, prizes, snacks and a birthday cake.

“What kind of a party would it be without cake?” she said.

A special guest appearance will be made by the book’s illustrator, Cheryl Uhrig.

She will be contributing some of her original art as colouring pages for the kids and may autograph them.

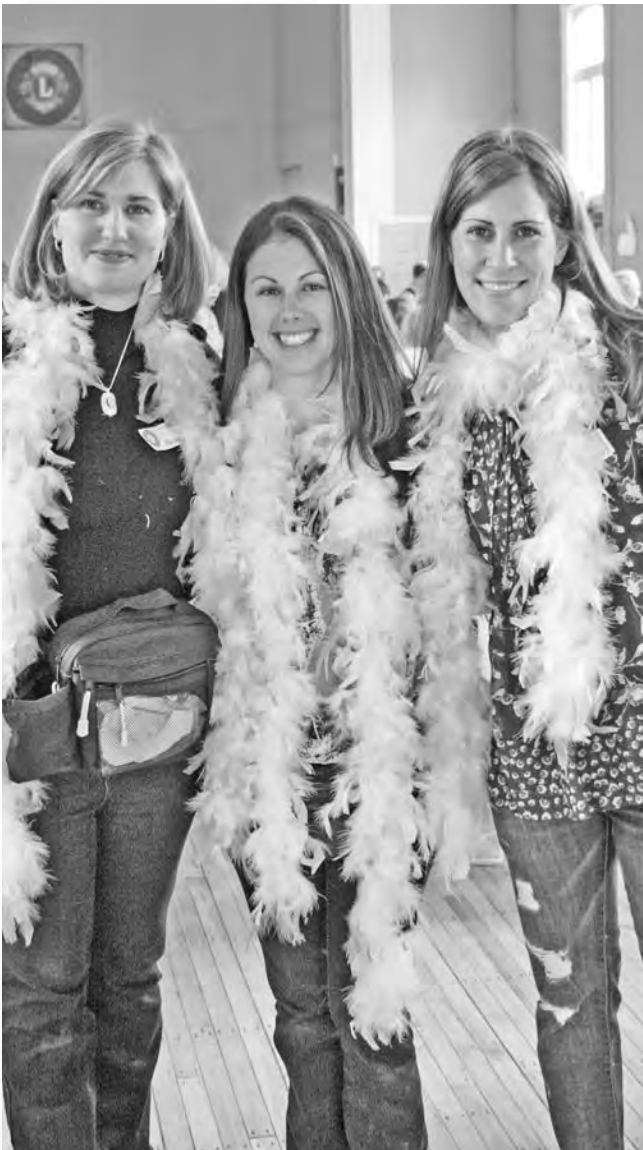
For the author, this endearing story is a vision, a promise, and a dream come true.

After years of working in advertising, marketing and sales, Joanna’s career came to a crashing halt when a multiple vehicle accident almost claimed her life.

Many years of surgeries and rehab gave Joanna a lot of time to reflect, and a new way of being began to emerge.

She is a long-time resident of Aurora.

The author is available for readings, workshops, and fundraisers.



Moms of Aurora Nursery School students got involved in the nursery’s family fun day at the Aurora Lions Hall Saturday. They are, left to right, Nicole Nascimento, Kelly Steedman and Elise Volpe. Funds raised during the day go to the operation of the non-profit day care. The co-operative nursery school is the oldest in Aurora.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

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One more Nokiidaa report coming

Aurora's controversial proposed link to the Newmarket end of the Nokiidaa Trail system was approved in principle at a recent general committee meeting after several months of public consultation and contentious public debate.

Final approval for the trail link and the proposed accompanying Hadley Grange Nature Reserve is contingent on another report coming back to council with the final price tag, which is currently pegged at \$771,766.

The final cost, in turn, is contingent on an application by the Town of Aurora to the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority for two-thirds funding to go towards the "non-trail related ecological enhancements".

According to a memo sent to Mayor Phyllis Morris and

councillors by Aurora's Chief Administrative Officer Neil Garbe, "these ecological enhancements represent approximately \$389,013 of the total \$771,766 estimate."

"The Lake Simcoe Clean Up Fund could potentially contribute \$259,342," Mr. Garbe's memo continued.

The deadline to apply for funding was April 15, but the Town has yet to receive word back on its application, said Jason Ballantyne, Aurora's Manager of Corporate Communications.

For Mayor Morris, as this project has been in the development stage for several years, it is high time it got underway.

"I think the community is ready for us to say we approve this," said Mayor Morris.

While Councillor Evelyn Buck also expressed the senti-

ment that the trail extension was overdue, she balked at the increased price tag, which was just \$250,000 before the Hadley Grange Nature Reserve became part of the proposal.

"As far as I'm concerned, a quarter of a million dollars is sufficient to provide a link to the Newmarket section of the Nokiidaa Trail," she said.

Councillor Buck said it was her understanding that the town hired facilitators to explain to Hadley Grange residents the fine details of the Nokiidaa Trail link which would be built close to the residence and to address any resident concerns that arose.

"That was my understanding of what the facilitator was about; instead we come back with half a million dollars added to the tab and I'm not interested

in voting for another dollar over the original \$250,000," she continued. "I think it is long enough that we've waited for this piece of the trail. I think it will be extremely useful. I'm not content to wait any longer and I am not interested in spending \$500,000 more."

Mayor Morris stressed, however, that the project has evolved from the original \$250,000 estimate to include the Nature Reserve.

"That evolved through public consultation," she said. "This is a different plan but what is in there is the original plan, which is the trail connection. We knew it was going to be a costly project. We knew that we were going to get some money from the Region, but this is not a project that has escalated up. It is a different plan, a beautiful idea of an enhanced area and that is what Council has to grapple with. It's whether you want to say if there are some funds out there and Lake Simcoe wants to partner with us, why would you say no to an enhanced plan?"

Town Staff plan on coming back with a further implementation plan before any work is done on the project, according to Al Downey, Director of Leisure Services.

"The conundrum here is do you want us to build an enhanced trail or not?" said Mr. Downey. "Then, if [you do], we will come back and figure out some funding models and some implementation plans with regards to going off and doing that."

The development of the Nokiidaa Trail and the Hadley Grange Nature Reserve has been a divisive issue in the community, with two public meetings with town appointed facilitators Ogilvie, Ogilvie and Company bringing together numerous concerned and passionate Aurorans to state their cases.

The trail extension, which is planned to run through the western edge of the McKenzie

wetlands on the north side of St. John's Sideroad near Yonge Street has been championed by trail enthusiasts for closing the trail gap, and by some naturalists who see this as an opportunity to bring people closer to nature.

Others have expressed their frustration with the project, believing that the McKenzie Wetlands and its ecosystems should be left alone with little to no human disruption.

Town will mark week

Aurora will likely mark National Access Awareness Week from May 31 to June 4 this year, following the Region of York's cancellation of their combined community events in the area.

"Due to a scheduled municipal conference the same week, the Region of York has cancelled their intended combined community events for the region," said Aurora's Accessibility Advisor Ivy Henriksen in a report to the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and brought before last Tuesday's General Committee Meeting.

"The Region of York is encouraging local municipalities to celebrate National Access Awareness Week (NAAW) at a local level to highlight the work of Accessibility Advisory Committees.

Ms. Henriksen suggested the events include a proclamation from Mayor Phyllis Morris marking the occasion, the display of information boards and exhibits at town hall highlighting accessibility, the launch of the Annual

Accessibility Plan, 'Lunch and Learn' sessions for staff, a free public display of the National Film Board's film Shameless, a sledge hockey demonstration and staff challenge, and the launch of a Business Accessibility Checklist.

Business accessibility checklists encourage accessibility among business owners and operators, according to Ms. Henriksen.

"Specifically the retail sector and service industries have started to acknowledge the importance of diversifying their customer base to include patrons with disabilities," she said. "The Town of Aurora's checklist is a complimentary tool to encourage accessibility in Aurora. The Chamber of Commerce has expressed an interest in receiving the checklist to link to their website and share with Aurora business owners through chamber membership."

The checklist includes a number of criteria ranging from customer service to parking lots, and from

stairs to public washrooms.

The National Access Awareness Week was founded by Rick Hansen in 1988 "to promote better access for people with disabilities," said Ms. Henriksen.

"NAAW provides an opportunity for the Town of Aurora to highlight the work of the corporation and the Accessibility Advisory Committee in relation to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in our Aurora community."

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Grade 7 student from Aurora Senior Public School, Trevor Wright, shows off his entry - the History and Tradition of Camping in Canada - at the annual History Fair held in Aurora last week. He won the Visual Arts & Design Award for his grade level.

Auroran photo by David Falcone

Revised limits irk councillors

Councillors expressed their disagreement at last Tuesday's general committee meeting to a Regional proposal to revise speed limits on key arterial roads across the region, including Bayview Avenue, Yonge Street, Wellington Street East, and Leslie Street.

The proposal would "harmonize inconsistent and patchwork approach to current established speed limits", address the increased need to share vehicle routes with transit, pedestrian and cyclist needs; resident concerns regarding high vehicle speeds in their communities; and "require speed reductions to support new urban streetscapes", according to the Region.

"This involves a more comprehensive review of traffic conditions, infrastructure conditions, pedestrian and cycle use, median presence and driveway frequency," said Ilmar Simanovskis in a report to council outlining new guidelines from the Transportation Association of Canada.

"The new guideline represents best practice in integrating both the traveller's needs and the needs of the local urban community."

In terms of harmonizing established speed limits, the Region proposes changing the speed limits of the aforementioned roads.

Under the proposal,

Bayview Avenue from the southern limit of Stone Road North to 250 metres south of the south limit of Mulock Drive would be reduced to 60 km/hour.

On Leslie Street, the southern limit of Wellington Street to 526 metres north of Green Lane - an area which varies in speed from 60 to 80 km/hour - would be a uniform 60 km/hour.

On Wellington Street, the stretch from the 404 to the eastern boundary of Bayview Avenue would be reduced from 80 km/hour to 60 km/hour, while Yonge Street from just south of St. John's Sideroad heading north to just above Green Lane, an area with varying speeds, would be harmonized to 60 km/hour.

"I do not support the region's plan," Councillor Bob McRoberts said at the meeting. "I think the changes from 80 km/hour are too much of a decrease in one step and I would like to see some logic. I think it is unrealistic to expect a vehicle to travel at a maximum of 60 km/hour from the 404 to Town and from Wellington to Green Lane along Leslie."

"60 is a nice number, but I don't think all the signs in the region have to have the same number on them."

With these proposed changes, Councillor Stephen Granger said he felt the cart was being put

before the horse "in regards to the very people who are going to be impacted the most, the citizens of our community."

"One of the changes that someone might have thought of as a minor change [was] when Bloomington Road was changed at Yonge Street from 80 km/hour down to 60 and Bayview to the 404 remained 80 km/hour," he said. "You wouldn't believe the amount of tickets flying out there and the number of phone calls we got regarding the logic behind it."

Logic was also a concern of Councillor Evelina MacEachern.

"Speed should be dictated by road design, traffic flow...and that is not what the region is doing," she said. "They're just going right across the board saying it qualifies as urbanization and that is what the speed limit is going to be. It's frustrating drivers."

"As far as enforcement, yes, there is a lot of enforcement. Just drive along King Road in the morning. Everyone is trying to go 50 km/hour and travelling with

their foot on the brake and it's just not happening. It's ridiculous. I don't know who came up with this policy, obviously someone who doesn't travel the roads because it doesn't move the vehicles."

"If they're designing it as a 60 thinking people are naturally going to go to 70, that's not the way it should be."

There was also dismay at the table with the impression felt that the thoughts of the Town were not taken into full consideration before drafting this proposal.

"It seems to me the municipalities are the last ones to really get its foot in the door to say, 'Hold on here,'" said Councillor Granger. "I'm not happy when I read key arterial lanes where there are hundreds or thousands of drivers that use them to move back and forth, north and south with expediency."

The matter is expected to be brought to the table at this week's council meeting where a Regional representative will be present to take the pulse of council and the municipality.

Students plant trees in Aurora

A number of the native tree species that used to dot the river beds and valleys of Aurora are slowly disappearing, the victims of suburban sprawl.

The native trees and shrubs go by the exotic-sounding names of Red Osier Dogwood, Nannyberry and Shining Willow.

But now Neighbourhood Network, with help from Aurora student volunteers and the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA), are making a concerted effort to bring them back.

Last weekend, as part of National Volunteer Week activities taking place across the country, Neighbourhood Network dispatched an army of 135 high school students to plant about 900 two-year old trees and shrubs along river banks and in environmentally-sensitive areas throughout Newmarket and Aurora, including St. Andrew's Valley Golf Club.

The student volunteer initiative was dubbed Planting A Future: Students For The

Environment.

Its goal was to shore up river banks and enhance the water quality in the streams and wetlands of the East Holland River by re-establishing environmentally-beneficial native tree species.

According to Lori McLean, Watershed Coordinator with LSRCA, the trees and shrubs will "help improve water quality by slowing water and filtering and absorbing contaminants, providing habitat for wildlife and shade for aquatic species, and preventing stream bank erosion."

The trees were supplied by the LSRCA and funded through the Conservation Authority's Landowner Environmental Assistance Program (LEAP), the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation, the York Natural Planting Partnership as well as private donations.

Students from Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, Aurora High School, St. Andrew's College and St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School took part in the tree-planting initiative.

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The Curves Divas of Aurora, representing Aurora's Curves, entered a team in the Big Bike for Stroke event and were travelling in downtown Aurora on their way back to the starting gate at St. Andrew's Shopping Centre. They were one of several teams who rode the big bike to support heart disease and stroke research.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Town nears agreement

From page 3

Its principles include the preparation of a long term custodial agreement between the Town and the Trust to allow continued public access to the land, the protection of natural heritage features, and the development of a wildlife corridor linking the land to "the town's significant natural heritage features and adjoining natural systems."

It will also allow for passive recreational use (hiking, jogging, etc.), the use of land as an "open laboratory and educational tool" showcasing the Moraine, and the creation of a self-sustaining environment.

At last Tuesday's general committee meeting, Mayor Phyllis Morris said she "wholeheartedly" endorsed the motion.

"I think this a fabulous step forward and we should be thanking Mr. Garbe for bringing this to us as quickly as he's been able to and to the OHT we look forward to hearing the report that they may be able to bring forward and might be able to bring to a conclusion with this community.

"Many years ago there was an attempt to develop these lands. It caused great angst in our community. Here's an opportunity to get a huge tract of land that the OHT probably can't manage on a day-to-day or month-to-month basis.

"We would be able through these principles to come up with some custodial relationship agreement that can be put before the community...and can get a lot of benefits for the community without having to pay the price as it were up front for such a large tract of land."

Councillor Evelyn Buck, however, said she did not see the benefits for the community in going forward with a custodial agreement.

"The land is available now and people are using it for passive recreation," said Councillor Buck. "There are signs posted on the land informing people who are using the land they do so at their own risk.

"In other words, Ontario Heritage has not accepted any liability for anything that might happen to anyone who is using these lands whether they are walking their dogs, creating informal trails...but there is no inhibition currently on any person that that land is open and it is not private land.

"There is nothing about a custodial agreement that will change that. We will not have access to that land for formal recreation programs. There are 97 acres in there. There is nothing that a custodial agreement will give us the right to use any parts of that land. We are in desperate need of the land. We are 127 acres short of lands needed for recreational purposes and these 97 acres will do nothing to reduce that need."

All the custodial agreement would do is unload liability and responsibility on Aurora residents "for no good or useful exchange whatsoever," she continued.

"That makes us janitors, and paying for the insurance premiums as well," she added.

The "value added for the taxpayer" was unclear to Councillor Alison Collins-Mrakas as well, who said that based on the information before her she did not see the need for an agreement because there is nothing indicating the lands are at risk.

"We've heard from residents and some at this table that we should support this custodial agreement by virtue of the fact the lands need to be protected," she said. "But based on the information here, it says the OHT holds the land in trust to protect the significant natural heritage features and archaeological resources of the property in the long term. To my mind that means the lands are already protected, so I'm not sure what the risk would be.

"It is already a passive recreation area, so in terms of adding green space we wouldn't be adding green space, it is already there and being used. I'm not sure what we as a municipality would get by encumbering ourselves with liability and the financial costs. I'm also concerned we're going to be caretakers of land we don't own and we wouldn't have the ultimate say as to what could or could not occur."

Mayor Morris, however, said it is important in discussions of good or useful exchange to consider the prior history of the land. The OHT, she said, was approached by developers with an interest in buying parcels of the property.

"As we know, the OHT - as many people in our community were horrified to find out - also has the right to sell lands and to dispose of the lands, and when developers make it of interest to them for a price they can turn around and use those moneys to go around and buy other pieces of environmental lands," she said.

"There is always an opportunity for people to be enticed by that. While there may not be an imminent indication that that is the case...today they are willing to come to the table and work with us and that would be to the great satisfaction to many people in this town to learn there is a custodial relationship to tie those lands up."

Council is expected to give final direction on going forward with the custodial agreement at this week's meeting following additional discussions at the table.

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In my backyard in Aurora. Call Leigh at 905-726-7940 for registration.

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Dance Lessons

Dance Lessons start May 3rd, 2010 and continue until June 28

Level 1: Cha Cha and Social Foxtrot 8 - 9 p.m.
Level 2: Jive and Tango 9 - 10 p.m.

Please call for advanced registration or pay at the door the first night

The cost is just \$85 per person for 8 weeks.

Do I need special shoes?

No, but dance or leather soled shoes with non marking heels are best. Do not wear rubber soled shoes.

DANCE PARTY
Only \$15 May 28 Only \$15

4,500 sq. ft. hardwood floor
Reserved seating available
Door Prizes 7:00 Doors Open - Dress code

7:30 p.m. **FREE Cha Cha**
Latin/Ballroom/West Coast Swing and Line dancing until midnight with desserts & coffee @ 10:30.

Location: **Royal Canadian Legion** in Aurora, 105 Industrial Parkway North
(Please park around back and enter through that door)

Please call or email for more information or to register for upcoming events
Site: www.SteveMillerDance.ca
Call Steve Miller at 416-587-4125
Email: Steve@SteveMillerDance.ca

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MAY 1, 2010
36 - 38 Moffat Cres. 8 a.m. - noon

COMING EVENTS

From page 2
905-727-3032 or 905-727-1080 for more information.

Gamblers Anonymous meets every Tuesday night at Trinity Anglican Church, Victoria Street, at 7.30 p.m.

Progressive Euchre every Thursday night at the Aurora Legion at 7.30 p.m. Call 905-727-9932.

Canadian Federation of University Women holds monthly meetings at the Aurora Legion with a variety of speakers. Contact Beverley at 905-727-2151.

The Aurora Seniors' Evergreen Choir practice in the West-McKenzie Hall of the Seniors' Centre, every Wednesday from 2.30 to 4.30 p.m. under the direction of Enid Maiz.

The annual Aurora Art Show and Sale takes place at the Aurora Town Hall Saturday, May 1 from 10 a.m., to 5 p.m. and Sunday, May 2, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For all art enthusiasts this is an important event featuring more than 200 pieces of artwork. Amateur and professional artists from Ontario will be displaying their original two and three-dimensional artwork created in any medium except computer-generated art.

MAY 6 TO 8
The Pine Tree Potters' Spring Pottery Sale will be held May 6, 7 and 8, at the Aurora Cultural Centre, 22 Church Street, Aurora. On Thursday and Friday May 6 and 7 the sale will operate from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and on Saturday, May 8 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. There is free parking, free admission and a door prize. Call 905-727-1278 for further information or visit <http://www.pinetreepotters.ca>.

SATURDAY, MAY 8
Merlin's Hollow opens to the public today at 181 Centre Crescent, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free.

SATURDAY, MAY 22
The Aurora Garden & Horticultural Society is having their annual plant sale at the Aurora Public Library, 15145 Yonge Street, Aurora from 9.30 a.m. to noon. Everyone is welcome.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 26
Guest speaker for the Aurora Garden & Horticultural Society is Nancy Lee-Colibaba, a master gardener, from Brantford. Group meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 8 p.m. at the Royal Canadian Legion, 105 Industrial Parkway North. Visitors are welcome for only \$2. A Youth Gardening Program will begin at 6.30 p.m. for one hour. Called "A Walk in the Aurora Arboretum", you can get more information by calling Ray at 905-727-6168.

SATURDAY, MAY 29
Aurora Grove Public School's 10th Anniversary Spring Fling and Reunion begins at 10.30 a.m. and continues until 3 p.m. Cake cutting ceremony at 11.15 a.m. Included will be Bouncers, a Silent Auction, music with a DJ, a Kidz Play Zone, a raffle, face painting, food, prizes, and a memory lane for the reunion.

SATURDAY, JUNE 12
Merlin's Hollow, the English flower garden, is open, free of charge, to the public today from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 181 Centre Crescent.



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Senior Scape

Volunteers' Night was a smart affair, with everybody well dressed for the occasion sometimes formally, and other times more casually but all together, a wonderful ambience was in the air created from the start.

Since almost everybody present in the crowded West Mackenzie Hall had friends present, the atmosphere sparkled with casual talk, laughter and a general first-rate mood of letting a good old time just happen.

The mayor, some members of council attended in addition to a past mayor of Aurora, and members of the Town administration.

ASA members carry their years with grace, a necessity when action-packed is a characteristic of their days, which suggests that a busy life is a healthy life.

Volunteer work does have satisfactions and realistically, anybody who remains busy with their interests, ages more sedately than if possessed of few significant interests.

Perhaps to illustrate my point was the presence of three excellent ladies, still members and still volunteering, wonderful ladies all considerate and helpful, and all 90 years of age plus.

The ladies are Robena Reed, Flo Murray and Anne McKenny, who got together with Tim Jones and had the memorable moment recorded with a smart group photograph.

The photographer and later the printer, was busy through the evening constantly taking group photographs and printing them later so that everybody who wanted a copy, got a copy before leaving.

The evening lasted for about two hours with musical entertainment by Jeff Salem & The Drums In U! And by U, Jeff meant the drummers in the audience, because after commencing his show with drumming interspersed with humorous chatter, he passed around African drums to the audience, rattles and tambourines for shaking or striking and other instruments.

Jeff inspired the audi-

ence to compete in producing cooperative drum music, and this event represents audience participation in drumming with a difference; very loud, very original and not very good but well received from those watching in awe and astonishment.

Jeff appears to be a very capable drummer and was brilliant recognizing the interest of others in drumming, and then continued by providing musical instruments to members of the audience and opportunity to actually drum for fun amongst hilarious friends.

Where else can seniors be invited to a fine social event, replete with entertainment, local personalities, and refreshments and become part of a drum band, all in about two hours?

Karie Papillon and Michelle Stemer, Seniors Co-ordinator & Programmer, who are responsible for the quality of this event, deserve to be recognized.

The Seniors' Centre has become popular to the point that parking has become a problem, and the parking in front of the

Centre appears to be the most popular, not only for seniors but also for visitors to the Town Hall.

Frequently every day, vehicles park in front of the Seniors' Centre and the drivers proceed to the Town Hall.

Lots of parking is located to the north of the Town Hall, which is fine for young legs, but many seniors cannot utilize this northern space, not even in good weather.

Some members return home without venturing from their vehicles.

Perhaps signage designating seniors' parking in front of the Seniors' Centre and advertising additional parking to the north of the Town Hall would alleviate this problem to some degree.

Parking is a problem and needs to be addressed.

Betty McKenzie, another well known stalwart member of the ASA, wanted to know why Canasta has not been mentioned in writing about the ASA, for a while anyway.

I apologize and have no excuse.

Betty said her Canasta group is going great with

20 to 30 participants, and she wants everybody to know that more players will be welcome.

Betty continued that you do not have to be a great player; you will improve if you continue to play, and mentioned that Canasta is a success story amongst card games.

Canasta is usually played among four players, playing in pairs.

At one time it was almost the most popular card game in North America, and that says a lot, because various popular card games are played daily in the ASA, and Robena Reed, mentioned above, still plays cards, most afternoons.

Volunteers' night a huge success

By BRIAN WARBURTON



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Pine Tree Potters Guild

Spring Pottery Sale

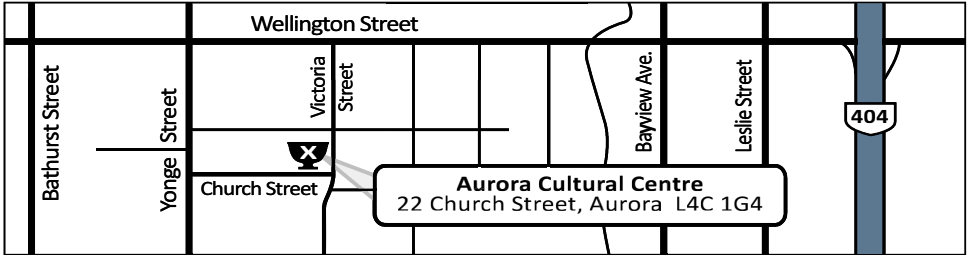
Thursday, May 6th and Friday, May 7th, 10am to 9pm
Saturday, May 8th, 10am to 5pm

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Bridge results

Monday, April 19: N/S - Suzanne Nunn and Shirley Laurin; Frank Lablans and Dennis McFadden; Nan McLean and Carole Bell. E/W - Priscilla Hull and Inger Kamel; Pat Leeson and Mary McClennon; Larry McGrath and Dennis Champ.

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