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THE AURORAN

Aurora's Independent Community Newspaper

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Group suggests school be rebuilt

Supporters of Wells Street Public School received some encouraging news last week, but the fate of the Aurora landmark will continue to be in doubt until July 6, when the York Region District School Board makes its final decision.

At a public meeting held at Dr.G.W.Williams Secondary School last week, Board staff members announced that the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC), a committee made up of trustees, staff, a member of council and school council members, had recommended that the school be rebuilt.

There was no doubt the crowd of residents was pleased by the committee's recommendation, but with estimates to fix or rebuild the school currently sitting between 5 million and 10 million dollars, the Board may be hard pressed to recommend that repairs be made.

Should the Board classify the school's repairs and construction as a priority, funding would be made available through the Ministry of Education.

In speaking to the crowd Mayor Phyllis Morris, accompanied by nearly all members of council, spoke about the financial benefits of retaining the school so close to the downtown core and the impact of losing the school to the neighbourhood.

"We're with you on this," Mayor Morris told the crowd, evoking one of the biggest responses of the evening.

Aurora School Trustee, Gord Kerr, explained to residents that he could not, in his position as a school trustee, publicly take a position with

Please see page 12



Led by Mark Thomas, blue jacket, squatting in the front row, this group of Grade 10,11 and 12 students left Dr.G.W.Williams Secondary School last week for a 10-day trip to visit WWI and WWII sites and battlefields in England,France,Belgium and the Netherlands.
Auroran photo by David Falconer

Animal access may be curtailed

Aurora is considering adopting a bylaw to restrict the access of domestic animals in town buildings, with the exception of service dogs.

The bylaw comes on the heels of a few incidents of people bringing pets into the Aurora Leisure Complex and on one occasion a dog bit a child.

An additional potential health risk is that some patrons suffer from allergies to pet hair. When the proposal for staff

to develop a draft bylaw came to last week's general committee meeting, Councillor Al Wilson questioned whether it was necessary, as residents were being "legislated to death".

In contrast, Mayor Phyllis Morris stated that she wished the bylaw had been in place before the child had been bitten.

With no further discussion, the motion to draft a bylaw was passed.

Briefly

Open House

The Aurora Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion has been in its existing building for 35 years.

Seems like only yesterday.

To celebrate the occasion, the branch is planning an Open House, Sunday, March 29.

Breakfast returns

After an absence of a year, the popular Lions Club pancake breakfast returns to Sheppard's Bush, for two weekends, beginning this Saturday morning at 9 a.m.

Demonstrations will also take place at various times throughout each day.

To get to the food, it's best to park in the lot at the end of Industry Street, just south of Mary Street, and enjoy the walk through the forest.

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PROUD TO BE LIVING AND WORKING IN AURORA



Tiiu Kaldma, left, and Barb Hibbitt, assist chef Steve Mattinson last week as members of the Aurora Seniors' Centre were treated to a bistro lunch, courtesy of the Hollandview Trail Retirement Residence. Usually, the bistro lunch will attract 20 to 30 seniors, but this event saw the numbers soar to more than 80. The chef is from Hollandview, while Ms Hibbitt and Ms Kaldma are senior volunteers.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Tree art gets thumbs down from committee

It's a simple idea, but it's complicated.

That was Mayor Phyllis Morris' take on the proposal to carve fanciful figures into some of Aurora's dead trees.

Back in November of last year, resident Myriam Schut approached council to approve and fund the carving of a face or figure into a dead standing tree trunk on the town boulevard outside her house. She was accompanied by Colin Partridge, who presented a number of photos of the works he had carved into similar trees in Orangeville and other towns.

Council was enthusiastic about the concept, and referred the idea back to staff to look into it further.

But they were less excited about all of the considerations that staff identified in their report to last week's general committee meeting.

These included the lack of a policy for this sort of activity, the issue of obtaining public input, ongoing maintenance, approvals, artistic limitation, the potential for vandalism, and whether the carvings should be restricted to a certain

area of town.

Councillor Al Wilson liked the concept, but said he was struggling with the cost.

For Councillor Evelyn Buck, no struggles were necessary, stating that there was no merit to spending \$2,000 on a dead stump.

After obtaining an estimate from staff, she said she would much rather see the stump removed and a healthy new tree planted to replace it, at half the cost.

Ms Schut spoke briefly to reiterate that the intent was to create something enchanting and whimsical, while retaining an important part of the town's heritage.

With obvious reluctance, most councillors echoed the concerns and potential issues that were flagged in the report, and in the end agreed with the staff recommendation that Council not support or fund this initiative.

However, the idea may not be completely dead, as there were a few comments that if such carvings were located in a park or other public area rather than on a street, the concept may be

reconsidered in future.

For now, however, the mayor expressed bitter disappointment with not being able to support the proposal.

But referring to the complexity of the issue and potential for liability to the town, she concluded that she'd rather be disappointed now, than sorry later.

Lacrosse organizers plan for longer game

For the second year, Aurora and Newmarket councils and staff will battle it out for municipal lacrosse supremacy in mid-June.

That was the challenge issued by Jim Zacher, Executive Member of Aurora Masters Lacrosse, as he promoted the 2009 DOVE Event at a general committee meeting last week.

Last year, the first DOVE (Determined to Oppose Violence Everywhere) Event was held in Aurora. The well-publicized activity included both a 25-hour marathon game, which resulted in a 292-292 tie, as well as the grudge match between the two councils.

In all, 175 players and volunteers took part over the weekend, and more than \$47,000 was raised for the Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness (CCAA).

DOVE wants to expand on that goal this year by having a 37-hour game, which would set a new world record, and be recognized by the Guinness Book of Records.

As well, to raise the local stakes, organizers are inaugurating the DOVE Councillors Cup, which will recognize the winners of the one-hour game between the two municipalities, as well as the team that raises the most pledges, and which creates the biggest buzz leading up to the event.

This year's activities are planned for June 12 and 13 at the Aurora Community Centre, with the marathon game starting things off at 5 a.m.

Apart from the pledges collected from the participants, funds will be raised through a silent auction.

In his presentation, Mr. Zacher asked that the town proclaim June 12 and 13 as DOVE days.

He also asked that council repeat the gesture from 2008 and waive the fees that would normally apply for the use of the ACC.

Councillor Evelyn Buck questioned why the town should provide the facilities free of charge.

Mr. Zacher responded that this would allow more of the

money raised to be directed to the CCAA.

Overall, the committee was supportive of the event, although Councillor Al Wilson, tongue in cheek, suggested that after all the running around last year, perhaps the organizers would consider a 30-minute municipal game this time.

The motion was approved to receive the delegation and for staff to bring back to this week's Council meeting further details on the ACC-related costs and other considerations, such as use by other groups of the facility on those days.

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Poor Richard

By DICK ILLINGWORTH

Simcoe upset at intersection ideas proposed

*Governor Simcoe is in a rage,
As he returns to Yonge Street;
Proposed changes at Wellington,
Has the old gentleman in a heat.*
- Poor Richard's Scrapbook

It was a quiet afternoon in my den at home working away at my computer and trying to get rid of old newspapers and other material that had accumulated during my recent stays at Southlake Health Centre when he suddenly appeared before me.

It was Governor John Graves Simcoe in all his splendour, but obviously very upset about something. "Illingworth, what in the hell is going on?" he exploded. "The last time we met, I told you that you had a nice town and I ordered you to keep it that way".

Before I had a chance to ask what he was talking about, he yelled that he owned Yonge Street.

"You let me down by not advising me there was a public meeting about the Yonge/Wellington intersection as I would have attended," he said as he quieted down. "I wouldn't have known about it, but I read about it in The Auroran, that very fine community newspaper that Poor Ronnie puts out," he added more quietly as he settled in.

"I'm sorry about that, Governor, but I wasn't able to get to the meeting myself as I was in the hospital, but I'm monitoring the situation and will keep you advised if that's what you want," I replied.

"I've contacted Robert Machell and Charles Doan regarding some of the suggestions made at the public meeting and they are very upset about the suggestion for a traffic circle at the intersection with the demolition of the T-D Canada Trust Bank and the Bank of Montreal," Simcoe said.

"Remember that Aurora was once called Machell's Corners and that was the Youge-Wellington intersection. Charles Doan, Aurora's first Reeve in 1863, had his general store and post office near the intersection," Simcoe said.

He added that the Bank of Montreal had been in Aurora since about 1855 when William Taylor was hired to install the windows with the existing bank officially opened in February, 1974.

The T-D Canada Trust Bank on the opposite corner was quite new as it opened in early 1973 replacing the former Queen's Hotel.

"There's a lot of history at the intersection and it shouldn't be lost to move traffic," he thundered.

"What about some of the other suggestions made at the meeting?" I asked. "There must be merit in some of them."

"None of them are good enough for my Yonge Street," he said. "This is a serious issue and we must assume a leadership role, as we did in the old days when Yonge Street was blazed through the forest to Holland Landing by the Queen's Rangers.

"What do you plan to do?" I asked.

"First of all I will mobilize my trusted Queen's York Rangers and post them on Yonge Street just north of the St. John's Sideroad to the north and just south of the Industrial Parkway to the south and the Chamber of Commerce office will be taken over as military headquarters," he replied.

"What then?" I asked, rather dumfounded at his aggressive stance.

"Their mission will be to stop all through traffic and divert it to the Industrial Parkway in both directions and the name will be changed to the Governor Simcoe Aurora Bypass, as I should get some credit for solving the problem," he proclaimed.

"Look at what the Kennedy Avenue bypass did for Unionville," he added, "and the Simcoe Bypass will do the same for Aurora. The old town will become a tourist area with fancy shops and boutiques and the citizens will reclaim Yonge Street."

"That's a pretty ambitious plan," I said, "Will it work?"

"Of course it will work," he shouted, "Didn't Yonge Street work? Not only that but the town closes sections of Yonge Street every year for parades, street festivals, etc. Have faith, my boy. Now I have to be on my way to solve other problems and I leave you in charge to see that my orders are carried out."



Go to the corner of of Mosley Street and Victoria Street, and look east on Mosley. Bet it doesn't look like this, eh? This postcard, depicting that corner in, probably, the early 1900s, was loaned to The Auroran by David Heard. The Presbyterian church is still there but certainly doesn't look like it looked when this postcard was made. St. Andrew's has undergone extensive expansions since then. Note the streetlight that, if still there, would be right in front of the building now owned by the Aurora Lions Club. If anyone can add information to this picture, we'd love to hear about it.

Letters to the Editor

Item not discussed, councillor says

To the editor,

There were 30 items on the agenda of Tuesday's General Committee meeting of council.

Item 7 was in response to a request from Councillor Evelina MacEachern, stemming from a line item on the Parks Division of the Leisure Services Budget.

On one evening, four hours were spent on that budget and still it was not completed.

Less road salt would assist Lake Simcoe

To the editor,

Re: The Soothsayer's (Dick Illingworth's) warning regarding the health of Lake Simcoe, The Auroran, March 10, 2009.

The Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority has noted an increase in road salt along with other contaminants in the lake water and Aurora has an opportunity help correct this situation.

Aurora Council and staff have before them a recommendation to reduce the quantity of road salt and sand while maintaining an appropriate level of safety on our roads thus reducing the salt that is entering the lake through the East Holland River water shed.

The recommendation notes that the Federal Government placed road salt on its list of toxic substances and urged municipalities to reduce the use of salt for winter road maintenance.

Also the recommendation contains the example of Otterburn Park, a town near Montreal, which has significantly reduced salt use, and has reduced costs while keeping its roads safe.

I suggest that concerned citizens discuss this issue with our councillors.

**Robert Cook
Aurora**

Item 7 on Tuesday, was a report that went from Page 108 to 124, complete with pictures.

The capital budget item in contention was \$60,000 for benches, picnic tables and garbage receptacles. Councillor Al Wilson was convinced the cost was excessive.

We were advised the items were built in house by parks staff. The councillor was certain the same items could be purchased at far less expense.

It was explained parks furniture was not something that could be purchased in a hardware store. Neither could they be be acquired from a supplier at a price competitive with the cost of building them to the standard needed to meet requirements in the town's own workshop.

They need to be sturdy and not easy to shift.

No matter. The yammering rambled round and round and back and forth and finally Councillor MacEachern directed staff to provide council with a detailed report outlining comparative prices.

Item 7 on Tuesday's agenda was the result of that direction.

Three suppliers of items most similar to those required had been contacted.

Prices were listed and photographs of the product were provided as follows: \$79,975. \$90,650. \$88,200. Taxes and shipping costs were not included and would be added later.

Town cost, with material and labour was \$52,920. No taxes or shipping costs needed to be added.

On Tuesday, as is the norm, the chair asked for items to be called for discussion. Item 7, the report responding to the request for comparative costs was NOT called by Councillor MacEachern who initially directed it be provided.

It was 16 pages long.

Staff expended time obtaining submissions from suppliers and compiling

them, with pictures, to explain to councillors how parks furniture can be constructed by town labour in a town workshop at less cost than the same product can be purchased from manufacturers, who are in business to make a profit and must charge sales and service tax and shipping costs to complete the deal.

The report slipped through without comment or question. As if it wasn't there. Like it had never been requested. Like staff advice had never been challenged. Like there had not been endless, tortuous, tedious, uninformed and erroneous argument about how it was not possible for that amount of

parks furniture to cost that much money and how councillors were so confident the same objective could be achieved at far less expense that the Parks Manager was required to do the research and submit to them in writing that he knew whereof he spoke or that they did not.

With ignorance matched only by arrogance, further town resources were expended in yet another useless exercise of compiling and writing still another report to take up space in the archives and be forever and a day conveniently forgotten and ignored.

**Evelyn Buck
Aurora**

THE AURORAN

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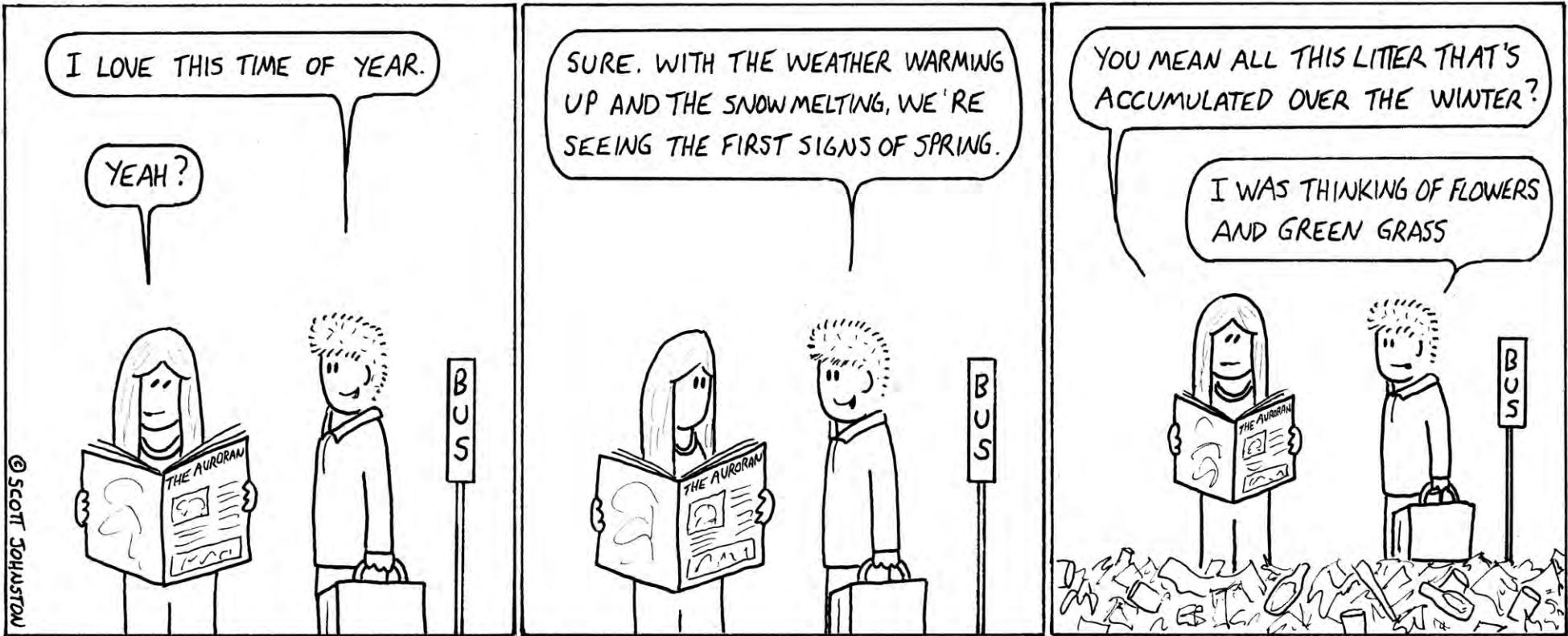
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Front Porch Perspective

By Stephen Somerville

Aurora land use

A couple of weeks ago, another community newspaper had a very good article regarding the issue of basement apartments in Markham.

The article stated that, "after a five-year process, staff recommended legalizing basement apartments, saying their strategy "strikes a balance between the concerns of residents and the need to provide reasonable opportunities for secondary dwelling residency".

The story goes on to note that Aurora has explored the issue for "several years and held a public meeting last November."

This column explores Aurora's land issues in general; next week I deal directly with the question of basement apartments in Aurora.

As we all know our land really is important because it is a limited resource and how we develop the rest of the Town's terra firma will have serious long term ramifications for our way of life and the tax burden that we all share.

Aurora has its own Official Plan, which describes Council's policies on how land in the community should be used.

An Official Plan, according to the York Region website, "helps to ensure that future planning and development will meet the specific needs of the community".

Aurora developed its own initial Official Plan back in the 1960's. This document is reviewed every five years or so.

The last such reviews were done in 1996 and another was completed in 2003. A review will be done again this year.

The Aurora Official Plan must comply with those of the province and York Region.

The province, until they introduced their "Places to Grow" Growth Plan in June, 2006, had not really done an Official Plan for the past 25 years or so, ever since the development of the regions, which were created back in the 1970's.

The provincial governments left the approval process for land development up to the individual region councils.

However, with the considerable growth in Ontario and more specifically the Greater Golden Horseshoe area, it was felt that a co-ordinated approach was necessary for land-use planning.

This provincial plan is "a framework for implementing the Government of Ontario's vision for building stronger, prosperous communities by better managing growth in this region to 2031".

Further, "This plan will guide decisions on a wide range of issues - transportation, infrastructure planning, land-use planning, urban form, housing, natural heritage and resource protection - in the interest of promoting economic prosperity."

After the province released its plan, York Region then responded with its "Planning for Tomorrow" document, which translates the provincial plan into a regional perspective.

According to the document, Aurora is not considered a "Growth Centre" as Newmarket is, for example.

But Aurora is still expected to share in the York Region intensification burden.

The municipal intensification calculation prepared by the region shows Aurora having an additional 2,800 residential units by 2031.

This is comprised of 90 single dwelling homes, 590 row townhouses and 2,120 apartments.

These residential dwelling numbers are over and above those contained in the Aurora Official Plan. An average of 431 residential units have been constructed each year in Aurora between 1986 and 2006, and this trend is expected to continue in the near future.

While the Region has not specifically told Aurora where or when to build these additional units, they are stating that by 2031, Aurora needs to have much higher intensification.

This translates to an average annual addition of 116 units until 2031 or a 27 per cent annual increase in residential dwelling construction over the Official Plan numbers.

Do we have enough developable land to reach our targets?

According to the good folks at the Town planning department, about 38 per cent of current Aurora land is taken up by residential dwellings, 3 per cent by commercial, 8 per cent by industrial, 4 per cent by institutional (schools and churches), with 36 per cent open space/environmentally protected while only 11 per cent of Aurora's land is left for development.

As of December 31, 2006, there were 9,931 single family homes in Aurora; this comprised 67 per cent of the total.

Town/Row/Link homes comprised the next largest segment at 16 per cent while apartments were at 9.3 per cent and semi-detached dwellings comprised 7.9 per cent of the total.

Eleven per cent does not sound like there is much left to develop and especially if one considers that the population of Aurora is expected to grow significantly.

Aurora has a current population of approximately 50,000.

Our population has more than doubled since 1986 and is expected to grow to 56,000 by 2011 and to 75,400 by 2026.

The only way to achieve these population targets is by intensification efforts.

But this whole issue raises many questions: to wit, are the additional 2,800 units of the right mix for our Town? Will these units ensure that Aurora has affordable housing?

And finally, the question that I will deal with next week, what about legalizing the use of basement apartments in Aurora?

Stephen can be contacted at:
stephengsomerville@yahoo.com



Cathy's Corner

By Cathy Vrancic

Enough of these groundhogs

If a rodent can bring an early spring...well, more power to you, Aurora Annie!

But truth be known, the prophetic abilities of groundhogs are about as reliable as election campaign promises.

And if you check the records, you will find that groundhogs disagree with each other just as much as council members.

Surely there were more deserving candidates in the animal kingdom to consult on such important matters - matters of human hope, happiness, health...and sanity?

Who decides these things?

If it were up to me, I would have asked a dog.

Really, the least intelligent dog is far smarter than the most intelligent groundhog.

This is why dogs eat groundhogs when you don't feed them kibble.

A dog might piddle on your rug if you fail to let it out, but a groundhog will surely piddle on your rug if you let it in!

Really, you just can't trust rodents!

And dogs don't rely on shadows to make impeccably accurate predictions.

No, my dog Jake can be in Newmarket but the second I touch his bowl, he predicts food.

So far, he has a 99 per cent accuracy rate. It would be 100 per cent but once in a while, I need to wash his bowl.

When Jake makes a mistake about anything, he assumes the classic shame posture: Head down, ears back, belly low to the floor. But he still comes when he is called!

I don't know any groundhogs that do this.

No, they just hide in the nearest garbage can and you can scream for them all you want but they will not come.

No, groundhogs are not only unreliable, but they run away from the problems they have created for humankind - plunging hopeful people into the depths of despair...watching shamelessly as people venture out of their homes on a beautiful sunny day with only a sweater...only to discover that the spring-like view from the window is a trap! A lie!

People return home with frost-bitten fingers, toes and noses...it takes them years of psychotherapy to deal with the trauma...not to mention the betrayal of heart, soul and winter.

So Scott, I must confess...I was there. I was chasing

Annie through the Aurora Arboretum with that small but devoted group of citizens (the local Chapter of WWW - the Winter Wonder-Wuss Society) to stop her evil deception of the good people of Aurora.

I just had to do it because...well, because...I've stopped watching council meetings ever since I discovered the hit TV series, "Heroes".

What can I say? I got inspired. I just had to "save the world"...or at least save Aurora. And I have a plan.

First, we find Annie, capture her and relocate her to Newmarket.

Nobody in Aurora ever listens to anything Newmarket has to say, so Annie will lose her powers, see?

Next, we put together a committee to find a more worthy prognosticator - a dog, a horse, a bear, a council member - anything, but NOT a rodent, please!

Then we put a fire in the fireplace, curl up, and sleep until the robins get so loud we know FOR SURE Spring is here!

Cathy Vrancic welcomes e-mail at:
ccaaurora@rogers.com



Bouquets & **BRICKBATS**

By DICK ILLINGWORTH

BOUQUETS to the officials of Canadian Tire for installing full-service at their gas station at Edward and Yonge Streets during the hours of propane service. It is badly needed by seniors and the handicapped.

BRICKBATS to the weatherman for taking the groundhog's prediction on February 2nd so seriously and giving Ontarians another cold wave, high winds and more snow, without a break of any kind.

BOUQUETS to Aurora Council for making the council chambers and committee rooms in the Town Hall available on March 26 for the 2nd Annual Ecological Action Youth Conference. Also, for waiving all municipal fees in the amount of \$1,708.58.

BRICKBATS to whoever is responsible at the provincial government level or one of the several parts of the former Ontario Hydro for continuing to charge users for Ontario Hydro debt retirement. The people didn't cause the debt, so why are they continuing to pay?

BOUQUETS to the Aurora Panthers Novice Girls hockey team on their continued winning ways by capturing the Durham West Novice A title recently. Well done, ladies.

BRICKBATS to a justice system that allows a man convicted of drunk driving who killed a Richmond Hill mother of four who was out jogging more than two years ago to walk around free after a sentencing hearing was adjourned.

BOUQUETS to the Music Department at Dr. G. W. Williams Secondary School, especially Penny Sedore as she directed the Senior Jazz Band and Senior Concert Band for gold medal wins at the Toronto Music Fest. The victories qualified both bands for the Canadian National finals.

BRICKBATS to Ontario Trade Minister Sandra Pupatello for her extravagant travel expenditures including \$50,000 on six trips staying at luxurious hotels and \$60 for a room service breakfast. Not a good example when more and more Ontarians are losing their jobs.

BOUQUETS to the federal Progressive Conservatives for taking action in the face of a global recession and a deficit of \$64 billion over the next two years. The government is eyeing cost savings which could cause jet-setting federal politicians and bureaucrats to fly economy class, freeze spending for meals, accommodation and travel at 2008 levels.

BRICKBATS to the federal government for failing to set up an independent commission to investigate suspected miscarriages of justice that has left Canada lagging behind other countries, after no fewer than seven public inquiries have recommended such a commission. The government has refused. Why?

BOUQUETS to the Dominion Institute's Memory Project and the many Legionnaires who make war history come to life for Ontario School Children in conjunction with Veterans Affairs Canada.

BRICKBATS to the Ontario Highway Transportation Board for ruling that the web site of Pickup Pal Online, a popular Ontario-based carpooling web site, was illegal and it would have to pay a total of \$11,300 to the Ontario government and a bus operator. The government found Pickup Pal was in violation of the Public Vehicles Act.

BOUQUETS to the Toronto Real Estate Board for its annual scholarship program to provide two young people with \$5,000 each at a post-secondary school of their choice. Scholarships are based on a 500-word essay and the deadline this year for entries is April 17.

BRICKBATS to the red tape at the federal government level that is holding up about \$3 billion in federal infrastructure funds and according to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities there are hundreds of projects eligible for existing funding.

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Letters to the Editor

Author remembers Aurora in the 40s

To the editor,

Thank you, Mr. Elmer, for your description of Aurora's business section in the early forties. (Two part series in The Auroran recently.)

It certainly brought back memories again of the town I knew as I grew up and the one I wrote about in my book "Aurora 1945 to 1965".

I don't remember the blacksmith shop north of Jack Hamill's business, or Banbury Livery Stable.

Perhaps they existed before 1945 and I was just too young to remember them.

It's so good to have them mentioned as they record two of the very old businesses that still existed in Aurora in the early forties.

Oh yes, I remember the golf course where we skied in the winter and peeked in the windows of the old farmhouse that was the first club house.

I can recall Dal-Har Grill which was always dimly lit

and filled with enough smoke to choke you (or a horse).

Fisher's Five-to-a-Dollar sold everything you could want including little fittings for the heels of shoes to stop them from wearing down, or save a trip to the shoe repair shop. (Maybe the Chinese will start making them during this present recession.)

Yes, I can recall all the places you mentioned along the street. I can summon up the seductive, sugary smell

of Scanlon's baked goods that came from the working buildings behind the shop and drifted though the entire shopping area on cold days in winter.

I remember Mary's Fruit Market where Mary told me not to squeeze the tomatoes and much more. In my mind's eye.

I can see the corner of Wellington and Yonge Street.

There stood Ardill's, Aurora's emporium of elegant clothing, the Queen's Hotel with its verandah and the men who sat watching us on summer nights as we paraded by from the movie theatre in our summer frocks, and stately Doan Hall across the street.

These were important places at the intersection in town where the first stop lights were installed.

Thanks for your memories, Mr. Elmer.

As an earlier letter writer to The Auroran wrote, "Nostalgia is underrated."

Elizabeth Hearn Milner
Bracebridge

Memories aplenty at historic school

To the editor,

Today, I walked past the Church Street School and it

YBH thanks concert group

To the editor,

On behalf of the Yellow Brick House Board of Directors, staff and clients we extend sincere appreciation to ARJ Productions for their organization of last week-end's Slippermen Concert.

Theatre Aurora provided the perfect venue and TK's Restaurant & Pub offered great discounts to ticket holders.

Our shared thanks to The Auroran for the tremendous pre-event coverage and certainly to the readers of this newspaper who sold out the event with generous ticket sales.

In combination these measures of support resulted in a great night of music and a charitable donation to the Yellow Brick House Capital Campaign.

Our kind regards to Andrew Kipfer, Joseph Grillo and Rob Bedard for their creativity and passion.

A special thanks also to the 'trio of gentlemen' for their thoughtful presentation of an additional donation to the Capital Campaign.

Aurora - a great community boasting even greater community service spirit!

Kate Collins
Campaign Coordinator
Yellow Brick House

brought back a few memories.

It was the place where three generations of my family were educated.

My grandmother, Mrs. Ethel McClenny (McLeod) was born two years after the school was built and she attended the school.

My mother, Mrs. Reta Elmer (McClenny) and myself also spent eight years at the Church Street School.

Many of my aunts, uncles, brothers, sister and cousins also attended this school.

Back in 1981, the Church Street School had a 95-year reunion and it was also opened as a museum.

I remember coaxing my grandmother, who was 93 at the time, to go to the reunion.

She didn't want to go as she didn't think there would be any kids from her day attending.

Well, she finally agreed to attend and we took her to the official ceremonies which were held on the front steps of the school, after which we took her into the school and around the main floor.

We then found her a chair and she sat in the main hallway.

There were many people who stopped to visit with her and she totally enjoyed herself.

She wanted to see the upstairs also, so a cousin and I helped her up the steps and around the upstairs rooms.

She totally enjoyed the reunion and wanted to attend the banquet the following night.

The Church Street School was a wonderful place to learn and it outlived my grandmother who passed away November 24, 1981.

The school is 123 years old this year.

Ken Elmer
Aurora

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Letters to the Editor

Bureaucrats accountable to no one

To the editor,

A March 10 letter to the editor by R. Zade attracted my attention for a number of reasons. One hardly knows where to begin so I shall

focus on one issue. A lack of understanding of our economic system brings out strange ideas. One of these is that governments and bureaucrats can deter-

mine a "fair" wage and somehow two people with the same job classification are "entitled" to identical compensation. We, therefore, have a ridiculous situation where two parties can

bargain freely and in good faith, have their agreements ratified by management and the members and then in the name of "justice", have it all overturned by the bureaucracy.

Of course, a wage adjustment can only go up. Not surprisingly, this is more likely to occur in government, where there is no accountability and the taxpayers just reach a little deeper into their pockets.

I would hope that reason would prevail and legislation would prevent retroactive pay raises that could cost millions of dollars. Imagine a scenario in your own business. Your staff has agreed to work for mutually agreeable wages over a long period of time.

Then one day a government bureaucrat appears announcing that you owe your employees a 25 per cent retroactive pay raise going back many years. This is all based on their interpretation of a "fair" wage. How can one budget or run a business when there is unlimited retroactive wage liability? As any employee or employer will readily admit, all workers are not alike. Some are more cooperative, some show more initiative, some are more efficient, etc. Yet, regardless of obvi-

ous difference in ability and temperament, if two workers have the same general job description, should the state be able to intervene and dictate a wage? Is this a "human right"? I would think the answer would be obvious.

G. Clarke
Aurora

Tape calls didn't sound like birds to this reader

To the editor,

Some of you will have seen David's letter of March 10 in The Auroran on the Sub-Committee of the Environmental Advisory Committee's results of birds reared in local next boxes around the town. David says that he will start his annual bird study in four weeks and he has been listening to bird tapes to sharpen his memory of their calls. As I cooked supper I heard the different calls on the tape and they sounded like this to me:

- The sound of a horse caught on barbed wire.
- The alarm of a traveler taking a hot pot off the campfire minus oven gloves.
- A barn door being opened against its will.
- A GI impotently sounding his plastic machine gun.
- Heavy grain being shaken in a tall metal cylinder.

The original tape that David bought had the name of each bird followed by their call. He attempted to change the order so that he heard the call first, took a guess at the bird

and then heard the name. Neither of us are great with technology and it soon became worthy of the Air Farce, with names and calls and calls and names interrupted by "Woof Woof" as Lucy, the dog we immigrated with, tried to get into the act or "David, TELEPHONE!" or childish giggles from our daughters, who found the whole exercise hilarious. The one that eludes him most is the "Bubble Gum Pink Rumped Neotropical Warbler - true or false?"

Dierdre Tomlinson
Aurora

MP answers reader's letter

To the editor,

I wish to clarify Mr. Zade's statements regarding the Conservative government's position on pay equity (Letter to the editor, The Auroran, March 10). Our government respects the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. I would like to assure Mr. Zade and all residents that our government is firmly committed to the rights of women in terms of equal compensation received for equal work performed. Unfortunately the pay equity system in the federal public service is broken. Under the current sys-

tem, women wait up to 20 years for compensation following gruelling and divisive court proceedings. The fact is, many employees have already left the public service by the time complaints are settled. As well, the current system doesn't require federal public service employers and unions to take pay equity issues into account during wage setting. These issues are only addressed as an afterthought and when complaints are made. This is not fair to women. In 2004, a Liberal-appointed Task Force concluded that proactive pay equity legislation is a

more effective way of protecting the rights of women. The same Task Force recommended that Parliament enact new stand-alone pay equity legislation. This is exactly what the Conservative government is proposing to do. The Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act will provide employees with access to the Public Service Labour Relations Board, who will hear and resolve all complaints. Established in 1967 to act as an independent, neutral third party to help resolve issues around wages and conditions of work in the federal public sector context, the Public

Service Labour Relations Board is well equipped to fulfill this function. The Board already plays a key role to help resolve issues around wages and conditions of work between federal public service employers and bargaining agents, acting as mediator, an arbitrator, and a tribunal, depending on the circumstances. Under the new legislation, employers and unions will be jointly accountable for setting fair wages – and reporting publicly to employees. Women deserve fair pay rates now. Not 20 years from now.

Lois Brown,
MP Newmarket-Aurora

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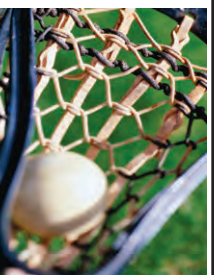


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Local speed skaters qualify for Provincial championships

While several of their friends are winding down their hockey seasons, four local skaters are preparing for the upcoming Ontario Provincial Speed Skating Championships in Kitchener-Waterloo.

The four speedsters are Griffin Bent, peewee, John Grant, intermediate, Jessa Griffith, juvenile, and Aurora's Taylor Simpson, midget.

All are members of the Newmarket Jets Speed Skating Club who operate out of the Magna Centre.

Simpson is a Grade 6

student from Light of Christ in Aurora.

Like many of his teammates he started speed skating after the 2006 Olympics in Torino.

Who can forget the memorable showing of our men's and women's teams as they captured 12 medals in short and long track speed skating?

"When the Olympics roll around, we get an upswing in our membership," said Jets' Vice President Bill Allen. "All our skaters who qualified for the Provincial championships began skating

since Torino".

Since starting speed skating three years ago, Simpson has competed at several meets across the province.

In his first season of competitive skating, he won all his races at every distance, capturing two gold medals for his efforts.

"After I started skating at some of the Regional meets, I really wanted to qualify for the Ontario Cup series," he said.

The Ontario Cup is the premier series of competition in the province

which is open to top 20 skaters in each age class.

Qualifying mid-year for the Ontario Cup, one of his most memorable moments in the sport was winning a bronze medal in Ottawa.

By the end of his second full season, he captured several more medals, qualifying for the Provincial championships where he finished fifth overall.

This season brought some changes to the competition format.

The criteria were tougher to qualify for the Cup meets and the field who would qualify for the Provincials would be narrowed to just 15 skaters

province-wide.

While some of the larger clubs are able to support training programs on multiple nights per week, the Jets get the most out of their two hours a week at the Magna Centre.

However, "some of our skaters that are looking for more ice time and coaching train with the nearby clubs in Barrie or Markham," Bill said. "We also welcome skaters from other clubs to train with our top notch coaching team led by Paula McConvey".

Simpson has stepped up his training program in preparation for the Provincials.

Sitting in eighth place going in to the final meet,

he is looking to solidify his position or hopefully advance higher.

As a first year midget skater, he had set his goal to crack the top 10.

Next year, he is looking to make the top 4 in his age class to earn a spot on the team to compete at the Canadian championships.



Above, Taylor Simpson, an 11-year-old Midget from Aurora, left, readies for the start of a race with Jessa Griffith, a 13-year-old Juvenile, from Oak Ridges, and John Grant, a 16-year-old Intermediate from King City.

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Tom & Jerry's	2	Law Insurance	3
FPL Aggregates	0	Rec Sports	3
Highland's Chev	5	Baldwin's	6
Priestly Demolition	3	Masterclean	6

PLAYER STANDINGS

NAME	G	A	Pts
Tom HusseyMasterclean223355			
Rob Blakely Masterclean232245			
John Archibauld Highland's	251338		
Mark Swirla Priestly172037			
Todd Richardson FPL	251136		
Jody Matthews Highland's152035			
Brad McMillan Baldwin's151934			
Doug Adair Rec Sports132033			
Craig McConnell Masterclean	191332		
John Anderson Rec Sports151732			
Steve Kavanah Baldwin's102232			
Pat O'Mahony Priestly92130			
Mike O'Conner Baldwin's	171027		
Mark SedorePriestly131427			
Ed Kilroy Rec Sports121527			
Jason MuisePriestly16925			
Darren Yaremko Tom & Jerry's	111425		
Mark Inglis Law Insurance81725			
Steve Robertson Baldwin's15924			
Dwayne Smith Law Insurance	13	11	24
Scott CrabbeHighland's91524			
Joel ReevesTom & Jerry's91524			
Dave Caverley FPL101323			
Ron Thiessen Tom & Jerry's	111122		
Mike CaiccoBaldwin's51722			
Chris Neale Highland's12921			
Ken Fisher Law Insurance71421			
Bruce Chappell Highland's	41721		
Dean Iwai Tom & Jerry's13720			
Gerald Briand Baldwin's71320			
Peter BriandBaldwins10919			
Vince GrecoTom & Jerry's91019			
Ed Jackson Baldwin's81119			
Hugh Alcorn Masterclean41519			
Scott Thomas Tom & Jerry's	41519		
Ken RumbleHighland's51318			
Steven MacDonald Highland's	5	12	17
Charlie SteenhorstFPL31417			
Brandon Chappell Highland's	9	7	16
Kevin O'Keefe Priestly7815			
John LeederLaw Insurance9514			
Tom WebsterRec Sports9514			
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Dan Cote Law Insurance4	610		
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Doug McGrath Baldwin's2810			
Steve Riswick Tom & Jerry's2810			
Murray Campbell Law Insurance	2810		
Brian Mackenzie Rec Sports1	910		
Dennis GilesFPL459			
Steve Bromley Tom & Jerry's	279		
Jerome Flanigan Baldwin's	279		
Vince Rochon Masterclean	189		
Fred Cox Masterclean	628		
Hank VanBakel Masterclean	538		
John Sibener Masterclean448			
Craig Gellatly FPL	358		
Keith Carruthers Masterclean	358		
Bill Collins Priestly268			
Don Nichols Highland's268			

Win in Aurora 7-5 Sunday

Tigers Minor Bantam Ateam still unbeaten in OMHAFinals

The Aurora Tigers Minor Bantam Ateam is no stranger to victory and they're getting closer to an Ontario Minor Hockey League Association title, thanks to a 7-5 victory in Aurora Sunday.

Playing in the championship round against Hespeler, Aurora has one win and a tie to its credit in the best of five series, now underway.

In their opener, played in Hespeler, Aurora battled to a 2-2 draw, before returning to the Community Centre Sunday for its 7-5 victory.

Third game in the series returns to Hespeler next Monday night, March 23, at 7 p.m. The teams then return to Aurora for the fourth game two nights later for a game which begins at 7.30 p.m.

At stake is the Charles Wilson championship trophy.

One of the two teams has already won the W. J. Weller Memorial finalist trophy.

So, where did this group of talented hockey players come from?

The team has won the York Simcoe championship three years in a row, and last year brought home the coveted International Silver Stick Championship, but until this year have never come this close to an OMHA championship.

It has been a challenging year for the 13 and 14-year-old hockey players.

As last year's Silver Stick champs there was quite a bit of pressure and many expectations going into this season.

After a bit of a shaky start, and several injuries leaving them shorthanded for a good part of the season, they finished in third place with a record of 16-4-10 going into the playoffs.

Round 1 began with Markham and Aurora took

the series in three games.

In Round 2 Aurora faced a very physical Barrie team, for a roller coaster five games.

Aurora won the first game 5-2 and it looked like a brilliant start to the series but the Colts came back strong to win the next two games and the Tigers had to dig deep to come back to win games four and five to win the series.

In the quarter finals, the team to beat was Newmarket.

In last year's playoffs, Aurora faced Newmarket in Round Two but were plagued by injuries and lost to Newmarket in three straight games, a huge disappointment that would require redemption. Aurora had been unable to beat Newmarket in this year's regular season with a loss and two ties.

It was going to be tough, but Aurora came out strong to win the first two games.

Unwilling to lose three straight, Newmarket rallied in the next game with 6-3 victory, but in Game Four the Tigers settled the score with a 3-2 victory on home ice to win their division and secure their spot in the OMHAsemi-finals.

In the semi-finals, and holding its collective breath, the team faced Whitby, last year's OMHACHampions and this year's Silver Stick winners.

In the first game again, and on Whitby's ice, Aurora won with a decisive 4-1 victory.

By game two they knew that Whitby was not going to be beaten that easily, and they were right. Whitby blazed back in the next two games beating the Tigers 2-1 and 5-2.

Aurora fought back to stay in with a 2-0 win on

home ice in Game Four, then sealed the deal to become OMHAFinalists with a 2-0 win on Whitby ice in a do-or-die Game Five.

It was an exciting end to the series with each goalie delivering a shutout.

Now the final countdown to the end of a brilliant play-off run begins.

The Minor Bantam A team is now up against the Hespeler Shamrocks in the OMHAFinals which began last week with a nail-biting 2-2 tie after 10 minutes of overtime.

With the team work and determination shown this far,

the ultimate minor hockey prize, the OMHACHampionship could be reachable.

The team is coached by John Archibald, who has Bruce Ing, Mike Nisbet, Randy Romano as assistants.

The team is made up with Eric Archibald, Ryan Baskin, Braden Casselden, Eric Damecour, Quincy Ing, Daniel Jones, Collin Laird, Colton Lee, Andrew McDonald, Liam Mackichan, Douglas Nisbet, Matthew Pryse, Evan Romano, Vincent Ruscica, Peter Sandwell, Casey Severini and Ethan Slimkowich.

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House League

Novice

Team 201 Caravan Kids Flames 6 - Jack Hosmer 2G, Ben Godber 2G 1A, Keegan Fisher 1G 1A, Adam Dipiero 1G, Jack Chivers 1A, Lucas Alberico 1A, Bryce Davison 1A, William Reid 1A, Andrew End 1A. **Team 204 Caravan Kids Flyers 4** - Adam Wochenmarkt 2G 1A, Dillon Varone 1G 2A, Nicholas Severs 1G, Mathew Parkin 1A, Ethan Cohen 1A, Michael Vivian 1A.



Team 203 Caravan Kids Senators 3 - Chris Sands 1G, Jacob Cowl 1G, Justin Carcone 1G 1A, Christian Ferguson 1A. **Team 205 Caravan Kids Leafs 2** - Dylan Clark 1G, Jack Fournier 1G, Mitchell Levy 1A, Pranay Rendalker 1A, Tristan Hicks 1A.

Team 202 Caravan Kids Bruins 6 - Christopher Walsh 3G 2A, Jaedon Jackson 2G 2A, Shayne Colin 1G, Claudio Basso 1A, Brock Stewart 1A, Zane Zwicker 1A. **Team 206 Caravan Kids Penguins 3** - Thomas Morra 1G 1A, Alexander Mueller 1G 1A, Raffaele Parente 1G 1A.



Rebuild school, group suggests

From page 1
out disqualifying himself from voting on the issue later. Residents must still wait for a Board of Education staff report to be presented at the April 30 Board meeting. Staffers advised residents that they could address school trustees and respond to the staff report at the April Board meeting, provided they had requested delegate status. School Trustees have also agreed to hold a final public meeting June 3, a month before the Board's final decision, at Dr. G. W. Williams Secondary School. As it stands right now, Aurora could lose three existing schools in the next few years: Wells Street Public School, Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, and George Street Public School. Late last week The Auroran received information that George Street Public School will close within the next four years, however, that information has not been confirmed. Trustee Kerr is not available for comment until March 23rd.

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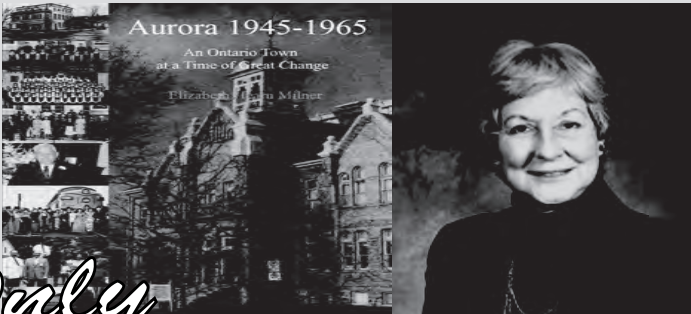
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Frankly Speaking

By Frank Klees

Last week, I asked Premier Dalton McGuinty to give the legislature his assurance that any changes to Ontario's tax policy will not result in additional tax burdens to consumers.

What is worrisome is that as usual, the premier chose not to answer the question, and that may well mean that the March 26th provincial budget will contain what could be one of the most significant tax increases Ontario consumers have had to absorb since the McGuinty health tax.

For those interested, the verbatim Hansard record and the video of my exchange with the premier can be found on my website listed below.

What prompted me to raise the issue in the legislature was the release of a report last week that warned that "harmonization" (combining the federal GST and the provincial sales tax) would increase the taxes on new homes in York Region by as much as \$27,000 and as much as \$47,000 in Toronto.

The result would be that home ownership would become impossible for many first time home buyers in Ontario, the building industry already in a downturn would come to a virtual standstill and thousands of jobs would be lost.

The reason?

Because under the proposed federal/provincial sales tax harmonization formula, many products and services that are currently exempt would be taxed under the new tax scheme.

In the case of the housing industry, because of the high ticket value, the new tax would be a shock not only to potential purchasers, but to the entire industry.

And beyond the housing industry, taxes would be assessed to all products including services that are now exempt.

They will range from taxes on personal hygiene products to services such as mutual funds.

While the argument will be made that the new tax rate will be lower, it won't take more than one weekend's shopping trip to realize that the McGuinty hit and run tax machine has rolled through town again.

Remember the last time ?

I recall the harmonization debate at the cabinet table when we were the government.

We decided against harmonization at the time because as a government we were committed to REDUCE taxes, not increase them.

And regardless of how the calculations were jiggered, there would be a net tax increase to consumers.

At a time when many in our community are already facing financial hardship because of lost jobs, the last thing we need is for the McGuinty government to whack us with more taxes on the most basic of daily needs.

Seniors who are already seeing their income eroded because of investment losses or historic low interest rates should not have insult added to injury by being pick-pocketed by their provincial government.

I know our Chambers of Commerce are in support of harmonization, but I have serious concerns about the impact on consumers at a time when many are already

struggling to cope with their daily cost of living.

Following my warning to the premier of the devastating effects that tax harmonization would have on new home buyers and the construction industry, I received many e-mails asking me what my position is on the broader issue of tax harmonization.

I'm pleased to respond, and while this is not a formal position of the Progressive Conservative party, it is mine: I am firmly opposed to any change in tax policy that will add

additional taxes to consumers. My assessment of the proposed harmonization policy is that there will be winners and losers, and this is no time to make anyone a loser. The timing could not be worse. So I say to Mr. McGuinty and to those advocating for tax harmonization, "Forget about it!"

As always, I welcome your thoughts on this or any other issue of concern to you. Please feel free to call me directly at 416-509-8999 or visit my website at www.frankklees.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

Harmonization

AURORAN WORD SEARCH - HISTORY

By SCOTT JOHNSTON

Find and circle in the puzzle the words from the list below. Words may run horizontally, vertically, diagonally, forwards or backwards. Letters may be used more than once.

Once you have found all of the words, the remaining uncircled letters will answer the question:

“Where are these once prominent parts of Aurora’s history?”

Y	B	K	F	L	E	U	R	Y	G	P	C	O	N
L	R	E	N	E	L	B	E	U	Q	O	O	S	E
I	R	E	E	V	E	I	D	T	U	N	N	R	K
A	S	R	W	R	H	H	M	S	E	I	O	T	C
R	N	C	N	E	O	P	I	S	E	G	T	H	I
F	R	W	Y	T	R	N	L	R	N	N	A	E	H
O	A	O	E	R	S	B	L	O	S	I	F	T	C
D	B	L	O	D	E	P	S	S	W	L	W	O	E
A	S	L	A	N	S	H	O	N	E	R	R	R	C
E	S	I	S	M	A	N	S	H	O	E	S	O	I
H	R	W	M	G	P	O	L	A	S	T	R	N	O
Y	A	D	O	R	T	S	D	L	T	S	R	T	H
S	R	E	H	T	A	E	L	S	I	L	L	O	C
A	U	R	O	R	A	F	A	I	R	T	E	N	M

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GATE
HEAD OF RAIL
HORSES
HOTELS
IRWINS MILL
LAMPS
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PLOW
QUEENS
RED MILL

RED WILLOW CREEK
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The answer to the question is hidden on another page

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The solution to the Word Find on page 13 is "gone, but not forgotten".

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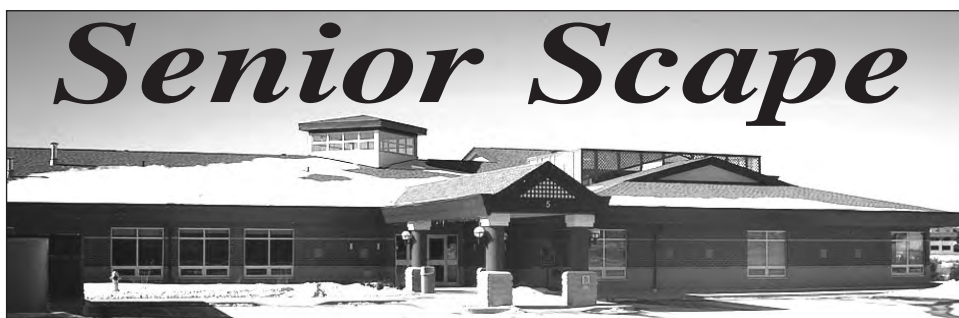
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Senior Scape

Volunteer appreciation night planned at centre

By BRIAN WARBURTON

In the Aurora Seniors Association (ASA) giving is often equated with a multitude of seniors volunteering their time and expertise and finding over and over that the volunteering that is the most demanding returns the greatest satisfaction.

Most of us require to be challenged occasionally, or boredom results.

In April, the ASA will hold Volunteer Appreciation Night, and this is an event that should be promoted not because volunteers are longing for appreciation, but because recognition adds luster to the ASA and our way of senior community life.

The ASA develops and augments the intangible characteristics that volunteering bestows on the members and characterizes the ASA community as seniors who share so much merely by socializing and getting involved in activities of choice.

The population of ASA members exceeded 1,000 at the end of 2008 and some members return several times weekly and others daily to find benefit or advantage by occupying their time profitably. During the month of January, 2,700 visits to the ASA were recorded and more attended as inevitably, some visits fail to be recorded.

The members who attended more than likely generated an excellent way of spending their day and the vivacity and vibrancy exhibited by these same seniors is a striking testimony to the power of good times and good friends.

We often forget the Board of Directors (BOD) exists but, the BOD meets regularly and works hard and the fact that the ASA runs quietly and smoothly, bears testimony to the selfless diligence of their endeavours.

They met in February and the results of their long and careful deliberations are posted on the bulletin board, together with a financial statement.

The dance committee is connected to what appeals to dancers and to what has made the Friday night dances so successful over the years.

The next Friday night dance will be Friday, March 20th, starting at 8 p.m. in the West McKenzie hall. You are welcome and

please bring a friend or two.

The Operations and Activities Committee met last Wednesday and had another productive discussion and review of ways and means to improve the quality of activities in the ASA.

Jytte Gillies chaired the committee meeting.

Enid Maize commented on the success of the recent mass choir event and the gathering enthusiasm to repeat the format at another location, possibly the ASA.

The addition of the Newmarket choir to this initiative would also be a possibility.

She also congratulated the ASA choir, for their constant rehearsals and their choral performance.

ASA president, Charles Sequeira, noted that profits from any ASA activities go into the ASA general account and he listed some of the expenses the ASA incurs.

He noted also that a funding application is being prepared to augment some of the activities that need to be upgraded.

New cupboard space and sharing of existing space received attention and ways to improve this situation will be examined.

Provision for improving the ASA staging is

planned and the present arrangements will be upgraded, hopefully in time for events planned for the coming months.

Other items that were discussed included the Canada Day Parade, the Farmers Market, the Street Sale and the comedy in rehearsal under Judy Buchanan's direction.

This is by no means all of what transpired but it does provide a sense of what needs to take place.

It also provides some awareness of the understanding that must prevail among the activities, for the needs and requirements of others.

Earth Hour is scheduled for Saturday, March 28th and this allows everybody who has the well being of planet earth at heart, to participate in cities around the world.

This will be accomplished by the simple expedient of turning off lights for one hour in an effort to raise global awareness of climate change.

It is not often that the whole world can participate in a common objective, together and in harmony but, Toronto will lead our way to participate in this symbolic gesture, together with 538 other cities which have agreed, so far, to participate.



Rotarian Grace Marsh, left, and Aurora Rotary President Ron Wallace, right, spend time with guest speaker, Staff Sergeant Ricky Veersappan of the York Regional Police last week. Ricky is officer in charge of the Diversity and Cultural Resources Bureau of YRP and fascinated club members when he addressed the regular Rotary meeting.

Aurora Seniors Duplicate Bridge

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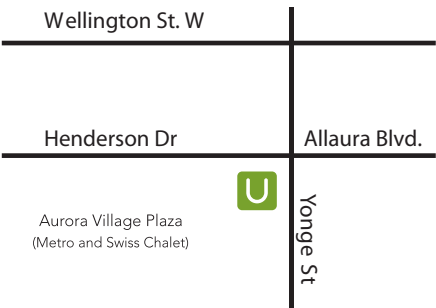
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