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FREE

Week of June 2, 2009

Aurora Chamber gets to hold first event at renovated school

The first event to be held at the newly-renovated Church Street School has been set.

The honour goes to the Aurora Chamber of Commerce who will hold a cocktail reception for the election and induction of the chamber's new board of directors.

The event will be held Thursday, June 25, for two hours beginning at 5.30 p.m.

Chamber members will pay \$20 to get in, while potential

members will pay \$30.

The school is located on Church Street at the corner of Victoria, a block east of Yonge Street.

The historic building has been undergoing renovations for a number of years and will soon be ready to start its new role as a Cultural Centre.

The Town of Aurora, owners of the building, expect to officially open the school in the fall of this year.



Aurora became a cleaner town Friday as volunteers pitched in to help York Regional Police and members of Aurora's PACT (Police and Community T ogether) Committee get rid of the graffiti found on several community walls. Helping was Samantha Robertson from Aurora High School. The wall she helped clean was on a vacant building on Edward Street near the railway tracks. Overall, 127 people took part. They cleaned 105 locations and removed 2236 tags.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Briefly

March planned

"Where there's a Wells, there's a way," says a group of people intent on saving the historic Wells Street school building.

To that end, two groups, the Community Action for Wells Street (CAWS) and the Olde Aurora Ratepayers' Association (OARA) are planning a march to Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School Monday, June 15th, at 6 p.m.

The whole town is invited to participate.

School board trustees will meet at that time to discuss the issue and the meeting is open to the public.

It gets underway at 7 p.m.

The purpose of the meeting is to help trustees understand the uniqueness of the school before they make their final decision on its fate.

The march begins at the town park, across the street from Wells Street school.

Help!!

With only days left until the start of the 14th annual Aurora Chamber of Commerce Street Festival, the Chamber has an urgent need for volunteers.

Chamber members who would like to volunteer either as a block captain or to man the Chamber booth during the Festival are asked to contact the Chamber office at 905-727-7262.

In addition, students in need of volunteer hours can earn them at the festival. They, too, should contact the Chamber Office.

Allegations against Buck continue

The saga of allegations against Councillor Evelyn Buck continued last week at a regular council meeting, and from the sounds of it, the only winners in this debate will be the lawyers.

The issue began May 12 when Sher St. Kitts, the volunteer Chair of the Aurora Canada Day parade sub-committee, stood up in Open Forum and lodged a formal complaint against Councillor Buck. Despite a challenge from the councillor that procedural bylaws were not being followed, Mayor Phyllis Morris ruled they were, and a subsequent motion introduced Ms St. Kitts' comments into the record.

At the last meeting, Councillor Buck questioned the mayor's actions in allowing Ms St. Kitts' comments to be part of the minutes, and re-stated her assertion that the required two-thirds majority had not been met.

She demanded a public retraction of the allegations, that they be stricken from the public records, and sought a public apology.

The mayor, obviously prepared for a continuation of the debate, noted that she would review the councillor's remarks with her legal council before making a response.

She also noted that she will be

Cancer Society fundraiser Sat.

Sue Gwilliam is at it again.

Her annual fundraiser for the Canadian Cancer Society, in memory of her two sisters, is scheduled for Saturday, June 6th, at the Shoppers Drug Mart at the corner of Yonge Street and Aurora Heights Drive.

The four-hour event gets underway at 10 a.m.

"We are organizing this fundraiser in the memory of my two sisters, Val McNulty and Nancy Shannon," she said. "They were not only my sisters but my best friends and also co-workers."

Included in the event will be burgers, hot dogs, pizza slices, chips, cold drinks and cookies

contacting the editors of the local papers to correct information she felt had been inaccurately reported about the issue.

Later, Councillor Alison Collins-
Please see page 3

from Hurst Bakery, a sidewalk sale, a garage sale, face painting and a silent auction.

Bidding for the silent auction has already started. All items are on display at the store.

They include: a Diamondback Bike, cosmetic gift packages, a weekend at Elora Inn, gift certificates (for carpet cleaning, restaurants, oil/lube and filter), original paintings, an NHL gift pack, a Nascar gift pack, a decorative mirror and Lindt chocolate.

Bids close Saturday at 2 p.m. The event will also feature a live performance by "The Expos".

All money raised goes to the Cancer Society.



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COMING EVENTS

CONTINUING

The Probus Club of Aurora meets at 10 a.m. the second Wednesday of each month at the Royal Canadian Legion on Industrial Parkway North. Probus was sponsored by the Aurora Rotary Club in 1995 with an initial membership of 25, now 82, for retired and semi-retired professional and business men and women, former executives and others. The club is non-sectarian and non-political. For information call 905-841-3558 or 905-727-9344.

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.

The Adult Bereavement Support Group offers a chance to learn how to cope with the loss of a loved one. Fred Bullen has given the use of the Aurora Lions Club and Brent Forrester of Thompson Funeral Home will provide administrative cost so that this service is given free to the community. Contact mariesgriefjourney@yahoo.com to reserve a seat or get further information.

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 Company's Children's Chorus is a new treble voice choir dedicated to educating, nurturing and providing opportunities for children to express their musical abilities. The chorus is open to boys and girls in Grades 1 through 12 and consists of two choirs: Angel Choristers, a training choir for six and seven-year-olds and the Children Chorus, open to eight to 17 year-olds. To audition, contact general director Sarah Kyle at keepsinging@look.ca.

CHAT'S Community Home Assistance to Seniors 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 Tuesday from 9.30 to 11 a.m. it's Story and Playtime at Aurora Cornerstone Church, 390 Industrial Parkway South for tots (age 0-4 years) and their caregivers for coffee or tea. Call 905-841-8883 for further details.

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 every Friday morning 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 evening at 6.30 p.m. at Gabriel's on Yonge Street. New members are welcome. For further information call 905-841-1352.

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.

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 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 Maize.

Meet at Martha's Table, at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, every Thursday from 11.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. Hot soup, sandwiches, and dessert will be provided. Any funds raised go to local charities.

School teacher at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School Bob McRoberts is retiring. A party will be held today at the Howard Johnson Hotel on Yonge Street. For details contact Lynn Gardner at 905-727-3131 ext. 157 or Joe Pagniello at joseph.pagniello@ydsb.edu.on.ca. Appetizers and cocktails begin at 5 p.m. with presentations at 6 p.m.

Aurora Chamber of Commerce Business After Five meeting, hosted by Willow Springs Winery and The Roving Chef, 5572 Bethesda Road, Stouffville from 5.30 to 7.30 p.m. This is a joint event with the Newmarket, Stouffville, Markham, Bradford and Richmond Hill Chambers of Commerce. There will be tours of the facility, a Tasting Bar and Gift Shop at this event. Numbers are limited, so early registration is required.

Hartman Public School Second Annual Film Fair takes place at the school, 130 River Ridge Boulevard in the Bayview-Wellington area, from 3.30 p.m. to 9 p.m. For more information, call 905-727-5938.

Aurora Optimist Club, Police and Community Together (PACT), and the Town of Aurora host the annual Bike and Board Rodeo event at Hickson Park, beginning at 5 p.m.

44th Annual Ceremonial Review Parade of the 2799 Queen's York Rangers Army Cadet Corps is set for 3 p.m. at the Aurora Community Centre. Reception at the Legion at 6 p.m.

Aurora Chamber of Commerce presents the 14th annual Longest Street Sale on the Longest Street beginning at 11 a.m. and continuing until 5 p.m. Call the chamber at 905-727-7262 for further information.

Longest lacrosse game in history, starts today at 5 a.m and continues until 6 p.m. Saturday, June 13 at the Aurora Community Centre, Rink #1. The game is being played to raise awareness and support for the Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness (www.abusehurts.com) and the Spirit

of the Stick campaign (www.spiritofthestick.com). In addition to the longest lacrosse game in history, a silent auction and a Family Fun day (Saturday) will be in full swing. Mayors and councillors from Aurora and Newmarket will play with lacrosse players from 5 to 6 p.m. Friday. For more information go to www.laxdove.ca or www.amll.ca.

Aurora Historical Society yard sale at Hillary House, beginning at 8 a.m. All proceeds go to the care and restoration of Hillary House. For more information, call 905-727-8991 or visit www.auro-rahistoricalsociety.ca.

Merlin's Hollow, a one-acre garden in East Aurora, is free to visitors today. It's located on Centre Crescent, north of Centre Street, west of Industrial Parkway North.

Meatball Madness at the Aurora Lions Hall, 33 Mosley Street. Doors open at 5.30 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$20. For further information, call 289-470-5102.

Members of CAWS (Community Action for Wells Street) and OARA (Olde Aurora Ratepayers' Association) will hold a parade in support of saving Wells Street Public School from the Town Park at 6 p.m. sharp. The parade will go to Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School. For question or comments visit the CAWS booth at the Farmer's Market every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Board of Education trustee public meeting begins at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School at 7 p.m.

Aurora Seniors hold a Health Fair at the seniors' centre from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event includes an English Tea.

Thirtieth Annual Polo For Heart, Canada's largest charity polo festival, presents three days of non-stop entertainment and activities the whole family will enjoy, at the Gormley Polo Centre (Bloomington Road and Leslie Street). Two polo games daily will occur with half-time entertainment. Tickets are \$15 each, children under 12 free. Proceeds go to the Heart & Stroke

Foundation and Southlake Regional Cardiac Care Program. For further information, visit http://www.poloforheart.org/ or call 905-505-0088.

Aurora Garden & Horticultural Society monthly meeting at 8 p.m. at the Aurora Legion, 105 Industrial Parkway North. Topic is "Fabulous Foliage" with guest speaker Heinke Thiessen followed by flower show. Guests are welcome. Admission is \$2 at the door.

Merlin's Hollow, a one-acre garden in East Aurora, is free to visitors today. It's located on Centre Crescent, north off Centre Street, west of Industrial Parkway North.

The Aurora Garden and Horticultural Society annual Aurora Garden Tour covers seven gardens including a chat with the owners and creators of the landscape designs. Tour is from noon to 5 p.m., rain or shine! Tickets are \$10 and are available in Aurora at Caruso & Co., 15210 Yonge Street, Flowers by Terry, 14799 Yonge Street, and R&R Revisited, 95 Edward Street.

For more information call 905-727-5926 or visit gardenontario.org/site.php/aurora/news/details/4441.

Revised staff report on the future of Wells Street School goes to the Board of Education in the Boardroom, Wellington Street West at 8 p.m. Public delegations must be booked in advance by calling Mrs. Lori Barnes at lori.barnes@ydsb.edu.on.ca or 905-727-0022, ext. 2263,

Merlin's Hollow, a one-acre garden in East Aurora, is free to visitors today. It's located on Centre Crescent, north off Centre Street, west of Industrial Parkway North.

Aurora Rotary Club golf tournament at Westview Golf Club. Shotgun at 10 a.m. \$150 per golfer includes lunch, dinner at the Graystone Tavern, electric golf cart and prizes. Call Ron at 905-727-3300 for details. Participation limited.

Doors Open Aurora, 2009, takes place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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Brian Horeck, the author of two best-selling novels, is an Aurora resident. You've probably seen him driving around in this vehicle, which advertises his second novel, "Frozen Beneath". He will occupy one of the more than 500 spaces on Yonge Street Sunday as the Aurora Chamber of Commerce holds the 14th annual World's Longest Street Festival on the World's Longest Street. Yonge Street, from Wellington to Murray Drive, will be closed to vehicular traffic from before 11 a.m. to after 5 p.m.

Auroran photo by Ron Wallace

Power outage issue back for another look

If a power failure were to strike Aurora, the lights would stay on at Town Hall.

At least that was the plan, as council discussed a proposal for \$98,600 to purchase a back-up generator for the building.

In the event of a power outage, the diesel generator would provide electricity for such things as computer equipment, heating or air conditioning, security and fire panels, lighting and electrical outlets.

Council originally approved \$90,000 for this project in 2007.

Since that time, staff members have looked at both diesel and bi-fuel systems.

Bi-fuel generators use natural gas with diesel as a back-up, and burn with cleaner emissions.

After receiving quotes from various vendors, the scope had been scaled back, so that staffers were now looking at a 400 Kw generator, which would easily meet Town Hall's peak demand of 358 Kw.

Staffers recommended a diesel generator as both the lowest cost, and due to the fact that the town has an existing diesel generator at the seniors' centre, with a contract for diesel fuel deliveries in case of emergency.

The actual quote came

in at \$78,000, but this was just to supply and install the system.

An estimated \$20,000 in additional funding was required for electrical connection and certification.

When this recommendation, including the request for the additional \$8,600 over the original budget, came to General Committee on May 26, councillors questioned the reduction in scope from the original proposal of a 750 Kw generator.

Staff members responded that a generator of that size had been proposed based on expected growth, and to provide power back to the grid.

However, when the quotes came in higher than expected, the requirements were reduced to 400 Kw to meet just the peak demands of Town Hall.

Councillors also questioned the \$20,000, and whether it would cover all of the electrical and certification requirements.

Staff members said it would.

Members also asked why the components were separated, and not quoted as one project to supply, install, connect and certify the generator. Would this not be cheaper?

Staffers replied that it would be more cost effective to do the project in two parts, as more competitive bids could be received for the connection and certification, over leaving it to the generator supplier to arrange this.

But in the end, after further discussion, General Committee did not feel comfortable with the staff recommendation of an additional \$8,600, and instead voted to refer the matter back to the town's Chief Administrative Officer

Meeting minutes are questioned

From page 1

Mrakas became involved in the discussion when she suggested the minutes of the May 12 meeting were not accurate.

She asked that staff members review the meeting tapes and revise the formal record where necessary.

As of press time the minutes had yet to be publicly posted on the town's website.

Town CAO Neil Garbe advised councillors that the standard practice was for the minutes to include a synopsis of discussions, rather than a verbatim transcript.

He noted that he, as well as the town's solicitor and

Aurora girl wins award from Bank

After volunteering in Ecuador two years ago, Aurora's Nicole Leroux started Water for Water to raise funds to make clean water accessible to Las Tunas, a poor community in that country.

Her international efforts have earned her the 2009 Toronto Dominion Canada Trust Community Leadership Scholarship.

The Water for Water program has grown from its original base in the school to the larger community. In addition to donating, community members have committed to raising additional funds. The project was designed to be sustainable and to contribute to the local economy, and has now grown to include other South American communities.

Nicole has also started a website to raise awareness and funding for the animal rescue program at the Quito Zoo.

She is also active in her school's environment club, Kids Help Phone, athletics, and her faith community.

Nicole is currently in Kenya pursuing other humanitarian initiatives.



NICOLE LEROUX



Alice Sandiford, for the fourth year in a row, set up her lemonade and cookie stand at the Yonge/Edward Street location of Shoppers' Drug Mart to raise money in her fight against breast cancer. After four hours of selling Saturday morning, she raised more than \$500.

Auroran photo by David Falconer



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Poor Ronnie

By RON WALLACE

Will Wells Street ever be used as a school again?

It's time to talk about the future of Wells Street School. Big question is: does it have one...a future, that is? There's a big march being planned for June 15, the last day the public can present its case to save the school. The meeting is slated for Aurora's Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, another building whose future is in doubt. Y'see, a couple of years ago, the York Region District School Board decided to shut Wells Street down and move the students to Aurora Grove Public School on Stone Road.

The students are still there; Wells Street School sits empty; and the board has yet to make a decision on what to do with it. Apparently, there are some reports floating around that say there is nothing wrong with the building, but the board apparently knows it's not a safe place for kids to be, so the best thing to do would be close it down.

I have a reporter working on a story about the school, its history, the reports, etc., etc. and I expect that story should be in next week's paper, in time for the meeting June 15.

In the meantime I have something to offer those who are planning to attend the meeting. It'll take more than a history lesson of Wells Street to convince the trustees to vote to save the school.

I've been there, so I have a pretty good idea of how things work. Granted, when I was the Aurora trustee 1985 to 1994 (three terms), there were 20 of us making the decisions. I always wondered why I, and I alone, got to vote on a half-billion dollar budget that affected so many taxpayers then, when Aurora Council, with a budget nowhere near the board's budget, had nine people to make the same decision.

Simple: it's Regional. Today, there are only 12 trustees on the board (bet that saved a ton of money, eh?) and the Aurora trustee - Gord Kerr - is also responsible for King Township. Frankly, I don't know how he does it. I could barely make it to all the graduation ceremonies in Aurora. My big claim to fame was getting approval for a new gymnasium at Regency Acres Public School, but in order to get it, I needed to find 10 more people who would vote with me.

Because, frankly, the trustees, representing their own corner of the world, could care less about Aurora...probably wouldn't know the town existed if they didn't have to meet here at the board's headquarters on Wellington Street West. I suspect it will be that way at the Williams meeting. Kerr will likely vote to save the school, but the rest of them probably have no idea what we're talking about. And to make his vote count, Kerr will need support from at least a half dozen trustees. All of whom have probably seen the reports saying the school is unsafe as an educational facility and therefore, should be closed permanently.

Whether the reports are correct or not. And, if the vote is in favour of keeping it closed (apparently it will cost millions to fix), all kids who live in the downtown area of Aurora will not have a school to go to. Which is probably what the staff is seeing through its crystal ball. There aren't enough kids in the downtown area to support Wells Street and George Street schools. So, the stake in the heart of Aurora goes a little deeper. And, by the way, who knows of a fire in the building at one time? Aurora's historians aren't aware of such an event, but more than one person has mentioned it. As you know, the original building, constructed in 1892, was Aurora's first high school.

The structure there now was built in 1923, served as a high school until Williams was opened in 1952, and apparently some of the first building is still there. But, no one has mentioned a fire. So, if you believe Aurora's downtown should have a school, you should join that march which starts at the Town Park (right across the street from the building in question) at 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 15.

GREMLINS AGAIN

I truly believed a reader had been into the wacky tabacky last week, when I received an e-mail asking who had won the contest a week earlier. It was in my column, I thought. Can't she read? So, I went looking and sure enough, the line that identified the winner was missing. For your information, the winner was Margaret Broad, who correctly identified former Aurora Chief Administrative Officer John Rodgers. She won a gift certificate from Oakland Hall Inn, a restaurant on Yonge Street, near St. John's Sideroad.



This is the Aurora High School Glee Club in 1948. We selected this picture because it was taken on the front steps of today's controversial Wells Street School, currently sitting vacant. At the time the picture was taken, the building served as Aurora's only high school. At the top right of the photo is the late Illtyd Harris, who taught the young singers. In rehearsal and in performance, Mr. Harris made the choirs relax with his comic faces and gestures. School principal, J.H. Knowles, is across from Mr. Harris, on the left. See anyone you recognize?

Letter to the Editor

Chronicle of a baseball diamond

To the editor,

A hesitant step forward has been taken. Aurora Council has made a decision of sorts. It could possibly evolve into a baseball diamond identified as a need in the Recreation Master Plan approved in 2003. Also recommended as a priority in the budget of 2007. It may even be available for use in the ball season of 2011 A.D.

Financing has always been available without representing a burden on property taxes. Contortion and distortion have jointly been the substance of debate. In 2007 budget, \$2 million was recommended for a land purchase of sufficient size to accommodate a baseball field. It was removed by council. She Who Must Be Obeyed said "we should keep the money in the bank and let it earn interest. When the town is built out, there will be no more development charges and no more money to build facilities." The funds are derived from growth which in turn compel the need. Keeping the money to make money is misappropriation. The town's financial interest would be adversely affected.

In the 2008 budget, the \$2 million item for land purchase was again removed. Desperate need was denied again. She said; " Why should we buy land when we have land available?"

We did not. The land referred to had no planning designation. The region had jurisdiction.

On budget night in April, 2008, AMBA delegated to council. Suddenly and deceptively, the urgent need was discovered and acknowledged by council; in particular, the mayor. With a flamboyant flourish, the director was directed to retain a consultant (\$40k) to design a facility along the lines of the discussion with AMBA

President David Giroux.

Plans and estimates were directed to be included in 2009 budget estimates.

The estimates were in the hands of the treasurer in September, 2008. The budget was not dealt with until the new CAO was in place on January 5th, the day the Treasurer submitted his resignation.

In March, 2009, financial estimates for design and various works to build a baseball facility within the newly designated lands as directed by council, finally made it to the council table, complete with all documentation pertaining to the matter leading up to this point. An interrogation by Councillor Evelina MacEachern followed.

Numerous details within the documentation were challenged. As she continued her lengthy critique of the documentation, without intervention from the chair, her voice rose and pages were flipped noisily, her apparent outrage grew.

Total cost of the work to be carried out as directed was almost three times a five-year-old estimate for construction of a baseball diamond.

Facts were misunderstood and misrepresented. Cost of the diamond was stated to have escalated to three times the original estimate.

The estimates were for a parcel of raw land to be graded and serviced to accommodate a baseball diamond and whatever other active sports fields might be included in what would ultimately be a community park.

A mound of soil stored from site preparation of the abutting recreation complex site had to be moved.

March 24th, 2009, the approved budget included \$1.6 million for the community park and the baseball diamond.

Still no approval of the project.

Chief Administrative Officer, Neil Garbe, was directed to review all relevant documenta-

tion and make a recommendation to council.

May 26th, Chief Administrative Officer Garbe reported with options and new estimates.

The diamond was approved. But without work on the remaining land intended use of a community park.

Heavy duty equipment will be brought to a site sufficient to accommodate a diamond and other sports fields. At a later date and duplicate cost and more mess, it will have to be brought back to grade the remainder of the property and remove the mound of soil currently being stored.

Without site work the remainder of the land will serve no useful purpose to the community whatsoever.

In the meantime, numbers have not been refined. Figures are not hard and fast. No contract award is likely before sum-

mer's end...if then.

Expectation for completion, 2011 A.D.

Eight years from the need being identified in the Master Recreation Plan. Four years from the need being given first priority.

The need was identified in the town's service levels to support the last calculation of development charge levies five years ago.

The town's financial interests have not been served by the failure to act.

May, 2009, the mayor repeated several times that Council was unaware of the urgency of the need until April, 2008, when input was received from AMBA.

As chronicled, the statement can clearly be seen not to be based on fact.

Evelyn Buck
Aurora

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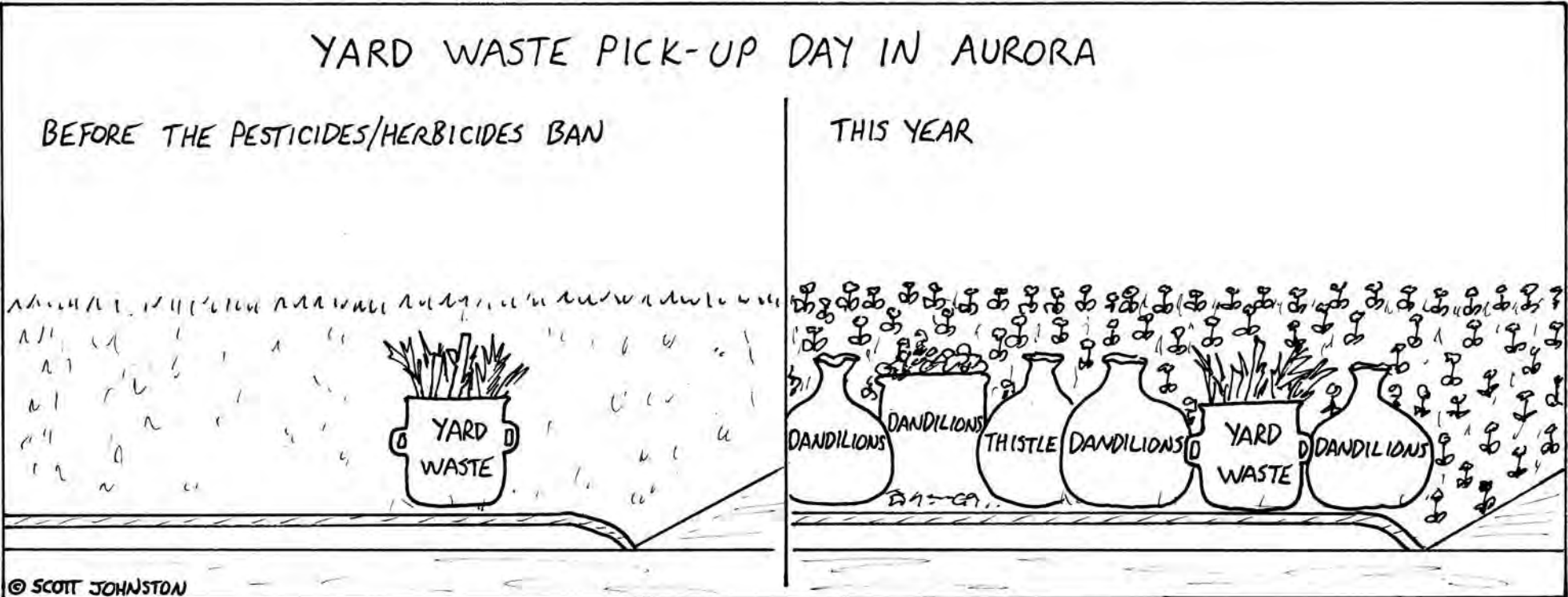
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Front Porch Perspective

By Stephen Somerville

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 and also whether or not we give the individual members the power to do their job.

On the first score, 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 is formerly a farmer.

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

That brings me to the second point in attempting to achieve good government -the use of free votes.

This is a concept advocated by local MPP and Provincial PC leadership candidate, Frank Klees. (I state my bias here - I am, on a volunteer basis, the Policy Chair for his leadership campaign.)

From one of his recent "Daily Message" e-mails: "Frank wants to get people more involved in the political process moving ahead, best illustrated by his commitment to legislative reform. As Premier, Frank would make government more democratic and more connected to the people who elect them. One prime example is mandated free votes on

all bills, even budgets.

"Frank is committed to empower MPPs so that they can truly represent their constituents at Queens Park and he's committed to empower you, the grassroots members of our Party."

Here are a few of my own additional thoughts on the subject.

I have always felt that being an elected member is really a hybrid job description, requiring the occupant of the office to be, at once, both a delegate and a trustee. As a delegate, the will of the majority is sacrosanct, and as such, he should vote according to majority will expressed by constituents. But there will be many instances that will require one to act as a trustee, bringing experience and specialized knowledge to bear upon an issue.

So on very important issues why don't we try to strengthen the individual bond between the constituent and his or her Member of Provincial Parliament by having our MPP act as our delegate?

As an MPP, they certainly have the resources: web sites, mail-outs, town hall meetings and other media at her disposal.

None of us want to see government driven by polls but there are those issues that transcend any particular administration and have a huge province-wide impact on our economic/cultural/social fabric. The harmonizing of the PST and GST comes to mind.

I believe that an ad should be placed in both our local papers consulting constituents on a really important vote.

This consultation could also be done via the MPP 'householder', which would be sent to everyone in the rid-

Free votes

ing. I believe those who respond do not even have to pay postage. Why not give everyone one week or so to respond?

The population of the Newmarket-Aurora provincial riding in 2006 was just over 121,000. About 46,000 voted in the last election.

Suppose that an important question yielded 2,500 individual responses. That would not be a bad sample size. I know the media regularly publish poll results having a sample size of only 250 to 500 individuals.

If the vote is 55 per cent to 45 per cent either way, then this should constitute a majority view and the MPP should vote accordingly. I know this doesn't sound like an overwhelming plurality, but majority governments are formed with as little as 38 to 40 per cent of the vote and Quebec was/is prepared to leave confederation with a 50+1 per cent vote so a 55 per cent plus vote should constitute a majority.

If the results show, say 52 to 48 per cent, which I would define as the grey area, then our MPP should vote based upon her conscience.

As important as the outcome is the level of transparency in this process. Any data or polling results used in the decision-making process should be made public.

We always hear talk about increasing voter participation and reducing the level of public cynicism towards our elected officials. What better way to meet these twin noble objectives than by asking the people?

Stephen can be contacted at:
stephengsomerville@yahoo.com



Inside Aurora

By Scott Johnston

The Aurora Street Festival is this Sunday, and like me, I expect you're really looking forward to it. But do keep in mind that despite your best intentions, you're going to miss a lot of it.

That because it's just impossible to see it all. And here's why ...

There are 500 booths and attractions. So even if you get there right when it opens at 11 a.m. and stay till closing at 5 p.m., that's only six hours.

Oh, that may seem like a lot of time, but 360 minutes works out to about 43 seconds per booth.

Actually, there're more than 500. Plus there are all the other existing shops and services along Yonge Street to check out.

So you're really down to about 35 seconds.

And be realistic; some of those exhibits you just can't do in half a minute.

Otherwise, you'd have to look at one classic car or piece of SOYRA artwork per second, and you'd never hear an entire song or piece of music all day.

Even if you somehow managed to keep to that 35 second pace, you'll inevitably spend extra time focusing on the stuff that interests you.

Whether that's discussing the upcoming season with the folks from Theatre Aurora, or rummaging through those half

price paperbacks, or hearing about what's new at the arboretum, or watching your kids on the climbing wall, face it; you're going to get bogged down.

It may even be something you weren't expecting to see that captures your interest, like a handcrafted item.

Then you'll get talking to the artisan about how they made it, and whether you should get one for your dad for father's day, or even have one specially made for you, and... well, it's at least 15 minutes before you move onto the next booth.

And you can't maintain a "gotta see it all" pace without refuelling. Whether it's sitting down with a leisurely pint, or waiting in line for a hotdog, this is all time that eats into - if you'll pardon the expression - your seconds-per-booth allocation.

If you've got kids in tow, then there will be inevitable additional stops for ice cream, and corn on the cob, and fudge, and well... you can pretty much forget about them eating anything for dinner that night.

And the great thing about the street fest is that everyone goes there.

So you're bound to run into neighbours, or friends, or colleagues, and trust me; you'll get chatting. No matter how much the dog is pulling you in one direction, and the kids in the other.

Street Fest time

So you can see already that your booth pace is not 35 seconds, but more like 20 or so.

And we're not done, yet, because there are more things that'll slow you down, such as reading.

Not only will you be looking at fliers and discount coupons and other literature, but some of these booths have elaborate graphics and writing so lengthy, they put Gutenberg to shame.

Crowds are another issue, especially at mid-day, when Yonge Street really fills in.

No matter how tantalizingly close a destination appears, it can be as challenging as a salmon fighting its way upstream to reach it.

A final consideration will be dealing with carrying around the extra weight.

I'm not talking about the weight of tired kids, or of all the food you indulge in, it's all the material you pick up.

A few fliers and freebies here, a purchase or two there... it'll slow you down.

So you pretty much have to face the fact right now; you'll miss a lot at the street festival.

But that won't matter, because you'll still have a great time.

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

Letters to the Editor

Sher supporter loves the parade

To the editor,

If my father were alive today, I'm sure he would be deeply saddened by what is being written in the paper today, about my friend, Sher St. Kitts.

Saddened because one of his favourite events as a long-time citizen of Aurora, was the Canada Day parade.

As young children we used to sit outside of Thompson's Fine Furniture, where he once worked, to watch the parade pass by.

Back in the 1970s, it was beautiful in its simplicity.

Through our eyes, there were some exciting floats, the beauty queen waving to the crowd and of course, a few marching bands.

After all these years, I can still recall looking at my dad at the very moment one of the bands began playing Oh Canada! His eyes would well up with tears, he would smile and

encourage us to "enjoy the parade!".

Dinner conversation that evening, would always begin with, "do you know how lucky you are to have been born in Canada, instead of Africa or some other distant country?"

At that age - some 40 years ago, we didn't really know, but in order to please him, we would nod our heads in agreement.

There would be nothing left on our plates that day for sure, as we bowed our heads in gratitude and savoured our abundance.

Having passed away in 2001, he would have been so disappointed to learn that in 2008, the parade in Canada's Birthday town, threatened to be cancelled.

He would have been heartbroken that an event that he loved to watch for more than 30 years, to honour and celebrate this fabulous country, could possibly come to pass.

And so, Sher, when the

parade was resurrected through your passion, vision and pure heart, I recalled once again, that twinkle in his eyes, as the parade passed by my eyes, one more time.

It was such a wonderful and memorable event and you and your committee of volunteers who worked so hard to make it happen, deserve much praise.

My dad would have been so proud.

And so in his honour, I feel it is now time for me to speak.

I want you to know the deep respect that I have for you as a friend and fellow human being.

You are a person of deep personal integrity who always puts the needs of others before your own. You constantly strive to do the right thing. You know the meaning of personal accountability and your core values define who you are.

You're a person of char-

acter who understands the real meaning of respect and who's compassionate, kind and loving heart, guides your every action.

I wish I had the time and energy that you do, to "bloom where you've been planted", as my mother often says. To give back to my community at least half as much as I receive.

You energize me, you motivate me and you inspire me to emulate you.

And so, Sher, I am sending you this long overdue letter of gratitude. For being my voice and the voice of so many others, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

You are a genuine leader and someone we should all aspire to emulate.

And perhaps your critics should take note of what Nelson Mandela once said; "a true leader is someone who does not put their needs, before the needs of their people."

Thank you for doing so much for us, our families and the community of Aurora, as a whole. Every community should be so lucky.

Looking ahead, as the comments about you and your actions unfold, hold your head high. Your efforts should remind us all that it is not how much money you earn, the house that you

live in or the position you hold, that will define your legacy - your actions define your legacy. And what a beautiful legacy you, together with George, will leave behind.

On behalf of my family and of course, my dad, we salute you.

Kimberley Whiten
Aurora

Sher a “ray of sunshine”, reader says

To the editor,

Over the last couple of weeks local papers have had comments about the Aurora Dream Team and its founder, Sher St. Kitts.

As a volunteer member of the Dream Team, I must ask why this particular group of volunteers within our community has been targeted for suspicion?

November 22nd, 2008, the Aurora Dream Team created a wonderful event to help raise money to

prepare a dinner for those in need on Christmas Day; and to support local charities (Salvation Army, Aurora Food Pantry and The Welcoming Arms).

The occasion gave an opportunity for the goodness of our local business and families to come forward and contribute to this very worthwhile cause.

It was nothing less than heartwarming.

Those who actually attended the Christmas Dream were so grateful to

have somewhere special to be on Christmas Day.

They had camaraderie, music, food and goodies to take home.

The look of gratitude on their faces was exceptionally fulfilling.

It was a great idea, a great event and it produced great results for those in need in Aurora and surrounds.

My entire family was involved with helping on Christmas Day - We were all reminded of the real meaning of Christmas!

I, personally, am honoured and proud to be a volunteer member of the Aurora Dream Team - Sher St. Kitts is a ray of sunshine in our Town.

I have never seen or felt any kind of “ulterior motive” in the actions and events of the Aurora Dream Team. There is no ulterior motive.

In fact, I know Sher has invested personally (in both time and money) in the fundraisers in order for them to be successful.

Sher is the lady who brought us back our Canada Day Parade - "Aurora is Canada's Birthday Town".

She has identified and brought back our community heart and now someone in our town wishes to break hers.

I pray we all stand up for what is right and don't lose future contributions of the Aurora Dream Team Volunteers!

I’m offended when couple’s integrity is attacked: reader

To the editor,

Wow, I'm really concerned about what appears to be controversy over Sher St. Kitts' endeavours to promote Aurora's Canada Day Parade and The Dream Team's countless charitable activities in our town.

Sher and her husband George are a dynamic, fun, energetic couple whose partnership share great vision and passion for the arts.

Our Arts, Culture and Heritage has been enhanced by their tireless efforts.

Despite that they reside a mere slight distance from our

Aurora borders, who cares?

They stepped up to create a renewed patriotic Aurora Canada Day Parade last year which I was proud to be a part as a float designer artist.

There were countless volunteers as well as a well attended parade route.

It was a community event, we were Red Hot Canadians and we all had a fantastic time.

It was through the preplanning months prior to the Aurora Canada Day Parade that Greg and I become friends with Sher and George.

They are still our friends.

Any attack upon the integrity of this couple I find offensive.

I love Aurora that I'm proud to call home but it still has a long way to embrace the arts and appreciate the musicians, artists, theatrical actors and the diverse culture that make Aurora Our Town.


Deborah Campo
Aurora

Sandy Humfries
Aurora


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Letters to the Editor

March is planned to save old school

To the editor,

Monday, June 15th, is a very important day for the Wells Street Public School Community and for all Aurorans who value this beautiful, vibrant, historical school! As a former

Accommodation Review Committee member, I could go on about why our months of work and research led us to the unanimous conclusion that Wells Street Public School be reopened. The purpose of this letter, however, is far more

straightforward.

I am asking all of Aurora to come out and join the members of the Community Action for Wells Street (CAWS) and the Olde Aurora Ratepayers Association (OARA) who have been working tirelessly to

organize a parade in support of saving the beautiful and historic Wells Street Public School.

The last public meeting is being held Monday, June 15th at 7 p.m. at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School.

This meeting is to help the trustees understand the uniqueness of our school and our community, before they make their final decision on the fate of Wells Street. It is not too late to make our voices heard.

It is our plan to show

the trustees how focused and united Aurora can be when working towards a common goal.

Not just the central core, but all of Aurora - North to South, East to West.

Aurora is a unique and special town that is constantly working on balancing the old and the new.

It is my hope that we can all come together to show how much we care about keeping all of Aurora a diverse, vibrant and thriving community.

Please join us in the Town Park at 6 p.m. sharp to wish our school well and to walk to Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School to attend the final trustee public meeting.

If anyone has any questions regarding the Wells Street issue, please visit us at the CAWS booth at the Farmer's Market every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Kim Rouse-Parypa
Aurora

Group creating Wells scrapbook

To the editor,

The following is an open letter to former students and parents of Wells Street Public School, current and former staff, and residents of Aurora:

CAWS - Community Action for Wells Street - is in the process of creating

a book of memories from special events that have taken place at Wells Street Public School.

In the past we have had wonderful events including Heritage Night, Fall Fair, the Hallowe'en Parade, the Holiday Concert at Aurora United Church, and the Family Dances held at the town park and gym to name but a few.

The fate of Wells Street Public School is being held in the hands of 12 York Region District School Board trustees.

Some of these trustees are unfamiliar with just how important Wells

Street Public School is to this community.

The scrapbook will be given to the trustees to further demonstrate to them that Wells Street PS is more than just a school to us.

It is the hub of our community - a place where families gathered, became friends, and looked out for each other's children.

If you have digital versions of photographs you would allow us to include in our book of memories, kindly send them to Beverly Norton at beverlynorton@sympatico.ca or Lucy Willer at lucy.willer@sympatico.ca.

School resumes annual musical

To the editor,

Wells Street Public School has always presented a musical every two years.

However, because of the challenge of sharing a location and resources with another school it didn't happen last year.

With the future of the school so uncertain, it was felt important to continue with tradition and so this year we were pleased to present "The Emperor's New Clothes".

The cast of 28 were students from Grades 3 to 6 with a cameo appearance from Principal Barb Nemo playing the part of the Minister of Education.

The cast put on an outstanding performance for an enthusiastic Wells

community at its temporary Aurora Grove location.

Along with the help of Wells Street staff Donna Ludlow, Lisa Savage and Deb Mennie, it was directed by volunteer Jackie Bennett, a past parent from the school.

Choreographers were volunteers Sarah and Laura Stubbs, Andrea Thomas (who are past graduates from Wells) and Carlee Ramsay (a graduate from Aurora Grove) and who all attend Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School now.

It is with sincere hope that this will not have been the last Wells Street production.

Jackie Bennett
Aurora

Fundraiser made a difference: reader

To the editor,

The Art of Change made a difference!

On behalf of the Women's Centre of York Region, I would like to thank everyone who helped make our Art of Change fundraiser such a success.

Through the involvement of local businesses, the Wellington Gallery, singer Mollie Fisher, dedicated volunteers and great support from the community, we were able to raise awareness of WCYR programs and funds to deliver these programs to women in York Region who have experienced abuse.

Demand for our services has increased so this event will help us to reduce wait lists for services, reach out to more communities, and expand our programs.

In 2008, WCYR provided more than 6,400 supports to women - through programs, referrals, calls, or counselling sessions.

Last December, we helped 401 children have a happier holiday season.

Each month, we support 150 women who need help in accessing food for their families.

Through our Enterprising Women program, we have helped more than 200 women start businesses and each year more than 140 women participate in our Making Changes lifeskills program.

We are planning to launch our Enterprising Careers program this fall, which will help women transition back to work.

Our goal is to be a hub of support for women in the region.

The Art of Change was an evening of art that will change the lives of many women in need.

Thank you to everyone involved for making a difference.

Kirsten Eastwood
Executive Director
Women's Centre
of York Region

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Letters to the Editor

“Disturbing” events at Aurora Council

To the editor,

It was very disturbing to watch as Aurora Council allowed a resident of Snowball to attack Councillor Evelyn Buck in Open Forum during the May 12 meeting without the mayor insisting that basic rules of decorum be followed -- particularly after the Town Solicitor indicated the issue did not fall within the authority of Council. It was even more disturbing to watch Council - with a recorded vote no less - break their own rules

and illegally waive their procedural by-law to allow this to become part of public record. (I say illegally because when the same two-thirds majority was needed to order a by-election one year ago, 5 - 3 was ruled not a two-thirds majority.) Furthermore, the mayor's responses to Councillor Buck for challenging her ruling would be described as "bullying" in any school yard. So far, nothing unexpected from this council. However, a new and

very concerning low was reached when the Council Minutes did not accurately document the recorded vote - even though the local papers had already reported on the discrepancy in the two votes. It is also clearly evident if you review this meeting on the Rogers website where all council meetings are now available. The 5 - 3 recorded vote is nowhere to be seen in the Minutes. These Minutes were initially posted and then removed from the website

within hours of this inaccuracy being reported Saturday (May 23) afternoon on the blog <http://auroracitizen.blogspot.com/>. They are still available as a link on the May 23 blog post or by going via the Town website to the meeting agenda for May 26 and clicking through. The conduct of this council has been widely recognized as an embarrassment, but thus far it has not included re-creating history with the Minutes -- which we know are reviewed by the mayor

before they are issued. Ethics is often defined as how we behave when no one is watching. If this is how they behave when we are watching, we can only wonder what goes on when we aren't. Maybe someone from Town Staff will let us know. Allow me to make a pre-

diction. All of this will be the fault of the Town Staff - not council. We are witnessing council leadership at its finest. If you are equally troubled, please let your local councillor know.

Bill Hogg
Aurora

How come no one stopped attack?

To the editor,

I am disappointed that this mayor and council would sit back and allow a person to speak to another councillor in the manner that Sher St. Kitts did last week. How dare anyone, especially someone from outside of Aurora, show such disrespect towards an elected official and be allowed to do so while the mayor and most councillors sat on their hands with what seemed to be enjoyment? While councillors are not above criticism, it should

not happen in front of a mayor who should have stepped in and stopped the long winded disgrace shown by Ms St Kitts. I don't care what Ms St Kitts has done in this town. The parade is good but does not give her the right to lambaste a councillor. I thought that at least one councillor would have called for a point of order and demanded the mayor to stop the attack. I do not care whether the mayor likes Councillor Evelyn Buck or not. As head of the council it is her job not to allow this embarrassment to happen. If it had been one of the mayor's chosen few councillors who was being attacked I am sure that it

would have been stopped immediately. When Tim Jones was mayor and I was on council, regardless of our disagreements, Tim would not have let this type of attack happen to me or anyone else. Even the 5-3 vote should have been challenged as it does not represent a two-thirds majority as it did not when that was the same vote as to not allow a by-election last year when the mayor wanted to have John Gallo on council. The mayor's math baffles me and she will use outside lawyers to prove herself right at the residents' cost. Now there is the missing

part of the minutes with regards to the Buck incident. When is this going to stop? As for all of you who believe that this is sour grapes on my part since I lost the election, please watch the Rogers tape of the Buck incident and tell me that you agree with the outcome. If you still think that, then you deserve everything that this mayor is doing.

Nigel Kean
Aurora

This person won vendor's customer basket

To the editor,

On Saturday I was very fortunate to win the "Customer Appreciation Basket" in a draw at the Aurora Farmer' Market. The basket was filled with contributions from each of the vendors at the Market. I would like to express my thanks to all the vendors for their products and also for maintaining a great Saturday market place in Aurora.

David Savage
Aurora

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Letters to the Editor

Development charges and what they cover

To the editor,

In response to the Vice President of the AMBA's letter in The Auroran dated May 26th commenting on mine dated May 19th. I do realize that town projects can and often do come from development charges, but surely that does not necessarily mean a baseball diamond.

Her comment of not costing the taxpayer anything, well this might be slightly naive.

On my last walk through the arboretum, I didn't see a money tree!

Basically the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing - Development Charges Act, 1997 (proclaimed March 1, 1998), states: The council of a municipality may by by-law

impose development charges against land to pay for increased capital costs required because of increased needs for services arising from development of the area to which the by-law applies. 1997, c. 27, s. 2 (1).

The services the Development Charge can pay for are similar to those of any other jurisdictions: Child care facilities, Civic improvements, Development-related studies, Emergency medical services, Fire, Health, Library, Parks and recreation, Pedestrian infrastructure, Police, Roads and related, Sanitary sewer, Storm water, management, Subsidized housing, Transit additions, Water, etc.

A development charge by-law may not impose development charges to pay

for increased capital costs required because of increased needs for any of the following:

1. The provision of cultural or entertainment facilities, including museums, theatres and art galleries but not including public libraries.
2. The provision of tourism facilities, including convention centres.
3. The acquisition of land for parks.
4. The provision of a hospital as defined in the Public Hospitals Act.
5. The provision of waste management services.
6. The provision of headquarters for the general administration of municipalities and local boards.
7. Other services prescribed in the regulations. 1997, c. 27, s. 2 (4).

Now forgive me for think-

ing that if we spend on one project to the detriment of another, then someone will have to pay!

Guess what, that eventually means the taxpayer.

Of course, the developer paid the development charges from payments made through the purchase price of a dwelling (between \$16 and \$36k) or office/retail (between \$10 and \$26 per sq ft).

However, all this being said, my original letter was my point of view, and was certainly not indignant or vitriolic.

The AMBA have their point of view and that's fine, and the Aurora Council has made its decision, hopefully based on common sense!

Robert Grattage
Aurora

Reader supports Nokiidaa trail link

To the editor:

This is a copy of an e-mail I sent May 7 to Mayor Phyllis Morris, Al Downey of Leisure Services, and Jim Tree of Parks:

I have already attended the information meeting and spoken in support of the proposed link, but I would like to add this quotation:

"We cannot win this battle to save species and environments without forging an emotional bond

between ourselves and nature as well - for we will not fight to save what we do not love": S.J. Gould

Routing the trail down the four lanes of traffic on Yonge Street will not help people forge a bond with nature.

Furthermore, I think you will find, given the lack of nearby public parking, that users of the trail will be committed walkers and hikers, i.e. the last people who would leave garbage and harrass wildlife.

Please allow the designated committees to fulfill

their mandate of creating a network of trails for the health and enjoyment of ALL the citizens of Aurora.

This IS our publicly shared space!

Those entrusted to provide feedback on the environmental impact have done so, and I would urge you to accept their expertise.

I would like to see Aurora setting a good example, rather than being excessively reactive.

You cannot please everyone. Active living and appreciation of nature are the ways of the future.

Heather Cooper
Aurora

Still time to participate in Downtown Aurora

To the editor,

Thanks to Klaus (Wehrenberg) for reminding us that it is possible to aspire to something higher than "just average."

We have observed the decline of the downtown – the result of not having and following a plan.

Therefore we should show our thanks to the Town for investing in the Downtown Study by contributing to it.

On the evening of May 13, a group of residents – 50 or 60 – went to the Library to express what they liked and what they felt needed improvement in Aurora.

Remember there are now 50,000 of us here. One in a thousand is a small representation.

There is still time to participate.

The background information is on the town web site. The comments from the 13th will follow.

The next meetings are scheduled for June 16-18.

In 1850 there were about 100 people at this crossing on Lord Simcoe's road.

By 2031 we expect to be more than 70,000.

Join Klaus, invest the wisdom of the whole community, make suggestions and explore the options that will help the consultants make a Downtown Plan to improve the quality of life – financial, social and environmental – for generations to come.

Gordon Barnes
Aurora

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THE AURORAN SPORTS

Page 10

Week of June 2, 2009

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Callum Ross, swimming for the Aurora Ducks, led the way with five gold and a silver medal at a recent swim meet in Hamilton.

Aurora Ducks shine at Invitational swim meet at Hamilton's McMaster

The Aurora Ducks swimmers once again performed brilliantly at the University of McMaster Pool, participating in the Jack McCormick Invitational swim meet recently.

Swimming in their third long course meet of the season, Duck swimmers picked up 21 medals including 14 gold, three silver and four bronze.

The Ducks were led by Callum Ross in the Senior Boys division, who won five gold medals and added a silver medal to his collection, and Sam Kaczor in the 10 and under girls division who also won five gold medals.

Swimmers are currently preparing for their next meet in two weeks in Buffalo, New York.

In a month, Callum Ross will compete in Scotland at the Scottish National Championships.

Here are the results of the Hamilton meet:

Callum Ross, senior boys - 50 Free, 100 Free, 200 Free, 400 Free, 400 IM, all firsts; 50 Fly, 2nd.

Jake Sacksteder, boys 12 - 50 Fly, 1st.

Sam Kaczor, girls 10 - 100 Free, 400 Free, 800

Free, 50 Fly, 100 Fly, all firsts.

Mackenzie Moyer, girls 14 - 200 Fly, 1st; 50 Fly, 2nd.

Jennifer Ackerman, girls 13 - 50 back, 1st.

Victoria Wicks, girls 12 - 100 Breast, 1st.

Cassey Beach, girls 13 - 50 Free, 2nd.

Victoria Bridges, girls 10 - 50 Fly, 3rd; 50 Breast, 3rd.

Alison Romano, girls 14 - 50 Breast, 3rd.

Marina Sotirakos, girls 12 - 50 Back, 3rd.



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Jays can't overcome lead

The Minor Pee wee Aurora Jays hoped to repeat their previous victory with a dramatic comeback but fell short with a 8-4 loss to Royal York last week.

Trailing 8-0, Ryan Donavan, Mitchell Albert, Mathew Leroy, Liam Gray, Roni Davelman, Michael Dilosa, Alessandro Bitondo and Anton Kalinin helped contribute to the Jays' score.

Notable highlights were, once again, the strong pitching of Alexander

MacKinnon and Kyle Hauck as well as stellar fielding by Aaron Hauck, Mathew Niece and Jack Pecora including a double play. The Jays hope to bring their record up to 2-2 when they meet Wexford later this week.

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Although they have been playing for some time this season, members of the Aurora Community Tennis Club selected Saturday to officially kick off the season. Admiring the group's sign is ACTC vice-president John Stephenson. The club uses three courts under a partnership agreement with the Town of Aurora at McMahon Park.

Auroran photo by David Falconer



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Aurora Minor Ball Association

JUNIOR T-BALL

The Team Gold Tigers took on Team Orange and Team Blue recently at Summit Park in Aurora.

It was a game full of excitement, laughter, and fun.

JUNIOR ROOKIE

Summers and Smith 17 - Mastermind 10

BANTAM

Gabby's 6 - Restorer Group 5

Gabby's Player of the

Game was Jonathan Colley for knocking in the game winning RBI in the bottom half of the last inning.

PEEWEE SELECT

Aurora Jays 11 -

Bolton 6

MINOR MIDGETS REP

On May 25th, the Jays defeated the Newmarket Hawks 5 - 4.

Dan Nicoletta and Troy

Gouveia each knocked in two runs to lead the Jay attack.

Ryan Berube picked up the win throwing two innings of scoreless ball and Ryan Anderson pitched a scoreless ninth inning for the save.



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Ball diamond approved

After years of discussion, Aurora baseball players will finally have their second field of dreams.

That was the decision of Council last week, when it approved a new senior baseball diamond for the Stewart Burnett Park north of the new Rec Centre.

Although approval of the diamond seemed inevitable, the road to this final decision was not an easy one.

Originally pegged at \$600,000 in 2008, the cost of this project ballooned to almost \$1.7 million by early 2009.

In April this year, council had grappled with a lengthy report from staff on the issue, eventually lobbying it back for a more concise summary.

Before the discussion began last week, town Chief Administrative Officer Neil Garbe explained that a different consultant had since peer reviewed the cost estimates, and had suggested they could be reduced.

The maximum cost had dropped from \$1.7 million to \$1.3 million.

While this reduction pleasantly surprised the council members, there were still a number of questions as to the value of some of the added features requested by the Aurora Minor Baseball Association (AMBA), as well as the staff

recommendation to grade the adjacent unused portion of land for future use.

Director of Leisure Services Al Downey noted that grading the adjacent land for proper drainage at the same time the diamond was constructed would be less expensive than doing it later, because all of the equipment would already be on site.

He said that a graded and seeded site could be used in future for a variety of sports.

Asked for a specific dollar saving by Councillor Al Wilson, Mr. Downey said that the cost to do it now was pegged at \$169,000, but how much less it would be to do this work later was not known.

Councillor Evelina MacEachern was similarly sceptical of doing this work now, saying that a decision on how the adjacent land would be used had not been made.

While grading may be applicable for a soccer field, if, for example, a new fitness centre was built there, the funds spent to grade the site would have been wasted.

While the staff report on the table listed four potential options, Councillor Bob McRoberts threw out a new one, suggesting the baseball diamond and grading be completed, but that the visi-

tors' batting cage and dugout requested by AMBA be eliminated, for a savings of approximately \$118,000.

That kicked off a discussion of the merits of step down dugouts and batting cages.

Mr. Downey said there were limited practice facilities in town, and that the batting cages would greatly expand the amount of available practice time.

The dugouts were a safety feature, which made it less likely for players to be hit by a foul ball, he said.

It would benefit Aurora to keep both features, as the diamond was being designed as a major facility that would set it apart from others in neighbouring municipalities.

Mr. Downey said that if the batting cages were not included, they could be added later, but if the dugouts were not installed now, the cost to include them in future would be prohibitive, and he would not recommend it.

Councillor Evelyn Buck said the new diamond would be a valuable long term asset to the town, and she did not agree with chiselling away at its proposed features.

Following that were some half-hearted discussions as to whether the town really needed another

diamond, but those were short-lived, as all councillors were obviously in favour of it in some form or another, and staff indicated that the number of users would increase with the availability of the additional diamond.

The focus of the meeting turned back to how this project was going to be funded.

Staff confirmed that 90 per cent of the cost would come from development charges, and 10 per cent would be from the cash in lieu of parkland fund.

Although this latter fund currently has \$10 million in it, Mayor Phyllis Morris reminded council that the fund was intended to purchase parkland for the town.

Staffers confirmed that based on the projected shortage of parkland in Aurora, the eventual cost to purchase this amount of land would be approximately \$30 million.

At some point, the mayor pointed out, the additional \$20 million would need to be found.

When it came time to vote, the McRoberts motion was narrowly defeated.

Instead, council elected to remove the adjacent lands from the project, and voted to build just the baseball diamond, without dugouts, but with a batting cage for the home team, at a total cost of just under \$900,000.

The final decision brought a round of applause from the few audience members who had stayed for the decision.

The next step is for detailed design and tender drawings to be produced, which should come back to council for review in four to six weeks.

As for future uses for the adjacent land, this is being referred to the Leisure Services Advisory Committee for their consideration and input.

Moraine Foundation presented with award

The Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation was acknowledged for its contributions of individuals to the protection of natural habitats through program development, education and leadership last week-end.

Awards were made by Ontario Nature, the federation of Ontario naturalists.

Naturalists from across the province gathered at the Bruce County Museum in Southampton for Ontario Nature's 78th Annual General Meeting and Conference.

A highlight of the week-end was the presentation of the Ontario Nature Conservation Awards.

Eight Conservation awards were given out, including the J.R. Dymond Public Service Award to the foundation.

The award was presented to the group that showed distinguished public service resulting in exceptional environmental achievement.

The Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation has multiplied its original provincial financing with private and public sector funds, and is attracting landowner donations in its efforts to preserve and protect the Oak Ridges

Moraine.

The foundation has become a model for developing community and stakeholder partnerships to protect the environmental values of the Moraine.

Part of the Oak Ridges Moraine falls within the boundaries of Aurora.

Presentations were also made of the Steve

Hounsell Greenway award; the W. E. Saunders Natural History award; the Ontario Nature Corporate award; the Carl Nunn Media and Conservation award; the Richards Education award; the W.W. Gunn Conservation award; and the Margaret and Carl Nunn Memorial Camp Scholarship.



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Jonathan Harker (James Moreau) unexpectedly runs into three of Dracula's brides (from left; Taylor Askeew, Diallya Kawar and Katelyn Stewart) in Theatre Aurora's Young Company production of "Dracula - the Final Countdown?" now playing.

Photo by Taisa Ballard

Theatre Aurora Dracula presentation is unlike anything you've ever seen

By SCOTT JOHNSTON

If you're looking for an entertaining evening in town this weekend, grab the kids (and perhaps some garlic) and head to Theatre Aurora's production of "Dracula - the Final Countdown?"

Produced by the Theatre's Young Company, this is the North American premier of this comedy written by British playwright Geoff Bamber.

Mr. Bamber, who has taken an active interest in this production, specializes in adding twists to familiar stories.

You may have seen a movie or theatrical version of Dracula before, but it won't be quite like this.

While many of the familiar characters appear, they're not quite what you expect.

For example, vampire hunter Professor Dorothy Van Helsing (played by veteran Reem Taylor), is more concerned with sales of her book "Vampires - Get to Know Them Before They Get to Know You" than she is about actually helping the others take down Count Dracula.

Although the production is presented by the Young Company, this isn't a typical high school play. Professionals were brought in to assist with the make-up, lighting and design.

The young actors and actresses, all ranging in age between 13 and 17 years old, have been studying and training at the Theatre for several months.

Many of them already

have a great deal of experience, having appeared in a number of plays, both at Theatre Aurora and beyond.

James Moreau as hero Jonathan Harker, has a great stage presence, and it is surprising to find that he is appearing in his first play.

He and his frequent on-stage companion, Jeremy Reynolds, who plays Andrew Remington, perform well together.

Another standout, assisted by a great role with wonderful lines, is Helen Doucher as Ilogretta.

She seemed to get a laugh every time she appeared on stage.

And Jack Troughton, as the Count, convincingly portrayed himself as one who knew he was in control of every situation.

While obviously not as polished as a more senior production, all of the young performers played their parts well, with no obvious miscues on opening night.

Director Sean Houghton and his team should be delighted with the results of their efforts, as should you, if you'd like to see and support the next generation of local theatrical talent.

Evening performances of "Dracula - The Final Countdown?" continue at Theatre Aurora, 150

Henderson Drive, on June 5 and 6, with a matinee performance on June 7.

Tickets for all shows are available at the box office, 905-727-3669.


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Senior Scape

Seniors' choir a big success

By BRIAN WARBURTON

The Evergreen Seniors' Choir presented "I Want to be Happy" at the centre to a full house last week.

Every seat was occupied and the Evergreen Choir and guest artists responded with a choral and musical presentation that was received by a delighted audience.

The Evergreen Choir choristers, well rehearsed and led by Enid Maize, sang their hearts out, while appearing to enjoy every minute of their performance.

Tom Rainsford, who has impressive musical qualifications and who is also possessed of a very high standard of musical ability, rendered excellently a number of fine songs.

He was accompanied on the piano by Ruth Volk, and Tom demonstrated clearly his technical mastery. Ruth showed later that she also is a trained and accomplished singer and a proud mother, judging from her sons who each performed later.

Ruth's sons, Mark, playing the double bass, Mathew, playing classical guitar, and Michael on the piano, showed technical ability, presence of mind, concentration, focus and aptitude for music.

Their music was classical, quiet and presented beautifully as it was written by Bach, Rachmaninov and others.

The strong applause following their musical presentations appeared to be universal, from every member of the audience and left no doubt that the audience was deeply appreciative of the artistry of these young men.

Let me add that the Evergreen Choir, Tom Rainsford, Ruth Volk, accompanist Doreen Riley and also Enid Maize who demands and gets the best out of people, deserved and received their share of generous applause from the audience who remained

rooted to their seats until the closing set of music.

The ASA is on the verge of summer holidays, which means in essence that although members are retired, many of them long accustomed to a summer holiday will continue with the summer ritual and a vacation will provide a wonderful change of pace and scenery.

The Silver Stars are a great ASA company of performers gifted with a variety of performing entertainment talents including the valuable and natural ability to make people laugh.

They are in the late stages of rehearsals for the production of "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", which is directed by Judy Buchanan and which is at the stage when everybody, except the coolest of heads, is wondering if everything will come together, finally.

Well, most productions of entertainment encounter a similar stage until finally the thrill of opening night casts aside all doubt, and it will come together and this show represents another great opportunity for Aurora seniors to present their stuff and make the rest of us laugh.

Almost always adjustments must be made to a production, last minute to be sure but the show goes on, and so do our mighty members, seniors no less but undaunted and still seeking the thrill of offering their entertainment abilities to an audience.

There will be two performances: Friday, June 12th, at 7 p.m., and Sunday, June 14th, at 2 p.m.

A special performance for elementary school children will be held Monday, June 15th, at 11 a.m.



MECHANICS HALL

Popular Mechanics Hall back on Doors Open list this year

By MICHAEL SEAMAN

The second article in the Doors Open series features the Lions Club Hall, at 33 Mosley Street. The Lions Club Hall is two sites in one featuring one of Aurora's most historic public buildings and the site is also the venue for the Scarborough Model Railroaders, one of the most popular attractions of the 2008 Doors Open Aurora festival.

This year's Doors Open Aurora festival takes place Saturday, August 15, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Lions Club Hall was originally the home of the Aurora Mechanics Institute and Library Association which had originated in 1855 as the Aurora Association for the Diffusion of Helpful Knowledge.

In 1870 they constructed the building shown above and enlarged it in 1888.

The Mechanics Institute was an organization started in England to advance the education of "mechanics" - as all craftsmen, tradesmen, and factory workers were called at that time.

Because of its educational goals, the Mechanic's institute opened Aurora's first public library.

Over the years the hall was used for a wide variety of events, plays, concerts and lectures.

It reached a high point during the First World War, when it served as the location of a number of productions intended to increase morale on the

home front and raise funds for troops.

One of these was the "Temple of Fame", a pageant of famous women, which was presented in 1918 to raise money for the overseas work of the Canadian Red Cross.

Featuring local talent, it found an enthusiastic audience at Aurora's Mechanics Hall.

Mechanics Institute activities eventually lessened and in 1920 the town took over the hall. During the 1930s, the cellar was dug out and central heating installed.

After the Second World War, Aurora Textiles rented the building for manufacturing knitted goods.

In 1951, the Lions Club purchased it and applied stucco over its original brick exterior.

Lions Clubs International was founded in the United States in 1917 by Melvin Jones.

Jones asked, with regard to his colleagues, "What if these men who are successful because of their drive, intelligence and ambition, were to put their talents to work improving their communities?" Jones' personal code, "You can't get very far until you start doing something for somebody else," reminds many Lions of the importance of community service.

In 1956, the Aurora Gospel Church took over until 1981 when the Lions Club resumed occupancy which they maintain to this day.

Visitors to the Lions Club Hall will see the beautifully

restored historic wood interior with coloured glass windows.

In addition to the historic architecture, visitors to the historic hall on Doors Open day will see the Scarborough Model Railroaders model train display set-up inside.

The Scarborough Model Railroaders are Toronto's only dual-scale model railway club, formed in 1962 in the then Township of Scarborough.

The club's "HO" scale layout depicts 1950s steam-to-

diesel transition-era southwestern Ontario, while its "N" scale layout is loosely based on modern-day Appalachia.

Mark Saturday, August 15th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on your calendar and enjoy Doors Open Aurora 2009.

Information about the sites can be found on the Town of Aurora Website at: www.eaurora.a/doorsopenaurora, the Doors Open Ontario website at: www.doorsopenontario.on.ca or by calling (905) 727-3123.

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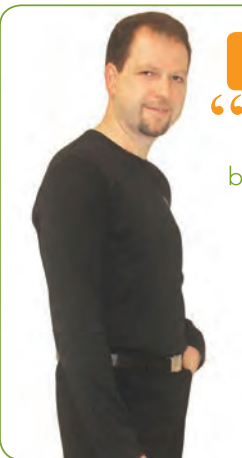


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