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See Page 9

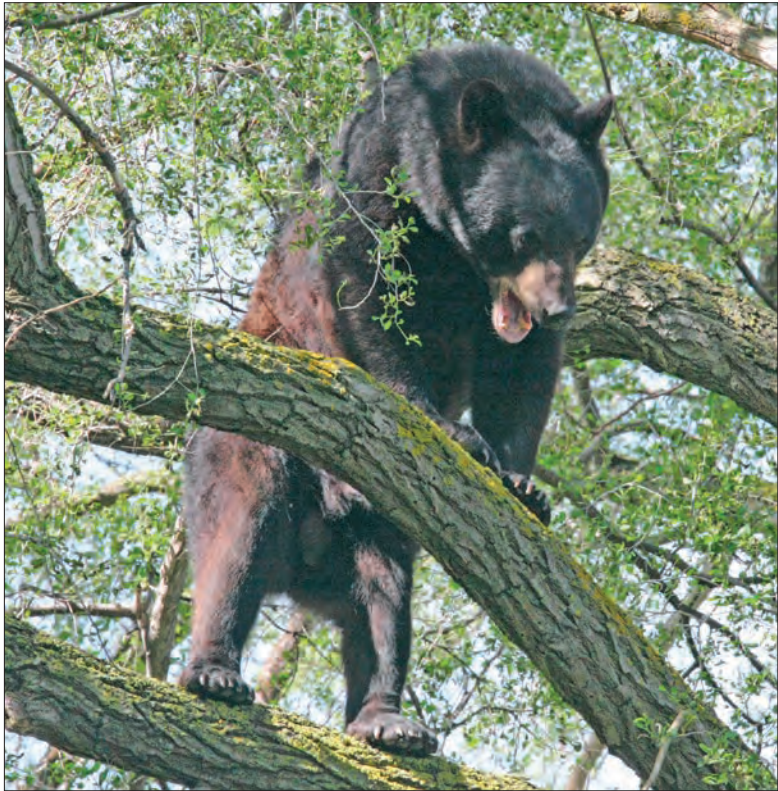
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THE AURORAN

Aurora's Independent Community Newspaper

Vol. 9 No. 32 905-727-3300 auroran.com FREE Week of June 9, 2009



This 200-pound black bear created quite a stir in Aurora last Wednesday morning when it wandered into town and found its way to this tree in the Wellington-Wells area. Hundreds of people, including several photographers, both professional and amateur, were at the scene to witness the event. Subsequently, officials tranquilized the huge creature and removed it from town.

Photo by Barry Bridgeford

Briefly



40,000 attend Street Festival. See pictures page 13

Garage sale

By attending this garage sale, you'll be helping to send the Aurora Jays ball team to Italy this year.
Action starts this Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the parking lot area of the Aurora Legion, Industrial Parkway North.
On sale will be clothing, household items and sporting goods.

Next workshop

Revitalization of the Yonge-Wellington Corridors has been named the Aurora Promenade and workshops continue this week.
The Town has initiated a study that will shape the character of Aurora.
The Aurora Promenade will set a new forward-looking vision for the Yonge and Wellington corridors and surrounding areas.
Phase 2 of the plan centres around another series of workshops, scheduled June 15 to 17 at Lynett Hall.

Board using “fear mongering” to end Wells School, he says

By MARLA LEWIS
Special to The Auroran

Hundreds of parents, students, town officials, business owners and residents are expected to march on a public meeting Monday at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary school.

At issue is Aurora's Wells Street Public School, currently on the chopping block by the York Region District School Board.

The historic school sits on death watch after being suddenly closed by York District two years ago, diagnosed earthquake unsafe and being declared a "ptr" school (prohibitive to replace).

Jones out, Black gets his support

The rumour is almost true.

Two weeks ago, when The Auroran received an anonymous phone call advising that the Liberal Party of Canada had decided who would run in the next federal election to represent the Liberals in the Newmarket-Aurora riding and a nomination meeting would not be held, the suggestion was pooh-poohed by several Liberals.

Later in the week, one of the candidates, Tim Jones, resigned from his efforts to seek the nomination and announced he would support King Mayor Margaret Black.

That left two people in the running; Mayor Black, and Newmarket Councillor Chris Emanuel.

Emanuel told The Auroran Sunday that he is still in the race.

He was surprised when he learned Jones had thrown his support to Mayor Black, since Emanuel had worked on Jones' campaign in the last federal election.

While he didn't have a booth in

ing, according a retired Aurora seismologist.

At issue is a slew of reports commissioned by the school board claiming it could cost up to \$10 million to fix

Please see page 15

David Tomlinson was named Aurora's latest Citizen of the Year Wednesday night.

The creator of the acre-big Merlin's Hollow, David was the hands-down favourite of a committee that met a couple of weeks ago to consider who Aurora's newest Citizen of the Year would be.

He replaces last year's Citizen, Sue Walmer.

The Citizen of the Year award was the highlight of an evening put on by the Town of Aurora to recognize its citizens.

Given how many exceptional people live in Aurora and make a difference in the community, the Town hosts an annual Civic Appreciation Awards Ceremony.

There are 10 categories of awards and community members are nominated for each category by their peers.

David's most outstanding accomplishment is the creation of a protected site within the Aurora community wildlife park known as the East Aurora Provincially Significant Wetland.

In 1983, he began to monitor the Aurora community wildlife park.

His commitment to ecological preservation became obvious when development pressures threatened the park area.

He used his expertise to formulate a detailed report addressing the park's rare plants, flyway migration routes, and habitat for sensitive species - always envisioning it as an interconnected habitat.

Please see page 18

Reports of deteriorating foundations, asbestos and declining enrolment have added to the deadly diagnosis.

But those reports are wrong, full of mistakes and amount to fear mongering,

Tomlinson named Citizen of the Year

He has voiced his concerns at every public meeting regarding development of the area.

His dedication helped to create a protected site within the park known as the East Aurora Provincially Significant Wetland.

Realizing the buffers to the wetland were unsuitable, David filed an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board resulting in a 35-metre buffer area.

He has a passion for ornithology, horticulture, and landscape architecture.

He's won many awards, received Emeritus status, and has been invited to speak to gardening enthusiasts throughout Aurora.

At home, David and his wife Dierdre control Merlin's Hollow - an acre of garden with more than 15,000 plants.



DAVID TOMLINSON



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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 maries-griefjourney@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. Martha's Table will close June 11 for the summer and reopen Sept. 3.

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

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.aml.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.aurorahistoricalsociety.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.

SUNDAY, JUNE 14

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.

MONDAY, JUNE 15

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.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17

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

JUNE 19-21

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.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24

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.

SATURDAY, JULY 4

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.

SUNDAY, JULY 5

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 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.

MONDAY, JULY 6

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@yrdsb.edu.on.ca or 905-727-0022, ext. 2263,

SUNDAY, JULY 12

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.

TUESDAY, JULY 14

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.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15

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

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Please call for upcoming seminar information

Traffic, trails committees should merge, he believes

The town's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee and Trails Subcommittee both deal with moving people around town, so should they be merged?

That was the question posed by Klaus Wehrenberg at the General Committee meeting last week.

Mr. Wehrenberg, who has extensive experience with both groups, and is currently Chair of the Trails Subcommittee, suggested that a single "Traffic Advisory Committee" would be more efficient.

With the Trails team reporting through the Leisure Services Advisory Committee, its focus was on trails as a leisure use.

He felt that a network of trails in Aurora would also provide an alternative to road traffic. People could walk or cycle to shops, schools, libraries, and even workplaces.

In response to a question regarding connections to the ongoing Yonge Street redevelopment study, Mr. Wehrenberg said he believed the trail system should link to Aurora's core, and that "pedestrians will be the key to revitalizing downtown".

As the trail system expands, and grade separations are added across roads and rail lines, he said this type of utilitarian function would gain on the leisure traffic.

In support of his argument to merge the committees he referenced a draft "New Communities Criteria" document provided to him by the town's Planning Department.

In the report it noted communities should be designed to have interconnected systems with a priority on pedestrian movement, transit use and access.

He also pointed out an item on the evening's agenda which had staff recommending that a proposed pedestrian crossing of the GO rail line at Cousins Drive not proceed.

He said his Trails Subcommittee was not even aware of the proposal, which was the sort of thing that was within their mandate.

Mr. Wehrenberg emphasized that what was needed in Aurora was a comprehensive view of traffic, so it made sense that there be only one committee to deal with all modes and forms of traffic.

Following his presentation, several members noted that the Trails Subcommittee should have been advised of the proposed Cousins Drive crossing issue earlier.

Mayor Phyllis Morris then provided some background on the issue for Mr.

Wehrenberg, explaining that due to the volume of students expected to use this crossing, in February, council had approved the project contingent on receiving funding support from the York Region District School Board.

The Board had since noted they could not assist, and further inquiries by town staff were unsuccessful in identifying other government funding sources, hence the recommendation not to proceed at this time.

Agreeing with Mr. Wehrenberg that there is a connection between the two committees, but not sure that the two should be amalgamated, Councillor Evelyn Buck put the motion forward that the proposal be put to staff to provide council with the pros and cons of such an arrangement.

It was then pointed out

that the councillor had provided a notice of motion for a future meeting on the issue of other committees.

Councillor Al Wilson and Mayor Morris suggested it might be more efficient, and less work for staff, to do one comprehensive review.

Councillor Buck insisted the two issues remain separate, arguing Mr. Wehrenberg had correctly identified a specific connection between the trails and traffic safety committees, and had put a lot of work into this issue, so it shouldn't be delayed.

The motion was eventually carried.

As for the proposed Cousins Drive pedestrian crossing, General Committee agreed with the staff recommendation that it not be approved, and instead referred the matter to the Trails subcommittee for comment.



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Poor Ronnie

By RON WALLACE

Lunch at the Legion June 16 for seniors

Because June is apparently senior citizens' month, and because I now get money from the government (which means I must be a senior citizen), I am going to break a few rules here.

Old people can do that, I guess.

So there I am Friday, in my favourite room at the Aurora Legion, reading all the propaganda on the wall.

And I see one that says "Happiness is lunch at the branch".

And, then I read the small print.

"June is Senior Citizens Month and Branch 385 (that's the Aurora Legion) is pleased to honour all the seniors and their guests in the branch with a special luncheon, and even if you are not a senior you can still take advantage of the special lunch on Tuesday, June 16th...

It went on, but I thought to myself, why didn't the Legion advertise this in Aurora's best independent newspaper?

So, should I give them some free publicity, or what?

If I do, every other restaurant in town will be ticked off at me, because they'll want the same treatment.

Oh, the hardships of owning a newspaper!!

But lunch for the seniors is sort of special, isn't it?

It'll still cost five bucks to get the lunch, but there are three meals to choose from.

You'll have to go there to find out what they are.

At the bottom of the note, it says: Please note our regular menu will not be available today."

Which suggests to me that the Legion is a restaurant and they should have to advertise these events like every other restaurant.

Anyway, while I was enjoying the note on the wall, some other events caught my eye.

For example, there's a Strawberry Supper on Saturday, June 20th, for \$12 a head.

You have to buy a ticket for that, and, according to the note "no tickets sold after June 16th as strawberries have to be picked".

So, you go to the seniors lunch on the 16th and buy a ticket for the Strawberry Supper. Very clever.

On Monday, June 22nd, the Legion is holding a "Toonie Monday" which is supper and a movie for two bucks.

I'm assuming that's the cost, because it doesn't say so.

Supper at 5.30 p.m. consists of peameal bacon on a bun and salad, and the movie at 7 p.m. which is scheduled to be "Paul Blart Mall Cop".

Oh yeah, there's horseshoes at 7 p.m., if that appeals to you more than the movie.

I know it would work for me.

On Wednesday, July 1st, the Legion is holding an Open House.

Whatever happened to the bylaw that was passed a million years ago, that forced everyone in Aurora to close on July First?

Including restaurants!!

I can remember a laundromat being charged because they opened July First, when the committee responsible for making us Canada's Birthday Town was trying to get everyone a day off so they could enjoy Aurora's July First festivities.

ONCE MORE WITH FEELING

In a newspaper's life, there's always a screw-up.

Last week, at the bottom of my column, I said the march from the Town Park to Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary school was Wednesday, June 15.

Should have been Monday, June 15.

It was correct in other places, but wrong there.

So, I say thanks to those who noticed it, for reading my column right to the end.

Letter to the Editor

An invitation to a barbecue

To the editor,

The Town of Aurora has been fortunate over the years to enjoy a great sense of community.

This has been largely because of the number of residents who contribute to the quality of life we have come to enjoy.

These volunteers help to

create that community spirit.

Given the substantial growth experienced over the last few years there is a need to make certain families feel welcomed.

A healthy, safe and active community is an inclusive community.

Neighbourhood Network, with the support of the Optimist Club, will be host-



Does anyone recognize anyone in this picture? The photo was purchased at a garage sale for a ridiculously low price, and appears to be a high school class posing in front of their school, today, the empty building on Wells Street. Can anyone offer any information?

Letter to the Editor

Pool allocation policy unfair, reader claims

To the editor,

Re: Proposed Pool Allocation Policy

I have known Yvonne Catrall since the early 1980's. She has taught both of my children to swim and I have always been more than impressed with the outstanding calibre of teaching that she has provided. My son is currently enrolled in the Selkies program.

Since the 1970's Yvonne has taught thousands of Aurora residents, in fact she has taught at least two generations of swimmers making her a revered institution of our town.

Yvonne did delegate to the Town of Aurora in support of the town building an indoor pool. She was teaching at the Vandorf pool at this time and had quite an extensive staff and business.

I am concerned that it appears that the Aurora Town Council has difficulty prioritizing the use of town facilities, namely the ARC and AFLC pool.

Councillors are elected by their constituents to be transparent and fair basing their decisions on what's best for the community. This is their purpose - to represent fairly and without bias, especially the

youth.

The lack of a fair and equitable pool policy significantly reduces the transparency of the decision-making process, and tends to lead individuals negatively impacted by the decisions to believe that potential favouritism and or other influences are driving the decisions.

It therefore behooves the Town Council to have a pool policy in place and in effect before the next season.

And such a policy should reflect the council's priority to the immediate community it serves and its youth who are most in need, and most benefit from the expenditure of our tax dollars.

Swim teams are different from field sports. Where field sports teams are made up of residents of the teams town swim teams are made of swimmers that come from other towns, cities, and even provinces.

Approximately 40 to 60 per cent of the Ducks and Masters Ducks swimmers are not from Aurora.

As a result the pool is servicing the needs of many swimmers who are not Aurora residents while residents of Aurora are being turned away.

If the town does not make this policy then they are sup-

porting the continued use of the facility of outside non-tax-payers and are not supporting their own town swimmers.

With "Field Use Policy" the first priority is the youth of Aurora and the second priority is the adults.

It is different in the pools as we are seeing adults being prioritized over the youth of Aurora.

They have 56 hours of adult lane swim per week in the ARC and AFLC. The town as well as the Masters Ducks has put adults as their number one priority for pool time.

A significant number of the children who live in Aurora should also be able to have use of the pools.

There is no documented

policy at present and indeed there never has been one. We need a policy to protect the three existing clubs - the Ducks, Masters Ducks and Selkies.

As a life-long resident of Aurora, I am at odds with the Town's administration for the lack of duty and respect for the residents of Aurora to not have had a policy in place before now.

I place my trust in Town Council to pursue the Pool Allocation Policy, ensuring fair and equitable access to community pool facilities amongst the existing swim clubs and the residents of our town.

Judith Thompson-Bouchard
Aurora

THE AURORAN

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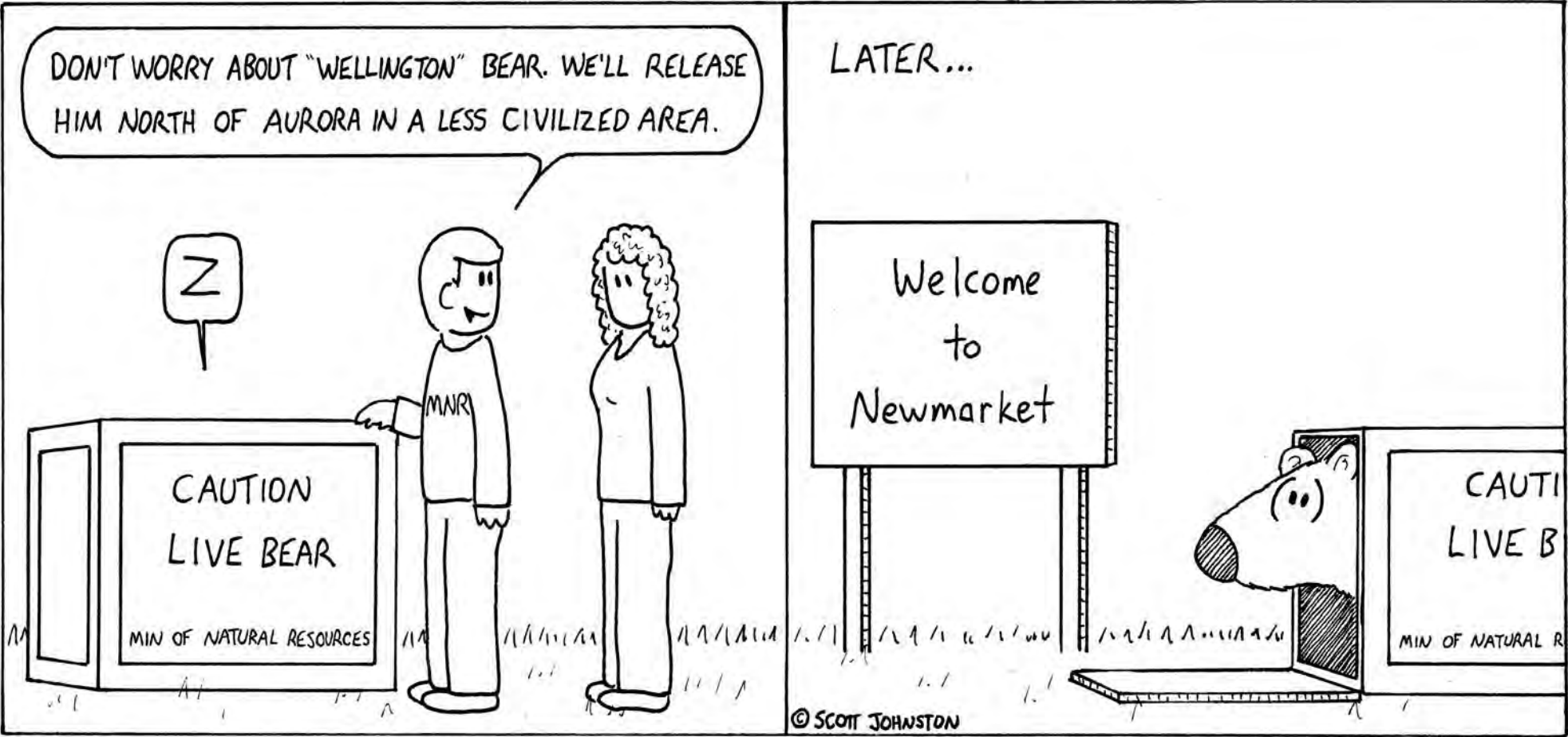
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Front Porch Perspective

By Stephen Somerville

This week I want to cast aside musings about politics and public affairs and write about something else.

Last weekend my wife and I attended a wedding in Aurora.

And it was, at once, both a different and a wonderful event.

It was different because the two people getting married for the first time are somewhat older than what one would traditionally expect.

And it was wonderful because all the various parts of this special occasion came together quite nicely.

Former Town Councillor and Mayor of Aurora, George Timpson wed Ann Peckover in a ceremony at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church on Mosley Street.

Although they now reside in Innisfil, George and Ann decided to have the wedding in the town where they first met and also have a great many friends.

The bride looked beautiful and I must say the groom cleaned up pretty well!

The ceremony was unusual in that two people presided; the Reverend Matt McKay of St. Andrew's and the Reverend Canon Dawn Davis, of Trinity Anglican Church, Aurora.

The interplay between the two clergy was as if they had been doing this ecumenical two-step for some time. It was a lovely service, topped off with a celebration of the Eucharist for all willing participants.

The other great thing about the church service was the soloist. I did not catch the young man's name but he had one of the best voices I had ever heard. He also doubled as

the photographer.

Once the wedding ceremony was finished and we were outside the church I saw the soloist again, so I walked over, introduced myself and complimented him on his singing talent. I then asked him how he came to sing that day.

He said he was a neighbor of George's from Innisfil and when he told George that he had finished in the top 150 for Canada's "Top idol", George wanted him sing at the wedding.

As I mentioned earlier, one of the interesting aspects of this occasion was that George and Ann had been dating for - get this - 22 years before they got married. George is now 63 years old while the bride, I am told, is "still twenty-nine."

As someone mentioned during their dinner speech, George is "very methodical in his approach to things." I guess so!

I also had a nice chat with Mayor Phyllis Morris, who was very well turned out in her white suit ensemble.

Former councillor and mayor, Tim Jones, and his wife Heather, also were also in attendance. They both looked very well and I had a good chat with Tim on the political "goings on" in Aurora.

I must say (and partly for self preservation purposes) that my wife looked absolutely fabulous in her new black dress. She assured me the dress "was not really expensive and neither were the new shoes", which of course, was music to my budget conscious ears.

I was hoping to go three for three in the economic austerity department when I asked that one last question:

The wedding

Honey, what about the new purse? "Oh yeah, that was expensive", she laughed. Well, two for three ain't too bad!

What my wife and I really enjoyed, besides the repeated helpings of the main course and also desert, was the company at our table, and we especially enjoyed our conversation with Fran.

Julie and I loved hearing Fran's stories about her days teaching physical education at Dr. G Williams for many years and also her teaching square dancing at Aurora High.

Fran is an older lady and the only one at our table not accompanied by a husband or date. I was not about to enquire about this situation, but through other conversations at the table I eventually pieced it together. Fran is the wife of former Councillor and Aurora Mayor John West.

Upon hearing this I introduced myself as a writer for this paper and I told her about a particular column that I written about the leisure centre and one of the main reasons that we have it is because of the efforts of her husband. I then told her that I had a number of e-mails praising her husband.

Fran said that, "unfortunately, John could not be with me at the wedding - and he really wanted to - but he is really too sick."

Our thoughts and best wishes go out to John West.

And this corner also congratulates George and Ann Timpson!

Stephen can be contacted at:
stephengsomerville@yahoo.com

Letter to the Editor

Councillor's granddaughter not upset by attack: witness

To the editor,

This is in response to Evelyn Buck's letter to The Auroran, week of May 19: "Granddaughter watched attack: councillor".

As readers may know, at Aurora's May 12 council meeting, prizes were awarded to winners of Aurora's Anti-Litter Poster Contest.

At the start of the same meeting, a contentious

issue involving Councillor Evelyn Buck was raised before council.

As the primary volunteer responsible for the contest I was there to present the plaqued posters and want to say that Councillor Buck's granddaughter, a contest prize winner, was not upset by events as Ms Buck's letter and headline suggests.

The parent accompanying Ms Buck's granddaugh-

ter told me directly after the meeting that the girl had not understood the proceedings involving her grandmother.

Indeed she appeared delighted while receiving her prize and, at Mayor Phyllis Morris's suggestion, happily joined her grandmother for a photograph.

The adults present, of course, would have understood the seriousness of the accusations being

made.

They would also have understood the mayor's need to address these allegations seriously and according to town procedures that required consulting with town staff about current processes and next steps.

Her approach as Chair plus the staff confirmations given are all on record for those wishing to know the facts.

The fact that both events happened during the same meeting may seem unfortunate to some, but a public forum is for citizens' use.

What is even more unfortunate, however, is that Councillor Buck's vociferous and emotive response to proceedings, including her generalized criticism of the mayor's and other councillors' performances, is an attempt to obscure the more serious

issue: a formal complaint has been made that Councillor Buck is engaging in an ongoing campaign of harassment against a team of Aurora volunteers, smearing them with unsupported allegations.

This is the issue we need our newspapers to cover and Councillor Buck to focus on.

Catherine Marshall
Aurora

Letters to the Editor

Subscriber suffers from cable change

To the editor,

It is with great sorrow that I had found myself having to be migrated over to the Rogers conglomerate effective March 10th.

I had had nothing but grief in my dealings with Rogers.

Firstly, I was transferred to not less than three people and put on hold on the phone forever.

I finally requested that they return my call instead of leaving me on hold only to discover that they cannot return customer calls.

I thought what kind of customer service is that?

For those of you who have had an opportunity to read the February 6th literature, (which was sent to Oak Ridges residents), it indicates that for \$41.95 plus \$3 rental modem charge for 12 months one would get the "fastest and most reliable speeds...comparing download speed to

the equivalent speeds of the incumbent DSL provider.."

However, upon further examination, what Rogers is really giving some ACI customers is a DOWN-GRADE in similarity to what they initially had.

That being said, Rogers offers in their Express Package: Seven Mbps download speed, 512 Kbps upload speed and a limit of 60 GB.

Aurora Cable, on the other hand, gave customers nine Mbps download speed, one Mbps upload with no GB limit imposed.

Of course, none of their customer service people would tell you this until they were approached with the details and asked up front if they didn't agree that their Extreme Package at 10 Mbps download with one Mbps upload speed was more compatible and similar to what ACI customers initially had. In addition, for those of us who went with

the Extreme Package, were told (at least I was told after a lengthy discussion with Hector from their Migration Department), that for this service, I would need to go to their Rogers Plus Store to pick up another modem and that a technician would call us on March 9 to arrange the service for March 10.

I was even given a confirmation order number.

I couldn't understand why the technician couldn't bring the modem with him--it's like having an appliance fixed and you having to go and get the parts!

After several weeks, I was finally contacted by someone from their Escalations Department who was very instrumental in getting things resolved to my satisfaction.

Nevertheless, my son installed the new modem so we do have internet access.

When I called their customer service people again, I learned that no one would be coming to the house--so go figure!

As at April 3rd, I still had no e-mail account set up but needed to deal with this issue in the upcoming days.

I was initially told by their people (can't recall anymore if it was their customer service or tech support) to go to rogers.yahoo.com and put in my key registration number and then my registration number.

However, when I accessed that website, there was no place indicated to enter either of these numbers.

After several weeks, I was finally contacted by someone from their Escalations Department who was apprised of my situation through someone

(from Rogers) who had read my concerns in the Thornhill Liberal and who was very instrumental in getting things resolved to my satisfaction.

The e-mail issue was resolved very easily, once we were given the corrected information.

Don't even get me started about Roger's billing process.

No one at their Rogers Plus Store has any idea when confronted with queries about their billing process.

They will tell you they are trained "only in sales".

Furthermore, if paying one's Rogers Bill at the store, one is now required to have the exact change or place the bill on one's credit card.

As for the Rogers Cable Service, it would have been a nice gesture to have had a "Cable Conversion Chart" sent to ACI customers such as ACI's nice glossy brochure outlining the equivalent TV Guide channels in the weekly television guide.

I subscribe to basic + enhanced cable.

This aspect has since been addressed and implemented by their Marketing Department through their representative from the Escalations Department.

Lastly, I had received a pre-recorded call from my ward councillor, Greg Beros, who had received many calls from disgruntled ACI customers and as a result, gave us a telephone number for a Rogers Representative at 905-780-7222 to deal with our issues.

I called this number on Monday, March 23, and also tried to contact my

councillor.

As at Friday, April 3rd, needless to say, I was still awaiting a call from both of them!

Several weeks later, I received a call from both Rogers and Mr. Beros, although I'm not certain if the latter was as a result of

the Thornhill Liberal write-up.

I could go on and on with other issues but am sure I've exhausted the number of words allowed in an article.

B. Zwarych
Oak Ridges



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Check your facts, former prez says

To the editor,

For the past few months I have read and heard on several occasions innuendoes against a fellow comrade and a member of the Light of the Legion Committee, Sher St. Kitts.

I have only known Sher for the past two years, working with her for the first time when she volunteered her services to bring back the July 1st Parade, and what a great job she did of it!

From the start of the fund raising campaign to the finish, she was inspirational to everyone concerned - always enthusiastic and a pleasure to work with.

It appears she is doing it again this year.

Light up the Legion had three main shows starting with Motown Boys, Imposters, and Abba, on which Sher worked with the committee.

All money was through the Building account, all posted for payment by the committee who budgeted every cent.

During the last event, Sher asked if we could look after this year's July 1st awareness dinner shows as she had no budget for fundraising.

Only because we were committed to our own shows was it declined, and she decided to go ahead herself, although we said we would help.

Two weeks from opening, very few tickets had been sold and as food, etc., had to be ordered and expenses already committed, we were concerned and talked it over with her.

Be that as it may, she decided to go ahead and guaranteed "she would pay any shortage herself".

I can assure you and your readers I know exactly the amount that came in and the expenses.

Sher, myself and our office manager, went over everything to be paid out and because of an extra four tables that night Sher cleared all expenses with some left over which she donated to the Legion, the White Heather Pipe Band and the staff of volunteers who worked for us that night.

To all those who made those unbelievable accusations - next time check the facts first before opening your mouth!

Len Whines
Past President
Branch 385
Royal Canadian Legion

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Peter Virtanen
CLU, Agent, Aurora



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Letters to the Editor

Flag “pitiful”, reader maintains

To the editor,

I have never been a supporter of the Conservative Party, but I was encouraged last week to read of Lois Brown’s Newmarket-Aurora “Proud to be Canadian” campaign.

What a great idea in

these gloomy times to demonstrate our collective Nationalism by displaying the Canadian Flag distributed by Brown’s office in each of our household windows for the weeks leading up to Canada Day.

That positive sentiment lasted until my flag from

Lois Brown actually arrived – all 5 by 10 inches of it.

Amazing.

Do Lois Brown and the Conservative party actually believe this petite and pitiful version of our flag is symbolic of our National Pride?

I don’t, because unless I

magnify my monocle in the next few weeks, I doubt I’ll even notice one single flag displayed throughout this entire campaign.

Maybe if the Conservatives lent a portion of the \$750,000 that they’re spending each week on negative attack ads against Michael Ignatieff, they might be able to distribute a flag and symbol worth keeping, let alone displaying in our household windows.

Good plan, Lois, terrible execution – hey, at least it’s consistent with your Party’s stewardship of our national budget.

John Crowell
Aurora

Sher St. Kitts’ family is admired, she says

To the editor,

What makes the world a wonderful place? People.

Our community is so fortunate to have Sher St. Kitts and her family.

This woman puts her heart and soul into helping the needy and showing patriotism and what does she get?

Never mind a “thank you”, but is actually questioned in regards to her ethics!

My family has known the St. Kitts family for over 20 years and they have always been wonderful, giving and loving people.

How dare they be berated in this way?

We have helped the Dream Team with Christmas dinner for the one reason only; it feels good to help other people.

The Canada Day Parade was so much fun; it involved

“Characters” had more common sense than current council

To the editor,

I will gladly pay for life-sized framed portraits of Dick Illingworth and Rumpole of the Bailey to be hung in Council Chambers.

Despite the fact that both of these “characters” have passed from the scene, their images would bring more reason, common sense, good government and meaningful democracy to the proceedings in that room than those presently conducted by that travesty of “she who would be Mayor.”

Aurora is but a small puddle within the vast slough that is the mayor’s mind.

Shame.

George Hervey
Aurora

many groups in our community; our son played on one of the floats!

I remember seeing Canadian flags everywhere and lots of red and white dressed people! It was a joyous day!

I don’t understand why people can’t work as a team for the greater benefit of those involved.

We need to concentrate on the positive and continue our desire in committing ourselves to our wonderful town.

If we treat people poorly when they are trying to help others, then we need to understand

that we may lose these people and our town will suffer.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Sher, George and their family for everything they have done for Aurora.

They are true friends and I am personally offended that they are having to endure such slander. Sher and George, you are admired by so many people.

Stay strong and stay positive.

Bonnie Schwartz
Aurora

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Letters to the Editor

No cause to question their integrity, he says

To the editor,

"Hypocritical" is the word that comes to mind when people of Aurora criticize volunteers, who spend countless hours on planning, coordinating, recruiting students (who do need community hours to graduate), encouraging float participants, match-

ing trucks and cars with entries, not to mention overseeing the smooth production on the day of the Parade.

In order to be a critic, one should have all the facts e.g. it has been suggested that very few people viewed the Parade last year, when in fact Yonge St was lined on

both sides by residents who were wearing their proud red and white colors and waving our flag.

Remember no one from our Town chose to organize the parade, a proud Canadian from a nearby community stood up and accepted the challenge, and therefore, should be allowed to

speak to council as if she were a resident.

The cost to the Town is nominal, in comparison to what is spent on other events of July 1st which does come out of taxpayers' pockets.

Some things never change!

Just like coaching, where people volunteer their time to assist with children sports, whether it is ball, hockey, soccer or any youth activity, there are those who contribute their time freely and those who sit back and complain.

I write this letter because the integrity of all involved has been questioned without just cause.

Jim McCart
Aurora

Evelyn has his support

To the editor,

It appears that the battles in the Council Chambers will con-

Stranger paid grocery bill

To the editor,

Here's another example of our big small town.

Last week I saw a lady with empty shopping bags walking, with some difficulty, along Wellington Street.

A car stopped and offered her a lift.

It seems that she was headed to No Frills.

The person not only took her there; but waited and took her home.

When she told the cashier to stop when she reached the total of the small sum of money that she had, the man next in line said not to bother because he would pay for everything!

Wendy Gaertner
Aurora

tinue until the next election.

Again, as in the last election, there could be a host of seats filled by new councillors.

My prediction is if Councillor Buck throws her Burberry bonnet into the ring next election, she will be elected, and will continue to keep the citizens of Aurora informed on all matters that are important. As a former Parks

Supervisor and Councillor, I found Evelyn Buck to be a knowledgeable, committed and fair mayor and councillor to work for and with.

Her service to Aurora is to be commended.

She will always have my vote.

Norm Weller
Aurora

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Letters to the Editor

She’s seeking big turnout for march

To the editor,

Wells Street Pubic School in Aurora is at risk of closing, but the final decision has not been made. On September 24th, the trustees of the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) will be voting on whether to fix the school and return the students home, or close the school forever.

The trustees have two reports before them: one from the Accommodation Review Committee which recommends the school be fixed and one from the school board staff which recommends closure. The trustees at the York Region District School Board have not discussed the issue and there is still time to convince them to make the right choice for Aurora and the Wells Street

students - that is to re-open the school.

On Monday June 15th at 6 p.m. at Town Park there will be a parade/march for residents of Aurora and neighbouring communities to show their support for the school.

This is a "must attend" event. Why? The parade of supporters will end at Dr. G. W. Williams Secondary School where the last open public meeting on the Wells issue will take place.

This is our best opportunity to show the trustees directly how much support there is for this school.

I have been at the Aurora Farmer's market over the past few weeks and I have to say that the support for the school has been overwhelming.

I've heard it in the com-

ments you have expressed, the generous donations made to cover costs of lawn signs and buttons and the willingness to volunteer to help the cause.

From residents who have lived in Aurora their whole lives to residents from the newer parts of Aurora who have only lived here a few months - they have all expressed their concerns about the staff recommendation.

What started off as an issue that seemed only to affect a few hundred students and parents has really struck a nerve with the people and businesses of this town.

This is an issue that matters to all Aurorans, not just the Wells Street community.

People from Richmond Hill, Newmarket and even

Markham have dropped by, signed the petition and expressed their concern about the possible closing of the school.

It matters to them as well.

It seems the taxpayers support small schools.

They support communities that thrive around a school. They support children walking to school. They support Wells because it is a part of Aurora's heritage and they recognize it as an important symbol of not only Aurora's past but also its future.

To fix the school costs money.

The YRDSB has it - it's a matter of whether they decide Wells Street Public School is a priority.

I've heard people say the decision has been made and the community's voice no

longer matters. It hasn't and it does.

Trustees are elected by the public. They are ultimately accountable to the taxpayers of York Region. That's why we need a strong showing of support from the community on June 15th.

I invite you to join the parade.

Bring your kids and show them how people can make a difference when they stand up for what they believe is right.

This will be a fun event to show pride in our community. For those new to the community, come join us and discover another reason why Aurora is a great place to live.

Many people have said to me they want to help but don't know how. Here's how:

Lawn signs and buttons (quickly becoming the must-have accessory of the 2009 spring season) - pick one up at the Farmer's Market from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays and display them proudly

If you live in the Wells/Williams area get the

signs out of the windows and onto the laws for maximum visual impact.

The trustees will be driving through this area on the 15th. We have wood stakes available at the Farmer's Market if you need one.

E-mail the trustees and encourage family and friends in other York Region towns to e-mail their local trustee and respectfully urge them not to let Wells close

Help raise awareness of the issue by talking to friends and neighbours and encourage them to take action

To volunteer or to share ideas on how to help save the school please e-mail savewells@yahoo.com

Most importantly, spare an hour and a half of your time and join the parade on June 15th and attend the beginning of the trustees' meeting.

Let's show the trustees that Aurora matters, Wells Street Public School matters and our children matter.

Heidi Franken
Aurora

Reader organizes discussion

To the editor,

Two weeks ago I wrote a letter in which I advocated that good architecture, involving art, can make a significant impact on the popularity of the downtown of a municipality.

There are many other measures that can make impacts, and combinations of measures and influences.

I also advocated that planning for downtown Aurora's improvement should include

discussions of ideas, in meetings where citizens speak to each other, as a way to benefit from synergy.

Just recently the agenda for "The Aurora Promenade" workshop No 2, the design workshop, was published.

"Aurora Promenade" is the new name for the Yonge and Wellington corridor study.

The agenda for that workshop from June 15 to 17 still does not include a discussion that allows citizens to feed off each other's ideas, and to

potentially come up with approaches, concepts, or designs, that trump any individual idea, to come up with results that are more acceptable, desirable, than the sum of the individual ideas.

I strongly believe that we should allow for such round-table discussion to take place, early in the study.

Therefore, all Aurora citizens are invited to come to such round-table discussions.

They will take place on Sunday, June 14, from 2 to 5

p.m., in the Magna Room of the Aurora Public Library.

It does not necessarily mean that the round-table participants will generate brilliant results, but they may!

However, whatever the results, they will be reported to the steering committee of the Aurora Promenade, early the next day, before the start of the public components of workshop No 2.

Klaus Wehrenberg
Aurora



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Goodyear Jays win in Richmond Hill

This season marks the return of rep baseball to Aurora for the 1994 birth year. After a two-year absence, a group of 12 young men worked hard in the off-season in local gyms to raise their game and to compete at a higher level.

The Bantam rep Jays, sponsored by Goodyear Aurora, recently ran their regular season record to a perfect four wins with a 16-1 victory over the Richmond Hill Phoenix.

Joe Ariganello pitched four strong innings of two-hit ball

and David Baccellieri used his knuckle ball for the save.

Billy Ferguson and Doug Nisbet led the offense with two hits each as the Jays pounded out 10 hits over five innings.

In the first three games of the season, the Jays used home field advantage to defeat Martin Grove 12-9, Royal York 13-1 and in one of the best games seen at this level, won a 2-1 pitching and defensive duel against Orangeville, with Ferguson, Andrew Seguin, Ariganello and Andrew Welsman combining on a six-hit gem, with

the winning run scored on a suicide squeeze play in the bottom of the sixth inning.

Matthew Stewart made several spectacular plays at second base, including a diving stop behind second of a bases loaded ground ball for a force out to preserve the lead.

The boys, parents and coaches Mike Ariganello, Rob Seguin, Tony Cozzolino and Scott Taylor are excited about the news of a second senior diamond for Aurora, which will allow them better access to practice times and help them raise their game even higher in

years to come.

To see the boys in action, they play at the Leisure Complex Number Four diamond on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 p.m.

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40,000 attend 14th annual street festival



The rains held off and the weather stayed cool.

It was another perfect day as the Aurora Chamber of Commerce welcomed more than 40,000 people to Yonge Street Sunday for its 14th annual street festival.

For the six hours that it operated, the festival was solid with shoppers and lookers.

Three days before the event, the festival had sold its more than 550 booth spaces and the "sold out" signs went up.

Teri Hastings, operating her first festival through her company Creative Corporate Events, said she was pleased with the way things worked out.

"I almost cried when I woke up Sunday morning and it was raining," she said. "But, the rain held off and it turned out to be a very successful event."

Ms Hastings is looking forward to the 15th annual festival next year.

Chamber officials agreed about 40,000 people took advantage of the street festival which closes Yonge Street the first Sunday in June, and has done for 14 years.

The festival started as the World's Longest Street Sale on the World's Longest Street to celebrate the 200th birthday of Yonge Street in 1996.

It was only planned for a single year, but was so successful it became an annual event.

Several years ago, the name was changed from "sale" to "festival" in order for the Chamber to apply for grants.



THE AURORAN
photos by
David Falconer
and **Rob Schuetze**



Ashlyn Kerr

Senior Girls Soccer MVP, Senior Girls Basketball MVP, Senior Girls Volleyball MVP and Senior Girls Athlete of the year.
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She is going to Brock University for Sport management in the fall.



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The Aurora Stingers U8 Girls captured the COVI Soccer Championship in a tournament in Vaughan last week. The Stingers started the tournament by coming from behind and settling for a 2-2 tie against the North Toronto Nitros. They followed that with a 4-1 win over the Vaughan Azzuri, then defeated another North Toronto team 5-0 to finish first in their pool and gain a berth in the semi-finals. In that game, they blanked the Glen Shields

Red Devils 4-0 to set up a rematch against the North Toronto Nitros, a game they won 1-0. Making up the team are, left to right, Assistant Coach Elaine Devlin, Amanda Malowney, Lauren Palazzi, Taylor Unger, Adriane Devlin, Jacey Dane, Meghan Phillips, Olivia Scott, Cassidy Phillips, Jayden Thompson, Megan Schmitt, Lauren Ruscica, Emily Lazenby and Coach Brent Unger. Absent when the photo was taken was Claire Edery.

New swim club battles for equivalent pool time

How do you fit three users groups into two town pools?

That was the town's continuing challenge, which was before General Committee last week.

For many years there have been two competitive swim teams in town; the Ducks and Master Ducks. These clubs were using most of the lane time available to swim clubs.

The recently-created Selkies Swim Club felt they were not being given equivalent time.

To help resolve this, the Leisure Services Advisory Committee (LSAC) has been wrestling with creating a Pool Allocation Policy since July, 2008.

The latest version, which contains more than 40 separate notes and considerations, was before GC for direction.

Councillor Al Wilson was unwilling to support the proposed policy, as he felt it would result in existing users being pushed out of the schedule, just because a new club had been formed.

He suggested that the existing schedule for the pool at the Recreation Complex be reviewed to see if there are gaps that could be taken advantage of.

Leisure Services Director Al Downey explained that all of the pool's prime hours were fully utilized, but that 32 per cent of non-prime time was available.

Unfortunately, no one seemed interested in regularly using such times as 6 a.m. on Sunday mornings.

Asked if there was a premium for prime time pool hours, staff replied that there was not.

Councillor Wilson found this interesting, and noted that even if an allocation policy was approved, it would not address filling the 32 per cent of unused pool time.

Councillor Evelyn Buck commended the LSAC members for all of their work, but suggested the only way to make this work was for the town to facilitate the users working together to set up their own procedures.

She noted facility time did

not seem to be an issue with any other user groups, such as soccer, baseball, or hockey.

Unfortunately, it doesn't look like this suggestion will work.

Mayor Phyllis Morris noted that the Ducks had offered some of their time to the Selkies, and the Selkies had rejected it, saying that it's not their role to sort this out between the clubs, it's up to the town to allocate the time.

Councillor Bob McRoberts expressed his frustration with Swim Ontario for allowing the creation of three competitive swim clubs in a municipality of this size.

Having worked on the draft policy through LSAC for almost a year, he noted that no decision on this issue will make everyone happy.

On the plus side, Mr. Downey noted that Swim Ontario, who was taking an active interest in these alloca-

tion discussions, had come to an agreement with respect to restricting additional clubs in municipalities, so Aurora should not expect any new groups coming forward for pool time.

The policy should place a greater emphasis on the number of members who are Aurora residents, according to Councillor Evelina MacEachern.

Other committee members argued that the town had to take the advice of the LSAC, who had put so much time into this project, and that the town needed to have a policy in place, as this issue would only get worse as the town's population grew, along with the number of pool users.

Councillor Alison Collins-Mrakas felt that what the town needed was not a sport-specific allocation policy, like the one proposed for pools, but a policy

that could be applied to all sports.

Following several rounds of discussion the motion was passed 6-3 to accept LSAC's latest draft version of the policy, with some minor tweaks regarding the definition of members, and how often and when clubs should advise the town of their lists of members.

In addition, staff is to review the current schedule, and see if additional time can be found for the swim clubs.

These recommendations are expected to go to Council for approval June 16, after which the new policy would be implemented starting in the 2009-10 season.

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Wells Street PS Student Accommodation Review

On September 25, 2008, the Board of Trustees for the York Region District School Board approved that a Student Accommodation Review process be undertaken for Wells Street Public School.

As per the Board's Accommodation Review Policy #463 and in keeping with the Ministry of Education Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines, the Board of Trustees for the York Region District School Board is hosting a public meeting as noted below.

Date:	Monday, June 15, 2009
Time:	7:00 p.m.
Location:	Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School - Cafeteria 39 Dunning Avenue Aurora, Ontario
Purpose:	For the York Region District School Board to receive public input
Contact:	Ross Virgo (905) 727-0022 ext. 2380 ross.virgo@yrdsb.edu.on.ca

For additional information and details regarding upcoming meeting and activities, visit the York Region District School Board's website at www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca

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Seismologist accuses board of “fear mongering”

From page 1

Wells.

However, seismic building expert Andy Godschalk says board staff attempts to justify costs are seriously flawed and perhaps an attempt to convince parents to abandon the school.

He says he's a self-made millionaire from saving old buildings that needed retrofitting to withstand earthquakes. Most of his work has been in California, one of the earthquake capitals of the world.

Raised in Aurora, the retired consultant has moved back here with his family and says he believes strongly in this community and wants to help save Wells as a neighbourhood school.

He says the school board reports are just attempts at fear mongering.

One of the biggest concerns about the building seems to be the foundation that is allegedly riddled with deteriorating "wooden sleepers" (defined as huge beams or timbers upon which a foundation rests).

School board staff showed The Auroran pictures of Wells' "sleepers", but they're just three-quarter inch planks.

Mr. Godschalk says everyone's going around talking about the sky falling because of these "sleepers" that aren't "sleepers".

And, despite the board's concern that the north-east corner of the building is sinking, board staffers admitted it has already been fixed.

There's a picture in the report from R.J. Burnside & Associates Limited of Collingwood proclaiming "a serious crack", which Mr. Godschalk says is not a crack, it's "cold joint", a place where bricks don't meet from a repair in the original part of the school dating back to the late 1800's.

He says another reported "serious flaw" which is supposed to prove a deteriorating foundation is simply a crack in the basement floor.

"If the damage is not evident on the second floor as well, it's not a problem in the foundation," he says. "Trustees need to seriously question these unsubstantiated estimates".

He says when he began fixing buildings in Los Angeles authorities had been told the cost would be about \$15 a square foot. He says his expertise allowed him to fix the buildings for half that amount.

And he told The Auroran he's willing to help out now for free in order to save the school.

As for the 330-page feasibility report from a company called the IBI Group, Godschalk says it would be illegal in California to submit reports like that without any detailed plans.

He says a report from Burnside, using a 1993 Safety Council Standard, caused him to wonder why anyone would use standards from 16 years ago.

Board officials admit little repair work has been done on the school for six years.

The lack of maintenance is apparent in the paint peeling windows, cracked concrete, deteriorating overhangs, and gaping holes in the asphalt that allow water into the foundation.

That has people like Mr. Godschalk wondering if the board is purposely neglecting Wells to the point of being so run

down it would be too expensive to repair.

But the Ministry of Education, after lifting its moratorium on school closures a couple of years ago, decided school boards shouldn't make hasty decisions without public hearings.

That resulted in the formation of the Accommodation Review Committee which, after months of meetings, reported the school should stay open.

However, school board staff presented a report at the same time, saying the school should remain closed.

It's now up to elected trustees to make a final decision September 24th.

Minutes of a school board meeting that ARC member Lauren Veino found a year before Wells was closed showed the board stated then that Wells was unequivocally not being considered for replacement.

ARC members spent months researching Wells, concluding that if Wells closes, the board would be closing a 117-year chapter in Aurora's history and its first high school.

Newmarket-Aurora MP Lois Brown has played the piano for the Christmas pageant the last five years running at Wells, and her daughter interned as a teacher there.

"Cities and towns need to keep their local schools, places kids can walk to with their parents," she says. "It supports local business. This is an institution Aurora needs to embrace not destroy."

There are other people whose history at Wells goes back generations.

Town councillor Bob McRoberts' grandparents attended the school, then his parents, then him, and then his kids.

In fact his great aunt, Ada Johnson, still alive at 106 years, married the principal's son.

Mr. McRoberts is also a math teacher at Williams, who will retire at the end of this year.

Dan Revington of The Old Aurora Ratepayers' Association is worried that without the

school, an already uncertain economic climate will make things worse.

Mayor Phyllis Morris says the town is undertaking a revitalization study to save the downtown. She says the school should be kept open.

Local historian John McIntyre, who attended Wells, as did his mother, loves to recall its birth as a simple, four-classroom, school built in 1892.

It was Aurora's first high school, an example of Romanesque Revival architecture that even had indoor plumbing, a library/staff room and a science lab.

It was purposely built in the town square to be a focus of the community.

Due to increased enrolment it was enlarged in 1923. Students attended from all around the region, either by morning train, horse or on foot.

But increased enrolment again after World War Two meant the high school wasn't big enough so Dr. G.W. Williams was built on Dunning Avenue.

Wells then became a public school with a new addition for Kindergarten and Grade 1.

Ironically it's the newer parts of the school that are suffering. The 1952 addition has large amounts of missing mortar between the bricks, windows are rusting, and there are huge holes in the asphalt.

In the meantime the building sits vacant, falling victim to neglect and rodents with expensive computer equipment, desks, supplies and library books inside collecting dust.

The school board has also quoted declining enrolment as a possible reason to close.

But members of ARC say there are many ways to fill the school that it should not be an issue.

Since the school board has reduced Wells "catchment" area before, it can always re-adjust the borders for students again.

There's the possibility of adding French Immersion from over-flowing schools, taking in arts students, or adding special education.

The school board boasts it is

not suffering the declines affecting most of Canada.

"Unlike other districts, we're still growing," says the board's public affairs manager Ross Virgo.

And a group trying to save the school, CAWS (Community Action For Wells Street) says it has done a survey showing there are parents who would send their kids to Wells.

At Monday's meeting, people are hoping they will get answers to questions like:

- Why does one report say the roof is fine and should easily last 10 years with minor expenditures, yet another report says it needs hundreds of thousands of dollars of work?

- Why is asbestos abatement included in the estimated costs, while experts say it's fine if you don't disturb it?

- Why is money being quoted for construction of an elevator, when there's already one there?

- Why are there quotes to gut bathrooms that seem fine?

If it's to make them wheelchair accessible, Mr. Godschalk says it's cheaper to build a single, separate bathroom.

A few years ago the National Trust for Historic Preservation added historic neighbourhood schools to its list of America's most endangered places.

York Region school board officials admit to having recently torn down half a dozen schools much younger than Wells.

It did not have to consult the public because of a policy that says they don't have to if the new schools are built on existing sites.

So in the board's 40 year his-

tory, this is the first time they've ever had to endure a committee like ARC.

Phone messages to Aurora-King Trustee Gord Kerr were not returned.

At Monday's meeting, mem-

bers of CAWS will present trustees with scrap books full of facts they think the elected officials should take into consideration.

The march begins at 6 p.m. at the Town Park.



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Sequeira returns as ASA president

By BRIAN WARBURTON

The Aurora Seniors Association (ASA) held its annual general meeting last Wednesday with a robust turnout of members, some with questions and others to listen to Charles Sequeira, the newly re-elected president speak to the past year of senior activities, programs and special events.

The term of Flo Murray had concluded and Flo did not seek re-election this time.

The directors' terms of Charles Sequeira and Ruth Church had also concluded, but both stood for re-election successfully, with Derek Murray also winning election to the board for the first time and Derek is the only new addition to the Board of Directors.

ASA Officers remain as before following an election in caucus by the directors, who re-appointed Charles Sequeira as president, Virginia Bodnar as vice president, Lydia Schuster as secretary and Ruth Church as treasurer.

These positions as ASA signing officers are important and the officers' guidance is crucial to the wellbeing of the ASA.

Flo Murray, now into her 90's and active and even feisty from time to time, has retired as a director but not from an active life.

Flo will continue with her retired career, which persists unabated with the book club which is her particular delight and may soon multiply to two chapters since more members want to be a part of this club than can be accommodated comfortably at any one time.

The other directors are Bob Collard, Bill Higgins, Derek Murray, Barbara Stoecklin and Bill Wharton.

Al Downey has communicated to the ASA that Karie Papillon has been appointed as the new Seniors Coordinator.

All other staff in the coordinators office are expected to continue in their present roles.

The committees and activities reports were dealt with by way of written handouts, saving a great deal of time. If vital questions exist regarding any activity, questions could still have been raised from the floor, and dealt with effectively.

The meeting was well ordered and questions from the floor were all answered satisfactorily. Important motions including minutes of the previous AGM, the Treasurer's Report, ratification of Directors' Actions and Decisions all carried.

The overall view of the ASA and the work of the outgoing BoD can be considered as competent and decisive in operating an effective community centre for seniors, governed in partnership with the Town of Aurora.

Earlier in the day, the computer club, which boasts a committee and a chairman also, had an AGM which was not quite as well attended as the ASA AGM.

The ASCC has members with computer skills sound enough to offer low cost computer lessons to members, and have done so successfully for the last five or six years.

In addition, those members with technological skills have fielded numerous requests for computer assistance from members, and have often served to correct a problem with relative ease and at other times have recommended professional help as the appropriate remedy.

Lessons will continue to be offered since technology will continue to evolve even though new members often have good computer skills.

Everybody should be aware by now that Aurora Cable has been acquired by Rogers Communications, and the old ACI based e-mail addresses will not be honoured much longer.

If you require a new address, please attend to the change sooner rather than later.

My dealings with members using new e-mail addresses has required me to take remedial action in e-mail correspondence already, including my e-mail address book, which is easy enough now, but will be a cause of frustration for users of old e-mail addresses later.

The "Flash e-mail Program" offered by the ASA to members and, which is a wonderful source of factual information concerning current events and upcoming events, will need to be updated when members advise their change of e-mail address to the ASA.

If this program is inundated later with the Mailer-Daemon returning e-mail using obsolete addresses, the volunteers at the ASA will have a mess to clean up and possibly distraught volunteers frantically dealing with too many changes and returned e-mail.

Please send your change of e-mail address to the secretary of the ASA at auroraseniors@rogers.com and let ACI rest in peace.

Vic's Shoe Repair returns as a Doors Open location

By MICHAEL SEAMAN

The third article in the Doors Open series features Vic's Shoe Repair, at 15243 Yonge Street. Vic's was one of the most popular sites on the Doors Open 2007 tour as former proprietor, Vic Paraninfo, demonstrated his craft to visitors.

It makes a welcome return for Doors Open Aurora 2009 as it helps to celebrate Aurora's heritage of shoes.

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

As a native of Northampton, England, once the centre of shoe manufacturing in the British Empire, I was interested to learn when I came to live in Aurora in 1999 that Aurora, like Northampton, is also very much a town built on shoes as a major industry for most of the 20th Century.

Like Northampton, where empty shoe factories dot the downtown landscape, Aurora's shoe industry is largely a distant memory, but there are still many physical reminders around the Town, such as former shoe factories, which can still be seen on Berczy Street, to the homes of people who worked there in the neighbourhoods of old Aurora.

Perhaps the most interesting of all reminders however, is Vic's, a little shoe repair shop where the shoe business is very much alive and well in Aurora.

Vic's Shoe Repair is not only a traditional shoe repair store, but an Aurora institution thanks to its former proprietor of 35 years, Vic Paraninfo who is one of Aurora's leading citizens.

It is possible that Vic may be back once again behind the counter on Doors Open Day.

An information panel about Aurora's history with the shoe industry will also be featured in the shop.

Vic's is located in one of Aurora's most historic brick commercial buildings.

Constructed about 1884, for many years the small shop was occupied by Marshall Forsyth's stationery and music store. In the mid-20th Century Rowland's Shoe Store was located in the adjacent store.

Until his retirement in 2008, Vic operated his shoe repair business in the same location in Aurora for 35 years.

His experience in the shoe trade went back decades before that to 1943, during the Second World War, when as a six-year-old in Delia, Sicily, he first started to learn about working with shoes.

Vic came to Canada in 1956 on the Greek registered ship The Queen Frederica.

Arriving at the famed Pier 21 in Halifax, Vic eventually made his way to Toronto where he worked as a barber and baker before going back to his true calling working with shoes.

Once in Aurora, Vic became immersed in the Aurora community, participating in and leading a number of charitable activities.

He is perhaps best known for "Vic's Day in Aurora", held for many years in February, when Vic donated the full price of sharpening skates to the Aurora branch of the Canadian Arthritis society. Over the years Vic raised many thousands of dollars for the cause.

For all his efforts, he was named Aurora's Citizen of the year in 1983.

Shoe manufacturing was a major industry in Aurora in the last century.

In 1901, the Underhill and Sisman Shoe Manufacturing company moved to Aurora from Markham and built a two-storey building which still stands on Berczy Street.

In 1910, the Underhill-Sisman partnership was dissolved. Underhill stayed in the old factory for a short time, while the new T. Sisman Shoe Company built a large factory, located on the southwest corner of Berczy and Mosley Streets.

The emergence of the shoe industry had a significant impact on the urban form of Aurora with many houses built for workers at Sisman's and Underhills, at the beginning of the 20th Century as well as new businesses to cater to them.

Sismans continued in operation until 1985.

Apart from a small remnant, the house and most of the factory were demolished in the years following.

The Underhill Shoe factory building still survives on Berczy Street, though it is currently adapted to new uses.

The current owner of Vic's shoe store is Reza Haghairi, who has been in the business himself for 20 years both in Toronto and Iran where he emigrated from in 1998.

Reza is very proud of the legacy that he has inherited from Vic and committed to keeping Vic's just the way it was and providing the same level of service as when Vic was the proprietor.

When he retired Vic expressed a in interest in continuing to work on shoes so Reza has arranged with Vic that he can come into the shop at anytime to help Reza work on shoes.

This is why, although he's retired, you will often see Vic still working away in his old shoe store.

Doors Open organizers are pleased that Vic's Shoe Repair is returning again to the tour in 2009, and once again will be sure to be an interesting stop.



A math teacher at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School in Aurora for 22 years, Bob McRoberts is retiring. A party, organized by Lynn Gardner and a committee, was held Thursday night at the Howard Johnson Hotel. McRoberts, who also sits on Aurora Council, was given a replica of the school's first "Williams Wildcat".

Auroran photo by David Falconer

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2) 700 Bloomington Rd. 8 - 1	6) 6 Millicliffe Circle 8 - 4	9) 105 Ind. Pkwy. N. 10-3
3) 8 Spyglass Ct., 8 - noon	7) 19 Twelve Oaks Dr. 7 a.m.	Royal Cdn. Legion.
4) 45 Earl Stewart Dr. 8 - 2	Moving Sale	Fundraiser

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Jones resigns from Liberal race; supports Black

From page 1
Sunday's Aurora Street Festival, he said he walked it from one end to the other.
He expects the nomination race to be a good one.
The 28-year-old Newmarket councillor is serving his second term, and when elected the first time, became the youngest person to hold an elected office in Newmarket.
Chris has called

Newmarket home for 20 years and has been a lifelong Liberal.
On council, he represents Ward 7 in the town after capturing 85 per cent of the vote in 2006.
Past federal Liberal candidate Jones, who in April indicated his intention to once again seek the nomination, last week, pledged his support for Margaret Black's bid to be the Newmarket-Aurora Liberal

candidate in the upcoming federal election.
It was Black, the rumour suggested, who was the Liberal choice for a candidate to run in the next election.
The two have had extensive discussions over the past week. After the discussions, the former Aurora mayor agreed to endorse her candidacy.
"I have known Margaret for a number of years, and I have

always had the utmost respect for her. We served together on Regional Council for 12 years. She is an intelligent and caring public servant, one who will be very able to effectively represent the needs of our community in Ottawa. We desperately need that representation. I look forward to supporting Margaret in the next federal election," he said.
Ms. Black, who two weeks ago was quoted as saying the

Liberals have been after her for 10 years, said, "Tim and I have been colleagues for a long time, and we share an important trait - the desire to do what is right for the people we represent. I am humbled and honoured by Tim's support, and I look forward to fighting in the election as part of the Michael Ignatieff team."
Jones was the mayor of Aurora from 1994 to 2006 and was the Liberal candidate for

Newmarket-Aurora in the 2008 federal election.
He lost that election to current Member of Parliament Lois Brown.
Margaret Black was born in Newmarket, went to high school in Aurora and is currently a practicing lawyer.
The date of the next federal election has not been determined, but it is widely expected to take place within the year.

THE AURORA PROMENADE A VISION FOR THE REVITALIZATION FOR THE YONGE AND WELLINGTON CORRIDORS



The Town has initiated **The Aurora Promenade – A Vision for the Revitalization for the Yonge and Wellington Corridors study**. The team led by **The Planning Partnership** has been retained to prepare the study in association with their strategic advisors from **Poulos & Chung** (transportation engineers) and **ERA Architects** (heritage architects).

The work program is organized in four phases that will be completed through a process that engages you, the community. The second of two workshops will be held on **June 15, 16 and 17 at Lynett Hall**. The Consultant Team will set up a temporary design studio to develop the preliminary design direction for **The Aurora Promenade Vision**. The Consultant team will be, for example, exploring options for: enhancing streets; parks and pedestrian connections; exploring strategies for enhancing heritage resources; and examining scenarios for redevelopment and infill.

We need your input

- On **June 15**, you are welcome to drop in for a one-on-one meeting with a member of the Consultant Team from 2 pm to 5 pm and/or between 5 pm and 6 pm to the Public Drop-In Centre to review the work in progress.
- On **June 16**, business owners are welcome to drop in between 1 pm and 3 pm. Residents are welcome from 7 pm to 8 pm at the Public Drop-In Centre to review the work generated during the day and provide feedback and ask questions.
- On **June 17** you are welcome to drop in between 1 pm and 5 pm for one-on-one discussions with the Consultant Team and/or at 7 pm for a public presentation and discussion of the best in-workshop outcomes.

This is a critically important study for the Town. The Planning Partnership team are very enthusiastic about working with the entire community on this challenging assignment



Proposed Study Area

Key Map of Lynett Hall



More information and a copy of the detailed agenda is available on the Town of Aurora Website (www.e-aurora.ca) or contact:
Jim Kyle, Planning and Development Services Department
(905) 727-3123 ext. 4345
email: jkyle@e-aurora.ca



Aurora Minor Ball Association

Jr. T-ball

The Gold Tigers played a great game recently at Machell Park in Aurora.

Dylan Vasilevski was named the Player of the Game for the Gold Tigers and the team all came together to high five Dylan for his excellent effort.

Bradford 9 Aurora 2
Allstate 9 McDonalds 8

Jr. Rookie

Mastermind 15 Michelberger 10
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Mosquito House League

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Lakeshore Valumart 16 Dr. Mark Weeden 12
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The Restorer's Group 6 Kwik Kopy Printing 2

Peewee House League

Men's Slo-Pitch 14 Minto Communications 3
TD Mortgages - Mike Searles 14 Royal LePage 7

Minor Midget Jays

Jays travelled to Barrie last week and defeated the Red Sox 14 - 2.

Patrick Jones struck out seven batters and Ryan Berube pitched four scoreless innings for the Jays. Trevor Searle and Bill Lowey each had two hits and Ben Ruffa knocked in three runs.

Improvements at leash-free park are approved by general committee

The Leisure Services Advisory Committee's recommendation for some improvements at Canine Commons, the leash-free dog park, raised at few questions at General Committee last week.

The suggested upgrades to the well-used space on Industrial Parkway North include a second fenced area to provide an internal safety feature for the dogs, the addition of trees along the perimeter, extra wood chips to help absorb some of the mud, and two benches for the park's (human) users.

Councillor Evelyn Buck provided a bit of history on the establishment of the park, and said it was her understanding that the agreement between the town and the committee that helped create and maintain the park specified that the committee was responsible for expenditures.

While she didn't have a problem with the improvements or cost, she was concerned that General Committee's approval of the expenditures would change the existing process, and potentially impact on similar agreements the town may have with other groups.

Leisure Services Director

Al Downey confirmed there is no charge for using the park, and that it is open to everyone.

While Aurora residents are expected to be the prime users, it is possible that people from neighbouring municipalities take advantage of it, since there are few other, if any, leash-free parks in the area.

Asked for clarification about the proposed improvements, Mr. Downey said the changes were minor in nature.

The Arboretum Committee had already agreed to partner in the plantings, which would improve the look of this barren stretch adjacent to the arboretum.

It was his understanding that the fence was meant to prevent dogs off the leash from escaping from the park when the gate was opened.

While he didn't know the cost, it was expected to be minimal and he felt it could easily be absorbed within his existing budget for town park fencing.

Despite Councillor Buck's questions, the remaining members of the Committee had no difficulty with the improvements or process, and the motion to approve the upgrades was passed.

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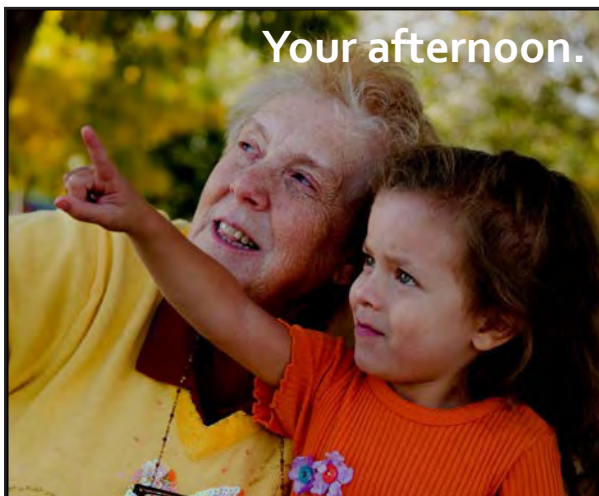


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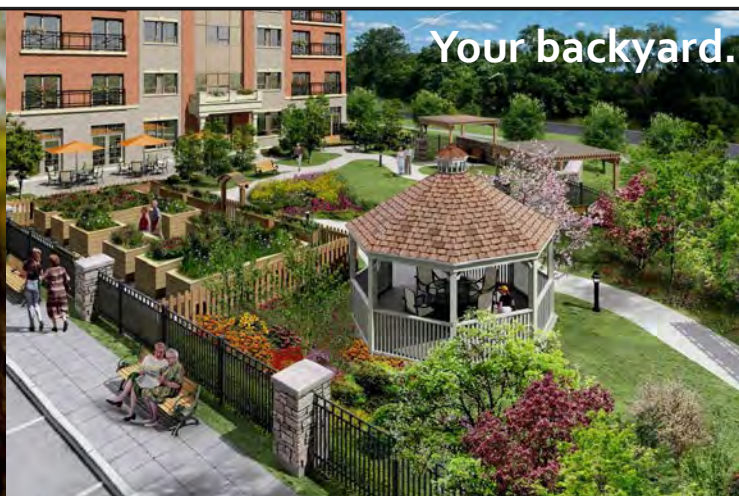
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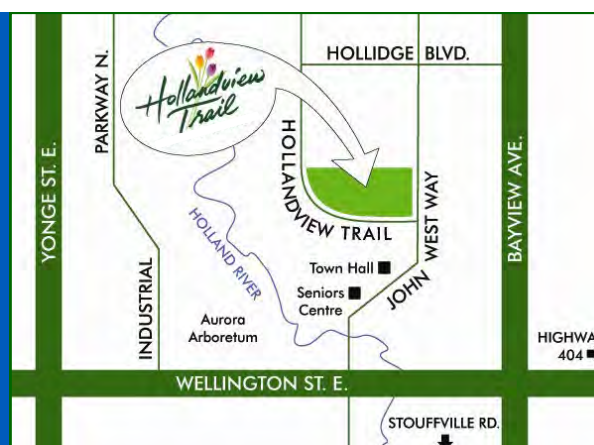
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