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THE AURORAN

Aurora's Independent Community Newspaper

Vol. 8 No. 49 905-727-3300 *auroran.com* FREE Week of October 14, 2008

Briefly



Which one will the voters bless?

With the election falling on our publication date, The Auroran won't be able to publish results in this issue. However, we will have photos and results on the internet as soon as they are available after the polls close. See our website at auroran.com.

Solve the murder and put the ghost to rest



The Aurora Historical Society's Murder Mystery Dinner returns to Hillary House on Saturday, November 1, and you are invited. In addition to an evening which includes wine, hors d'oeuvres and a three-course dinner catered by Gabriel of Aurora's Garbiels Café, you can actively participate in solving a crime that takes place in 1908 when Hillary House is visited by the very reluctant ghost of a young woman (Nicole Reiner), seen at the piano. Jennifer Steen, left, and Allison Petts are the servants. The dead woman seems to know she was murdered but does not know how, why or who killed her. She will keep haunting Hillary House until YOU help find the answers. To obtain tickets, which are \$80 each, call 905-727-8991. Space is limited.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Wells Street School's fate continues to be uncertain

By **ROBERT REVINGTON**

The fate of historic Wells Street Public School remains uncertain in view of a report presented by the York Region Board of Education indicating the 85-year-old building is in need of major capital improvements and plagued by declining enrolment.

The IBI Group of Architects engaged by the Board gave three options as to how the existing school might be salvaged.

The first consists of a minimal retrofit at an estimated price of \$5.21 million.

This option would also include a fee for additional maintenance estimated to be between \$3.5 million and \$6 million over a period of five years.

The second option is for a complete retrofit to try and meet current building code and Board standards.

However, this option carries a hefty price tag of \$10.76 million.

The third option is for a new building at the same location while keeping a Heritage Façade and would cost an estimated \$8.59 million to build--over \$2 million less than repairing the current facility.

Despite these options, the Board suggested in its report that there may not be a long-term need for a school in that area since Wells Street's enrolment numbers have been in decline since 2002.

In the current building's last year of operation, enrolment fell to a full-time equivalent of 198.5 students, while the Board places the building's capacity at over 300.

Over the last two school years Wells Street students have been sent to Aurora Grove Public School while the review process took place.

Before the students were relocated to Aurora Grove, Wells Street accepted students from kindergarten to grade six.

There has been a school on the Wells Street site since 1892.

The current building was constructed in 1923 and at that time was the only school between Toronto and Barrie boasting both an auditorium and a gymnasium.

It is believed parts of the 1892 structure were integrated into the current building.

Recently the facility was given protection under the Ontario Heritage Act.

"It would make demolition much more difficult," said John McIntyre of the Aurora Historical Society.

"It is an extremely important landmark in Aurora."

Many current and former residents of Aurora have gone to the school.

"It's right smack in the middle of the old part of town," said Councillor Bob McRoberts.

McRoberts's grandfather, J.H. Knowles, was the building's first principal while it was still a high school and worked at the building until 1952 when Dr. G.W. Williams High School was built on Dunning Avenue.

In the Board's meeting of September 25, it was decided an accommodation review committee would be created.

The Board will hold at least four public meetings on this issue, with the first scheduled for 7 p.m. on Wednesday, December 3, at The Education Centre on 60 Wellington Street West. Board Trustees are scheduled to make their final decision on the issue in their July 6, 2009 meeting.

Welcoming Arms finds new home

Welcoming Arms has moved from the basement of Our Lady of Grace Roman Catholic Church to a new location in the former rectory of Aurora's Trinity Anglican Church.

The service is a community-based organization made from a coalition of four major churches: Aurora United, Our Lady of Grace, St. Andrew's Presbyterian and Trinity Anglican.

"We wanted to have a permanent home," said Reverend Matt McKay of St. Andrew's Presbyterian.

Welcoming Arms is an outreach ministry to the poor in Aurora. It's a bunch of people who love their town and love the people."

His views were echoed by others.

"We know there's a need for what we do," said volunteer Susan Doyle.

"I think Welcoming Arms is succeeding," said Beverley Wood of Trinity Anglican. "It's a wonderful, wonderful, opportunity to learn and share."

"It helps people to make ends meet," said Councillor Stephen Granger, a Welcoming Arms volunteer, adding "People don't know where to go and the first place is to the church".

The churches refer them to Welcoming Arms.

Granger believes the new location is going to increase the service's profile.

The former location, in the basement of Our Lady of Grace, was meant to be temporary but it took a year and a half to find the right place.

The new location is at 44 Metcalfe Street, Aurora, on the second floor.

"We're just really happy to be involved and able to support this Ministry," said Trinity associate minister Reverend Stephen Kern.

Welcoming Arms is open on Mondays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and on Wednesday nights from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

See picture page 13.

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COMING EVENTS

CONTINUING

This month at the Town Hall's Skylight Gallery, the works of Bud Switzer are on display. Call 905-727-9491 for further information.

Thursdays (September to June): Navy League (Children nine to 12 years) Cadet program 7 to 9 p.m. Contact Cliff Davies at 905-727-2244 for details.

Tuesdays (September to June): Sea Cadet (Youths 13 to 18) program 7 to 9 p.m. Leave message at 905-895-3038.

Aurora Opera Company Children's Chorus (AOCCC) is a new treble voice choir dedicated to educating, nurturing and providing opportunities for children to express their musical abilities. It offers professional opportunities to sing with beauty, artistry, and joy. The AOCCC is open to boys and girls in Grades 1 through 12, and is made up of two choirs: Angel Choristers (a training choir for 6 and 7 year olds) and Aurora Opera Company Children's Chorus (open to 8-17 year olds), To audition, contact general director Sarah Kyle at keepsinging@look.ca.

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

Every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. moms/caregivers and tots are invited to Story and Playtime at Aurora Cornerstone Church, 390 Industrial Parkway South. Call 905-841-8883 for more information.

Every Wednesday from 6.30 p.m. to 8 p.m. the Pioneer Club for boys and girls age 3 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 905-841-8883 or E-mail to office@auroracornerstone.ca.

A drop-in centre operates every Wednesday at the Community Bible Church on Bathurst Street just south of Henderson from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. It's open to all parents, grandparents and caregivers. For more information e-mail Judy Hoffmann at jhoffmann@sympatico.ca.

Scottish Country Dancing every Friday morning at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church beginning at 10.30 a.m.

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.

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. There is also a selection of interest groups. 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. For more information, call 905-841-9706.

Tots (age 0-4 years) bring your caregivers for coffee or tea while you enjoy story and playtime every Tuesday from 9.30 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Aurora Cornerstone Church, 390 Industrial Parkway South. Call 905-841-8883 for further information.

Meet at Martha's Table, now in its fourth season. Every Thursday from 11.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m., you will find comfort food and a sense of community in the hall at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Aurora. A lunch of hot soup, sandwiches, and dessert will be provided. Any funds raised are directed to local community charities.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16

Amnesty International meets at Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria Street at 7.30 p.m. New members welcome. For information, call 905-713-6713.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17

Aurora Chamber of Commerce presents the 2008 Business Achievement Awards at Carrying Place in King Township. The event will feature a "Roaring Twenties" theme.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18

Harvest Fair at Wesley United Church 10 a.m. to 1.30 p.m., corner of Woodbine Avenue and Aurora Sideroad (Wellington St). Fair features crafts, baked goods, jams, jellies, preserves and an inexpensive lunch.

Eat locally, think globally. Enjoy "Harvest in Your Backyard," a dinner featuring duck and seasonal, local produce. Dinner begins at 6.30 p.m. in St. Andrew's Hall. Proceeds go to an Afghan mission. Purchase tickets in advance through the Presbyterian church office at 32 Mosley Street: call 905-727-5011. Tickets are \$15 for adults; and \$7.50 for children 14 and under.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19

The Aurora Seniors Association presents a "Celtic Autumn Concert" featuring Sarah Kyle and Joe Likuski that will take place at the Aurora Seniors' Centre 2 p.m.

Aurora-Newmarket unit of the Canadian Cancer Society will hold a fund-raising event at Upper Canada Mall beginning at 9 a.m. The event includes a five-kilometre walk around the mall. Registration at 8 a.m. For further information, or to register, visit www.cancer.ca/takingsteps.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 20

Aurora Writers monthly meeting at the Aurora Town Hall. Writers 18 years of age and over at any level of experience or genre of interest are welcome. For further information, contact Malcolm at 905-898-5484.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21

Have a howling good time filled with spooky stories, eerie activities and a creepy craft at the Aurora Library from 6.45 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. Admission is free. Ages 6 to 8. Phone 905-727-9493 for further information.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22

Aurora Garden and Horticultural Society presents Allen Foster talking about "Myths and Magic of Plants" at 8 p.m. at the Aurora Legion, Industrial Parkway North.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23

Women's Centre of York Region, Annual General Meeting, 6 to 8 p.m. in Binion's Hall at Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria Street, Aurora. RSVP by October 20 to Kirsten Eastwood, 905-853-9270, extension 101.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25

The Farmers Market features Customer Appreciation Day.

Haunted Forest, Sheppard's Bush, 6 to 8 p.m. Enter off Mary Street and bring a flashlight. Charitable BBQ will be on site. Advance tickets only, will be available starting October 14. For tickets and further information call 905-726-4762.

A Sketching Workshop with artist Bill Lewochko happens at the Aurora Public Library from 10 a.m. until noon for ages 4 to 9. Pre-registration is required. Fee is \$10 per registrant.

York Chamber Ensemble at Trinity Anglican Church at 7:30 p.m.

Halloween carnival party from 3 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. at Christ Lutheran Church (downstairs), 7 Lacey Court. It's free. For further information, call 905-727-3311.

14th annual seniors' autumn art show and sale

at the Aurora Seniors' Centre, 5 Municipal Drive, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Artists in attendance and refreshments will be served. Free Admission. For further information. call 905-726-4767.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28

Canadian Federation of University Women open meeting at the Aurora Legion, Industrial Parkway North. Guest speaker is David MacKinnon. Event begins at 8 p.m.

Explore the World of Art at the Aurora Library, for children ages 6 to 9, from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Fee is \$6 per child. For further information, call 905-727-9493.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1

Murder mystery evening at Hillary House. 6 p.m. Wine, hors d'oeuvres, and a three-course meal will be served. This event, because of limited seating, sells out early. For tickets - at \$80 each - call the Aurora Historical Society at 905-727-8991.

York Regional Police Male Chorus, 16th annual "In Harmony with the Community" fund raising concert. Tickets \$10. For advance sales in Aurora, call 905-727-9676.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3

Aurora Film Circuit presents "When Did You Last See Your Father?" starring Jim Broadbent and Colin Firth. Tickets, \$10, available at Aurora Public Library and R&R Revisited. All screenings

take place at the Cineplex Aurora, with door prize at 6.45 p.m. and film at 7 p.m. All proceeds benefit out-of-budget programming at the library.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Annual Christmas Bazaar sponsored by St. Andrew's Guild, beginning at 9.30 a.m. Stay for the "Spud Lunch," which begins at 11 a.m. Lunch tickets are \$8 for adults; \$4 for children. Everything happens in St. Andrew's Hall, corner of Mosley and Victoria Streets.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Trinity Anglican Church Women's Christmas Starlight Bazaar from 9.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. Luncheon is 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Coffee House at 7:30 p.m. Experience the many talents of Trinity Anglican Church and support the Diocesan choir camp.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18

Canadian storyteller Jennifer Cayley will be at the Aurora Public Library from 7 to 8 p.m. to introduce heroes and heroines in the Optimist Room, for children ages six to nine. There is no charge if you book in advance. Call 905-727-9493 for further information.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22

Local artist and author Nancy Hallas will tell a tale about a clever mouse then offer children between the ages of six and nine the opportunity to model their own mouse character at the Aurora Public Library. Event begins at 2 p.m. and the fee is \$6 per child.



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Rochelle Hayward (left), of the Community Home Assistance to Seniors (CHATS) receives a cheque from Karen Zorn of the Aurora Pine Tree Potters' Guild. The Guild will be holding a sale at the St. Andrew's Valley Golf Club, St. John's Sideroad East, from November 13 to 15. Charity table proceeds will go to the CHATS. For more information call 905-727-1278.

Tax relief for seniors

Currently the key provisions of the York Region property tax relief policy for seniors and other low-income persons 65 years of age or older provides that all property tax increases may be deferred.

Low income seniors aged 55-64 may defer increases greater than \$300 and the deferral applies to local, regional and educational components of the tax bill.

It is further provided that all deferrals are free of interest until the property is sold or ownership changes and that the low income threshold is \$23,000 for individuals and \$40,000 for a household of two persons or more.

As of December, 2006, there were 246 individuals utilizing the tax deferral program for a cumulative deferral for all three taxing jurisdictions was \$188,700.

The number of individuals participating in the program has increased on average by 20 per year.

Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Newmarket have grant programs for low-income seniors but do not include other low income individuals.

Newmarket provides a grant of \$200 with 49 participants, Richmond Hill grant is \$250 for 330 participants and Vaughan has a \$270 grant for 1,139 participants.

In order to better match tax relief with revised assessment process the region has reduced the threshold for seniors aged 55 to 64 to \$100 from \$300.

There was also a request that the provincial government act on its promise to create a new homeowners' grant for seniors who have difficulty paying their taxes and to enhance its Ontario Property Tax Credit program by increasing the refundable tax credit available to all low-income seniors to an amount equivalent to the education portion of the residential property tax.

Arguments have raged

over the years why seniors aged 65 and over are required to pay education taxes as their children were no longer part of the education system.

In March, 2007, Aurora council directed the town treasurer to prepare a report outlining the feasibility and implications of initiating a Property Tax Grant Program for Aurora Seniors.

In a report to council, it was pointed out that there were only two sections in the Municipal Act that allowed municipalities to provide relief to taxpayers.

The Property Tax Deferral section provides that a regional municipality may pass a bylaw for the purposes of relieving financial hardship for low income seniors and low income persons with disabilities.

The qualifications for what is low income must be specified in the bylaw.

The tax relief may be deferral, cancellation or other tax relief for all or part of a property tax increase in the residential property tax class.

Currently Aurora has ten individuals utilizing the regional tax deferral program for an annual deferral of \$770 on the town's portion of the property tax levy.

It was noted that should council wish to implement a Low Income Grants Program, it was estimated that up to 150 seniors would apply for it.

It was also suggested that council may wish to offer \$150 per qualified property owner and increase this annually by the increase in property taxes. Based on these estimates the cost to the taxpayers would be \$22,500 or a one per cent increase in taxes.

In addition to the cost of the grants there would be administrative costs and the number of applications would determine if the treasury department had the resources to handle the requests, plus some promo-

tional costs.

It's not a new problem as back in December, 1967, Aurora became the 46th municipality in Ontario to make a tax credit available to property owners over 65 years of age.

Under the Municipal and School Tax Credit Act, the total amount of the accumulated tax credit became payable when the property changed hands.

There was general belief at that time that education taxes should not be part of property taxes, as education bore no relationship to property in the same way as roads, sidewalks, sewers and other services to property.

Community newspaper truly serves

By **DICK ILLINGWORTH**

Newspapers have played and continue to play a vital role in the development of a country or a community.

They inform, entertain and document day-to-day events and patterns of life in the community.

They serve as a forum for discussions of issues of the day and represent the voice of the people and a defender of civil liberty and a friend of righteous causes.

A community newspaper's chief function is to hold a mirror to the community, the events and its people.

Edmund Burke, a great British Parliamentarian, flattered the press gallery by pointing to its members and naming them the Fourth Estate, far more important than the other three estates in parliament -- the lords, the commoners and the church.

United States President Thomas Jefferson said he would prefer newspapers without government to a government without newspapers.

Not everybody sees the media in this light as to many, including politicians, it is a foe not to be trusted, with complaints of being misquoted.

The complaint about being misquoted comes most frequently from persons not used to being interviewed or having a meeting covered by the media and become concerned when they see their words in print.

Former Liberal Prime Minister Jean Chrétien in his book "Straight from the Heart" wrote he had found that if you treated journalists professionally they would treat you the same way, but if you tried to use them they would sock it to you.

A newspaper cannot please everyone on every issue as there are normally two sides to an issue and it tries to present the facts as correctly as possible in its news columns so that

the reader can understand the issue and make up his or her own mind.

Editorial comment is the paper's opinion and columns are the writer's personal opinion.

Letters to the editor provide the readers, especially those who disagree with an issue a chance to have a say.

Briefly stated, when the media attends a council meeting or any public event, they have no greater right than the general public, but no less right.

In addition, they have a mandate and a responsibility to keep the public informed.

Communication is a two-way street.

The public has a right to know about the actions of their elected representatives, how they arrive at their decisions, how they vote, how they spend taxpayers' money and if they are accountable and responsible.

Elected representatives should read the letters to the editor of a community newspaper to learn the reaction of the general public to their policies and decisions.

The media acts as the alter ego of the public.

It stands in place of the absent citizen, but does not usurp that role when the citizen is present.

The media has a traditional mandate and responsibility to observe, interpret and report openly and without prejudice to the public.

But with freedom of the press there is an obligation and a responsibility.

The media is responsible to its readers and to the public for meeting the public need.

People are hungry for news about community events, local people and their activities, and the role of the community newspaper is to fill that need.

The national media and other papers carry the news of the world.

A truly community-oriented newspaper concentrates on the people, places and events in that community.

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Poor Richard

By DICK ILLINGWORTH

I'm not sure how it came out, but this meeting was fun

By RON WALLACE
Auroran editor

Chances are when you read this, the federal election will be over, the dust will have settled, and you'll know who the Member of Parliament is for the riding of Newmarket-Aurora.

But I'm writing this with still a week to go before the election, and when I return from holiday, the election will be over.

Last night, which in fact, was Monday night, October 6, the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, with a couple of local newspapers - yes, The Auroran was one of them - sponsored an all-candidates' meeting at Theatre Aurora.

The place - am I surprised - was packed. Standing room only, as about 200 people crammed into the small theatre.

Now then, I was one of the ones asking questions. If you were there, I was the one who wrapped up the evening saying "I'd rather be in a bar..."

Being a questioner of the event gave me the opportunity to study the six candidates for this riding, and, if I was a new voter, without any prior knowledge of the candidates, I'd have voted for Glenn Hubbers of the Green Party.

But I personally knew most of the candidates and I knew what party they represented, so I didn't vote for Glenn. That's all I'll tell you.

I think, perhaps, the Green Party is one that must not be discounted in the future, but it's too early right now for them to run a country.

Their leader, Elizabeth May, is a former lawyer and she makes a lot of sense with every issue she tackles.

Later on C-Span, I watched as she met other leaders of the other parties, and, to me, she was a clear winner in every issue she discussed.

As much as I like Dorian Baxter, the PC candidate, his time may also be in the future...but it's not yet.

He told the audience he was the only candidate back for another go at it, because Belinda Stronach isn't running this time.

Lois Brown of the Conservative Party and Mike Seaward of the New Democratic Party both ran, and lost, in the last election.

And I'm not sure Glenn Hubbers didn't run as well.

In other words, it was like old home week up there on Theatre Aurora's stage, where the last time I was there, I was an also-ran in the Neil Simon play called The Odd Couple.

Boy, that was a few years ago.

They asked me to try out for a musical after that, and heard me sing only once, and I haven't heard from Theatre Aurora people since. Frankly, I don't blame them.

That had to be nearly 40 years ago, and after all those years singing in the shower, nothing has improved much.

Meanwhile, back at the candidates' meeting.

Lois Brown - now there's someone who can sing...and play a piano - is a former front office worker for Newmarket-Aurora Member of the Provincial Parliament Frank Klees, but she has no political experience to speak of.

Granted, she almost knocked off Belinda Stronach when the two were seeking the Conservative nomination, two elections ago, before Belinda crossed the floor of the house and became a Liberal.

Before that happened, Belinda nearly lost the election when she came up against Martha Hall-Findlay, a former Newmarket resident who was parachuted in from the Collingwood area and damn near won the riding.

Martha, currently a member of parliament in Willowdale (at least she won a by-election a while ago, and I don't know how she made out Tuesday, but I'd be surprised if she lost) hates it when I say she was parachuted into the riding to do battle with Belinda.

But, facts are facts, and that's what happened.

When Belinda became a Liberal, Martha stepped aside to allow it to happen.

Now the reason why I'll never make it as an election prognosticator: I thought when Belinda crossed the floor, she was literally finished as far as re-election was concerned.

But in the next election she ran roughshod over her nearest competitor - Lois Brown.

Go figure.

Then there's Tim Jones, an Aurora politician for 28 years, 12 of them as mayor. With Tim at the helm, I served nine years as an Aurora councillor.

Frankly, if Tim were there again, I'd do it again.

'Nuff said.



Father of Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, was a member of this baseball team, and he is in the second row, third from the left. Letter writer's father, Frederick Charles Bush, was the pitcher. Aurora United Church anniversary spurred the memories of the letter writer, below. Anybody know anyone else in the photograph?

Letter to the Editor

Church's 190th anniversary awakens reader's memories

To the editor,

Reading your issue of The Auroran of the week of September 16th regarding the "United Church turns 190" story, sent me down memory lane once again.

I attended Aurora United for approximately 40 years before we moved from Aurora.

As a teenager I belonged to the Young People's group at the church, joined the church in the spring of 1943 when Rev. Roy Hicks was minister there, sang in the choir for many years, taught the little -four and five-year-olds in Sunday School there, and my husband, Gordon, and I were married by Rev. Hicks in September, 1946.

The Rev. Edwin Pearson, father of Lester B. Pearson, was minister in the then Methodist Church before it became the Aurora United Church, from 1901 to 1903.

He performed the ceremony surrounding the marriage of my mother and father in November, 1903.

The Rev. Pearson played on the Aurora baseball team, and my father Frederick Charles Bush was the pitcher.

I am enclosing a copy

of a picture I have of the baseball team (above) and my father is sitting cross-legged in the front row on the right side.

The Rev. Edwin Pearson is in the second row, third from the left.

My father's brother, Edwin Bush, is the first on the left in the third row, and Henry Bush is at the end of the same row.

After I was born in September, 1926, my parents wrote to Rev. Pearson asking if he would attend at our home at 82 Wellington Street East in Aurora and christen (it's now called baptizing) me, and he came.

Hey, it seems that that is my only "claim to fame".

Congratulations to Aurora United Church on this very special event that took place on Sunday, September 28th.

I have many memories of old Aurora and look forward to reading about many more in your newspaper.

Your newspaper, as usual, is full of very interesting Letters to the Editor, stories of past events, and just plain good reading!

Dorene Stephenson
Dundas

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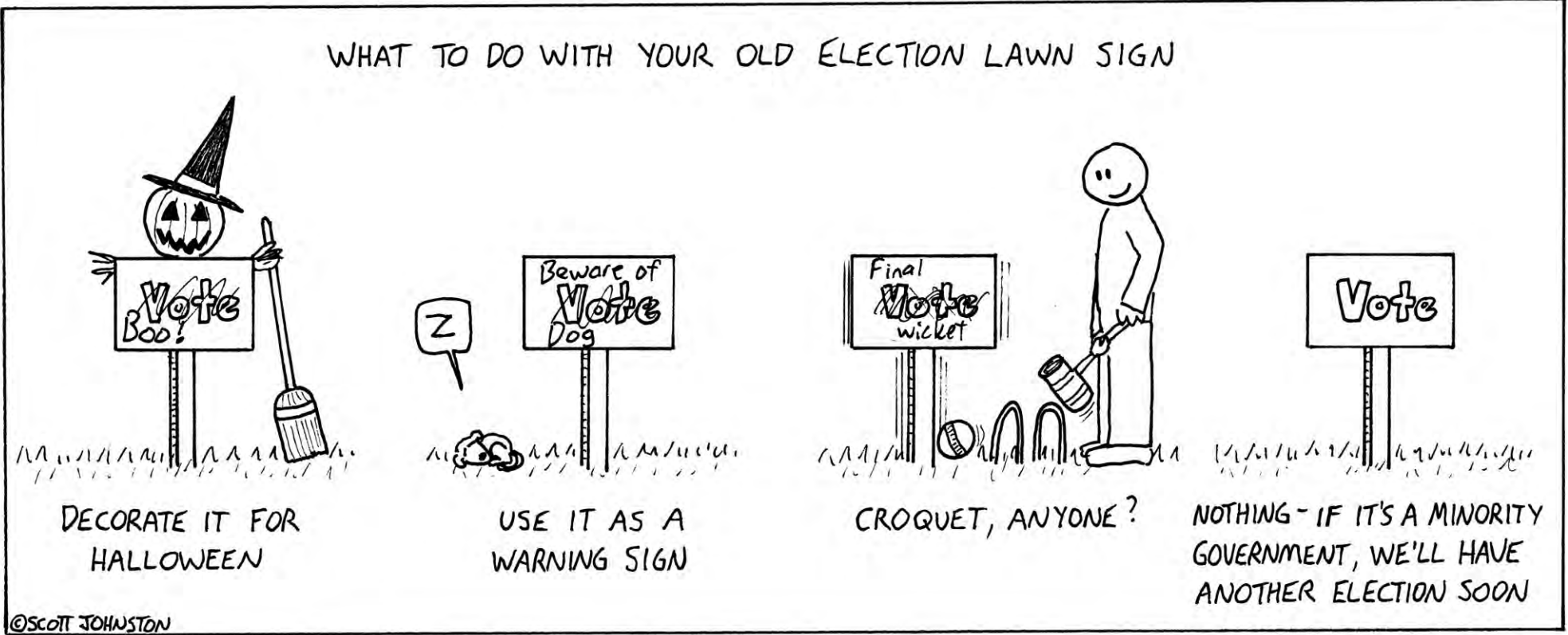
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Front Porch Perspective

By Stephen Somerville

Election notebook & prediction

Some musings and observations from the election trail.

The way that things were going during the early and middle part of the campaign, I was quite certain that the Liberal Party's "Green Shift" program would turn out to be the federal equivalent of the Provincial Tories faith based funding fiasco last year.

The Liberals were not getting any traction with their messaging of this complex program and, when Mr. Dion basically put the plan on the back-burner a while ago, I thought this would also be the equivalent move of Mr. Tory changing his own stand on the faith based issue, with the same electoral consequences for the Liberals.

But it did not happen.

The reason being that the worldwide financial and economic crisis took over and changed the rules of the game.

As has been said many times, actual campaigns are important; it doesn't matter where you sit in the polls once the writ is dropped but it is where you sit come election day that counts.

The other thing that I noticed was the decrease in the number of volunteers. There is always going to be a core group of individuals to assist, but the numbers of volunteers - among all parties - seems to have decreased. People are extremely busy and don't have the time or the inclination to devote to civic causes as they once did.

This means that more pressure is put on the existing workers to do more.

My hats off to the volunteers for all the candidates.

You make democracy thrive in our community by offering that most important commodity to the voter -- a choice.

I know you are all waiting for my fearless prediction of both the voter turnout and the electoral results in this riding.

Before I provide you with this, a little history is in order regarding my predictive powers.

I thought that Frank Klees and the Progressive Conservatives would win last year's provincial election contest in Newmarket-Aurora by between twenty- five hundred and three thousand votes, not the one thousand three hundred and forty-seven votes that it actually turned out to be.

But then again, just keep in mind that I confidently predicted that Kim Campbell would win one hundred seats in 1993 and that then incumbent Mayor Tim Jones would retain the mayor's chain by about 350 votes over Ms. Morris and Nigel Kean in November 2006!

I won't be headed to Las Vegas or Casino Rama, for that matter, any time soon!

For regular readers of this column, you will know that there is a hobby horse that I consistently ride; that people need to get out and vote.

Voter turnout for the past provincial election was a record low -- only 52.6 percent of eligible voters cast a ballot, beating the previous all-time low of 54.7 percent, which occurred in 1923.

In Newmarket-Aurora, we did slightly better than the province-wide average; 45,606 of 82,376 eligible voters cast a ballot, or 55.4%.

Not pretty!

Oh well, looking on the bright side at least it beat the 38% voter turnout from the 2006 municipal election.

I predict a voter turn-out of between 55% to 57%, low by federal standards.

I believe that the actual result should be within one thousand votes, either way, for Conservative Lois Brown or Liberal Tim

Jones on election day.

The race could in fact be closer than the 689 vote margin that then Conservative candidate Belinda Stronach beat Liberal Martha Hall Findlay by back in 2004.

As I write this column on Thursday October 9, the CPAC Nanos national polls have the Conservatives at 33%, 29% for the Liberals, 20% for the NDP, 10% for the Bloc and 7% for the Green Party.

I predict that Lois Brown wins by 250 votes.

Here's the scenario.

If the downward trend from the Nanos poll continues, Ms. Brown may well be behind based on the ballots actually cast on October 14, but be saved by the advance poll results of those who voted a week ago when things were better for the Tories.

If this scenario plays out, the Conservatives would win Newmarket by 1,000 votes, lose Aurora by 1,750 votes, but ultimately be saved if they win the advance polls by 1,000 votes.

And I don't believe this idea is as far fetched as it first sounds.

The advance voter turnout was very high - in the neighbourhood of 5,000 I have been told.

The Conservatives have historically won the advance polls in this riding relatively comfortably.

So, if Ms. Brown wins the advance ballot battle by a good margin, she could be going to Ottawa.

While I am at it, the Leafs will win the Cup next year over the Mats Sundin- led Detroit Red Wings - in six games!

Stephen can be contacted at
stephengsomerville@yahoo.com



Cathy's Corner

By Cathy Vrancic

On giving thanks

It's Thanksgiving weekend, and all through the house...Not a single dust puppy is stirring. They have all been neatly vacuumed. Floors have been washed and wood has been polished. Glass gleams in the sunlight and there are no cobwebs in the corners or fingerprints on the doors. Since the kids took most of my furniture when they moved out almost 2 months ago, I have engaged in some therapeutic shopping.

Then, to keep "Empty Nest Syndrome" at bay, I have been keeping busy cleaning and organizing. I even painted the walls to match the "new look": the clean, clutter-free look I have longed for all my life! Oh, the joy! Now I'm ready to entertain my returning band of prodigals!

Tim is the first to return to Aurora. He walks through the door like he lives here, even though he doesn't anymore. I guess that's because this is still his home...and with any hope, it will always feel that way. After all, he does still have a key and I'm not far enough into the "Empty Nest Recovery" stages to have changed the locks.

"Hello, Mom, I'm home!" he announces as the door slams behind him.

I don't hug my son right away. I can't because we have a dog. Just like all dogs, Jake is first to the door and quite dramatic in his greeting. Tim pets him exuberantly for a few min-

utes, causing fresh dog hair to be released into the freshly vacuumed and dusted surrounding area. I cringe.

Tim is a good son who seems to intuitively understand that I miss him terribly, so he never comes home without a few bags of laundry to help ease my pain. Since piles of rumpled clothes at the front door don't suit my new decor, I get him to move them to the laundry room and it feels just like old times: nobody can walk in the laundry room anymore!

As he hauls his laundry through the house, he notices that things have changed. "Wow!" Distracted, he drops the laundry in the middle of the hall and detours through the rooms I have finally reclaimed. He approves!

Jennifer is next to arrive home. Of course, Jake does the dog thing again. His tail wags so wildly he looks like he's doing the salsa, and I am resigned to running the vacuum cleaner once again in the morning. Just like old times...

Jennifer inspects the "new look" and gives her enthusiastic approval. Having come of age as a woman, her decorating gene is fully activated. She compliments me on my excellent taste - in using the red and mustard she picked for her apartment in Windsor. Who would have thunk I could be wild and whimsical like my daughter, huh? My, how things have changed!

Since Nadia and James live in Newmarket, they arrive on Saturday...right after I finish running the vacuum cleaner in the morning. They have a new baby - Oreo.

Oreo is a kitten and Jake is a dog, so the commotion at the door entails a great deal of fur flying, not to mention hissing, growling and hackle raising. As the two fundamentally incompatible animals work on their relationship, vases teeter, wine glasses wobble and I cringe.

Ah, but the family is together!

Yes, there will be dust puppies breeding in the corners and dishes multiplying in the sink. There will be laundry piled high on top of the dryer and unmade beds. There will be sweaters draped on the banister and crumbs on the sofa. Isn't that what Thanksgiving is all about?

But there will be laughter and sharing and reconnection. There will be warm hearts and warm smiles. There will be apple picking and a walk in the forest. There will be a bonfire and a hunt for the perfect stick upon which to roast the perfect marshmallows. Just like old times...

And when they all pack up and exit Aurora, all that's really left will be moments and memories that will fill our hearts with gratitude for a lifetime.

Cathy welcomes e-mail at: ccaurora@rogers.com

Letters to the Editor

Apple n’ honey fest sweet for judges, winners

To the editor,

Most people think judging is an easy job. Well our 6 judges knew after sampling each and every entry of 22 apple pies and apple crumbles that this was real work! Overall, we had tremendous support and participation from Aurora citizens this year considering the misty rain we had. There were happy faces excited to see the many entrants in this year’s competition. From the 22 homemade, the winners with bragging rights, along with earning spe-

cially made ribbons with prizes, went to the following people. For the apple pie section, 1st place was Edna Crosby of Aurora, 2nd place was Lisa Duff of Aurora, and 3rd place was Michelle Bodley of Aurora. For the apple crumble section, 1st prize was Sue Hugginson of Aurora, 2nd place was Lauren Winders of Innisfil and 3rd place was Lois Brown of Newmarket. This event had many tasty treats which were sold afterwards as individual slices for charity in support of the Aurora Food Pantry. To assist here we had many helpful hands from the

youth and parent volunteers of the Aurora Tigers AE division. They lent their assistance to the judges and helped in raising funds afterwards for Charity. We also had the Aurora Scout Group on hand during the festival to help support the various causes at the market. As a fun compliment the Apple N’ Honey Festival featured another special event contest facilitated by David Heard of B.U.L.L.I.E.S. His tireless efforts as a farmers’ market organizer/vendor managed to get over 30 youth between ages 7 and 17 to participate in this year’s pie eating contest.

At times the crowd’s laughter was amazing while these great kids had a blast chowing down on their personal chef-made pies. To the happy sticky faced winners two great 1st place prizes of a \$100 education bursary along with other super gift prizes were awarded from B.U.L.L.I.E.S. I’m sure many of these Aurora youth will have lots of good hometown memories for years to come as a result of this contest. The Welcoming Arms Ministry was supported from the proceeds of this event and together both charities will continue to do great work in supporting the Aurora community.

Throughout the festivities musical tunes were played from Aurora local band talents such as Soulise, the Manatee Band, the Mammoth Band and George St. Kitts Music. There was also a free UBU Art Workshop where 40 children designed personal painted tee shirts. All adding to the good times and good company for people of all ages visiting the Aurora farmers’ market during the day. In looking ahead, the farmers’ market will continue to keep going every Saturday in October, closing on October 25th.

So as a wrap up on Saturday, October 25th, we will have our "Customer Appreciation Day" along with prizes featured for the best youth Halloween costumes worn at the market. We again appreciate Aurora’s continued patronage at the market and the vendors look forward to meeting you at "your special meeting place" in Aurora each Saturday! Stephen Granger Councillor-Liaison Aurora Farmers’ Market

These solicitors can’t force you to release water heater

To the editor,

Several times recently I have answered my door to find someone standing there insisting I make an appointment for them to come in and take my rented water heater away and install new one. I have explained to them that I rent the water heater from Direct Energy and so

I cannot let them take it. The conversation should end there but it doesn’t. They insist that I have to do this, that I have no choice. I contacted Direct Energy who confirmed that I am responsible for the appliance and cannot give it to anyone else. They also assured me I

can rent my heater from anyone I choose. Taking this further I checked with the Town of Aurora, Enbridge, and Power Stream and found nothing to suggest that there is any reason to replace my five-year-old appliance. These people are overly aggressive and when out of frustration I shut the

door on them they just send someone else who also insists I have to let them into my house. I’m writing to warn others that these people are not telling you the truth. You do not have to let them switch your water heater if you don’t want to. LeeAnn Keller Aurora

Can’t get through to new service

To the editor,

Too funny! Did they (those powers who be) really think the launch of the Do-Not-Call service would not garner an immediate response and a deluge of calls and e-mails enough to crash the entire system? Perhaps, rather than advertising the start of the wonderful (if it, in fact, works) system, a graduation of sign-ups using either area codes, phone numbers, last names, etc., could have prevented the "crash of 08" (contracted Bell system). As of this writing, I am still on hold, two days and counting.

This system, which apparently only lasts for three years, does not stop unsolicited phone calls from charities, American companies, newspapers, political parties, pollsters (especially during a federal election), and companies who you have done business with in the last 18 months. The service takes about 31 days to come into effect. So, basically, I won’t receive calls from "Boris - the moving guy" and that dating service who advises me that they have "Mr. Right" just waiting for my return call to their agency - a lot of bull. To prevent all unwanted calls, Bell has a blocking

service that you can pay for. I prefer to answer the call with my mouth full of dinner, ask the caller for their number so that I can return their call during their supper hour or an equally inconvenient time. I have been known to be even ruder but I will keep my alternate answers to myself for fear of embarrassment. By owning two barking Old English Sheepdogs, a mouthy cat and an attack African Grey Parrot, I have effectively stopped unwanted solicitors from coming to my door or if they venture to knock they seem to run away at the speed of light to never

again "darken my doorstep". The people I want to see know how to circumvent my walking security system. I don’t like junk mail either, but if you want my attention just a polite phone call, e-mail during regular business hours or even that ancient novel idea of a proper letter could work. To sign up for the Do-Not-Call service "try" 1-888-362-5889 or www.inntedncl.gc.ca and be prepared to wait. Still waiting! Bonnie Tiffin Oak Ridges


Interaction is good: reader

Re: David Hodgson’s forwarded correspondence from GO Transit concerning candidates on GO property, The Auroran, week of October 7.

As a regular GO rider I read Mr. Hodgson’s original letter to The Auroran with a chuckle and shake of my head. To see the follow up response begs the reply -


me thinks Mr. Hodgson has too much time on his hands. We should welcome any and every opportunity to interact with our political candidates no matter what their views and in this case even on a GO platform. Mr. Hodgson - I have some leaves that need raking if you have the time. J. MacDonald Aurora

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Letters to the Editor

Council meetings to be available with internet connection, Buck says

To the editor,

I called Lisa, station manager of Rogers Cable, this morning.

I wondered what went into the decision to show Aurora Council meetings on Cable at noon on Wednesdays.

It seems the decision was to follow Aurora Cable practice for first showing.

I had heard the arrangement with Newmarket Council was for one and a half hours of screen time.

They organize their agen-

da to put housekeeping items at the end of their meetings and deal with the issues the public should be aware of during the first hour and a half.

I was hoping Aurora Council would recognize the merits of that format and we would follow suit.

At this point, Council has not had an opportunity to consider options.

A meeting has been held between top echelons of Rogers and Mayor Morris.

No preference was stated for timing of council

screening.

In its absence, as noted above, Rogers simply decided to follow Aurora Cable practice.

There is time yet for a change.

Robotic cameras are in the works.

It means less manpower needed to film council meetings.

Still, if people in the community put any value in the opportunity to watch council meetings and reserve for themselves the right to make judgements about council

decisions, they would be wise to let Rogers Cable know another time slot would be appreciated.

I have some good news though.

This week, for council input, staff are previewing You Tube-like screening of council and council-in-committee meetings on the Town's website.

It means computer users with internet access can view the meetings.

First indication is storage can only be provided for four meetings.

I believe Aurora is among the first municipalities to make this service available.

I think it's exciting.

We are keeping up with the times.

It was also an idea I proposed which was not opposed.

Evelyn Buck
Aurora

Reader questions case for Aurora nature trails

To the editor,

Response to Klaus Wehrenberg's letter to the editor, The Auroran, week of September 23.

Mr. Klaus Wehrenberg presented a case for trails in

Aurora.

He claims that 86 percent of Aurorans participate in walking and hiking.

He has a large group of people to raise money from to build his fantasy trails.

But no one wants to form a committee as another spe-

cial interest group to obtain money from the council.

I would say that Aurora is run by committee.

Most of the committees are advocates for a specific matter and in some cases is not for the good of Aurora taxpayers.

I would expect there are more than 200 Aurora citizens on Aurora council committees, all with different agendas.

I wonder, how many committee recommendations are changed by council?

If the answer is very few, then Aurora is run by committee and not by our elected council.

The decisions are made by the committees.

So, Mr. Klaus Wehrenberg, form your committee and we will see the outcome.

But it would be nice to see the 47 percent of Aurorans you say would like to spend the money on trails.

Maybe it is other Aurora citizens' money they would like to spend.

R.W. Hanes
Aurora

Mini-walk benefitted from Auroran letter

To the editor,

Thank you so much for printing my first letter in The Auroran regarding the mini-Winners Walk of Hope in Aurora.

Many people commented to me about reading it; as well, three walkers joined us because of reading my letter!

I was so touched.

There were close to 80 walkers and we raised nearly \$5,000 along with another \$2,200 from a walker unable to join us but who directed her money be given to Team Aurora.

Therefore, we are not far

from our \$10,000 goal.

Next year!

I am so grateful to the many individuals who donated - there must be close to 200 - as well as the few businesses who gave generous donations.

All who contributed to Ovarian Cancer Canada have

done a great deed and have contributed to finding an early detection tool and ultimately a cure.

I am proud of our Walk and I truly believe it was filled with Hope.

Gayle Palmer
Aurora

What's Happening at the Howard Johnson Aurora...

Dinner Theatre

Point of Viewing

by Todd McGinnis

Opening Night

Friday October 24th, 2008!
November 7th, 8th, 14th, 21st,
December 12th and 19th

\$39.95 per person
plus tax and gratuity
Doors open @ 6:30 pm
Dinner @ 7pm
Show @ 8:30 pm

Murder Mystery...



"Little Theatre of Death"

Saturday, October 18th
\$39.95 per person
plus tax and gratuity
Doors open @ 6:30 pm
Dinner and Show 7pm

Yuk Yuk's Halloween Night!*

Friday
October 31st, 2008

\$35.00 per person,
Dinner and Show
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Part 1

Prosperous times for Aurora in the 1940s

By ELIZABETH MILNER
Special to The Auroran

"Were the old days really good," asked Virginia?

"Yes, Virginia the old days were good in Canada and in Aurora."

Canadians have voted once again, but we are never too sure these days what a government will do for us. Will promises be kept? Do those in power really care about the lives of citizens, or is corporate power controlling the government?

There was a time when the government seemed to be on the side of working families. No, the years from 1945 to 1959 weren't perfect, but they were called years of "peace and prosperity" by most historians and except for the Korean War (1950 to 1953) and the Cold War, I guess you can call them that.

Certainly in Canada and in Aurora the label seems quite accurate; it was a time of excitement and positive thinking and many activities, clubs and events that have continued to this day, began in Aurora at this time.

William Lyon McKenzie King was returned as the Liberal Prime Minister for the third time in 1935 and he served until 1948.

His government passed many laws which were good for average citizens.

In 1945 Family Allowance, called the "baby bonus", began with an average payment of \$5.95 for each child 16 years and younger, was sent each month to families.

The amount seems small today, but at the time it provided real assistance to a family. Family Allowance was Canada's first universal welfare program and it showed the government cared about its citizens.

The Canada Citizenship Act came into effect January 1, 1946.

Canadians became citizens of their own country and that was marvellous. The United Nations General Assembly had its first meeting January 10 of the same year.

There was hope for dialogue between nations and perhaps even world peace.

Tommy Douglas introduced a health care system in Saskatchewan at this time and people in the other provinces were beginning to hear about the possibility of provincial or even a national health insurance plan for Canada. What could be better than that?

In November, 1948, Louis St. Laurent became Prime Minister and good times continued.

People often referred to the Prime Minister as "Uncle Louis." On January 14, 1949, the first non-stop Trans-Canada flight took

place. In March of the same year, Newfoundland became Canada's 10th province.

Construction of a Trans Canada highway followed in 1950. Even better than that, was the fact that the Old Age Assistance Act passed in 1951.

Seniors now had a safety net, if they lived long enough to fall into it before they fell into their permanent resting place.

A Trans-Canada natural gas pipeline from the West began in 1953 and a National Library, built in Ottawa, opened its doors the same year.

Canada was growing and changing rapidly. World War II had made our country stronger, more independent and given it a place on the world stage.

John George Diefenbaker became Prime Minister in 1957 putting the Progressive Conservatives in power. (Don't confuse the Progressive Conservative Party with the present Conservative Party, which united with the Reform Party and the Canadian Alliance).

In 1957, the natural gas pipeline coming from the west reached Aurora and two years later the pipeline was completed across Canada.

While Mr. Diefenbaker was in office the Canada Council was formed March 28, 1957.

Two years later, on April 1, the St Lawrence Seaway opened and on exactly the same date, National Hospital Insurance also began.

Canadians were seeing great changes in their country.

According to many historians, "peace and prosperity" ended in 1959, but in Aurora we included the next few years because Lester Bowles Pearson became Prime Minister in 1963 bringing the Liberals into

power once again.

In Aurora, Mr. Pearson was considered a home town boy because he had spent his very early years in our town, where his father was a preacher, and so we expected more good things from him. We got them, too.

The Canadian Bill of Rights was approved August 4, 1960. The Canadian Pension Plan was under discussion in his government from 1963 to 1965.

In 1965, Canada got its own flag, but not everyone liked the one that was chosen. There were people who felt Mr. Pearson had foisted the simple flag on the country.

In February, 1965, there was a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. No one in Aurora thought too long or hard about that at the time.

Also, that year, a Universal Health Insurance and National Medicare programme was instituted which came into effect in 1966.

Our Prime Minister was called a peace maker and he was respected around the world and he even sent letters to the Banner about his years as a little boy in our town.

All these good things, happening in the larger world, made our little town of Aurora a better place to live.

We felt, as did other Canadians, that we could trust our government. We felt the people in Ottawa were on our side and they were doing the right things for us and every citizen.

This period of good government and positive thinking began a period of growth and change in Aurora, as well as other small towns across the country.

The Aurora Legion began in 1945 and the town assisted in funding the construction of a Legion Hall. The first Legion Hall opened

on Yonge Street in 1947 and everyone was pleased about that.

The same year, the Victoria Order of Nurses opened an office in town. The nurses offered home care at minimal cost to the sick, the recuperating, the dying, as well as new mothers and their babies.

In 1946, a sure sign that Aurora was growing was when the town's first traffic lights were put in at the corner of Yonge and Wellington Streets.

Bell Telephone Company also improved and expanded its service in 1946 by extending lines in the rural areas around Aurora.

The Aurora Horse Show, Hunt Club and the Boy's Band started up again the year after WWII ended. The tennis courts up Maple Street got overhead lights in 1946 and people could play in the cool of the evening.

Cousins Dairy opened Aurora's first Bowling Alley built above the dairy that year. People thought that was great and that a bowling alley was a better place for the town boys to go than a pool hall.

In 1949, because of Tom

Please see page 9



Aurora resident Angus Duff was 'all ears' at last Thursday's Colours of Fall concert and corn roast held by the Town of Aurora in the Town Park under perfect skies. Events included fiddling, pumpkin carving and live entertainment. Line-ups for corn were reported to be long and steady.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

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The story behind lost Aurora mall

The proper name for the Northern Lights is Aurora Borealis, so naturally there is a strong link between the municipality and this multi-coloured curtain of wavering lights.

Aurora once had the opportunity to bring the northern lights home, but it's a long, sad story.

Representatives of Consolidated Building Corporation, the developer of the 800-home Regency Acres subdivision, were back before council in committee in 1965 to propose a \$17-million dollar complex for the north end including an enclosed mall shopping complex.

In addition to the approximately 24 stores, the developers planned a movie theatre, a motel and a large one-stop service centre.

The residential component was planned for high-rise apartments, maisonettes and single-family homes. The apartment complex was to have 11 storeys with approximately 1,000 suites, plus about 275 private homes.

The developers said they would maintain as many of the existing apple trees as possible to provide a park-like setting for the complex.

They also indicated they were willing to contribute to the town's proposed \$400,000 sewage plant expansion.

An assessment hungry council requested a proposed site plan for the residential and commercial development, and agreed to fast-track the shopping centre component to be located at the corner of Orchard Heights Boulevard and Yonge Street where St. Andrew's Shopping Centre is now located.

At that time council in committee meetings were held in private and when news of the proposed development appeared in the local press, there were cries of a news leak, with everyone blaming someone else.

In late January, 1966, the new shopping centre moved a step closer to reality.

CBC officials expressed their willingness to delay the housing component of their

development plan so they could proceed with the commercial development. They said interest was strong and the proposed plaza had been expanded.

By this time some of the local merchants started to take an interest in the proposed development.

In spite of the developers' promises that the proposed shopping centre would attract customers from the surrounding area, the merchants were concerned about loss of business.

By April, 1966, the Ontario Water Resources Commission (now the Ministry of the Environment) warned that approval for additional growth would not be given until satisfactory additional sewage treatment facilities were in operation.

A month later, council was still waiting for a report and recommendation from the Aurora Planning Board.

It was decided they would wait until their next meeting and if they hadn't received a report they would act on their own.

In late May a deeply

divided council gave grudging consent for a start on excavation and foundation work for the proposed shopping centre.

By a 5-4 vote, council concluded a table-pounding session at which CBC representatives threatened to withdraw their project unless they were given some indication that it could proceed.

In early June representatives of the Aurora Shopping Centre advised council they were opposed to the proposed development and asked council to withdraw approval.

By March, 1967, the proposed north end plaza was ready to enter the detailed planning stage.

In spite of information that the plaza would produce \$475,000 in assessment, some councillors expressed concerns that the promise of a shopping plaza was bait leading to the development of a residential subdivision.

By June, 1969, Bancora Developments acquired the 15-acre north-end commercial site.

Please see page 12



Aurora Seniors Association President Charles Sequeria expresses his delight as the roulette wheel slows to a halt during the Aurora Seniors' Centre first Casino Night held this past Friday night. Enjoying the president's reaction is Las Vegas show girl Liana Crisolago who greeted guests to an evening that included slots, black jack, finger foods and other refreshments.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Prosperous time for Aurora - continued

From page 8

Swindle, playground equipment was put into the park and that summer there was the first volunteer park supervision by Mrs. Craig McKenzie.

Tom Dickson was hired as the first full time Recreation Director in 1950 and he started pressing the town for artificial ice in the arena.

He said it would save the teenage boys from going wrong.

I don't know if that's what persuaded everyone to vote for artificial ice, but the town's people voted "yes" and the first artificial ice was put into the arena along with dressing rooms with stoves, an office for Tom and a big observation room overlooking the ice with a snack bar.

We thought we were in heaven.

A year later in April of 1951 we were registering for the first figure skating lessons in town that began the following autumn.

I thought that was grand and I lined up to register.

Aurora began having a Santa Claus parade in 1950 and the event just kept getting bigger and better.

Mrs. Landen came to Aurora with her husband, the General Manager of Hart Manufacturing, in 1950 and she offered the first dancing lessons in town. Different teachers came and went, but there were always dancing lessons in town after that.

The Lions Club gave the town its first bandstand in the Town Park that year. It wasn't handsome but it served as a stage for events and it provided washrooms below the stage. I don't know what people caught short in the park did before that.

A Women's Business and Professional Club began in Aurora in 1950.

A year later, The Aurora

Banner began a "Woman's Page" which included: articles about fashion, sewing patterns, recipes, special women's events in Toronto and other highlights.

The Lloyd Vernon Chadburn Chapter of the I.O.D.E. began in April of 1951. That same month a Junior Chamber of Commerce, a Rotary Club and an Aurora and District Kennel Club began in town.

That was the same year Aurora got an animal shelter. The shelter housed mainly the stray dogs that many people were complaining about in the town.

In the summer of 1951,

supervised park programs began in the four Aurora parks that existed: the Town Park, Reuben Street Park, McMahon Park and Tyler Street Park.

I was one of the first supervisors along with Mrs. B.L. Stiver, Mrs. Earl Quinn, Mairlyn Thompson, Gaye Morning, Nancy Stocks, Margaret Barrager and Marjorie Dawson.

The Town Council was approached about Aurora's first small subdivision in 1951. It was going to be off Kennedy Street West at the top of the first hill. It would require George Street to continue south through

Kennedy West to a few homes, but it was called a subdivision. This was the beginning of home construction in the town and by 1954 the Town Council was talking to people from out of town about three very large subdivisions.


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THE AURORAN SPORTS

Page 10

Week of October 14, 2008

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Tigers show third period strength with wins over Derbys and Bruins

Hockey is a team game but sometimes one individual can make the difference.

Last Friday at the Aurora Community Centre, Aurora Tigers forward Michael Sardella scored a hat trick in the third period to lead his team to a 4-3 win over the Streetsville Derbys.

Sardella broke a 1-1 tie with a pair of goals at

6.07 and 9.53 of the final period.

After Streetsville cut Aurora's lead to 3-2, Sardella completed the hat trick with 3.33 to play.

The Derbys added one more goal with 26.8 seconds remaining in regulation time.

After a scoreless opening period, Aurora's Steve Morley made it 1-0 on a goal assisted by Sardella

and team captain Dominic Monardo.

Streetsville then tied the game at one goal apiece with 1.46 to go in the second period.

During third period play on Saturday night in Humphrey, the Tigers scored six unanswered goals, resulting in a 7 to 4 victory over the Seguin Bruins.

Scoring three points each were David Morley (2 goals, 1 assist) and Domenic Monardo (1 goal, 2 assists), while line mate Sardella added 2 assists.

Other scorers were Jacob Mooney who energized his team with a short handed goal, Matt Pasztor with the game winner, Luc Van Natter with the game-tying goal and Tim Revell who scored during a power play.

On Friday the Tabbies go up against the Orangeville Crushers at 7:30 p.m. in the Aurora Community Centre.

Thrashers gain first win of season

In Aurora minor hockey action, Thrashers trounced the Flames by a score of 10 to 5 for their first win of the season.

Thrasher goals were scored by James Eydt,

Tyler Wilson, Leo Branigan, Colin Read Jordan Screech, Sean Anderton, Kyle Hunter, Nicklaus Reid and Christian Loria who, in his first league outing,

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Frankly Speaking

By **FRANK KLEES**
MPP - Newmarket-Aurora

I am often asked what I as an MPP can do to bring the concerns of my constituents to the attention of the government.

In this column, I am inviting you into the legislature chamber to observe a word by word transcript of my advocacy on behalf of the business owners in our community.

This special debate time was requested by me following what I considered to be a woefully inadequate response to a question I had put to the Premier the day before.

The transcript as recorded by Hansard begins with the Speaker's introduction:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnett): Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Newmarket-Aurora has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Labour yesterday.

The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or his parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

I'm pleased to recognize the member for Newmarket-Aurora.

Mr. Frank Klees: I requested this special debate on the challenges faced by small and medium-sized businesses because I'm concerned that the McGuinty government is failing this important sector in our province.

I see it as my responsibility to ensure that the Premier and his ministers are fully informed of the challenges business owners are facing daily to keep their businesses operating and to point out how, all too often, this government is frustrating the best efforts of hard-working business owners to keep their doors open and the jobs that they've created in their community.

Yesterday, I asked the Premier a very specific question.

I reminded him of his pre-election commitment to small and medium-sized employers that he would improve the inspection and audit processes to which businesses are subject in this province.

In fact, the Premier reconfirmed that commitment in the 2008 Ontario budget, which stated, "Ontario's goal is to lead all Canadian jurisdictions in efforts to measure and reduce the regulatory burden."

I pointed out to the Premier that given the reports from business owners from across the province that regulatory burdens are increasing, not decreasing, has in fact the Premier forgotten his commitment?

But rather than answering the question, the Premier referred it to the Minister of Labour, who proceeded into a rant about how I and my party want to "water down legislation and regulations when it comes to workplace ... safety."

He went on to say that I am "not on the side of workers" and that I don't "want to protect workers."

Speaker, the minister

missed the point completely, and when I clarified that what I was referring to was the regulatory burden and the heavy-handed enforcement that government agencies are strangling businesses with, the best the minister could do was to pronounce that labour relations have never been better.

And the Hansard record of his reply will show that it's clear the minister fully misunderstood or simply does not understand that he has serious issues on his hands here in the province of Ontario.

That's why we're here now, because I want to give the Premier and his minister the same information I'm receiving daily from hard-working business owners.

It's my hope that the Premier will direct his ministers to the necessary steps to refocus the government agencies and their front-line staff to do what the Canadian Federation of Independent Business is calling for, namely, to get all of the enforcement staff in government departments and agencies into a helping rather than hindering mode in this province.

I'm not asking government to compromise the health or safety of employees, and I'm not asking for a watering

down of legislation or compliance, and neither are the business owners for whom I'm advocating today.

I am asking for civility and respect.

I'm asking that enforcement staff be redeployed to help business owners, by working with them, to understand the rules of engagement, to help them come into compliance rather than threaten them, and apply reasonableness and common sense in circumstances, especially in circumstances of first-time, innocent non-compliance with government regulation.

Surely this is not an unreasonable request, but let me put on the record what is happening with increasing frequency.

The fact is that business owners in this province are constantly, on a daily basis, being harassed by people who should be "civil" servants, who should in fact be working with businesses in this province to help them better understand, and if they are not in compliance, to work with them to come into compliance--not to threaten, not to issue fine after fine and to conduct themselves in such a way that is, quite frankly, offensive to hard-working

people in this province.

There are numerous examples of this behaviour.

Judith Andrew of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business confirms that her organization has a banker's box that is full of signed faxes that make that same point.

I trust that the government will receive this appeal in the spirit in which it is brought forward: simply to make the government aware that there are serious problems on the front lines of government service, and that steps must be taken to ensure that civility and respect are the principles that guide our front-line civil servants in this province.

I want to thank Doug Simon, the District Manager of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business for bringing the concerns of local business owners to my attention.

This debate was in response to that appeal for help.

And as always, I invite your comments and questions on this or any other issue of interest to you.

Please feel free to call me on my direct line at 416-509-8999 or my website at frankklees.com.



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Poetry of burning leaves is missing

There's an element missing from the autumn air these days and that's the pungent, poetic smell of burning leaves, as the practice was legislated out of existence in the early 1970s in the name of anti-pollution. Leaf burning used to be a big thing in many communities where good stands of hardwood trees were found. Some old-timers may still remember the romance of

raking the leaves and putting them on the fire while chatting with kindred spirits who were doing the same thing in their backyard. Leaf burning was also a big attraction for the kids and they became involved in raking the leaves and throwing them on the fire. It became a highly developed art for veteran leaf burners as they studied the wind direction and velocity,

especially if the next door neighbour had washing on her clothes line. But for leaf burners the smell of burning leaves was outdoor incense. They became expert at distinguishing aromatic varieties. There was the oak smell, the maple smell and the lovely mixed-with-pine-needle smell. The ceremony of burning

leaves turned even the most agitated overachiever into a serene philosopher as he leaned on the rake with nose wrinkled up enjoying the smoke curling up as they smiled the gentle remembrance of less regulated living. Today stuffing a wad of leaves into a plastic bag and having it carted out of town to be disposed of like a public nuisance caused the bon-

fire to lose its place in marking the change of seasons. Some leaf burners claim the amount of leaf smoke dispensed into the atmosphere during the fall season wouldn't equal the volume of fumes of large trucks

in one day. Perhaps one day a year, if everyone gave up smoking and driving for eight hours as a trade-off to permit one magnificent leaf fire, we might bring back all those nice memories.


The lost Aurora mall - continued

From page 9
cial property and advised council there was no way a shopping centre could be attracted to that site. Wimpey Construction acquired the residential property and began building Orchard Heights. In February, 1972, Bancora proposed that their property be developed as residential. They opposed a seniors' development proposed for the south side of Orchard Heights Boulevard. That resulted in an Ontario Municipal Board hearing. Some council members believed Bancora was using its objection to the senior citizens' proposal as a lever to pressure council into backing down from a previous decision to bar residential development on Bancor's commercial property. In 1973, Bancora sold the land, subject to council rezoning the site. Then in August, 1974, council received a new proposal. It was for a \$5 million shopping mall to be named Northern Lights. The proposed mall was to be about two-thirds the size of the Upper Canada Mall, featuring a major department store, a major food outlet with two levels of retail outlets and two cinemas. Mayor Evelyn Buck and councillors were quick to approve the proposal in principle. By late September, council had given two readings to a bylaw to amend the zoning to accommodate the proposed mall, over the objections of Councillor George Timpson, who said council had an obligation to protect the interests of existing merchants. A public meeting was


held October 16, 1974, and the proposal ran into considerable opposition from Aurora's business community. More than 130 citizens attended the meeting to hear Yonge Street shopkeepers claim the proposed mall would make a ghost town of downtown Aurora. The meeting adjourned with many unanswered questions. The opposition continued at the next council meeting with delegations from the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, the Aurora Business Association, Aurora Shopping Centre and the Concerned Citizens of Aurora Orchards subdivision. Third reading of the bylaw was deferred. On November 4, 1974, after the fireworks died away the bylaw received third reading on an 8-1 vote with Timpson in opposition. The bylaw required approval from the Ontario Municipal Board before it became effective. By mid-January, 1975, 11 formal objections were received plus a 53-name petition offering conditional support and suggesting a list of preferred stores for the shopping mall. The petition also stated that one or more theatres must be included. At the request of council the developer met with the citizen objectors, most of them homeowners to the west of the proposed mall. Following the February 10, 1975, meeting, several residents expressed satisfaction that sufficient steps were being taken to protect their privacy against the sights and sounds of the mall. Seven of the citizen objectors withdrew their official opposition. Two families

objected on the basis that the town has too much unused commercial space, which the developer said was not a valid objection. At the April 21, 1975, council meeting, the majority of councillors agreed to ask the OMB to dispense with a public hearing and sought immediate approval of the bylaw. Councillor Bob Roth said this was unfair to the four homeowners and the Aurora Shopping Centre who were still opposed to the mall. In May, York Regional planners advised the OMB that Aurora should have conducted studies to assess the potential impact of a major shopping mall on the community before approving plans for the Northern Lights Mall. In August, the OMB advised Aurora Council it would not consider the bylaw rezoning the property to accommodate the mall until the region finished its official plan. Evidence given at an OMB hearing, finally set in May, 1976, suggested the proposed mall could mean a saving of \$30 to \$40 to the average Aurora taxpayer through increased assessment. The need for shopping facilities in the north end of Aurora was stressed, and it was stated that Upper Canada Mall would be the big loser, not the downtown merchants. On the other side were questions as to the need for the mall when stores were unoccupied in the downtown core, the lack of market research and approval of the proposal when the town's official plan was being updated.

In mid-July the OMB announced approval of the rezoning bylaw allowing the construction of the mall. Before a shovel could be placed in the ground, the Aurora Shopping Centre and The Aurora Business Association appealed the OMB decision to cabinet, with a counter-appeal by Aurora council. In spite of assurances by the developer that the mall would be open before Christmas, 1977, many citizens and some council members, including Mayor Timpson said the mall would never be constructed. In September, with a lack of merchants willing to rent space in the mall, the developer asked council for approval of a phased construction proposal. By February, 1978, the Northern Lights had faded. Other developers came and went, until finally in February, 1980, council received copies of a retail shopping study prepared for Steve Otto, who had acquired the property. The proposal was for a boutique-type development of specialty shops and the current St. Andrew's Shopping Plaza became a reality, but not quite the way Otto had envisaged it.



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Evergreen Choir will perform

By BRIAN WARBURTON

The Aurora Seniors Evergreen Choir will perform at Hadley Grange at St. John's Side Road and Yonge Sreet on October 19, starting at 7:30 p.m.

This is the Evergreen Choir's first choral programme of the season, for which all members are enthused and excited.

The programme of choral music will feature soloists Bud Switzer, Frank Hawkins and Sylvia Neal, with the excellent musician Doreen Riley as the pianist.

Several old time songs will be played and the audience of seniors at Hadley Grange, who love to sing along, are more than likely and welcome to join in with enthusiasm.

The subsequent public appearance of the Evergreen Choir will be at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church at the corner of Mosley and Victoria Streets on November 2 at 10.30 a.m. and will lead the music ministry in worship.

On this occasion the choir will sing two choral presentations and Sylvia Neal and Margie Hawkins will execute a beautiful duet.

I write the obvious when I state that the Evergreen Choir lends to the ASA a wonderful element of musical and choral excellence, in addition to providing an outlet for the musical ability of the ASA members.

If this scenario excites the musical yearning in your heart, please be aware that a few places in the chorus exist for men and altos.

The ASA thrives as an organization for seniors even though the world at this time is ravaged by the lack of confidence in stock markets and governments.

Activities proliferate and flourish and it seems new initiatives find fertile ground to breed and flourish, usually in the prolific minds of members with particular interests.

Ron Coe, who spends the majority of his time in the friendly confines of the wood shop, and who developed the wooden clock tower replica for the Canada Day Parade, now finds himself with two new projects which have him enthralled.

I will write about these projects later when I have a fuller and clearer picture of what the final intentions may be.

In the meantime, the 40-plus members who animate the wood shop with their convivial presence and render pieces of lumber and other materials to a beautiful or functional condition, leave room for more like-minded members, male or female.

If you enjoy the well-equipped woodworking atmosphere, this may well be the home away from home for you.

These members typically spend the majority of their time in the wood shop but find time for a game of snooker or cards, badminton, horseshoes and even to find new golfing partners.

With its catalogue of programs and activities, plus the members who bring a new sense of wonderment to what life is all about, the ASA serves as a beacon for the retired.

Those retired from a life of work are sometimes a little bewildered by retirement and how best to engage themselves in an interesting fashion in a world which has swept along, leaving the unwary behind.



Aurora's Trinity Anglican Church celebrated the opening of its rectory as the new home for a local community service called Welcoming Arms. The church received a gift of \$170,000 for renovations and, with local trades people pitching in, about \$250,000 worth of work was done to the building. Welcoming Arms is an ecumenical group helping the people of Aurora with food, shelter and transportation. Used clothing is offered for sale five mornings a week with proceeds going to the service.

Auroran Photo by David Falconer

Aurora council sets new bad debt allowance fund

A report to Aurora Council regarding an Allowance for a Bad Debt Account was referred back for clarification as to why the recommendation was to the Allowance for Bad Debt Account rather than a reserve for bad debts.

In a report to the general committee municipal staff advised that, after reviewing the regulations, it was determined the fund was better suited as a Discretionary Reserve Fund as opposed to an Allowance and recommended that a new fund be established to be called Allowance for Bad Debt Discretionary Reserve Fund.

The purpose of the fund is to be for large

write-offs as a result of Assessment Appeals or larger than budgeted uncollectable taxes.

There was a number of assessment appeals outstanding that could, if the municipality loses, result in large repayment of taxes.

If this were to happen with no provision the cost would be a direct hit on the current year's levy, resulting in a large tax increase.

The general committee received the report and approved the establishment of a new Allowance for Bad Debt Discretionary Reserve Fund and authorized the 2007 operating surplus of \$519,000 be transferred to this fund.

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The Corner Ridge Volunteer Group recently helped the York Region Food Network do some "re-rooting" at the Aurora Community Garden on the Jack Woods property on Allaura Boulevard. Volunteers helped in clearing the land, turning the soil and packing up garden supplies for the last time at this site. The garden, which has operated since 2004, was closed for its final season and being re-located ("re-rooted") next spring to the Alliance Park on Industrial Parkway South.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Remembering Aurora CBers

With cellular phones widely used today by motorists, pedestrians, shoppers and teenagers, there isn't a need for a CB or Citizen Band radio.

But back in 1963 CB radios were widely used as a means of communication. They were licensed for General Radio Service with 20 channels authorized that time by the federal Department of Transport for short range private radio communication.

Communication of more than 30 miles was forbidden although sometimes local users received calls from as far away as southern California.

As users did not have exclusive rights to the channels, DOT regulations require that after five minutes of conversation, the user was required stay off the channel for one minute.

No special test was involved in obtaining a licence for CB radio, so that anyone over 18 years of age, with a valid reason for wanting two-way communication, could get a licence for \$10.

Users in the Aurora/Newmarket area formed York County's Citizen Band radio organization known as SERV-CB and expressed their willingness to help any worthwhile organization.

SERV stood for Safety and Emergency Radio Volunteers.

The group, about 20 of them, owned a truck which in addition to the radio equipment was equipped to dispense coffee and sandwiches at fires and other disasters.

Fires, floods or flat tires, it didn't matter to members of SERV-CB. Whatever the occasion, they were willing to help. Members considered themselves on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

They had CB radios in their cars and in their homes and kept their ears open for calls for assistance.

Locally, channel 12 was used as the club channel for activities and channel 9 was monitored for emergencies.

The late Aub Leslie of Aurora was vice-president of SERV-CB.

Back in October 1969, he recalled the 1968 Newmarket Main Street fire when the group was called out to provide back-up communications with their radios and serve the firefighters

hot soup and coffee.

He also recalled the group being called out during the 1968/69 winter to assist in the search for two youngsters who had been lost for a number of days near Keswick.

Unfortunately the two boys were found dead near their home.

The emergency agencies were quick to call the members to aid in searches, drownings or any type of an emergency.

A number of organizations called on the group to aid them in crowd and traffic control at fairs, carnivals, horse shows, parades and other public functions.

The club was financially self-sufficient with its revenue coming from members and donations by persons or organizations who had received assistance from the group.

Members had a language of their own known as the 10 code.

Unlike Amateur Radio (or "ham") operators, CBers were not allowed to talk to anyone at will.

For one station to call another there had to be a mutual personal or business interest involved.

When Aurora had its volunteer firefighters, every time the alarm sounded, local members of SERV-CB were quick to respond to aid in crowd control and provide communication

back-up if required with the completely-equipped club van acting as a control centre.

But it was not all hard work.

While the group did not consider themselves a social club they held monthly meetings at Victoria Hall and a monthly "on air" meeting.

During 1972 Len Foster and Ernie Roylance organized a Transmitter Hunt. The object was for CBers, members and non-members, to try and locate a hidden transmitter using clues transmitted by the hidden transmitter and received over radios in the cars.

Bob Middleton was the winner, Bob Gibson, second, Joe DeGerr, third and Ken Kingham, winner of the trophy for most useless miles traveled.

By 1976 the use of CB radio was more than electronic toy as it had saved hundreds of lives and provided back-up communication links during emergencies.

At the time it was the fastest growing communications medium since the telephone.

CB users developed a language all of their own and each user normally had a CB handle (name).

Old-timers may remember movies or TV shows with truckers warning other truckers about the whereabouts of "Smokey".

Major Leonard Frost of the Newmarket Salvation Army

used the handle "The Iceberg" and his CB radio helped many in need.

It wasn't long before the CB boom started to fade to be replaced by other forms of communication, including Amateur (ham) Radio.

In fact, CB radio no longer requires a licence and there was never a requirement for CB operators to take examinations.

But for several years the members of the SERV-CB radio club performed yeoman service in the local area.

Many former "CBers", including Len Foster and Ernie Roylance, subsequently graduated to the Amateur Radio Service, which is also under the domain of the federal government but demands that operators successfully write an exam and adhere to stringent regulations based upon international treaties.

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), a Canada-wide organization of volunteer Radio Amateurs that provides communications in time of emergency or disaster, is sponsored in Canada by the not-for-profit Radio Amateurs of Canada Inc. (RAC).

The RAC is the recognized advocate for all Radio Amateurs in this country.

More information about the ARES and Amateur Radio may be found on the internet at www.rac.ca.

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