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THE AURORAN
CANADA 150
Aurora's Community Newspaper
Vol. 18 No. 15 905-727-3300 theauroran.com FREE Week of February 2, 2017 CMCA AUDITED

HOLY SHIFT!

Reverend Dawn Davis of Aurora's Trinity Anglican Church, and Associate Minister Philip Hamilton, sit around a bar table that has become a hallmark of their "Holy Shift" program. Holy Shift is a new spin on the traditional sermon that sparks an ongoing dialogue between the ministers, the congregation, and the community at large on today's big issues. For more, please see Page 3.
Auroran photo by Brock Weir

PICKERING COLLEGE
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Wednesday, February 22, 2017
6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
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New hotel hopes to break ground by April

By Brock Weir

Aurora will have a hotel once again.

MasterBUILT Hotels announced Monday their decision to build their flagship Microtel Inn & Suites by Wyndham in Aurora on Monday.

Set to be their sixth location in Ontario, and the first within the GTA, the hotel will feature over 100 guest rooms and suites, a fitness centre, swimming pool and, of particular importance to the local business community, meeting room facilities.

"When we first visited Aurora over a year ago, we knew right away that the Town would be the ideal location to launch the new urban design of Microtel Inn & Suites by Wyndham in Canada," said Eric Watson, Chief Operating Officer of MasterBUILT Hotels in a statement. "Aurora is a vibrant community with a great deal of growth and opportunity and we look forward to being part of it. The Town has been very accommodating and a pleasure to work with in getting the project started and we look forward to bringing much needed accommodations to the community.

Aurora has been without a hotel since Howard Johnson's closed its doors over four years ago with the property owner having no intention of selling off or redeveloping the building.

The community's lack of hotel has been an ongoing concern for the Town's business, sport, and cultural communities since that time.

"We are extremely pleased," says Mayor Geoff Dawe. "[MasterBUILT Hotels] are very aggressive operators, so they want to be in the ground by April. We'll do whatever we can here to make that happen. They still have

Continued on page 6

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"A Place of Possibilities"

Tomer and David, and Anna and Luke had some fun with a 3D-printed model of the Eiffel Tower on Saturday afternoon as the Aurora Public Library held its first-ever STEMfest, designed to introduce families to new programs, activities and resource related to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. This month, the Library plans to reach out in other ways. For more, see Page 11.
Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

Community vigil planned for Saturday following Quebec attack

By Brock Weir

Aurora's faith communities will hold a Community Vigil on Saturday afternoon to stand in solidarity with the local Muslim community, following a terrorist attack on a Quebec City mosque over the weekend.

The shooting, carried out during evening prayers at Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec on Sunday, left six dead and 19

Continued on page 15

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AURORA! ½ ACRE! 4300SF + FIN BSMT & POOL!
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TOWN OF AURORA

Weekly Notice Board

AURORA

Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
~~Thursday, February. 2~~	~~7 p.m.~~	~~Leksand Room~~	~~Environmental Advisory Committee~~ **CANCELLED**
Tuesday, February 7	9:30 a.m.	Newmarket	Joint Council Committee
Tuesday, February 7	5:45 p.m.	Leksand Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, February 7	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	General Committee
Wednesday, February 8	7 p.m.	Aurora Cultural Centre	Aurora Cultural Centre Board
Thursday, February 9	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Committee of Adjustment
~~**Thursday, February 9**~~	~~7 p.m.~~	~~Leksand Room~~	~~Economic Development Advisory Committee~~ **RESCHEDULED (date to be confirmed)**
Monday, February 13	7 p.m.	Leksand Room	Heritage Advisory Committee
Tuesday, February 14	5:45 p.m.	Leksand Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, February 14	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council
Wednesday, February 15	7 p.m.	Aurora Public Library	Aurora Public Library Board
Thursday, February 16	7 p.m.	Leksand Room	Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Committee
Friday, February 17	10 a.m.	Council Chambers	Trails and Active Transportation Committee

*Meetings can be viewed online by visiting aurora.ca/gcstream

Council meetings are open to the public and can be seen on Rogers TV, channel 10. For a full list of upcoming meetings, please visit **aurora.ca**

Open Forum

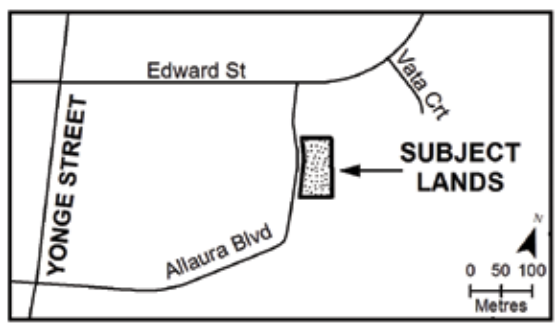
As of January 24, 2017, Open Forum will be held at 6:45 p.m. Open Forum allows members of the public to voice opinions on subjects of municipal concern.

Public Notices

Sale of Public Lands: Part of Lot 26, Allaura Boulevard

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO PASS A BY-LAW TO DECLARE AS SURPLUS AND SELL MUNICIPAL LANDS

Take notice that the Council of The Corporation of the Town of Aurora (the "Town") is providing notice of its intention to pass a by-law on **Tuesday, February 14, 2017**, pursuant to Report No. PDS16-065, for the purpose of declaring as surplus and selling land legally described as Part of Lot 26, Registrar's Complied Plan 10328, designated as Part 2 on Plan 65R-33023, Town of Aurora, Regional Municipality of York, being all of PIN 03644-0126 (LT), having a total area of approximately 0.88 acres, more or less, as illustrated for location purposes only on Figure 1 (below).



The by-law will be available on the Town's website, located at **aurora.ca/agendasminutes** on **February 10, 2017** in advance of the Council meeting to be held on **Tuesday, February 14, 2017** at 7 p.m. at Aurora Town Hall in Council Chambers, located at 100 John West Way.

For more information, please contact Anthony Ierullo, Manager, Long Range & Strategic Planning at 905-727-3123, ext. 4742 or by email to **aierullo@aurora.ca**.

Outdoor Ice Skating Rinks

The Town of Aurora's outdoor ice skating rinks are up and running for the 2017 winter season.

The rinks are located at the following parks:

- Ada Johnson Park — 60 Hartwell Way
- Confederation Park — 30 Glass Drive
- Machell Park — 2A Aurora Heights Drive
- Town Park — 49 Wells Street

All rinks are lit for evening enjoyment until 11 p.m. Please note, the rinks are unsupervised and are for shared use hockey and pleasure skating. The conditions of our outdoor rinks is entirely weather-dependent.

Updates regarding the condition of the skating rinks are posted on the Town's website and social media feeds.

The Town of Aurora is seeking your help to fulfill provincial legislation.

Notice for Drinking Water Testing for Lead

The Ontario Government's existing drinking water systems regulation (O. Reg. 170/03) requires municipalities conduct testing for lead in drinking water from plumbing that serves private residences. This means that the Town of Aurora is mandated to perform tests at private residential taps to check for lead in drinking water.

Although the Town of Aurora's records do not indicate the existence of lead in the Town's water, there may be some privately-owned lead pipes that have to be replaced or there may be lead pipe plumbing within a home.

Residents are encouraged to volunteer for the Town's testing program. A limited number of participants are required. The program will involve sampling tap water twice a year in the volunteer's home. All sampling will be done by identified Town Staff.

If you are available for 45 minutes within the 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. timeframe and would like to participate in Aurora's Drinking Water Lead Testing Program, please contact 905-727-3123, ext. 3453 or email **ivoinea@aurora.ca**.

Public Notices

Tell us what you think about Sheppard's Bush Conservation Area

The Sheppard's Bush Conservation Area Management Plan is undergoing review to consider current site conditions, public uses and management challenges.

The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) wants to hear from you! What do you like about Sheppard's Bush Conservation Area? What can be improved? Your feedback will help LSRCA manage this conservation area to best serve the needs of the community.

How can you get involved:

- Join us on **Sunday, March 26** at Windfall Ecology Centre for a public open house where we'll discuss the future of Sheppard's Bush.
- Visit LSRCA.on.ca before **Friday, March 31** and fill out a brief survey for your chance to win a $100 gift card to Running Room.

For more information, please contact Lauren at 905-895-1281 ext. 126 or **l.grzywniak@lsrca.on.ca**.

What's Happening

February Skylight Gallery Artist

Aurora artist Marilee Gibson is showcasing her vibrant abstract acrylic and whimsical watercolour artwork throughout the month of February. The profits from the exhibit *Brushstrokes for Africa* will be donated to The Butterfly Tree (thebutterflytree.org.uk) a charity in Zambia that Marilee supports.

Regular viewing times are from Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Aurora Town Hall, 3rd Floor.

Club Aurora seminar – Lower Back Care

Join us for a Club Aurora Seminar on **Monday, February 6** from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. and learn about winter lower back care. This seminar will provide you with tips on how to prevent back injuries during the winter season. **aurora.ca/fitness.**

Monthly Walking Club

Join us at the AFLC indoor track on **Thursday, February 16** at 10 a.m. for our free Older Adults Monthly Walking Club. There will be healthy snacks provided by Chartwell Retirement Residences, along with a fitness professional from the Club Aurora Fitness Centre. Additionally, some months will also feature a healthy living seminar. **aurora.ca/activeseniors.**

Youth Movie Night

Calling all youth! Join the Aurora Youth Engagement Committee for a showing of Jurassic World at our movie night on **Saturday, February 4** from 7 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. at the Loft. For more information, visit **aurora.ca/youthprograms**.

Summer Camp Early Bird Registration

Save 10 per cent on the cost of select summer camps when you register from **February 27 to March 10**. The Early Bird discount applies to the following camps: Tots of Fun / Kinder Kamp/ Sports Camp / Adventure Camp / Arts Camp. For more information about summer camps, please visit **aurora.ca/campprograms**.

Older Adults Program – Ukulele Heroes

Play songs on the ukulele. No experience is necessary and there is no need to read music. Bring your own ukulele or instruments are available to rent from the instructor.

This six-week program starts on **Wednesday, February 15** from 11 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Registration is required. Please use course code 8414. **aurora.ca/activeseniors.**

March Break Family Fun

Make the most of your March Break in Aurora from **March 13 to 17**. With so much to do in Aurora, why not stay local and enjoy some of our exciting and low-cost activities.

Check out our scheduled March Break activities online at **aurora.ca/marchbreak.**

CELEBRATE FAMILY DAY AT

Aurora's ARCTIC ADVENTURE

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2017 • 10 A.M. TO 4 P.M.
AURORA TOWN PARK • 49 WELLS STREET

ENJOY LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
First Nations presentation
Ice-carving competition
Muskoka Wildlife animal show

GET ACTIVE WITH WINTER SPORTS
Hockey shootouts
Snow shoeing
Snow tubing
Body zorbing (inflatable body bubbles)

BRING THE KIDS!
Inflatables
Fishing game
Mini golf

…AND BRING YOUR APPETITE
Soup for Smiles at the Armoury hosted by the *Optimist Club of Aurora**
Food vendors on site*
**Nominal fees apply.*

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Please note, we reserve the right to cancel, amend or change activities.

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Aurora's Borealis

AURORA

Don't miss Aurora's Borealis

Visit Aurora Town Park every evening from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. until February 20, 2017 and enjoy the beautifully lit trees and festive atmosphere. Aurora Town Park is located at 49 Wells Street.
For more information, please call 905-726-4762 or visit **aurora.ca**

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Get rid of unwanted clothing, textiles and household goods with convenient pick-up at your doorstep.

Place any of the accepted items listed below in clear plastic bags. Mark 'T' for textile on each bag. Leave the bags outside your front door by 8 a.m. the first Monday of each month.

First collection will take place Monday, February 6, 2017

We will collect the following materials in any condition (gently used or worn and torn) as long as they are clean, dry and odourless.

WE ACCEPT:
- Blankets, bedding, sheets, pillows
- Clothing
- Drapery, curtains
- Footwear
- Housewares (e.g. home décor items)
- Jackets, overcoats
- Kitchenware
- Linens, towels, washcloths
- Reading glasses
- Purses, hats, belts and ties
- Sleeping bags
- Soft toys
- Toys, sports equipment

WE DO NOT ACCEPT:
- Appliances
- Furniture
- Hazardous waste

For more information and other options visit aurora.ca/clothingrecycling

Noticing a changing Aurora community? Holy Shift!

By Brock Weir

Change, for many, can be a very exciting prospect. For others, however, it can spur a huge degree of anxiety and concern.

No community is immune to this but, in Aurora's case, Trinity Anglican Church is stepping up to foster dialogue on some of the very important changes that are happening both here at home and around the world.

"We have noticed here is a lot of anxiety and concern coming out of some sense of the shifts going on in Aurora, some shifts that were going on in the lives of our congregation, and certainly some of the big geopolitical shifts that are going on in this world," says Trinity's Rev. Dawn Davis. "One of the things we noticed is there are not a lot of safe places in society for people to process and reflect on what is going on in their own lives, and this is exactly what the church is supposed to be about."

Enter "Holy Shift" – a new sermon series designed as a dialogue between a Baby Boomer (Davis) and a Millennial. In this case, the millennial is Associate Minister Philip Hamilton, who also pitched the eye-catching title for the series.

It caught the attention of parishioners – and the community at large, who have passed by the banner outside the Victoria Street church – so that mission was very firmly accomplished.

"Part of my hope is we re-frame the conversation about changes, particularly demographics and the culture of Aurora in less of a negative light and see that there are actually some positive changes going on in our community, and also in the world. That isn't the dominant narrative in most media, that there are actually some positive things that are going on and, because we're not hearing it in other places like Facebook and most news sources, I think the church is a great spot to maybe reprogram our brains to think about things from a different perspective on the positive going on in our world, as well as what we can do to be a part of making positive change and resisting negative change, if that needs to be a part of it too."

Over the course of her 10 years at Trinity, Davis says she has seen firsthand significant shifts in Trinity's parish lists. The congregation is aging. Boomer families, for which church used to be a family affair, are now shrinking in the pews as their kids go off to university or move out on their own. Some of the boomers are looking into downsizing and making the decision to set up shop in another community.

Although the Aurora community is growing and, consequently, bringing new people into Trinity, there are new needs to be addressed by the church. The question, she says, is "How do we embrace the new community that is developing here?"

Brainstorming ideas on how to kickstart the "Holy Shift" conversation, Dawn and Philip began at the most obvious starting point: the "anxiety" they are hearing both from Baby Boomers and Millennials on the "geopolitical" situation, whether it is the Trump presidency in the United States or Brexit in Europe.

"We have adjusted [our topics] as we have gone along," says Philip, touching upon this past Sunday's topic of communications and seeking the truth, a late entry into the Holy Shift program following the Trump Administration's decision to add the term "alternative facts" into our collective lexicon."

"When we had our first session, we did more of an overview [of the program]," says Davis. "We're sitting on bar chairs around a cruiser table with coffee mugs and we're engaged in a conversation. At the end of that conversation, we turn and engage in a conversation with the congregation. People have a chance to speak into what they've just heard and get the perspective of a Baby Boomer, so they might hear their own voice, and hear the perspective of a Millennial, which is less well-heard in churches."

Media, she says, was an issue that quickly cropped up in this dialogue, particularly its role, she says "in forming some of the anxiety we're feeling."

So much emphasis is placed on what's wrong with the world, she says, that perspective is often lacking, particularly statistics indicating that crime is going down, we're more secure than we have ever been, and we're more affluent than ever before.

"There are a lot of good things happening, but because we get inundated with the negative views, our brains often make that assumption that it is the real thing and then we start living out that illusion and we self-fulfil them and make that illusion a reality," she says. "We had that conversation and we realised there was a lot of fire in the room."

Continued on page 15

Trinity moves towards same sex marriage

By Brock Weir

Aurora's Trinity Anglican Church has moved to become a place of worship allowing same sex marriage.

The announcement was made on Sunday at the Victoria Street church following what Reverend Dawn Davis described as a lively discussion over Trinity's future path.

"We had a town hall [meeting] and the question was raised: would we be able to be a community that allows same sex marriage?" said Davis. "Under my 30 years of ministry, that night stood out as one of the top five holy, sacred events that I have been a part of. There was a tremendous amount of respect, love, and intentional listening.

"I am very proud to say our church is going to be moving in that direction. The Bishop asked us to go through this process [and] we will ask him if he now will assign us as one of the churches in our area that will allow same sex marriage to take place.

"Not everyone was along the same line. There was diversity within our group, but what we heard is that nobody wanted anyone to stop the direction the consensus was forming. As a matter of fact, they just felt they needed some time to get the knowledge to understand who they were in this. It was very respectful and so loving."

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TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

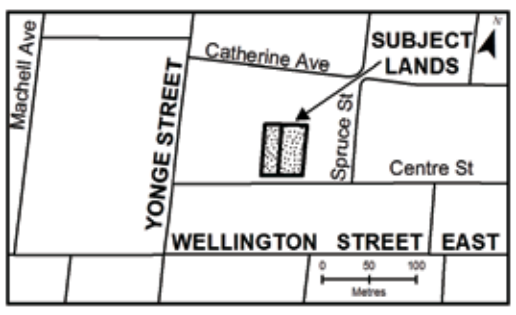
AURORA

NOTICE OF PUBLIC PLANNING MEETING

Aurora Town Council will hold a public meeting to receive input on the following Planning Application on Wednesday, February 22 at 7 p.m. at Aurora Town Hall, Council Chambers.

APPLICATION: The Owner has submitted an application for an amendment to Zoning By-law 2213-78 to rezone the subject lands from "Special Mixed Density Residential (R5) Zone" to "Row Dwelling Residential (R6-X) Exception Zone" to allow the development of 12 block townhouse units on the 0.24 ha site.

PROPERTY: 22 and 26 Centre Street



LEGAL DESC.: Lots 120 and 121, Plan 246

APPLICANT: 1428420 Ontario Ltd.

FILE NUMBER: ZBA-2016-08

CONTACT: Any inquiries should be directed to **Jeff Healey** of the Planning and Building Services Department at 905-727-3123 **ext. 4349**, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Comments may also be mailed to the Planning and Building Services department at the address noted below, faxed to 905-726-4736 or emailed to **planning@aurora.ca**. Please quote the file name and number.

Personal Information Collection Notice

The Town of Aurora collects personal information in communications or presentations made to Town Council and/or its Committees under the legal authority of the *Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990*, Chapter c.P.13, as amended. Pursuant to Section 27 of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990*, c. M.56, as amended, (*the "Act"*) public feedback to planning proposals is considered to be public recorded and may be disclosed to any individual upon request in accordance with the *Act*. If you are submitting letters, faxes, emails, presentations or other communications to the Town, you should be aware that your name and the fact that you communicated with the Town will become part of the public record and will appear on the Town's website. The Town will also make your communication and any personal information in it, such as your address and postal code or email address available to the public unless you expressly request the Town to remove it. Questions about this collection should be directed to the Town Clerk, Town of Aurora, 100 John West Way, Box 1000, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1 905-727-3123.

Audio and Video Recording of Council and Committee Meetings

The Town audio and/or video records Public Planning Meetings. If you make a presentation to Town Council or its Committees, you may be audio or video recorded. Pursuant to Section 27 of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990*, c. M.56, as amended, (*the "Act"*) public feedback to planning proposals is considered to be a public record and may be disclosed to any individual upon request in accordance with the *Act*.

Zoning By-law (O. Reg. 545/06)

If a person or a public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to The Town of Aurora before the bylaw is passed, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision of the Council of The Town of Aurora to the Ontario Municipal Board. If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to The Town of Aurora before the bylaw is passed, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Municipal Board unless there are reasonable grounds to do so. If you wish to be notified of the decision of The Town of Aurora in respect to the Zoning By-law Amendment, you must make a written request to The Town of Aurora to the attention of the Director of Planning and Building Services.

Town of Aurora 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1 • aurora.ca/publicnotices • 905-727-3123, ext. 4349

TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

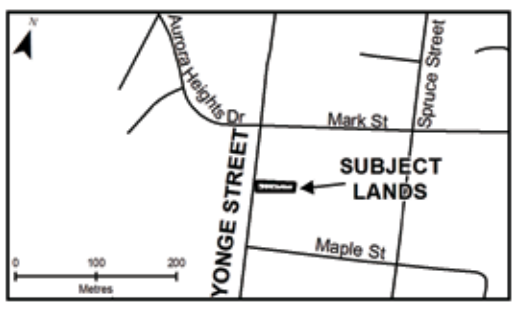
AURORA

NOTICE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION AND PUBLIC PLANNING MEETING

Aurora Town Council will hold a public meeting to receive input on the following Planning Application on Wednesday, February 22 at 7 p.m. at Aurora Town Hall, Council Chambers.

APPLICATION: The Owner has submitted a Complete Application for an Amendment to Zoning By-law 2213-78 to change the zoning from "Special Mixed Density Residential (R5) Zone" to "Special Mixed Density Residential (R5-X) Exception Zone", to allow a business and professional office use to the uses currently permitted by the R5 Zone.

PROPERTY: 15403 Yonge Street



LEGAL DESC.: Lot 95 Registered Plan 246

APPLICANT: Dorota Smolarkiewicz

FILE NUMBER: ZBA-2016-14

CONTACT: Any inquiries should be directed to **Marty Rokos** of the Planning and Building Services Department at 905-727-3123 **ext. 4350**, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Comments may also be mailed to the Planning and Building Services department at the address noted below, faxed to 905-726-4736 or emailed to **planning@aurora.ca**. Please quote the file name and number.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dollars should not be put before student success, says Williams student

A little while ago I read an article in The Auroran suggesting that a new high school should be built in Aurora.

There was an indication that should a new high school be built, then Dr. G. W. Williams' Secondary School should be slated for closure.

As a current student of Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, it is difficult for me to advocate for this, but in my opinion, the school should be closed.

A new school should be built in the area of Bayview and Wellington in Aurora.

I believe this plan would be best in helping students achieve their full potential which, after all, is the foundation for Ontario's Education System. I do not believe the residents of Aurora would disagree with me when I say that Williams is a historical building and should be preserved as such. The question is, are we acting in the best interest of students by allowing the door to remain open?

The school, while it has had lots of renovations, is still old and run down.

With the new subdivisions being built in the northern part of Aurora, a school move would be better for the commuting student.

Also, the school board could ensure that the new school meets the accessibility standards of the AODA, thus ensuring a truly inclusive environment.

It is my belief that it is also the school board's intention to start up the international bachelors program at Williams in the fall. Would it not be best to do this in a clean, new environment?

While I appreciate the cost that has been put into the school to renovate it, we should not put a dollar amount on student success, which is ultimately the fundamental question at the heart of this debate.

I would ask for the Town, the local member of the provincial parliament, as well as the Member of Parliament and the board along with the town's residents to reconsider the proposal for a new high school. I urge everyone to see this as a new opportunity for the next generation and for the Town.

Benjamin Williamson
Aurora

Have green initiatives gone too far?

(Re: Chamber wants answers on vacant storefronts, January 19)

It was disturbing to read Chairman Javed Khan's comments of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce regarding the many "For Lease" signs emerging in ever increasing numbers as businesses shut down in our area.

The key cause one hears about continually is the dramatic rise in electricity costs. How could we let this happen? One of Ontario's key competitive assets used to be low cost hydro.

It would now appear recent Government policies have fundamentally changed our competitiveness as it relates electricity costs.

Industry is not the only part of our economy being affected.

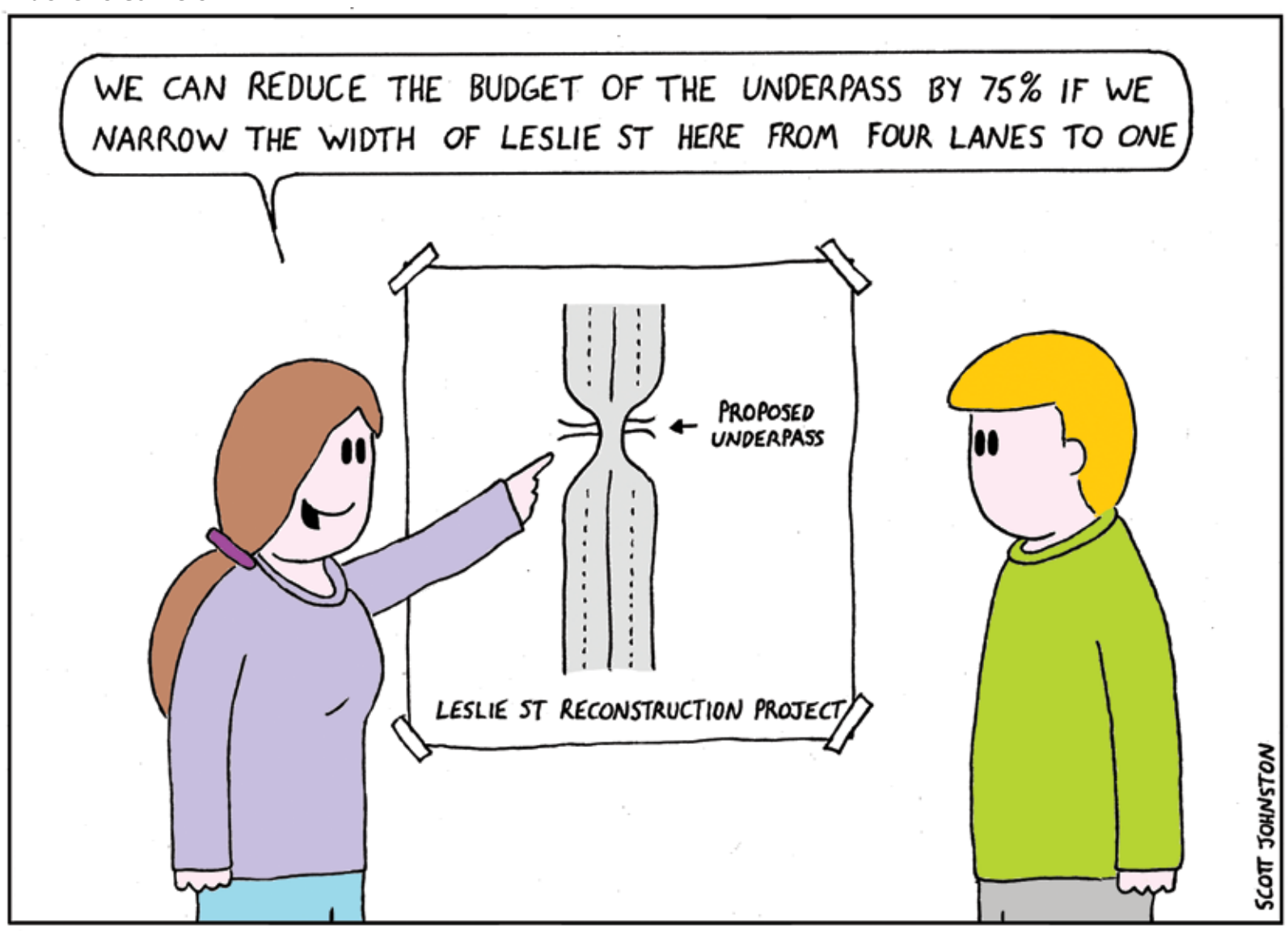
Just ask nearby farming friends who have seen their monthly bills doubled and tripled. They are suffering too.

To further burden Ontario's cost base, we now have Cap and Trade being introduced.

Have our Green initiatives taken us too far?

John Greenhough
Aurora

Machell's Corners



The Dying Art of Conversation

BROCK'S BANTER
Brock Weir

Over the past few days, circumstances have continually thrown my mind back to a lesser-remembered scene from I Love Lucy.

The Mertzes have come over to the Ricardos' apartment to watch a movie on their television. It's a happening – the refreshments are made, the popcorn is freshly popped, and is in a long-handled server to pass around to all the guests. The movie is rolling along nicely until the television set starts to act up.

After a few minutes trying to adjust the screen, they realise it's on the blink and their movie night is just not happening.

Not to be deterred, they brainstorm other ways to occupy their time, eventually settling on having a good ole' conversation.

This is about as far as they get.

After all, for the previous few years, they have been fully immersed in the worlds contained on their television airwaves.

Sure, they could talk about the day's headlines, but their talking points struggle to even scratch the surface.

All talk quickly winds to close.

Then, to the relief of everyone, Lucy finds a radio for them to listen to and sanity is restored and they don't have to put themselves through the wringer trying to come up with pleasantries and small talk.

This particular episode is nearly 65 years old, yet it highlights a long-running trend: the gentle decline and near fall of the art of conversation.

Don't get me wrong, I am no fan of small talk – yet, some people excel at the smallest of the small talk. And, kudos to them. Somebody's got to do it, but it's just not for me. In everyday human interaction, I would rather keep quiet until I have something relevant to say to whatever the topic might be. Some perceive this as a degree of shyness, but it is simply having no desire to throw in a banality just to remind whatever group with whom I am interacting that I am actually present. They know.

Conversation has become something of a lost art. I don't think anyone would necessarily disagree with that statement, but it is an art lost by our own device. After all, we're living in an age where people all too often believe the most effective way of communication is limited to 140 characters, a share, or an animated gif.

We've come to accept that and, in turn, have become complacent that this is our new reality.

But, am I alone in sensing there is some change in the air?

From where I sit, things have reached a breaking point.

Despite the anger and fear in the air felt by so many right now by so many from all points on the political perspective, there seems to be a renewed appetite for dialogue; an appetite to engage in a respectful way with people who might not necessarily share your particular worldview. Perhaps it is in the vain hope that your sound, well-reasoned views might change an opinion or two, or that hearing the equally sound and well-reasoned viewpoints from the opposition might give you valuable perspective to bolster your own case, but the important thing is dialogue is indeed happening.

I was heartened last week going over to Trinity Anglican Church to talk to their leaders about their new sermon program, Holy Shift. I felt in turning the traditional style of a sermon on its ear, and underscoring the fact it is a dialogue open to the community as a whole, they were re-filling a vital service that used to be the cornerstone of every vital community: dialogue.

Of course, when they told me the theme of this past Sunday's service would be, in a nutshell, the role of media and truth in the age of "alternative facts" I just had to go in and see whether this new format would set out to achieve what was originally intended.

And, in the end, it did just that.

Between the ministers, there was a fruitful discussion not just on the role of media, but the search for truth embodied with the individual. There was also valuable input offered by members of the conversation. I left buoyed that conversation – and indeed truth – might have a future after all.

"Right from the beginning in our Christian narrative, Jesus and Pilate had a conversation about what's true, and we have been given a God given ability to think and reason and work through what's true," Rev. Dawn Davis told me last week, a point which she reiterated to the congregation on Sunday morning.

"That is a huge responsibility. That is the form we felt we really needed to engage in."

God, a higher power, or whatever you believe in, might have given us the ability to think and reason and work through what's true, but, in my opinion, our collective muscles to do just that have been atrophying. Thankfully, they seem poised for a workout once again.

In addition to Aurora, I also serve as the editor of a newspaper in a more rural community northwest of here. On last week's front page, I included a photo of two local girls who took the time to travel to Washington, D.C. to take part in the Women's March. In the photo, one of them is holding a sign taking back a word that had re-entered the popular lexicon over the course of the most recent U.S. presidential campaign thanks to a certain handsy Republican victor in an Access Hollywood bus.

A provocative photo, to be sure, and it certainly created a stir.

"You are directly responsible for parents having to explain the entire conversation of the sign," wrote one reader in response to the photo. "Why you didn't have the inclination to smudge the words out is beyond me. You have insulted the good reputation of [the Town and the girls' high school] and placed families in a precarious situation via explanation."

Since when did we, as a society, feel the need to shy away from having conversations on important issues of the day with loved ones?

If my inclusion of a young woman's sign "grabbing back" can foster "an entire conversation", a conversation that could lead to valuable dialogue between parents and their young daughters on (a) why girls not that far removed from themselves in age are standing up for their rights and what they believe in, (b) a talk between parents and their sons on why they might consider joining their sisters in the fight, or (c) give people in general any food for thought on how they might want to consider standing up for any children or grandchildren they might have coming down the line, then I am happy to shoulder even a fraction of the responsibility.

But, let's be real, that responsibility lies with the women and men taking part in the marches.

The rest of us are talking – or writing – but we each have an important part to play, so strike up that conversation and see what comes from it.

You'll be glad you did.

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Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

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The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating:

The Formation of the National League of Baseball (February 2, 1876)

Baseball was in full swing in Aurora by the time the major leagues were forming. Sisman's Shoe Company fielded a team in the local industrial league, pictured here in 1914.

AURORA MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

360 Kids

Last week, 360 Kids said goodbye to its executive director, Michael Braithwaite, who will be joining Raising the Roof to help tackle homelessness on a national scale.

Michael was an integral part of the 360 Kids team for over six-and-a-half years. He is well respected in the community and has always been a strong advocate for youth and the fight to end homelessness. Michael's vision, adopted by organizations throughout Ontario, is that every kid matters. I am assured that Michael leaves behind a strong team that will continue to build on the vision and mission at 360 Kids.

One of the programs 360 Kids is moving forward with is Nightstop. This program has been successfully running in the United Kingdom for the past 30 years and 360 Kids is the first North American organization to implement it.

Nightstop is a volunteer program in which youth are invited to stay in the home of a volunteer community member for a short or long-term period. The host volunteers are screened and trained to take low-risk homeless youth into their homes.

This is another way that we can help fight homelessness in our communities and prevent our youth from ending up on the streets of Toronto – and the horrific life that can follow. If you or anyone you know would be interested in becoming a volunteer Nightstop host, please contact the Nightstop Coordinator, Jacquie Hermans at jhermans@360kids.ca.

View From Queen's Park

Chris Ballard, MPP
Newmarket-Aurora

Toll Roads

Last week, the government announced it is doubling the Gas Tax dollar program for 99 communities across Ontario, including Newmarket and Aurora. We will provide York Region with reliable, long-term funding to improve and expand its local transit systems and offer more travel options for commuters and families.

By saying "no" to Toronto's request for road tolls, we are listening to the concerns of individuals who are frustrated by their daily commute.

Premier Wynne clearly stated the province's philosophy around toll roads is to only allow them where there are public transit alternatives to private vehicle travel. The $168 million Toronto said it would raise through tolls will be more than covered by its portion of the Gas Tax program.

Starting in 2019, Ontario will increase funding for local transit through an enhancement to the existing gas tax program, doubling the municipal share from two cents per litre to four cents by 2021. There will be no increase in the tax that people in Ontario pay on gasoline as a result of the enhancement to the program.

Cities and towns receiving the new funding are able to plan for and make major infrastructure upgrades, buy additional transit vehicles, add more routes, extend hours of service, implement fare strategies and improve accessibility.

Our Government recognizes that commuters need reliable transit options before revenue generating measures such as road tolls are considered. That is why we are not supporting plans for municipal road tolls at this time. We will continue to invest heavily in transit infrastructure in Toronto – more than any other provincial government in history – as well as across the GTHA and across Ontario.

Bingo World

I had the pleasure of attending an event at Newmarket's Bingo World last week to celebrate the $3 million raised by Newmarket Charitable Gaming Association Charities since 2013.

The Ontario Charitable Gaming Association is a provincial organization that represents the interests of Charities and non-profits that fundraise through charitable gaming.

Funds generated at Newmarket's Bingo Word benefit 35 local charities and non-profit organizations within Newmarket-Aurora that support mental health services, services to children and families, health research, service clubs, housing programs, cultural groups and youth sports.

I am proud to be part of a Government that supports such amazing initiatives. Through OLG's partnership with charities, municipalities and the private sector, 31 charitable gaming centres in operate across Ontario supporting 1,800 charities and non-profits. To date over $135 million has been raised across Ontario.

Chinese New Years

Gong Hey Fat Choy – wishing all those celebrating the Chinese New Year happiness and prosperity. This year is the year of the Rooster. The rooster is the tenth animal on the Chinese zodiac. In addition to the year of the rooster the Chinese element theory also comes into play. This year is the fire element making this the year of the Fire Rooster, this only happens once in a 60-year cycle.

Continued on page 14

POLITICS AS USUAL

Alison Collins-Mrakas

The week that was

I don't think we are going to hell in a hand basket just quite yet, but I do think we are getting pretty darn close.

What else to make of the world of politics this past week? Where we've gone from "alternate facts" to frightening reality in a matter of just a few days. It has been a sobering experience, for me at least, and it has left me at a loss for words.

I truly did not know what to write about this week.

The topics range from the potentially inspiring, to the truly horrible, to the outright horrific.

For example, I could comment on hugely successful Million Women March, where millions of women – on the day after Trump's inauguration to add to the powerful message being sent – marched in cities across the globe in support of the, "protection of their rights, safety, health and families."

But will this show of force mean anything in the long run? To paraphrase CNN, is it a "moment, or a movement?"

Or, I could comment on the thousands of people protesting at US airports, consulates and embassies about the appalling presidential decree banning entry to the US by Muslims from certain countries. Is this the beginning of a Muslim registry, as many fear, or is it a sensible temporary measure to improve national security as others assert?

Or, I could comment on the firing of the acting AG who refused to uphold the presidential decree, in what has been described as "Monday Night Massacre" redux (a reference to Nixon's firing of multiple folks in the justice wing that refused to do his bidding).

Are we about to see a return to the dark days of the Nixon years, or is this a simple issue of appropriate sanction for an act of insubordination?

I could comment on the tragic deaths and horrendous injuries of dozens of peaceful worshippers at a mosque in Quebec City, apparently shot in the back, as Prime Minister Trudeau said, "while practicing their faith."

Is religious intolerance becoming a crisis in Canada, or is this just the work of a lone madman?

Or, I could change gears entirely and comment on what passes for scandal – manufactured or otherwise – in local politics. Where picayune doesn't quite capture how small the issues it is that some folks have their proverbial knickers in a twist about. But, I can't be bothered to comment on the contorted contrivances of the perpetually aggrieved.

It's not that I have no opinion on any of the issues of the day; it's just that – at the risk of sounding defeatist – it seems so pointless to say it. Much of what needs to be said has already been said, or frankly should have been said. I am not sure what else I can add, but here goes.

We have always lived in a world where there are those that have much and many more that have little. We have always lived in a place where "others" are not welcomed by everyone, and often feared by some. And thus we have always lived in nations where leaders assume power by stoking fear not peaceful coexistence.

There is no point in denying what is, the point is to fight for what could be. I don't have much fight in me right now, but tomorrow is another day. The sun will rise. And so should we.

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Do you agree with the sentiments expressed by those in Saturday's Women's March?

Yes No Unsure

Go to www.theauroran.com to vote!

RESULTS TO DATE JANUARY 31, 2017	YES	NO	UNSURE
	53%	41%	6%

Groundhog Daze 2017

It was early February, and I was taking what I hoped was one of my last strolls of winter through the Aurora Arboretum.

Spying a small figure perched on a bench, I quickly realized that it was Aurora Annie, our Town's weather prognosticating groundhog. As I got closer, I could see she looked depressed.

"Hi, Annie," I said, sitting down next to her. "It's a beautiful day. Why so glum?"

With a sigh, she announced; "It's global warming."

I wasn't expecting this. Climate change seemed a big issue to be occupying the mind of such a small individual.

"Why's that? Are you concerned about potential draughts and the impact on crops?"

"No."

"How about rising water levels and increased flooding?"

"I hadn't thought of that."

Then, she suddenly sat up, eyes wide.

"I live in a hole in the ground."

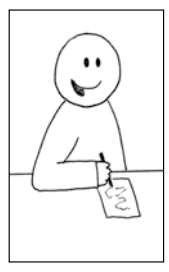
Jumping to her feet and waving her arms at the surrounding landscape she continued, "This is all flood plain!"

Trying to calm her increasing sense of panic at this new thing to worry about, I quickly changed the subject of a potentially watery future.

"You suggested something else about global warming was on your mind?"

"Yes," she said, sitting down again. "It's my annual weather predictions. They're getting impossible."

"Back in the old days," she explained, "winter would arrive, and that season would be with us for a few months, consistently cold and snowy. Then, it would warm up for good and be spring."



INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

She paused, gazing off with a nostalgic faraway look into seasons past.

"And now?" I prompted, after a long pause.

She shook her head to come back to the present.

"Now the weather see-saws all over the place. This year, December was freezing, with lots of deep snow. Then January was warm with lots of fog and rain, and pretty much melted off all the snow. Now February looks like it's getting colder again."

"I know spring will be here eventually," she concluded, her eyes welling with tears, "but with all these periods alternating between hot and cold, how am I ever supposed to predict if it will be early or late?"

We sat quietly for a minute. I watched the progress of a lady walking her dog on the trail further up the park. Annie sniffed heavily, and blew her nose into a tiny handkerchief.

Then an idea struck me.

"Maybe this is a blessing, not a curse," I said.

She looked over at me.

"Sure. You could use this global warming to your advantage."

"How's that?" she asked, with a pleading look.

"You know, that the new normal is that winter is going to cycle through warm and cold spells."

"Yes."

"So whatever you predict, you'll be right."

"Announce that spring is coming", I continued, warming up to the subject, "and you're covered, as we're bound to get a balmy spell. Predict we're in for a longer winter, and you know no matter how warm February may get, there will be a coolish dip in temperatures at least once more before it warms up for good."

"You're right either way," I concluded.

"That may work," she said, obviously running the various scenarios through her mind.

"I'm confident that it will," I said, giving her an encouraging smile, and receiving one in return from my furry companion. "You've got nothing to worry about."

Well, maybe she did have to worry about her burrow flooding in the spring thaw. But now that she'd finally cheered up a bit, I wasn't going to remind her about that.

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

John Webster, Aurora's Town Crier, was recently in the spotlight in all his finery as members of the Society of York Region Artists (SOYRA) painted his portrait at the Aurora Cultural Centre, part of their 30th Anniversary Exhibition. Packed up, SOYRA gives way this month to Grade 12 artists from Aurora's four public and Catholic high schools. The Youth ARTS Exhibition opens this Saturday, February 4.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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Development charge cuts paved way for hotel: Mayor

From page 1

to come through here for site plan [approval] which is doable. I have seen some initial renderings and I think it looks pretty spiffy. That just has to go through Council. They have worked through what they need to do for the foundation permits and that kind of thing."

The new hotel will be located on Don Hillock Drive, part of the business and employment lands on the east side of Leslie Street near Highway 404. The area is home to the headquarters of York Regional Police and Bulk Barn and, on the north side of Wellington Street, by State Farm Insurance.

A hotel has been a long-identified need continually brought up by these businesses and organizations, says Mayor Dawe, as they often bring employees, franchisees and others into Aurora for multiday meetings and training courses, leaving them to find accommodations in Newmarket and Richmond Hill.

> We are ecstatic and very excited at this opportunity

These have also been concerns long-echoed by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

"We are ecstatic and very excited at this opportunity," says Javed Khan, Chair of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. "We have been quite diligent in just keeping the conversation going and we are, collectively, very pleased."

Mr. Khan says he particularly welcomes the meeting spaces the hotel will bring to Aurora for businesses to use, not to mention the off-shoot benefits in-town accommodations will mean to local restaurants, shops, and others.

"Contrary to what some people say, it was development charges," says Mayor Dawe on the major factor that led to Monday's announcement. "We met with the Chair and the CAO (of York Region) as well as their finance staff a couple of times at the end of last year, highlighting the very basic economic shifts." Last year, Aurora passed a resolution asking the Region to drop hefty development charges when it comes to hotels as it was identified as being a key barrier to bringing new hotels to York.

"We don't get as much in development charges this way, but the points I made on a number of occasions is I would rather make half of the development charges of a project that is built than 100 per cent on a project that isn't. It did take a while for the Region to come around, but they did finally agree to do that. "

For that, Mayor Dawe says he sends his thanks to Regional Chair Wayne Emmerson.

On his part, Mr. Emmerson said the Region was "pleased" Aurora has been selected for a new Microtel, which will "not only create jobs for our residents, but it will offer visitors top notch, comfortable and friendly accommodations."

The development will be processed by Aurora's Business Concierge program, which "offers priority processing and service for qualifying non-residential development projects."

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Under fire, York Region District School Board placed under Provincial review

By Brock Weir

Amid allegations of systemic racism in the system, along with problems over equity and accountability, the Province of Ontario has stepped in to review the York Region District School Board (YRDSB).

In a statement Thursday announcing individuals appointed to review the YRDSB, Ontario Education Minister Mitzie Hunter called the matter an "urgent" one.

"There have been significant and growing concerns from parents and community members regarding governance and equity issues in the York Region District School Board," said the Minister. "These include allegations of systemic racism, concerns about the Board's equity and inclusive education policies, accountability for spending on trustees' international travel, and deteriorating relationships between the trustees, the director of education and the Board's senior staff.

"In November, I met with the Board chair and director of education to discuss these concerns. During that meeting, I was not provided with the reassurance that the Board had an adequate plan in place to deal with these issues, so I asked the Board to submit a report outlining their plan of action by January 13. Unfortunately, their proposal also fails to address these issues.

"As a result, an urgent review of the Board is needed. I am appointing Patrick Case and Sue Herbert to review the governance and performance issues at the YRDSB. The reviewers will recommend improvements, particularly regarding equity, accountability and transparency, to regain public confidence in the school Board. In addition, they will recommend ways to improve the working relationships at the Board, including amongst trustees, between the Board and the director of education, between the director of education and senior staff, and with the community. In addition, they will review whether Board members and the director of education are fulfilling their legislated duties."

Philip Parappally, the YRDSB's beleaguered Director of Education, set out a letter to York Region parents that afternoon.

In his message, he said the YRDSB "remains committed" to providing students with "safe, welcoming inclusive learning."

"These are critical issues and we welcome this opportunity to work with the reviewers in an open and transparent manner," he said. "This review will foster a common understanding of how we need to move forward with our community, the Board and staff members alike. I will ensure that all staff members cooperate fully throughout this important review.

"I want to assure you that we take these issues very seriously, and will not shy away from the difficult conversations and the important work that lies ahead to address these concerns. Our Board has long had a reputation for excellence and I want to acknowledge the good work that continues to take place in our schools and workplaces to advance student achievement and well-being.

"We remain committed to providing our students and staff with safe, welcoming and inclusive learning and working environments that enable all of our students and staff to succeed."

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Dog Show at Oak Ridges
Wednesday, February 22 • 7:15 - 8:15 pm

To all dog lovers, help us in welcoming the North York Obedience Club! They will present an amazing dog show that includes obedience routines as well as tricks and agility exercises. The performances will be followed by a lot of tail wagging and visiting between the dogs and everyone here at Oak Ridges.

Understanding Diabetes in Older Adults
Thursday, February 23 • 3:00 - 4:00 pm

Come in for an informative presentation with Faryar Foroodi , who will be discussing Diabetes in older adults. He will be teaching us about risk factors, signs and symptoms as well as tips and strategies on how to help manage the disease.

RSVP to Kristen or Catherine for both events at (905) 773-4220.

Oak Ridges Retirement Community by Signature

12925 Yonge St, Richmond Hill
Info@OakRidgesRetirement.com
OakRidgesRetirement.com

"Aurora Speaks" web-based traffic solution gets greenlight

By Brock Weir

If you see a traffic problem in your neighbourhood and want the Town to do something about it, there will soon be an app for that.

Council is set to approve "Aurora Speaks" an "innovative" web-based platform that will allow Aurorans to log on, drop a pin on a map and identify problem areas for neighbours and lawmakers alike to consider possible solutions.

Given the tentative green light at the Committee level last week, it is intended to be a new spin on Aurora's old Traffic Safety Advisory Committee. While Council voted last year to bring the Committee back to help address and investigate numerous traffic complaints rolling into Town Hall, they welcomed this new approach to addressing old problems.

"I am really excited to see how this model comes to fruition," said Councillor Sandra Humfryes, one of the leading voices behind bringing the Committee back. "I think once we have it rolling and we can get some timely feedback on how things are developing, having ourselves go into the site as well and see the information we're getting from residents…that is really when you get true statistics and true measurements to validate what you're doing and the actions we're taking to keep traffic flowing, appropriate and safe for our community."

Councillors received a demonstration of the new software at last Tuesday's General Committee meeting. Pitched by Ilmar Simanovskis, Aurora's Director of Infrastructure, and Stephanie Mackenzie-Smith, the Town's Manager of Corporate Communications, it was billed as a "really unique and innovative way of presenting solutions to our traffic issues."

"We want to make sure residents understand why the decisions that are being made are being made the way they are," said Ms. Mackenzie-Smith. "The two way communication is really critical. For us, we all want to make sure we're making the best decisions possible and that our citizens are as informed as they can be. It really allows us to actually have a conversation and to provide that feedback, [get] their ideas, and then for the Town to be able to provide them with information and respond to that in a timely and relevant way."

Added Mr. Simanovskis: "It becomes that central place for collaborations and communication with that community. It is that space that creates our solutions focus and Council is in the loop from the perspective of actually [seeing] those recommendations forward after they have been vetted by the community."

Aurora Speaks, they said, is about "building a consensus" between the residents and the ultimate decision-makers and, in the end, "empower people to make a meaningful impact on the communities where they live, work and play."

Should the new program be approved this week, the software will be in place by the end of this month for a launch. Open houses will be planned for March or early April to get members of the public up to speed with the new process and decisions could start stemming from the feedback as early as May.

If you're not quite internet savvy, the option to simply call in to Town Hall with your concerns will still be available, and your input will be compiled and placed by staff into the app for community consideration as well.

"I think there is a great potential for this," said Mayor Geoff Dawe, before asking whether any mechanisms would be put in place to ensure the community dialogue remains "civil."

There will be, he was told, filter systems in place to block "profanity."

Added Councillor Wendy Gaertner: "This will make people feel they are heard. I think there has been community frustration not having a place to go like a traditional committee. I would have been satisfied with that, but this is a lot better."

Support for the program was unanimous around the table, with Mayor Dawe adding, following the initial pitch, that there will be opportunities down the road to apply the same model in engaging the community on other issues. They agreed.

"I want to commend the innovative approach," said Councillor John Abel. "It is different, engaging, and it is taking advantage of new technology. It shows the emphasis we have on communication. I am impressed and fully in support of trying this alternate approach and getting this community consensus because I often find the community buys in, you get the best success. This looks like the way we should be working on a lot of projects.

Briefly

CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH ON SATURDAY

York Regional Police is proud to celebrate 21 years of Black History Month in Canada. The public are invited to attend the York Regional Police Black History Month celebration which is taking place this Saturday, February 4, at 10.30 a.m., at the York Regional Police headquarters, located at 47 Don Hillock Drive in Aurora. There is no cost to attend. Food and refreshments will be available after the program. Unity in the Community is the theme of this year's celebration, where we will be highlighting the many accomplishments of our members in the community. The event will include special vocal performances by Renee the Voice and Latoya Mullings, saxophonist Dave McLaughlin and a Steel Pan Drum performance by Josette Leader. "On behalf of all members of York Regional Police, we are proud to recognize the contributions that our officers have made in our community," said Chief Eric Jolliffe. "It is my pleasure to invite our community to join us in celebrating 21 years of Black History Month in Canada." For more information or to RSVP please call 1-866-876-5423 x6826.

CONCERT AIMS TO HELP KIDS ON THE STREETS

Aurora's Wavestage Theatrical Productions is taking over Newmarket Theatre on Saturday, February 11, with a benefit concert to buy kits for individuals living on the streets. Each kit will have warm blankets, tooth brushes, hats, and other necessities, and audience members are asked to bring a pair of new warm socks to the concert. "Backwards Broadway will be a fun evening of repertoire with a twist," says Wavestage's Sarah Langford. "Songs will be performed blind of age, race or gender, featuring lead singers from many past seasons and members of the Wavestage Choir." For more information, visit www.newtix.ca.

14 IMPAIRED DRIVERS NABBED

14 drivers were taken off York Region roads over the weekend after being arrested and charged with impaired-related driving offences. Between Friday and Sunday, 11 men and three women were charged with alcohol-related driving offences, including nine from general patrol or RIDE spot checks, and five from calls made to police by concerned citizens. Despite repeated warnings by police and numerous senseless tragedies on roadways, drivers are not getting the message, say Police. Impaired driving is the number one criminal cause of death in Canada.

THE AURORAN

SPORTS

Vol. 17 No. 15 905-727-3300 theauroran.com FREE Week of February 2, 2017

Aurora's Eric Holland gets a chance in close on the Wellington net in the Tigers' 4 - 1 loss to the Dukes last week.
Auroran photo by Jake Courtepatte

Tigers eliminated from playoff contention

By Jake Courtepatte

The shades have been pulled on the Aurora Tigers' season.

With just over three weeks left on the Ontario Junior Hockey League regular season schedule, Aurora's Junior A club has been officially eliminated from the postseason.

A pair of losses last week, combined with two big wins from the eighth-place Newmarket Hurricanes, leaves the Tigers 20 points out of a playoff spot with nine games to play.

The season all but over last Thursday, the Tigers faced a Wellington Dukes squad eager to clinch the postseason.

Wellington came out flying, going up 3 – 0 on the Tigers before they finally solved Wellington goaltender Victor-Olivier Courchesne. It was a highlight moment for the Tigers, however, as defenseman Daniel Tomassetti notched his first goal with the team.

Jake Sabourin stopped 37 of the 40 pucks he faced in a 4 – 1 effort, with Wellington adding an empty netter in the final two minutes.

Sabourin was back between the pipes Sunday to face the Cobourg Cougars at home, one of the hottest teams in the OJHL. At the other end was Stefano Durante, whose "sparkly" 1.88 goals-against this season, as play-by-play announcer Joe Montesano called it, leads the OJHL by a long shot.

Cobourg capitalized just off the opening draw, before doubling their lead just under seven minutes into the first. Eric Holland cut the lead in half with his nineteenth of the year just a few minutes later, sending a backhand through Durante's pads on a breakaway.

Down 3 - 1 in the second, Tyler Davis once again brought the game within a goal, burying in close off a Mel Melconian centering pass.

The Cougars scored the only goal of the third period to win it 4 – 2, Aurora's third loss in a row.

With a record of 6-34-1-4, the Tigers sit two points back of the Pickering Panthers for last in the OJHL's Northeast Conference. Fans will be seeing some fresh faces for the remainder of the season, which culminates on February 24, as call ups from the AAA systems will be trying out for next year's squad.

A pair of games are on the Tigers' schedule this weekend, first visiting the Stouffville Spirit (23-16-2-3) Saturday night. The weekly home game features the Tigers hosting the Dukes at the Aurora Community Centre, with puck drop set for 7 p.m.

While only four teams in the OJHL have clinched a playoff spot, two York Region teams are in good position to reach the postseason.

While the Hurricanes sit seven points into the eighth and final playoff spot, the Spirit are twenty points ahead of ninth place, and could punch their ticket this week.

For stats, schedules, and more information, visit www.auroratigers.pointstreaksites.com.

Aurora native having breakout NCAA season

By Jake Courtepatte

An ex-Tiger and Aurora native may just be named the best play in NCAA hockey this season.

Dylan Sikura has been turning heads as of late while playing for the Northeastern Huskies, one of the most prestigious teams in the Boston area.

Named on Sunday as a finalist for the winner of the Hobey Baker Award, handed out to the NCAA's MVP at the end of each college season, Sikura recently took over the team lead in scoring following a tear of offense over the past month.

Registering a point in 20 of 24 games this season, he moved up to fifth in the nation in points over the weekend, enough to be nominated for college hockey's most prestigious award.

Most recently, Sikura earned Warrior Player of the Week honours for a natural hat trick scored against UMass Lowell on Friday. With the Huskies trailing 3 – 1 with less than eight minutes left in the third period, Sikura single handedly won the game for Northeastern, including the game-winning goal with sixteen seconds left on the clock.

"Every chance I get, I try to score a goal," said Sikura. "It was the biggest game of our year so far, so I'm pretty happy I could be a big part of it."

Currently riding a nine-game point streak, it was the second week in a row Sikura has been the Warrior recipient.

Growing up in Aurora, Sikura joined the St. Andrew's College's Saints program from the AAA South Central Coyotes in 2010-11. After just two games with the varsity squad, he joined the OJHL's Aurora Tigers, spending three seasons with the Junior A team. He was named team captain in his final season, amassing 110 points in 131 games with the Tigers.

Now in his third season with Northeastern, the centreman has racked up 41 points in 25 games this year. He said it was "such an honour" to receive the Hobey Baker nod.

A long list of Hobey Baker winners have gone on to make a big impact in the NHL, including the likes of Paul Kariya, Jack Eichel, and Johnny Gaudreau.

Sikura was drafted by the Chicago Blackhawks in the sixth round of the 2014 NHL Entry Draft.

Aurora native, and ex-Tiger, Dylan Sikura leads the Northeastern Huskies into the NCAA's prestigious Beanpot tournament on Monday.
Photo by Jim Pierce/Northeastern Athletics

The St. Andrew's Saints were runners-up to the Northwood School Huskies in the annual MacPherson tournament on Sunday.
Photo by Paul Mosey

Saints repeat as finalists in MacPherson tournament

By Jake Courtepatte

It was a repeat performance in St. Andrew's College's premiere hockey tournament.

For the second year in a row, the Saints varsity squad met the Northwood School Huskies in the championship game of the MacPherson tournament, held at St. Andrew's annually since 1984.

Scoring a total of 23 goals in their first four contests, a tournament high, the Saints were held to just one goal in a 6 – 1 loss to Northwood at La Brier Arena on Sunday.

Mathew MacDougall had the only goal for the Saints late in the second period.

Four unanswered goals by the Huskies in the third period were the Saints eventual undoing.

"It was a disappointing end to a fantastic weekend for our school community," said David Manning, head coach. "Northwood is an outstanding team and a worthy winner this time around. As always, we will push our players to pick themselves up and look to get better this week in preparation for Upper Canada College on Wednesday."

One of the top prep hockey programs in the country, the Saints have not disappointed this season in the independent CISAA league. They bring a record of 7-0-1 into their matchup with Upper Canada.

For the MacPherson, Sunday's

Continued on page 14

Stratigakis joins women's national soccer team for camp

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By Jake Courtepatte

Sarah Stratigakis is inching closer to the highest level of women's soccer in the world.

The Aurora United FC standout, and League 1 Ontario superstar, has earned an invite to Canada Soccer's Women's National team's first training camp of 2017 ahead of a test match against Mexico in early February.

While the training camp serves as a reorientation and conditioning stint for returning players, it is also an opportunity for executives to scout incoming talent such as Stratigakis, who has been a staple at the international level in younger age groups for years.

With three of the national squad's key members – Melissa Tancredi, Marie-Eve Nault, and Rhian Wilkinson – retiring there could be room for Stratigakis to make her move to the next level.

"Many of the young players coming into this camp have just experienced FIFA youth international competition, so bringing them into the Women's National Team environment now continues their development and gives them more opportunities to grow as players within the Canadian system," said team head coach John Herdman. "Giving young players this experience is an important part of their development and provides a critical assessment touch point for our technical staff."

Scoring at almost a goal-per-game pace in Aurora's first season of League 1 action in 2016, the seventeen-year old finished sixth in league scoring, potting nine including a hat trick in the final game of the regular season in August.

Making her debut with the Canadian youth program in 2013, Stratigakis has represented Canada at the U-17 level three times and in the U-20 twice, but this week's camp will mark her first instance training with the senior squad. She most recently donned the red and white at September's U-17 Women's World Cup in Jordan, helping Canada to a 3 – 2 victory over Cameroon with a game-winning penalty kick.

She is one of three players invited to the camp under the age of eighteen.

Joining Stratigakis from League 1 is Alex Lamontagne of Durham United FC, who played just four games with the club in 2016.

Canada Soccer's Women's National Team will play at home for the first time since capturing back-to-back bronze medals at the 2016 Rio Olympics when they take on Mexico in an international friendly in Vancouver on Saturday, February 4, BC Place.

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Library wants LGBTQ+ views on how to better serve community

By Brock Weir

LGBTQ+ youth often feel they don't have the safe spaces to speak out on the issues that matter to them, and how the community can best address those needs. But, the Aurora Public Library wants you to know they are one of those safe spaces and they want to hear from you.

This month, the Aurora Public Library (APL) will launch a series of workshops with LGBTQ+ youth and adults to hear more about the needs of the community and how the Library can serve.

APL recently launched its new strategic plan entitled "A Place of Possibilities," which will help guide the direction of the library through 2021. The strategic plan focuses on community-led initiatives and dynamic conversations with the community on what the Library is, and what it could be.

"We want to learn about our strengths, our gaps in service, needs and priorities," says Claudia Olguin, Coordinator of Community-led Initiatives for APL. "In other words, we want to learn how APL can better serve the LGBTQ+ communities."

Over the past three years, APL has been working to improve their LGBTQ+ collections when it comes to books, movies, and other media. They have received positive feedback, particularly from youth, to say these efforts are appreciated, but they know there is more that can be done, whether it is special programs or ways to adjust service to make APL even more accessible.

"Part of the reason why we're doing this is because we happen to have a staff member, me, who can offer at least one point of view," says Polly Ross, APL's Children's Librarian, a member of York Region's lesbian community. "But, obviously this is an area where one point of view isn't enough. As the Children's Librarian, what I want to do is make sure LGBTQ families and young people feel welcome and find the books they need. In general, I would like us to be more aware that the assumptions we're making aren't always correct when we deal with people. That is something everybody in public service needs to begin to think about when it becomes more and more accepted that gender and sexual identity are a continuum. We're dealing with that, along with everyone else, pretty much, especially in North America."

The next steps in addressing that are the focus groups.

The first focus group will take place at the Library on Wednesday, February 15, from 7 – 8.30 p.m., with a conversation open to LGBTQ+ youth in the Aurora community. A second focus group, geared towards adults, will take place Wednesday, March 15 at the same time.

For Claudia and Polly, it is very important to begin first with the youth, but they do face some challenges in reaching this demographic.

"Polly and I were discussing how we could set up the groups and we came up with the idea of having two focus groups because maybe a 17-year-old wouldn't feel as comfortable being in the same meeting as a 12-year-old, or maybe the needs wouldn't be the same," says Claudia.

Adds Polly: "I definitely wanted to have one for youth because this is a place where I really think we can make much more of a difference. If you're a high school student and you're just coming out, or you're just transitioning, nobody ever really feels safe, but those people feel really unsafe. If we can be a safe place and offer books that say, yes, this is okay, this is how you're allowed to be, and be a place where they can be who they feel they are is really important.

"If the youth want to come, I want them to know that they are safe, 100 per cent. If they don't want to identify themselves, that is okay. We're not going to demand to know people's names, where they're from, or how they identify. If there is anything you think we can change to make things better for you, please get up your courage and come. We would really appreciate it and do our absolute best to make you feel safe and comfortable."

With the Library focusing on technological literacy as well as traditional literacy, there is also room for gender literacy, they say.

To reserve your spot in either focus group, visit www.aurorapl.ca or drop in on the evening itself.

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Region needs to lower "ridiculous" fees on underpasses, says Councillor

By Brock Weir

Two new pedestrian underpasses on Leslie Street between St. John's Sideroad and Wellington Street are set to move forward this week, but final costs have yet to be pinned down.

Sitting at the Committee Level last week, Council gave the tentative green light to moving ahead with the trail underpasses.

Part of a 50-50 cost sharing deal with the Region of York when they begin reconstruction of Leslie Street this year, the underpasses are designed to be a connection between the emerging neighbourhoods in Aurora's 2C developments on the west side of Leslie and the planned business parks in the east.

With Aurora's share clocking in at nearly $902,000, excluding any additional costs the Town might decide to invest later on to provide illumination, the ballooning price tag has repeatedly come before Council for consideration.

But, last week, Councillors said enough time had passed to make a decision.

"I think it is imperative we move forward with this underpass," said Councillor Sandra Humfryes, following a delegation from long-time trails advocate Klaus Wehrenberg. "We have delayed it a couple of times, we went back to Trails and Active Transportation (committee) and at the last meeting it was unanimously agreed that it needed to move forward and…we should not be wavering from the path we started.

"There is going to be much development of employment lands where the only way [you can get there] if this doesn't occur is by driving and I think it is imperative we move forward. I really hope we have the support around the table to really get this back on track."

Indeed, they did.

"We have been talking about this for years," said Mayor Geoff Dawe, "so I really do think it is time for action and, at some point, I would like to suggest to the Trails Committee that we look at an underpass on Wellington."

Before that hits the table, though, some Councillors said they wanted firmer numbers on what the final price tag might be for the two underpasses in question.

Speaking in favour of the paths, Councillor Tom Mrakas said the Trails Committee had a bit of frustration when they found the underpasses were before them again for further consideration after signing off on them multiple times. The committee was firm, he said, that not moving forward now would be a lost opportunity. Nevertheless, he renewed his criticism of the Region charging Aurora 12 per cent fees on the underpass for administration and inspection costs.

Councillor Mrakas' motion calling on the Region to wave these fees was approved by Committee, with the caveat the project still go ahead if that waiver didn't come.

"As everyone knows, I think it is absolutely insane that the Region is charging us, the municipality, a six per cent administration fee and that inspection cost," he said. "We don't do it when we work on projects with them. If they want [it from] us, we can start charging them. If they don't waive it, I suggest we start charging them on any projects that we work on with them.

"I want to move forward regardless of what the Region says; I just want to make them aware that we're not okay with this charge, and to let them know that if they are going to continue charging this we will charge them back."

As far as costs go, there are other uncertainties.

Al Downey, Aurora's Director of Parks and Recreation, said that should the projects clear the final hurdle at Council this week, he will approach the Town of Newmarket for possible cost sharing for the underpass connecting to the trails aligning with the Aurora-Newmarket border.

In the view of Councillor Wendy Gaertner, leaving illumination out of the equation is out of the question and should be considered along with making sure the trails can be accessed from Leslie Street.

Aurora is negotiating with the Region on an "electrical drop" to help offset some costs Aurora might incur on lighting the tunnels, said Mr. Downey. But, he noted, costs for the lighting and access to street level remains uncertain.

THEY'RE BACK – The sounds of Motown raise the roof of Aw, Shucks! on Thursday as the George St. Kitts Band played the restaurant's grand re-opening. The popular downtown Aurora eatery opened its doors once again on January 26 after nearly a month of renovations.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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Local business steps up to keep Women's March momentum going

By Brock Weir

With his daughters off at university and his wife preparing for her Masters, it was left to Aurora's Steve Falk to "represent the ladies in his family" at the January 21 Women's March, which brought over 60,000 people to the streets of Toronto to send a message to politicians around the world.

Moved by the experience, however, Mr. Falk is not content to sit back content that he just took part in the March; it is a movement that needs to keep going in order to effect change.

Following the successful protests which sprang up around the world, the organizers shifted focus to "10/100" issuing ten calls to action over the coming days. The first call to action is to write a postcard to politicians about what matters to you and how you plan to fight for it down the road.

To that end, Mr. Falk and his Industrial Parkway-based company, Prime Data, have stepped up to make things easy for Canadian Marchers. Through their website, interested individuals can fill out a brief web form with their name, their politician of choice, and what they're marking for, and it will be printed off and sent to Canadian Members of Parliament free of charge.

"It was reassuring to know there were that many people who shared your sentiments and cared enough to hit the streets about it," says Mr. Falk, reflecting on his experiences in the Toronto March. "There has been a lot of hand-wringing and a lot of 'Where's the free world going?' kind of stuff, and I tend to put my head down, forge forward and try not to make that negative background hum interfere with my every day. Every once in a while, though, you have to step out and say, 'It is important just to say something."

The idea to offer his company's resource to the cause came about while

Representing the ladies in his family at last month's Women's March in Toronto, local businessman Steve Falk is trying to keep the momentum going.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

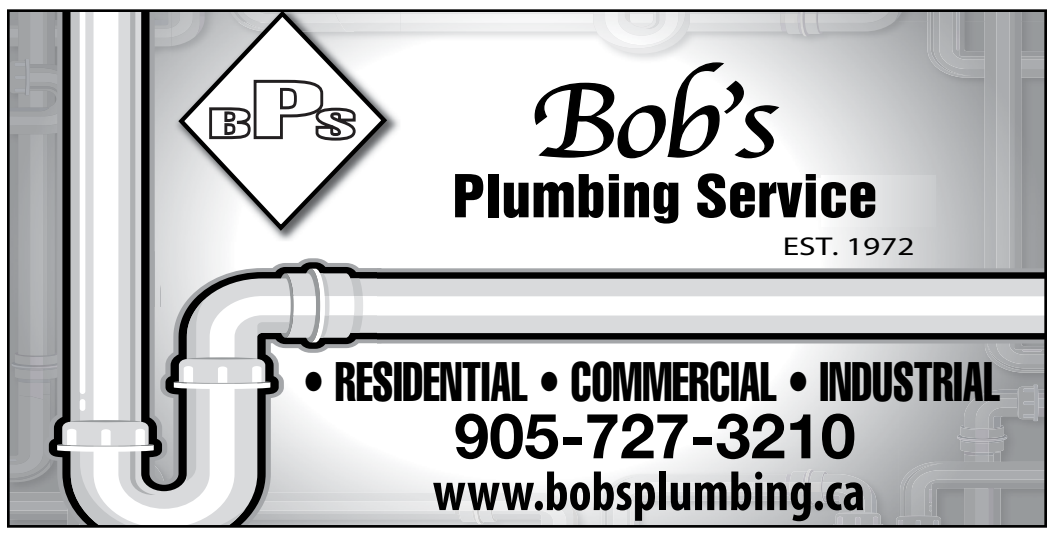
writing a blog post of his experiences. As he processed his thoughts, March organizers formally launched 10/100 and the creative wheels started turning.

"I'm in the postcard business and I create millions of these personal communications and I was so thrilled they realised that a postcard could have a lot of effect," says Mr. Falk. "If they get 150 letters about something in a Senator's office, they think it is a pretty serious thing. It only takes that much. You can put 25,000 names on an electric petition or on a Facebook post and it doesn't make that much of a difference. Knowing that most people don't have stamps anymore in their homes, or they might not have postcard printer stock, I thought we can just make this happen. Within a couple of hours, we can send postcards to people."

Since the program's launch on January 25, they have had a response from people in such wide-ranging communities as London, ON, Drumheller, AB, and even individuals in France and The Netherlands.

"I am not sure what I would call a success; maybe the dozens of postcards that go out during the day might affect an MP's opinion and I won't know, but writing to your MP should be a thing again. If we just send that message out, maybe the next time someone suggests writing to your MP, maybe they'll do it.

"It is such a small gesture that could potentially change an MP's attitude towards an issue. People often say, 'I can't effect change, I don't even vote because I can't effect change.' Maybe you can't effect change by putting happy faces on Facebook posts or signing electronic petitions, but physical mail has an impact."



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Tourney hosted teams from three provinces and three states

From page 9

championship game marked the eighth straight year that the Saints program has won either gold, silver, or bronze in their home tournament.

In its 34-year history, St. Andrew's has won the tournament a record nine times, last raising the trophy in 2014.

"As a coach, player, and avid fan, I always look forward to watching the fast-paced and competitive games in this tournament," said Kevin McHenry, Headmaster.

The Saints opened the tournament on a tear, outscoring both Appleby College and the Under-18 Elite Pittsburgh Penguins by a combined score of 20 – 1. They were brought down to earth by Edge School on Saturday afternoon, shut out 2 – 0, before earning a berth in the final by besting Upper Canada College 3 – 1.

The tradition of naming a tournament All-Star team had two Saints land on the roster, in junior Cam Hillis and senior Morgan Baron. Hillis was named an all-star forward, while Baron, team captain, earned the Robin Fraser plaque for sportsmanship.

Drawing from over a dozen countries throughout its history, this year's incarnation of the MacPherson tournament hosted teams from Ontario, Alberta, Quebec, Maine, Pennsylvania, and New York.

Questions raised over actual costs of Joint Operations Centre

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By Brock Weir

A final report on Aurora's new Joint Operations Centre raised eyebrows of Councillors last week raising questions whether or not the building came in under or over budget.

Convening for the first time in the New Year last Tuesday night, Councillors sitting at the Committee level dissected a document from Ilmar Simanovskis, Aurora's Director of Infrastructure, which was intended to be a "final report" on the status of the project.

For some Councillors, however, it was just the start of what could prove to be a number-crunching game.

Last year, Aurora's infrastructure and parks departments moved into the new Joint Operations Centre (JOC) near the top of Industrial Parkway North, the former works on Scanlon Court sold to help finance the new building for a budgeted $20.5 million dollars.

In his report, Mr. Simanovskis notes that the Council of the day was provided with a full scope of all the amenities that could be a part of the JOC, but several items such as a green roof, an entry pylon sign, on-site landscaping, and a fuel monitoring system were left off the final menu, to meet budget demands and be investigated for implementation at a later date.

"The report recognized the net impact of additional site development costs and offered a number of scope reduction options to bring the project costs in line with the budget," said Mr. Simanovskis in his report, noting that these reductions helped knock just over $102,000 off the final project budget. "Reductions that were considered were identified as work that could either be completed at a later date, at a lower cost (by staff or other contracted services), or could be deleted with minimal impact to the project. These scope reductions were approved by Council to maintain the project budget targets."

Last week's report, however, had one detail which brought up a significant discussion: the fuel monitoring system. Mr. Simanovskis notes the system was "not essential to the operation" of the fuel dispensing system at the JOC but, "to take full benefit of the monitoring and control features of the fuelling system, staff requested consideration of the controls component in the 2017 capital program as a separate capital project. These items result in a total net budget impact of $269,500 or 1.3 per cent over the approved budget."

"My general thought as I was reading through this is it is like someone giving me a budget to buy eveningwear for the next few years and, during the process, I find I don't have sufficient budget for a tie, cufflinks, shoes, and belt," said Councillor Harold Kim, who was not on Council when the initial budget for the JOC was approved. "However, I could buy a belt at a future date at a lower cost should my pants start falling down."

Councillor Pirri, who was part of the decision-making team when this was approved in 2014, offered a similar perspective.

"I think we have skirted this issue a little bit and here's my difficulty: I think we need to do a little bit more work on this to figure out what happened. Looking back at it now, and hindsight is always 20/20, in August 2014, a few months before an election, certain elements were removed from a tender so the project came in under-budget by $100,000.

"I think, as a whole, this Council has always strived to provide real and accurate information and tried to provide numbers that aren't hidden throughout our budgeting process; we publish both our rate increase as well as the Regional rate increase to [be] as open as possible. Looking at it in hindsight now, it is not something that looks good."

Many Council members around the table, he said, questioned how this happened. Among them was Councillor Tom Mrakas, who said eliminating certain items from the budget – particularly the fuel monitoring system – knowing that they would be needed down the line "sets a false sense" of costs to the community.

"Realistically, when I look at it and when I go through this, it didn't come within budget, it actually came in overbudget," said Councillor Mrakas. "To me [on the fuel monitoring system] I am hearing two things: we didn't need it, so we moved it out because it wasn't essential. Then I am hearing we actually do need it to keep it moving properly. To me, it is just a way of circumventing what the budget number is. I have concerns and I think moving forward we need to deal with this and have [the information] properly put out for us and for residents."

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TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

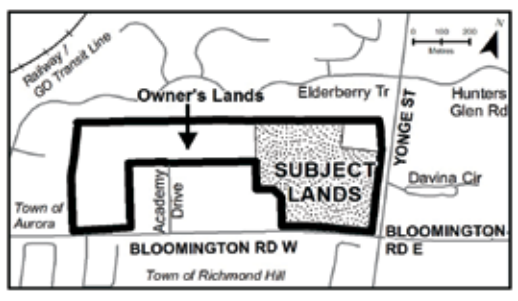
AURORA

NOTICE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION

The Town of Aurora has received the following application under the *Planning Act*:

APPLICATION: The Owner has submitted an Official Plan Amendment Application to amend the Yonge Street South Secondary Plan (OPA 34) to redesignate the easterly portion of the Owners Lands (Subject Lands) from; Major Institutional, Minor Institutional and Environmental Function Area to, Cluster Residential, Environmental Function Area and Special Policy Area.

PROPERTY: 50 Bloomington Road West



LEGAL DESC.: Part of Lot 71, Concession 1, Geographic Township of King, Town of Aurora, Regional Municipality of York

APPLICANT: Ontario Minister of Infrastructure (MOI)

FILE NUMBER: OPA-2016-06

CONTACT: Any inquiries should be directed to **Glen Letman** or **Jeff Healey** of the Planning and Building Services Department at 905-727-3123 **ext. 4346** or **ext. 4349**, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Comments may also be mailed to the Planning and Building Services department at the address noted below, faxed to 905-726-4736 or emailed to **planning@aurora.ca**. Please quote the file name and number.

Personal Information Collection Notice

The Town of Aurora collects personal information in communications or presentations made to Town Council and/or its Committees under the legal authority of the *Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990*, Chapter c.P.13, as amended. Pursuant to Section 27 of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990*, c. M.56, as amended, (*the "Act"*) public feedback to planning proposals is considered to be public recorded and may be disclosed to any individual upon request in accordance with the *Act*. If you are submitting letters, faxes, emails, presentations or other communications to the Town, you should be aware that your name and the fact that you communicated with the Town will become part of the public record and will appear on the Town's website. The Town will also make your communication and any personal information in it, such as your address and postal code or email address available to the public unless you expressly request the Town to remove it. Questions about this collection should be directed to the Town Clerk, Town of Aurora, 100 John West Way, Box 1000, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1 905-727-3123.

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or email:
executive.director@aurorashof.ca
CALL: 647.632.6911

View From Queen's Park

From page 5

It is widely believed that a person's characteristics are decided by both their birth year zodiac sign and their element.

I was honoured to attend a private Chinese New Year's celebration hosted by the Aurora International School on January 22. It was a great way to kick-off the New Year with performances by students of all ages.

A second public event is taking place at the Newmarket Old Town Hall, 460 Botsford St., on Sunday, February 5, 12..30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. This event will be hosted in Newmarket by the Federation of Chinese Canadians in York Region and Wasim Jarrah Real Estate Services. The celebration is open to all and will include a lion dance, cultural songs, a Kung-Fu show and authentic Chinese food.

As always, I invite you to contact me on any issue. Please call my community office at 905-750-0019, or visit my website at www.ChrisBallardMPP.ca. My email is: cballard.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org. I look forward to hearing from you.

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THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4

Celebrate the start of Black History Month with the York Regional Police today at their Aurora headquarters. The Police will host a morning of celebration from 10.30 a.m. to 12 noon at 47 Don Hillock Drive featuring fellowship, music and refreshments. Unity in Community is the theme of this year's celebration, where Police will be highlighting the many accomplishments of their members in the community. The event will include special vocal performances by Renee the Voice and Latoya Mullings, saxophonist Dave McLaughlin and a steel pan drum performance by Josette Leader. To RSVP, contact the Special Events Unit at 1-866-876-5423 x6826. For more information, visit www.yrp.ca.

****

BLUES BASH – The Aurora Winter Blues Festival (AWBF) kicks off tonight with the forth annual Blues Bash at Highland Automotive. (15783 Yonge Street) from 7 – 11.30 p.m. The AWBF BluesBash Festival Kickoff event is one of the must-attend social events in Aurora. The annual fundraiser for local charity organizations is a happening event which hosts two live music stages, dancing, silent and live auction, food stations, licensed bar, the Blues Brothers, Live Painting to the Beat by Dubi and many other fun activities. The evening showcases the talents of local youth and professional musicians for an upbeat and memorable night of music. Don't miss out on this amazing night, which sells out every year! For more information, visit www.awbf.ca.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6

The Aurora Historical Society hosts its Annual General Meeting in the Magna Room at the Aurora Public Library this evening from 7 – 9 p.m. Featuring guest speaker historian Jacqueline Stuart, a Year in Review, Plans for 2017 and more. 2017 Membership is required to vote. Directors and committee members wanted. For more information, call Mary Beth Hess at 905-727-8991.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8

The PROBUS Club of Aurora holds their monthly meeting today from 10 a.m. to12 noon at the Royal Canadian Legion, 105 Industrial Parkway North. This month's guest speaker is Elaine Cheral on the topic of "The Power of the Pen." For more information, visit www.handwritinganalysistoronto.com. If you are interested in becoming a member, please call Gary Gilbert at 905-895-2849, or be our guest at the meeting.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Amnesty International – Amnesty International holds their monthly meeting on Thursday, February 9, from 7.30 – 9 p.m. to discuss current human rights issues and write appeal letters. Held at Trinity Anglican Church (in The Rectory building behind the church), 79 Victoria St., Aurora – all are welcome! For more information call Renee or Len at 905-713-6713. Website: www.amnesty.ca.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10

The lead-up to the Aurora Winter Blues Festival continues tonight at the Aurora Cultural Centre with the "Friday Night Blues Party" featuring Diana Braithwaite and Chris Whitely from 8 – 10 p.m. The Centre is proud to collaborate with the Aurora Winter Blues Festival for a night of hot blues! The finest couple in Canada's blues scene graces our stage with their five-piece band. As the venerable jazz and blues bible Downbeat Magazine said about Diana Braithwaite and Chris Whiteley: "It's a rare and good thing when two talented performers join forces." Audiences, critics, and blues lovers all over North America and Europe seem to agree. Doors open at 7 p.m. for an 8 p.m. start. Tickets are on sale now -- $30 in advance or $35 on the day of the concert – from the Aurora Cultural Centre. www.auroraculturalcentre.ca.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11

WILL YOU BE MY VALENTINE? Join the Aurora Historical Society today from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. for a jewellery making workshop, just in time for Valentine's Day. Come to Hillary House to make a hex nut bracelet, a gift box, and a card for your loved one. Must be 16 year of age or older to participate. Space is limited; contact 905-727-8991 or email leigha.cooney@aurorahs.com to register.

****

The Aurora Winter Blues Festival and the Aurora Public Library will host a Pop-Up Blues performance today in the Library living room from 1 – 3.30 p.m. Today's theme: Lady Plays Guitar.

****

Calling All Writers – The Writers' Community of York Region is thrilled to present its first student workshop to be held at 1310 Kerrisdale Blvd, Suite 200, in Newmarket today from 2 – 5 p.m. This workshop is open to students in Grades 7 – 12. The Writers' Community offers a variety of activities, including writer prompts, blue pencil sessions, book talks, and guest speakers guaranteed to stimulate your inner writer. Bring a friend to enjoy the experience. This is a fun opportunity to share with others the love of writing. For additional information, contact Youth Coordinator and Forum Facilitator Erika Willaert at hintsofgrey@gmail.com. Erika is the teacher-librarian at Rogers Public School and is a published writer with over 20 years of teaching and writing experience.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18

The Aurora Winter Blues Festival and the Aurora Public Library will host a Pop-Up Blues performance today in the Library living room from 1 – 3.30 p.m. Today's theme: Old School Blues.

****

Raise The Roof Rhythm and Blues Dance: The Aurora Legion, in conjunction with the Aurora Winter Blues Festival, will host the "Raise the Roof" Rhythm & Blues Dance. For those of you looking for a fun evening of dancing, we have the perfect night out for you. By popular demand we have the big band sound of "Groovestra", a nine-piece band that knows how to heat up the dance floor with its Jump Rhythm & Blues along with other popular hits from the 70s, 80s and 90s. Throw on your dancing shoes and come on out and support a wonderful cause. Proceeds from this event will go towards the Legions New Roof Fund, the Queens York Rangers Cadet Program and the AWBF Youth in Music Program. For more information, call 905-727-9932.

To submit your event send details in 100 words or less to letters@auroran.com with the subject line "Coming Events".

Faith groups stand together

From page 1

wounded, leading faith communities across the country to stand up in solidarity with their Muslim brothers and sisters.

The community vigil, hosted by Aurora United Church, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, and Trinity Anglican Church, with participation from an Aurora Imam and the Newmarket Islamic Centre, will take place at the Aurora Cultural Centre on February 4, from 1.30 – 3 p.m.

Other faith communities were expected to confirm their participation in Saturday's vigil as The Auroran went to press.

The Newmarket Islamic Centre, which serves the communities of both Newmarket and Aurora, are also in the planning stages of an additional vigil, tentatively set for Friday.

Further details for both events will be posted at www.theauroran.com as they become available.

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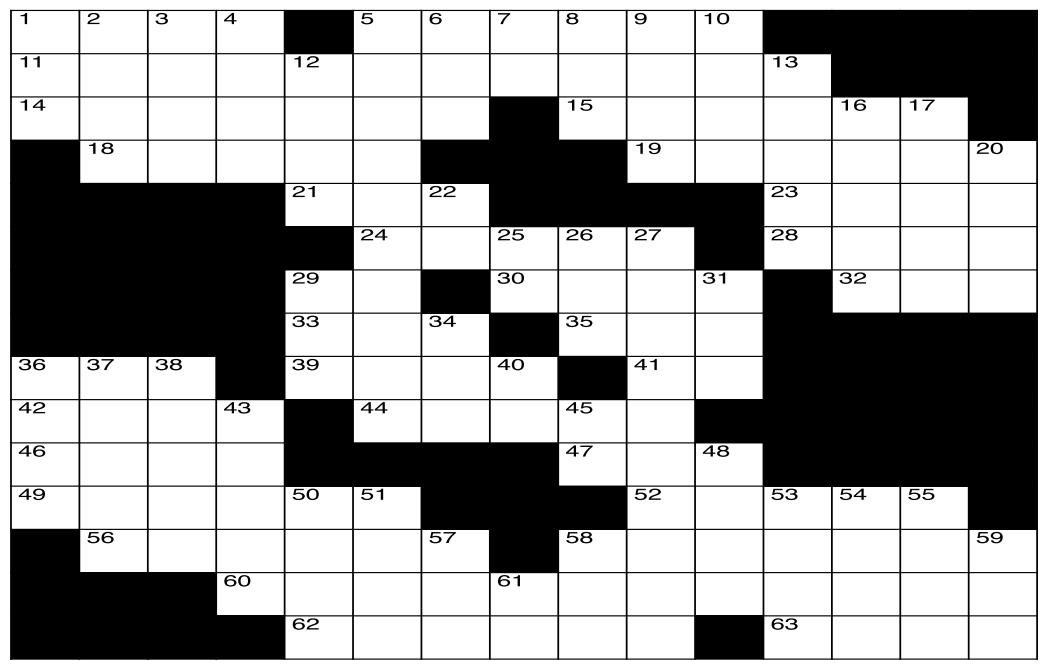

CLUES ACROSS

1. Baseball team
5. Hymns
11. Actor Jared
12. Fragrance
16. __ Von Bismarck, Iron Chancellor
17. Nordic God
18. Weighed down
19. Coppola's mob epic
24. Nanogram
25. Famed street artist
26. Identifier
27. 23rd letter of the Greek alphabet
28. In addition
29. Micturated
30. Shock
31. Accept
33. Allotment
34. Eras
38. Emerges
39. Cape Verde capital
40. __, United Arab Emirates capital
43. Small amount
44. Back of the foot
45. Pakrit language
49. Home of "60 Minutes"
50. Condemn
51. Ailed
53. Elevated railroad
54. Rebelliousness
56. Ancient Greek city
58. Clothing company (abbr.)
59. Member of the cabbage family
60. Softens or smooths
63. Mass of coagulated liquid
64. Problems
65. Irish Republic

CLUES DOWN

1. Dress
2. Deadly
3. Says aloud
4. PT Anderson film "__ Nights"
5. Teacher (abbr.)
6. Anesthetized
7. Anno Domini (in the year of Our Lord)
8. __ and behold
9. French young women (abbr.)
10. Scorch
13. Notre Dame
14. Express disapproval
15. Cars need these
20. Not off
21. Unit of mass
22. You
23. Concealed
27. Parent-teacher organizations
29. Approximately 3.14159
30. Chinese conception of poetry
31. Satisfaction
32. College degree
33. Formerly Ceylon: __ Lanka
34. Effeminate
35. Something to solve
36. Horses like these
37. Intelligence organization
38. Blood type
40. Exhibition
41. Poisonous plant
42. Aluminum
44. Possesses
45. Penetrate with a sharp instrument
46. Ring-shaped objects
47. Speaks at church
48. Form in the mind
50. Selectors
51. Probability of default
52. 2001 Spielberg film
54. Where to get a sandwich
55. Newts
57. Modus operandi
61. Exists
62. Politico-economic union

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

	E	F	T	S						C	A	B	S	
S	L	O	P	E	S				R	E	L	I	E	F
P	I	R	A	T	E	S		C	E	D	I	L	L	A
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	T	E	A	S		M	R	N	A		R	U	T	
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C	H	I	C	A	G	O	B	E	A	R		P	E	A
M	A	N	A	G	E	R		I	N	U	R	I	N	G
P	R	A	T	E	D				S	E	N	A	T	E
	A	R	E	S						S	A	S	S	

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Holy Shift has planted seeds of ongoing conversations

From page 3

Hamilton recalls an instance at an early session when a "Traditionalist" (defined as "older than a Boomer") responding to the basic question of whether or not the world is getting better or worse. She stood up and said, "I don't know where you were in 1942, but I know where I was and the world has gotten better.'"

"I think it is important for a lot of us to put that into context, especially for Millennials who forget there have been much darker times, specifically when it comes to world peace, than we're in right now," says Hamilton. "When I took a poll on whether or not the world is getting better or worse, the demographics under the Gen-Xers generally thought the world was getting better whereas the Boomers felt the world was getting worse. An interesting perspective shift."

"Faith communities, particularly churches, are really unique places in the world that aren't just echo chambers of people who agree with each other, and they aren't [like your Facebook feeds]. Here, we have some diversity politically, culturally and definitely demographically, and it is interesting how we create a safe space for dialogue, even with people with whom we disagree pretty strongly on a lot of points, to be able to talk openly about a lot of this stuff. I think that is really helpful and I don't think there are too many places in the world where you can do that anymore."

Davis says she agrees, adding: "We have heard from so many of our parishioners that this has seeded conversations they have had. I can't even count how many people who say they go away from this, taken one or two of the parishioners around them and go out for lunch, or meet the next day just to talk about these things. They might have a meal with their family members who weren't here, picking up these themes, and they were talked through. This has contributed to their own ongoing conversation and that is huge.

"It is just waiting to see what is unfolding and to be really sensitive with what the needs are."

The Holy Shift series continues for the next few Sundays at multiple times and the whole community, regardless of faith, is welcome to be part of the dialogue. For more, visit www.trinityaurora.ca.

LACED UP – Newmarket-Aurora MP Kyle Peterson laced up and hit the ice at Newmarket's Magna Centre on Saturday as he welcomed the community for a free skate. He's pictured here with Liam, Idla and Matt.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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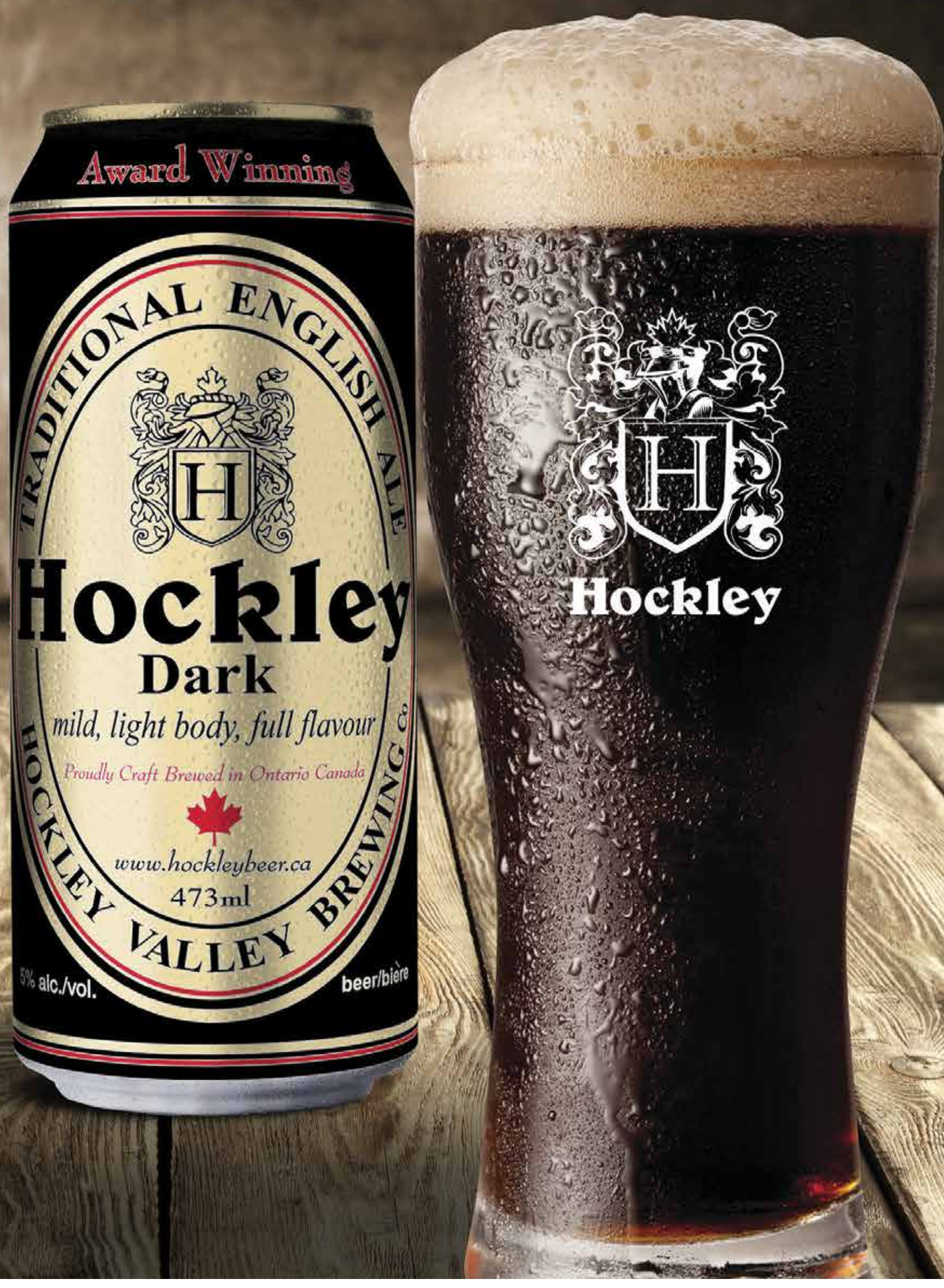
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