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THE AURORAN

CANADA 150

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 17 No. 32 905-727-3300 | theauroran.com | FREE | Week of June 1, 2017 | CMCA AUDITED

A FAMILY MAN – Newly-minted Aurora Citizen of the Year Peter Van Schaik and wife Teresa, fourth and fifth from right, were joined by children and grandchildren at Monday night's Community Recognition Awards.
Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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ROYAL LEPAGE

Van Schaik named 2017 Citizen of the Year

By Brock Weir

Peter van Schaik's behind-the-scenes humanitarian work has led to him being described as an "unsung hero" in York Region, but now people have the chance to openly sing his praises.

Van Schaik was named Citizen of the Year at the 2017 Community Recognition Awards held Monday night at Town Hall.

Van Schaik co-founded mental stamping company Van-Rob in 1979, which has grown into a wildly successful player in the automotive industry, but on Monday he was hailed for his philanthropic work, which has focused on health, education, and building the leaders of tomorrow – and by Mayor Geoff Dawe for his "selfless dedication" to Aurora.

"His determination, passion and perseverance have helped him to be a success as both a business owner and a volunteer," said Mayor Dawe. "And aside from the business savvy that he has exhibited in his life, he is a dedicated volunteer. He truly believes in generosity and giving back to his community."

Among his contributions most immediately recognizable to the public is his tireless work for Southlake Regional Health Centre and its Southlake Foundation. Under his leadership as campaign chair, they raised over $80.8 million dollars for the local hospital – not only to build the Regional Cancer Centre itself, but going one step further in taking on the Images for Life campaign to build a second MRI suite.

"I first had the honour of meeting Peter in 2014 when I started working at the Southlake Foundation," said Neila Poscente, former CEO of the

Continued on page 12

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RACE INTO SUMMER – Aval and Ella are neck and neck in the potato sack race at Devins Drive Public School's Annual Spring Fair. June is a busy month with a growing list of family friendly activities to try out. For more, see Page 19.
Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

Internet voting approved for 2018 in "hybrid" system

By Brock Weir

Aurorans will be able to go to the polls from the comfort of their own homes in the 2018 Municipal Election.

Following a Council decision last week, Aurora will adopt a "hybrid" voting system which will allow eligible voters to cast their ballots online in advanced polls while giving people the option of coming out on Election Day itself to physically cast their vote.

It was a decision that was hardly

Continued on page 18

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TOWN OF AURORA

Notice Board

AURORA

Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Thursday, June 1	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Environmental Advisory Committee
Tuesday, June 6	9:30 a.m.	Newmarket	Joint Council Committee
Tuesday, June 6	10 a.m.	Holland Room	Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee
Tuesday, June 6	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, June 6	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	General Committee
Wednesday, June 7	4 p.m.	Holland Room	Accessibility Advisory Committee
Thursday, June 8	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Committee of Adjustment
Thursday, June 8	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Economic Development Advisory Committee
Monday, June 12	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Heritage Advisory Committee
Tuesday, June 13	5:30 p.m.	Holland Room	Finance Advisory Committee
Tuesday, June 13	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council
Wednesday, June 14	6 p.m.	Aurora Cultural Centre	Aurora Cultural Centre Board
Thursday, June 15	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Committee
Friday, June 16	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**

Public Notices

Service Disruptions

Please note that all skate times located at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex will be cancelled on **Thursday, June 1**. For more information, please visit **aurora.ca/news**.

Temporary Road Closure for the Aurora Chamber Street Festival

Vehicular traffic on Yonge Street between Wellington Street and Murray Drive will be temporarily prohibited on **Sunday, June 4, 2017** from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. for the Aurora Chamber Street Festival. Thank you for your patience and co-operation.

View the Design Plans for lane and sidewalk construction in the area of Mary Street and John West Way

The Town of Aurora intends to construct a new sidewalk on Mary Street this fall. The project also includes the addition of right-turn lanes along Mary Street and John West Way at the intersection of Wellington Street East. Residents and owners are invited to attend a public meeting to view the engineering design plans.

The meeting will be held on **Tuesday, June 6, 2017** from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Aurora Town Hall, 100 John West Way in the Leksand Room.

For more information, please contact Sabir Hussain, Municipal Engineer by phone at 905-727-3123 ext. 4378 or by email to **shussain@aurora.ca**.

What's Happening

Seeking applications for the John West Memorial Scholarship

The Town of Aurora is currently looking for youth entering post-secondary school who have made a positive impact on the community to apply for the John West Memorial Scholarship.

The scholarship is valued at $1,000. The application deadline is **Thursday, June 1**. For more details, visit **aurora.ca/leadersoftomorrow**.

Seniors trip to the Carole King Musical *Beautiful*

Join the Aurora Seniors' Centre on **Thursday, June 29** for a day trip to the Carole King Musical *Beautiful*. Enjoy orchestra seating at the Ed Mirvish Theatre. This trip includes transportation and lunch at Badali Bar & Cucina. Register now at the Aurora Seniors' Centre. For more information, visit **aurora.ca/activeseniors**.

Register for 2017 Spring and Summer Programs, Aquatics and Summer Camps

Registration is now open for the 2017 Spring and Summer programs, aquatics and summer camps. Pick up a copy of the *2017 Spring & Summer Recreation Guide* at Aurora Town Hall or the Aurora Public Library. You can also view the guide online at **aurora.ca/recguide**.

Skylight Gallery artist for June – Zorica and Nenad Miric

The Skylight Gallery is featuring artwork from Zorica and Nenad Miric this month. The display is called *A Potpourri of Colour, Numbers and Dance*, which is about their passion for paint and dance. This mixed media presentation includes art combined with numbers, vivid expressions of motion and music intertwined with stories. Visit the Skylight Gallery this month and enjoy this colourful collection.

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

What's Happening

We want to hear from you! Aurora is looking for focus group participants.

The Town of Aurora is looking for focus group participants to help us improve communications with our community.

The two dates to attend are below:

- Wednesday, June 7 – 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex.
- Thursday, June 8 – 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Aurora Seniors' Centre.

Email **communications@aurora.ca** or call 905-727-3123 ext. 4370 to register.

Club Aurora Seminar on June 10

Join us for a Club Aurora seminar on **Saturday, June 10** from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. to learn more about the Stott Pilates Mat Workout. For more information, visit **aurora.ca/fitness**.

Seeking youth to serve on the Youth Engagement Committee

The Town of Aurora is seeking youth members to serve on the Youth Engagement Committee (Y.E.C.). The Y.E.C. is a group of youth aged 12 to 17 who guide and advise staff on appropriate programs, special events, and services for youth in Aurora. The committee works with the Town to address current trends, issues and to engage youth.

The Y.E.C. meets biweekly to discuss community issues, promote services, and host events/fundraisers. New for 2017/2018, the committee will have at least one youth from the following categories per term: junior (ages 12 to 13 years), intermediate (ages 14 to 15 years), and senior (ages 16 to 17 years).

If you would like to participate in the Youth Engagement Committee, applications for the 2017/2018 season will be accepted until **August 31, 2017**.

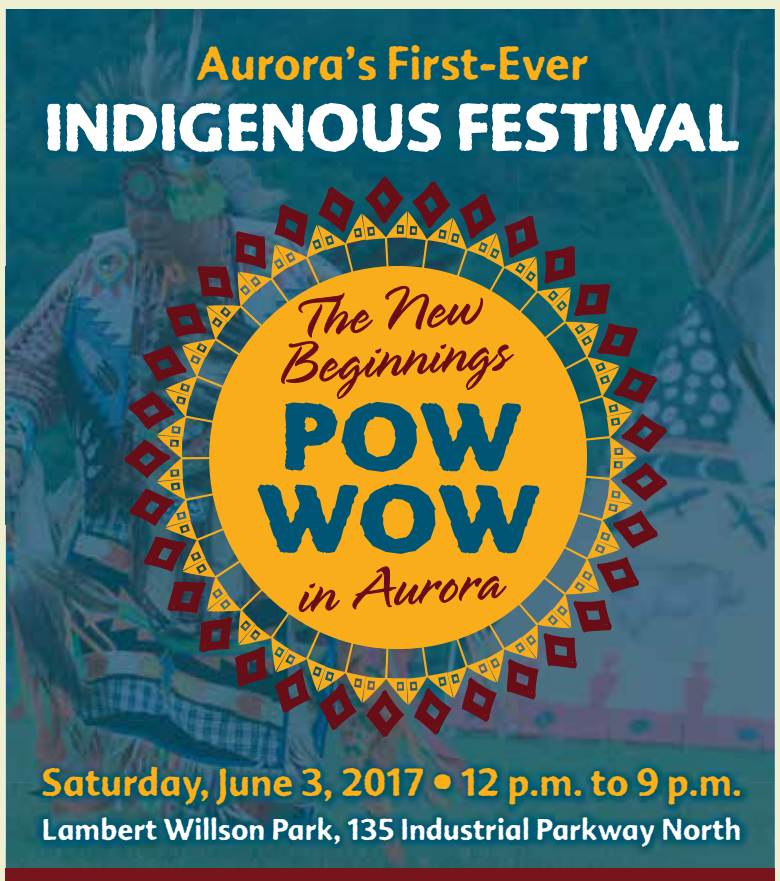
Visit **aurora.ca/youth** for more details and to download an application. Completed applications can be emailed to **jstephenson@aurora**.

Visit the Town booth at the annual Aurora Chamber Street Festival

Visit the Town booth to check out Town information and learn more about Aurora's history. The festival is on **Sunday, June 4** from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. along Yonge Street in Aurora. The booth is located at Block #15 booth numbers 419 & 421 near Kennedy Street. We hope to see you there! **aurorachamber.on.ca**

Participate in a free class for National Health and Fitness Day

Celebrate national Health and Fitness Day with Club Aurora. Attend a free Zumba class at Ada Johnson Park on **Saturday, June 3** from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. For more information, please visit **aurora.ca/fitness**.



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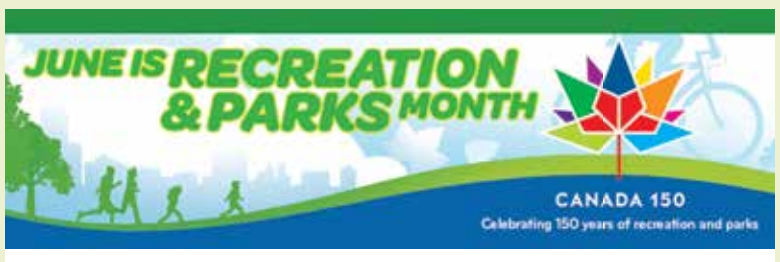

The Town of Aurora is celebrating Recreation & Parks Month this June!

Pick up your *Recreation & Parks Month* Passport at Town facilities today.

Here's your chance to try new activities for free. Great prizes to be won just for participating!

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AURORA

Saturday's Powwow is about moving forward towards a New Beginning: Indigenous community

By Brock Weir

Footprints often show where we've been but this Saturday footprints will show where we're going as Indigenous Leaders converge on Aurora to usher in a new beginning.

As Indigenous elders, dancers and singers prepare to make their Grand Entrance at 12 noon for the New Beginnings Powwow at Lambert Wilson Park, youngsters will be putting their creativity to work creating their own set of footprints. For Powwow organizer Rod Nettagog, it is symbolic of walking together and a way forward on a healing journey that is long overdue.

The June 3 Powwow, a hallmark of Aurora's Canada 150 Celebrations, was initially proposed to mark the sesquicentennial of Canada's celebration, but it has taken on a much deeper meaning, one of Truth and Reconciliation led by Canada's First Nations.

"It is a dark past and this powwow is about moving forward," he explains of New Beginning. "Now it is time to move forward with reconciliation and bringing that understanding and awareness about our people and to learn and appreciate who we are as First Nations because this is Canada. I think everyone needs to know the true history of this country before European contact. Part of that is the powwow.

"It is a celebration, a time of singing and dancing and expressing who we are as indigenous people and welcome people into the circle to dance with us, to celebrate with us. That is what this time represents: a time to move forward. We can't forget about the past, but we need to move forward and to learn to forgive. We need to accept each other as brothers and sisters on Mother Earth."

When asked what Canada 150 means to him, Mr. Nettagog answers the question with a question: 150 years of what?

Canada, he says, was founded on genocide and the forced removal of their land and trees. Now, he says, they are left with about two per cent of the land with boil water advisories in their own communities.

"Where is the equity in that?" he asks. "These issues need to be addressed and talked about [so] Canada has an understanding of where indigenous people are and still being treated today."

Fostering this understanding is a key component stemming from the report of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission, which was intended to be a comprehensive response to address the Residential School system, the effects of which are still being felt today. One such effect was the attempted suppression of indigenous culture, forbidding traditional languages, traditions and celebrations.

Since then, there has been a concerted effort to re-learn these traditions and, most importantly, reclaim identity.

That being said, along the way, there have been – and continue to be – significant misconceptions to address, one of the most evident of which is cultural appropriation. You only have to look as far as a festival to see non-indigenous people walking around with makeshift feather headdresses to get a flavour of cultural appropriation, which Mr. Nettagog says is a "mockery."

With that in mind, it was important to set the right tone in deciding Saturday's craft program. Working on a theme of inclusion, organizers settled on creating footprints to represent the path moving forward, along with representation of the traditional medicine wheel to show "the different races of Mother Earth and how we all have those gifts we bring within that circle, we are respecting each other, and walking together."

"We are all human beings," says Mr. Nettagog. "We need to treat each other as human beings, and I think not a lot of people are aware of that."

Surveying where this relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians stands after 150 years, Mr. Nettagog said he would like to see "more awareness" generated over the next 50 years ahead of the 200th anniversary of Confederation."

"It is going to take a long time," he says. "They say it will take a lot of years to get back to where we were as Indigenous people and take those responsibilities back of learning the ceremonies, the songs and the dances because a lot of that was lost through the residential school system and it affected everybody in so many different ways. There are a lot of people out there who aren't even aware of the effects it had on a lot of us.

"There needs to be that understanding of why we're out there still fighting for our rights as Indigenous peoples because we want to have clean drinking water as everyone else does. We want to have the same healthcare and education as everyone else across the board. It doesn't really matter how many people show on Saturday; [success is] the fact that this is happening for the first time in Aurora and that is success. It is getting that word out there. It's a time of celebration and a time of song and dance."

The New Beginnings Powwow will take place at Lambert Willson Park (135 Industrial Parkway North) this Saturday, June 3, from 12 noon until 9 p.m. Events get underway with the Grand Entry at 12 noon, festivities and activities from 1 – 5 p.m., a feast from 5 – 7 p.m., and closing ceremonies beginning at 7 p.m. The Powwow will feature craft and food vendors each with Indigenous roots. Admission is free, but attendees are asked to leave their pets at home (Service animals exempt). For more, visit aurora.ca/powwow.

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Thank you to our generous sponsors, attendees and outstanding group of award recipients for making the 2017 Town of Aurora Community Recognition Awards a star-studded evening.

Congratulations to the following award winners!

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Suzanne Charlebois-Bin
Brigitta Emes
Jan Gibson
Mary Haberer
Raz Khamissa
Alda and Reggie Lima
Marion Lougheed
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Janet Metcalf
Janice O'Hara
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Deborah Simerson
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Penny Stephens
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★ Congratulations to **Peter van Schaik** 2017 Citizen of the Year! ★

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AURORA

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Time for engagement on a new memorial: reader

(Re: Vimy anniversary put purpose of Cenotaph into perspective)

There's not much to be added to John Sander's eloquent letter calling for Council to reconsider its decision to place a LAV in the Cenotaph Park.

At the time, it was obvious that Councillors were unprepared to debate this issue and didn't want to be labelled as "anti-veteran," as some told me.

Now the question is, "Who will show bold leadership by proposing a monument to all who have died serving Canada since WW2, and who have not yet been recognized?

Such a monument should be in keeping with the physical and spiritual character of the Cenotaph envisioned and erected under leadership of citizens of Aurora, King Township, and Whitchurch Township in the mid-1920s.

These were small urban and rural communities with limited resources, but with a vision to erect a unique memorial, a memorial that has no equal across Canada.

Now it is up to Council to engage the Royal Canadian Legion with the aim of a providing a new memorial that reflects the character of our Cenotaph, and which would reflect the definition of a cenotaph.

Together they could engage the local artistic community and commission a locally designed work.

Definition: "A sepulchral monument to person(s) whose body elsewhere", from Greek words meaning, "empty tomb".

Robert Cook
Aurora

Word "glorification" is overused

(Re: Vimy anniversary put purpose of Cenotaph into perspective, May 18)

I take issue with this current use of the term "glorification". It suggests that while remembering those who have made the ultimate sacrifice is okay we must dissociate ourselves from the trappings of war as if to say, "we're not like that anymore." My wife and I were at Vimy last month (after the big show when it was quieter and much colder).

Three of the eleven thousand names of those with no known grave were related to me. True, there are no weapons on display, but the grimness of war is there. On Hill 145. It is in the trenches, the shell holes, the tunnels and the small signs warning of unexploded ammunition. It is a sobering monument to sacrifice erected on blood-soaked ground. As you say, in Aurora we have a Cenotaph where we can remember the fallen. The LAV monument simply reflects the sacrifice made by young Canadians in a different place and time. Aside from the fact that the LAV was mainly used to offer our troops protection, we should be reminded that the point isn't to glorify the vehicle, but rather to remember those that were sent into harm's way to use it. Lest We Forget.

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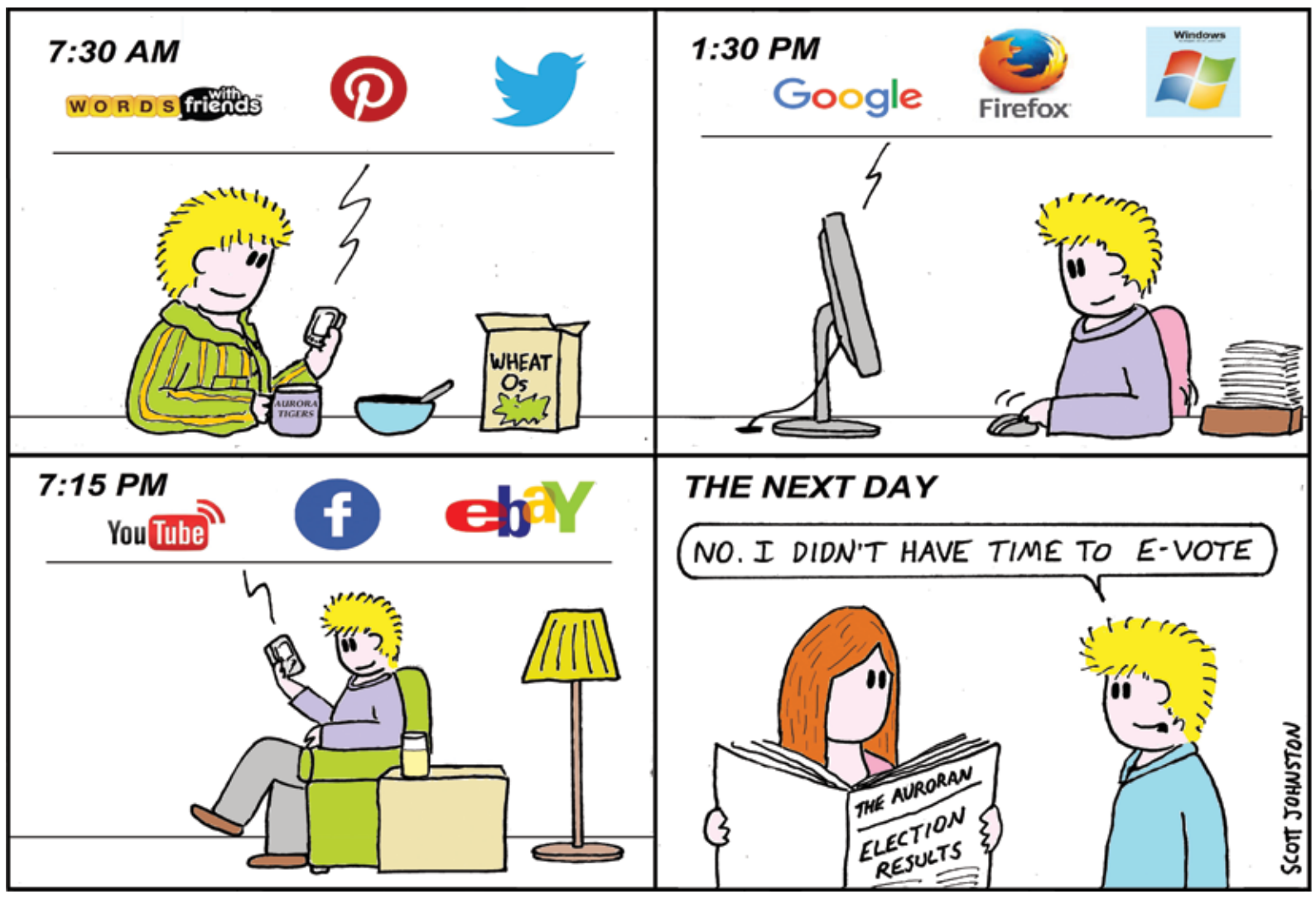

Not Scheer Luck!

BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

As a movie fan, it's a fairly safe bet that I like drama as much as the next guy.

That being said, however, even I have my limits.

This past Saturday I was so grateful to have a previous commitment as, in the end, it saved me from myself. As the day wore on, I had flashbacks to years past where I was compelled by some invisible force to spend entire days on the couch waiting for an outcome that that was all but certain.

One of the last such times was the NDP leadership convention which propelled Tom Mulcair to the top job. The same can be said for the leadership races that shot Justin Trudeau, Michael Ignatieff and Stephane Dion to the head of the Liberal table with varying degrees of success.

As interested in politics as I am, I was not quite tuned in at the time Stephen Harper was crowned in the race to the newly-minted Conservative party, so this would have been my first time glued to a deep Blue sea. Yet, there was that pesky commitment, so I had to keep in touch via Smartphone.

And, phew, that was a close call! Waiting for the results in real time must have been agony for Conservative conventioneers and armchair politicos alike.

That is no reflection on the outcome of the race, but just the sheer wait for satisfaction. (Get it? I digress…)

Votes were cast in a tabulation system, so all the votes could be counted (and were), along with second, third, and fourth place votes, and the final numbers redistributed and crunched all within a minute or two of the last ballot being fed into the machine.

Yet, in a supreme feat of high drama, they kept each of the 13 candidates who held in for the bitter end of the race on the edge of their respective seats to an even more bitter end for all but one. And, in the end, there could only be one. And, of course, we know by now that Saskatchewan MP, and former Speaker of the House, is the one.

Mr. Scheer was ultimately tapped by party members – well, by points allocated to each riding – to fill the shoes of Mr. Harper, the size of which is yet to be decided by history.

"There is renewed hope for Canada starting today," he said to party faithful after his surprise victory over runner-up Maxime Bernier.

In his speech, which was warmly received by the energetic crowd in Toronto, he said a Conservative government in 2019 would focus on policies that create both prosperity and opportunity, on drafting balanced budgets, ending corporate welfare, reining in spending, nixing any talk of a carbon tax and scrapping HST from home heating and electricity.

"You have made this a campaign of ideas," he said. "We know that Conservative solutions are the best response to the issues which we are confronted with. In the next months we will have to communicate those Conservative values to a greater number of Canadians. The next Conservative government will always be looking for new ways to make life more affordable by cutting your taxes, making it easier for the public sector to create jobs and we will end the Liberal policies that make it harder to start new businesses, make life more expensive for families and that punish hard work and success.

"There is a system that rewards hard work and success which benefits all Canadians. As Prime Minister, I will focus on results with Conservative policies that create prosperity and provide opportunity for every single Canadian."

But, Mr. Scheer also said he believed the foundation of the Canadian democracy is to "have a debate about any subject."

"That is why I am so committed to defending free speech," he said. "I will withhold Federal grants from university that shut down debate and can't stand different points of view."

"We all know what happens when Conservatives are divided," he added near the end of his speech. "We will not let that happen again. We win when we are united. Throughout this campaign, all of the leadership candidates… working independently grew this party to the biggest it has ever been in history. Now imagine what we will do when we're all working together."

Keeping taxes in check and fostering a hospitable environment for business have always been Conservative staples and what Mr. Scheer offered in his acceptance speech was earnest yet hardly ground-breaking.

From my perspective, the bolder pledge is party unity.

As the race drew to a close, most leadership candidates pledged they – and their supporters – would work together, regardless of victor, under the "Big Blue Tent." It is a nice sentiment, to be sure, but how long will this goodwill last?

Taxes, business, and "freedom of speech" (although some might take issue with that phrase being used in this context) are issues that surely unite Conservatives, but there were many issues which rose to the top that can only serve to divide.

Take, for instance how the vote shook down in the riding of Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill. According to data released by the party following Saturday night's announcement, Mr. Scheer handily beat Mr. Bernier on the thirteenth ballot with 60.54 per cent of the vote.

The first ballot, however, told a wildly different story.

At the outset, Saskatchewan MP Brad Trost, who ran on a campaign of rather hardline social conservatism when it came to abortion and to choose and equal marriage, to pick but two examples, was the clear leader of the pack with 47.96 per cent of the vote, with Maxime Bernier and Andrew Scheer in second and third place with 14.3 per cent and 12.6 per cent respectively.

The gap in Newmarket-Aurora was slightly narrower with Bernier and Trost tied for top spot on the first ballot with 24.58 per cent apiece, with Scheer in fourth position, about 1.5 per cent behind Erin O'Toole. (On the final ballot, Scheer and Bernier split the vote 50-50)

Mr. Scheer, of course, has social conservative values as does Mr. Trost to the enth degree. The popularity of Mr. Trost's campaign in certain pockets of Canada, coupled with the divisive immigration policies of Kellie Leitch, which undeniably resonated in certain segments of our country, makes me think the new leader's biggest task will be fostering that unity and truly defining what ultimately defines the party in a post-Harper universe.

If it was truly a campaign of ideas, the powers that be now have a smorgasbord to choose from. And, yes, those Conservative ideas do need to be communicated to a greater number of Canadians, but just what will those Conservative ideas be? Pocketbook ideas only go so far.

They better decide soon and, if Saturday was anything to go by, the New Leader better not put these ideas through a tabulated ballot or we could be waiting for the results through 2020.

(Editor's Note: Brock's Banter will return in the June 15 edition of The Auroran)

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Main number 905-727-3300 • Fax number 905-727-2620
Founder Ron Wallace | Publisher Emeritus Rosemary Schumaker
Subscriptions available within Canada and U.S.
email: administration@auroran.com

EDITOR
Brock Weir
brock@auroran.com

ADVERTISING
Zach Shoub
zach@lpcmedia.ca

TODAYS NEW HOMES
Zach Shoub
zach@auroran.com

CLASSIFIEDS
905-727-3300 ex.102
cynthia@auroran.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Cynthia Proctor
cynthia@auroran.com

ADVERTISING
Diane Buchanan
diane@auroran.com

MOTORING
Heather Erwin
heather@caledoncitizen.com

ADVERTISING
Doug Sherritt
doug@lpcmedia.ca

ADVERTISING
Chelsea Ertel
chelsea@lpcmedia.ca

PHOTOGRAPHY
Glenn Rodger
grodger@rogers.com

To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to letters@auroran.com.
Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

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Order Of Service

for the observance of

The Coronation

of

Her Majesty

Queen Elizabeth II

High School Auditorium

Town Of Aurora

Tuesday, June 2nd, 1953

The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating…

The 64th Anniversary of the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (June 2)

Queen Elizabeth II began her reign on February 6, 1952; however, the official Coronation ceremony didn't take place until the following year on June 2, 1953. The Town of Aurora celebrated Coronation Day in the Auditorium of the Aurora District High School. The programme consisted of a music selection, featuring hymns and the National Anthem, followed by the reading of selected verses and psalms. At the front of the auditorium, the colours of the Legion and the imperial Order Daughters of the Empire were displayed. Following the service, the crowd was entertained by the Aurora Cadet Trumpet Band.

AURORA MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

POLITICS AS USUAL

Alison Collins-Mrakas

In praise of trails and biking

*This week, I am ceding my column space to a guest columnist – **Richard Doust** – who is a member of the Trails and Active Transportation Committee. He is also Co-Chair of the Bike Aurora Day planning group. On June 24, Bike Aurora will take place as a celebration of our trails and biking.*

"Happy trails to you, until we meet again." Roy Rogers

Trails invite action.

Be it walking, jogging or biking, trails call us to the joy of motion, and motion in beauty, as we explore the natural wonders of Aurora that lie off-road.

Residents know this.

In Town surveys, they rank trails as one of the greatest attractions to life here, especially in a rapidly growing community. The stats show their importance. The town has about 60 km of trails and more in the works. Aurorans have in our trails a gift that keeps on giving, keeps on growing. We need to celebrate this and never take it for granted.

I love walking, running and mountain biking on our trails. Each has its own charms.

Walking is pastoral. At this slower pace, Nature rewards us with hundreds of epiphanies in spring: trilliums and lilacs in bloom; painted turtles sunning on logs in the marsh; swans on the ponds; waterfalls in Sheppard's Bush. You miss little walking, if you are fully attentive.

Running speeds things up. Here is the joy of being in Nature and being in fast gear. Breathe deep the oxygenated environment of treed trails as you motor through. Look around at the wild raspberry bushes; the Norwegian pine; the woodpeckered oak. This surely beats the streets.

Winding through the trail network, you feel your heart racing, in the delight of motion, in the rich panorama of the trails.

And then there's mountain biking.

When I first took this up in Toronto I lived where there were limited off-road trails. No more. I have enjoyed every kilometre of the network in Aurora. Every trail has its own identity, and it pays to stop and pay attention when the unexpected happens. There was that pileated woodpecker just a few trees away, having lunch. Or that broad-winged hawk you saw snacking on, well, something. Or the Northern Oriole resting, a show-stopper in living colour.

Biking is a celebration of motion and balance, of instinct and planning, of the spontaneous and the deliberate. The bike is an extension of the body, and of the mind. It is part of us. In fact, we can almost forget it is there when we coast down a hill. When we go along a trail there's a sense of pioneering, of a courier de bois on wheels, that is, I think, exhilarating.

Bottom line: we need our trails. And our trails need us.

Imagine Aurora without trails. Imagine only paved streets and roads. It's not a pretty picture. But we do have them, so let's use them and let's support them. They can be a natural ally as Aurora seeks to become the fittest community in Canada by 2020.

As a member of the Trails and Active Transportation Committee, I appreciate the synergy between trails and active living. And I know the value of what the Parks and Recreation staff do to ensure our trails are in good order.

I look forward to seeing everyone on June 24. For details check us on Facebook.

Clean Water

MP's Report

Kyle Peterson, MP
Newmarket-Aurora

It has been a busy spring both in Ottawa and here at home, and the weather is finally warming up.

It has been a delight to see the Canada 150 Tulips in bloom on Parliament Hill, and to attend the many events around Aurora. On Wednesday May 24, I was proud to announce, on behalf of Hon. Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, with Chris Ballard MPP and Chair of York Region Wayne Emmerson, over $50.8 Million in funding for 80 newly approved green infrastructure projects in York Region.

Of these, 5 projects are in the Town of Aurora totaling $1,559,550 under the Government of Canada's Clean Water and Waste Water Fund.

The investment is over $3 million with provincial and regional support.

Investing in water and wastewater treatment infrastructure is essential to maintaining a healthy environment and providing access to clean, reliable drinking water. The Government of Canada is working with provinces, territories, municipalities and Indigenous communities across the country to support important projects like those here in Aurora and across York Region, which will ensure communities are healthy and sustainable now and for years to come.

This time of year is always busy, and this year has been no exception.

With the opening of the Aurora Farmers' Market, now open every Saturday, spring has arrived! It is always a wonderful weekly opportunity to visit with members of our community and to support local farmers. On April 29, I was proud to attend the #142 St. Andrew's College Highland Cadet Corps 112th Annual Cadet Inspection at St. Andrews College. Congratulations to all cadets on a job well done! It was a marvelous day. I was also proud to attend the Neighborhood Network Give Back Awards, sponsored by Magna International, held on April 25, which recognizes many outstanding graduating high school students who have made exceptional contributions to the community.

I was overwhelmed by the accomplishments of these young people to our community. Our future is in good hands!

On Thursday, May 25, I attended the Central York Fire Services 2017 New Recruit Graduation Ceremony at the Salvation Army Northridge Community Church in Aurora. Congratulations to each of the new firefighters on your new career. We are grateful and proud for your commitment and dedication to serve our community. Finally, I am looking forward to the Annual Aurora Street Festival this Sunday, June 4. My Booth will be located near Yonge & Wellington and I invite you to stop by to say hi to me and our team. As a reminder, you can reach out to my Constituency office and my staff at any time.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require information or assistance on any Federal matters. We are located at 16600 Bayview Avenue, Suite 202. You may reach us at Tel: 905-953-7515 or by email at Kyle.Peterson@parl.gc.ca.

Thoughts about the Federal Conservative Party Leadership Race

FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE

Stephen Somerville

By the time that you read this, the Federal Conservatives will have a new leader.

This past Saturday, the Conservatives announced the results of their Leadership vote.

This overly drawn out contest had fourteen contestants.

According to media reports, the party went from 90,000 members to now over 250,000 members and each one of them had an opportunity to vote for the leader.

Most pundits believe that former Conservative Cabinet Minister Maxime Bernier, a Member of Parliament from Quebec will win.

I chose to vote for my long-time good friend Erin O'Toole. He represents the riding of Durham. He was a former Veterans Affairs Minister in the Harper government. Prior to entering public life, he was a captain in the air force and worked as a lawyer.

Unlike previous leadership contests that were done by a delegated convention, whereby each riding association in the country sent representatives to a national party convention to vote, this was a one person one vote operation.

This process did not elicit much interest from the general public on a national level and was far too long. There was no excitement of a convention; the last minute speeches that could make or break a candidacy and no in between balloting last minute deal making for support.

Instead, a preferential ballot was used. Each voter could rank up to ten candidates (or only one). The lowest ranked candidates fall off the ballot and their choices get allotted among the remaining candidates. A candidate needs 50 per cent, plus one to become party leader.

This process also did not really generate any local excitement.

The riding association hosted a fundraiser and invited all the leadership candidates. I believe that six of the fourteen attended. And while the respective candidates did hold smaller meetings in town, they were modest and low key events.

As a longtime volunteer in the Conservative party, I would suggest the following changes the next time that a party leader is chosen:

First, real, substantive debates on issues cannot be undertaken when you have fourteen candidates on the stage. You need to both make the bar higher to enter and propose incentives for the candidates to know when to exit the race.

This time out each candidate had to submit nomination forms signed by 300 party members from at least 30 electoral districts in at least seven different provinces and territories. This was a good idea.

Further, according to Wikipedia, each candidate had to pay a $50,000 non-refundable entrance fee, half of which must be paid when filing nomination with the other half due by the close of nominations on February 24, 2017.

They also had to pay an additional $50,000 compliance deposit, by December 31, 2016 or when filing nomination for those who register in 2017, which is refundable provided the candidate complies with campaign rules.

To me this amount of money is not enough to keep marginal candidates out of the race. I would have increased the initial amount to $100,000 and I would have also increased the additional amount by $150,000. I would also change the mechanism for the refundable part of the entrance fee.

As you get closer to the leadership voting date, I would have decreased the amount of refund that a candidate gets. If a candidate leaves the race in February, then he/she gets more than if they quit the race in late April. There was no such incentive in this race.

I would also make use of polls help to assist eligible voters. The party should poll party members once every two weeks from about February through to voting day and publish these results. This will help voters to focus on who can win. It will also help the candidates in both fundraising and in making a decision to drop out or who to throw their support behind.

Most importantly, I would also propose some type of hybrid process that contains the best elements of a delegated convention with a one person, one vote election system. I will lay out a detailed plan for this in my next column.

In the end, however, it is not about the voting process itself. It is about electing the best potential leader to take on Justin Trudeau and the Liberals in 2019.

Stephen can be contacted at stephengsomerville@yahoo.com

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Do you welcome the internet voting option for advance polls in the 2018 Municipal Election?

Yes No Unsure

Go to www.theauroran.com to vote!

Previous Poll Results

Should a parking lot at Library Square be a permanent solution?

RESULTS TO DATE May 23, 2017	YES	NO	UNSURE
	47%	47%	6%

"De-paving paradise" leads to personal growth at Aurora school

By Brock Weir

Joni Mitchell once said you don't know what you've got till it's gone, but Light of Christ Catholic Elementary School certainly did and, last week, they got out their hammers and chisels, and did something to get it back.

Over 40 members of the Light of Christ community, along with representatives from the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB), Windfall Ecology Centre, and YorkWay Paving, gathered to de-pave their own personal paradise – the school yard – to make way for a healthier alternative; a healthier alternative for body, mind and soul.

Together, they pried up huge chunks of the asphalt and black top that has covered their playground for more than a quarter-century and, in time, over 450 square metres will be ripped up to "green" the school yard with new trees, gardens, and permeable surfaces.

Participants in last week's de-pave included principal Travis Macdonald, Superintendent Opiyo Oloya, and Board Vice-Chair Elizabeth Crowe. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

"Most of the playground at Light of Christ was covered in pavement," says Principal Travis Macdonald. "There was actually very little space that was not paved, so we wanted to create a space that was more natural to play on. [A greener area] encourages imaginative play for kids, and that is a big thing. It also provides space for kids to engage in the natural environment.

"By removing the black top, it will also help to decrease the temperatures out there. It will also mean shade trees. There was no shade on our school playground, so we have planted six trees as part of the program and not only will those trees help provide shade for our students, hopefully it will also attract birds and wildlife to the area."

Currently, log benches have been added to the playground and more amenities are hoped to be added if more grant funding becomes available. As it stands, last week's de-paving project was sponsored by significant grants from RBC Canada and an in-kind donation from YorkWay.

The support of Windfall was also integral in bringing the project to fruition.

According to Andrea Fallone, Program Manager at Windfall, "De-Pave Paradise" is an initiative of Green Communities Canada of which Windfall is a member. The mission is to remove paved surfaces to allow rain water to seep back into the ground rather than flow down into storm drains and into lakes and streams. Being able to "green" communities like Aurora in the process is also a huge plus and schools are increasingly getting on board.

"There is a lot of interest from schools within [the YCDSB] to naturalize their school yards," she says. "Students get to enjoy a more natural school yard, they get to be outdoors and actively playing on mulch, or within trees and gardens, as opposed to pavement, it helps keep the schoolyard a bit cooler, and it gives us the educational opportunity to talk with them about watershed, native plants, native trees and issues.

"These are great community events and they get the whole community, whether it is the school community or the community at large, together and engaged on protecting our local streams, creeks, rivers and lakes. It is pushing an environmental message that we want to drink clean water."

This message is not lost on the students of Light of Christ. Its Eco Team was heavily involved in spearheading the in-school de-paving program, says Mr. Macdonald, part of their ongoing efforts to "save the environment and increase recycling."

"When they were informed about this project, they felt it was wonderful because it falls into line with all the activities they have been working on this year," says Mr. Macdonald. "There was immediate buy-in and excitement for the project and the kids were on-site and it was just wonderful to see how excited they were by it."

Advertorial

TMS Staff Gives Back Paint Night Event

Staff at TMS School wanted to give back to the community – specifically they wanted to give back to a great community organization – 360kids. TMS has done this before – cooking for charities, but this time they wanted to do something as a community building activity for TMS staff. Art can be very daunting and intimidating to some people - but together and for a good cause they were up for the challenge.

A few staff members had done a paint night before and enjoyed the experience. Over 70 staff members attended from both campuses knowing this staff social event's main focus was to raise awareness for 360kids. Staff brought items to create hampers for clients of 360kids who are moving into more independent living. This evening was a chance to educate TMS staff on what 360kids does through its programs and services and for a couple of staff who participated in the 360kids Experience to share what they learned.

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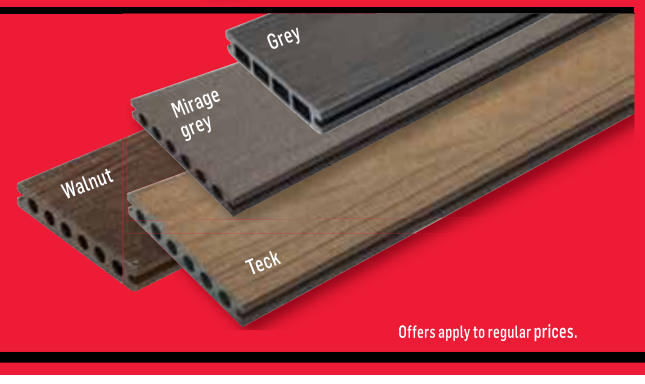

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JUNE 1 TO 7 renodepot.com

Newmarket-Aurora PCs ramp up nomination appeal efforts

By Brock Weir

Members of the Newmarket-Aurora Progressive Conservative Riding Association will continue their efforts this week to seek an appeal into the process which saw Charity McGrath nominated to carry the blue banner in the 2018 Provincial Election.

As first reported in The Auroran last month, the riding association filed an appeal with the Ontario PCs on April 27 and, under the rules of the party, officials had seven days to respond. The Riding Association is set to meet this Saturday and will call on the Party Executive to order the Newmarket-Aurora results be audited by Pricewaterhouse Coopers.

In a press release Tuesday, Riding Association President Derek Murray alleges there is "clear and substantial evidence indicating the campaign team for Charity McGrath Di Paola blatantly breached party rules in their membership drive when members did not pay their own fees and their signature was falsified on the membership form, and fraudulent members were knowingly allowed to vote at the nomination meeting in which Charity McGrath Di Paola was declared the winning candidate.

"The riding association initiated an investigation and 100 per cent of the membership list was called."

Receiving a 22 per cent response rate, the Riding Association says 89.89 per cent of respondents had been contacted by a candidate to attend the April 8 nomination meeting, 50.17 per cent signed an application to be a party member, and 40.06 either paid or had an immediate family member pay for their membership. In all, they are challenging 358 voters on the rolls over both municipality.

This information, they say, was provided to Bob Stanley, Executive Director of the Ontario PC Party who replied the Party reviewed the submission and determined it "does not raise a question that merits a hearing."

The riding association argues the rejection of the appeal indicates they feel "upwards to 25 per cent of [Riding Association] members potentially being forged or fraudulent is not worthy of a hearing."

"In all recent nomination races, Executive Director Bob Stanley is a consistent player," said Mr. Murray in his statement. "[PC Leader] Patrick Brown has indicated he has nothing to do with the nomination meetings. Notwithstanding the response from the Party Executive Director, we call on Patrick Brown, the Party Membership Chair, and the Party Executive to direct PricewaterhouseCooper to conduct an independent third party audit of legitimate memberships for all riding appeals and demonstrate that values of transparency and accountability are firmly in place in the Ontario PC Party.

"Ethics and accountability must start with our own party first. Only a full audit by PwC of the legality of disputed memberships can validate our parties' commitment to the principles of transparent, fair, and democratic government and the legitimacy of the nomination meeting and the resultant candidate. Our collective goal should be to decisively win the next election with the strongest candidate in each riding nominated by legitimate members and, in contrast to the current government, ensure the party stands for the highest ethical standards in keeping with the Leader's public commitment to ethics and accountability."

When asked to comment on the latest step in the appeal, Ms. McGrath said she wanted to thank "all the new members and existing members" of the riding association and called for unity.

"I'm deeply humbled and grateful to have obtained the support of the majority of the members and will continue to work very hard to get our message out to the voters in Newmarket Aurora," said Ms. McGrath. "I want to thank all those who volunteered to help my nomination campaign and those who purchase a membership to support my candidacy. I also want to thank

Continued on page 11

Advertorial

Shoulder/ Elbow/Wrist Pain:

New Approach Delivers Remarkable Results

Our patients have reported a 90-95% relief of their symptoms, more mobility, increased flexibility and vastly improved function!

If you suffer from Shoulder/Elbow/Wrist pain (Injury/strain/tendonitis/Arthritis) you need to be aware of effective advancements that can eliminate years of pain, suffering, immobility and frustration.

You may have told your doctor you suffer with one or more of the following: sore, stiff, painful Shoulder/Elbow/Wrist, "clicking" sound with movement, difficulty bending, and/or walking.

Often times, problems/symptoms in one of these areas leads to compensatory issues in one or more of these other joints.

You may find that your pain or stiffness affects your work, housekeeping, leisure activities, exercise, sports or other activities. You go to the drug store or to your doctor and get pills to help relieve your pain. But you find the pain keeps returning. Alternatively, the doctor may refer you to a specialist who may tell you that surgery is needed or is an option for you.

However, many people are hesitant to have surgery given its invasive nature. It is important to know that although surgery is sometimes necessary, it is considered a last resort in most cases.

Also, you may have heard that there are serious health risks associated with chronic use (or overuse) of pain pills or anti-inflammatory drugs that include damage to the liver, kidneys and gut.

There is a new, natural, safe and highly effective approach that has helped many sufferers improve their lives dramatically: Laser therapy uses light to favor and accelerate the body's natural healing processes. The innovative Multiwave Locked System (MLS) Laser produces a safe, efficient and simultaneous effect on pain, inflammation, swelling and water retention, exceeding the limits of traditional LLLT (Low power) and eliminates concerns of HP (High power) laser therapy.

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It is the very latest in medical technology, with years of clinical studies supporting its safety and efficacy and we are very proud to offer our patients effective solutions to their recent or chronic conditions.

"This new, natural, safe and highly effective approach has helped many sufferers improve their lives dramatically".

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Friday, June 16• 2 - 3 pm

Come join us for a delicious strawberry social in our courtyard while being entertained by Peter and Helen Ness. Peter and Helen are a stylish and professional vocal and piano duo that perform classic songs by singers such as Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Rod Stewart, Michael Bublé and others! Don't miss out on a great afternoon!

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

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Church redevelopment clears Public Planning hurdle

By Brock Weir

Plans for the redevelopment of Aurora United Church and adjacent retirement centre cleared another hurdle last week, receiving unanimous consent from Council members at Wednesday night's Public Planning meeting.

With this tentative approval, developers and concerned neighbours will likely have until July 4 to continue working together to hammer out remaining differences.

Following last week's Public Planning meeting, the redevelopment of the site, which includes a now-seven storey retirement complex, will next come before elected officials at a General Committee meeting, followed by a Council meeting to ratify that decision.

Marco Ramunno, Aurora's Director of Planning, told lawmakers and residents alike that his final report could come before Council by the end of June but would most likely take until the July 4 cycle to be complete.

In the meantime, Councillors told a packed house they hoped the intervening weeks will allow the two disputing parties to address remaining differences – particularly building height, tiering and massing from Tyler and Temperance Streets – before the next meeting.

"All of us on Council are hopeful that we can move forward with this application in a way that satisfies the congregation of the United Church and local residents and we can move forward," said Councillor Michael Thompson. "Aurora is a town of good neighbours and I think we would all like to continue forward."

Artists' rendering of how the retirement home will look from Temperance Street looking south.

Illustration courtesy of Aurora United Church

Added Councillor Paul Pirri: "Collaboration isn't always a quick, tidy, easy thing to do. Sometimes it takes work and sometimes there are concessions made on all sides. Keep moving forward and keep working together and I am sure by the end of it we will have something there we are all proud of. The second you stop thinking about our neighbours as neighbours is when we get into trouble."

At the start of last week's meeting it became clear the proposal now before Council was a markedly different one.

Speaking on behalf of the proponents, planner Sarah Millar said a "substantial" amount of work had been done to modify the plan since March. Height, she conceded, was an issue with many community members, as were massing and setbacks from the side streets. Nevertheless, Amica was able to rework their retirement home plans to come down two storeys and reconfigure the space to accommodate 152 units rather than the initially proposed 159 units.

Parking issues brought up from residents had been largely resolved, as had redesigning the back end of the building to be more in keeping with the adjacent residential neighbourhood.

Nevertheless, Council members said they understood many of the residents' remaining concerns but said they had a fine line to walk.

"I will always support any application if the concerns of the residents are met," said Councillor John Abel. "That is what tears it with me. The developers know how to talk to staff and we make decisions, but we have to make decisions based on what the residents are telling us. It is loud and clear the residents on Tyler and Temperance and surrounding areas have an issue with the massing, specifically on the back part. I hear that loud and clear.

"It was a tremendous loss but often out of the ashes there is an opportunity and now we can rebuild and put a sustainable entity and the outreach they provide can continue and it will be a model that sustains for many, many years. This is a great model moving forward. It is a responsible model."

In any redevelopment, he said, there has to be a benefit to the wider community and providing these residential units for seniors is a benefit.

Councillor Tom Mrakas was another Council member who said the potential benefits from the development needed to be weighted in the process.

"We are elected to represent all of the residents of this Town and the Town as a whole," he said. "When we look at planning and applications, we look at it from a high level view of what is good for the Town as a whole. This vision has been going on since 2010 when the Aurora Promenade Plan was developed and it was to intensify the Yonge Street Corridor. That is what we are doing. It is also helping with the growing population of our seniors [and] we're desperately going to need extra housing and that is what helps out with this.

"I have always stated that if there is not a benefit to the community as a whole then we don't move forward with an amendment. As we look forward I see many benefits in this application. I see that the proponent has listened to the concerns, have made substantial changes, they have dropped two floors, have done some extra tiering. I would like to see a little bit more tiering but I think when we get to that general committee meeting we can still work on a few things. We're very close but I think we need to keep moving forward and we have an obligation to make a decision tonight. While it is not a final decision we need to make a decision moving forward."

Councillor Jeff Thom had a similar perspective, outlining the benefits to the community and also the hope that there is a way to move forward this summer "in a way that satisfies the congregation of the United Church and local residents." Aurora, he said, is a "town of good neighbours" and that should be the order of the day.

Listening to the comments of her peers, Councillor Wendy Gaertner said she was "proud" to be part of a Council that articulates the values of residents, but said, from her perspective of the longest-serving incumbent Council member, that this planning application was one of the most "difficult" she has seen yet.

"Usually we have residents on one side and a developer on the other. In this case, we have residents in the neighbourhood and we have residents who also are part of the developer's plan because they are part of the church community," she said, joking that, as a Libran, she wanted to please everybody. "I am going to look at it from a planning perspective. We have an OP (Official Plan) and part of that OP is our Promaenade plan and that is a vision for Yonge Street. In this case, it is the historic part of Yonge Street. Then we have the respect in our official plan for Stable Neighbourhoods and for transition so that stable neighbourhoods are protected. For both of these, the height and the massing and the setbacks are not what is required.

"I know that everybody has worked very hard to come up with a plan that is so much better and so many of us have said so much closer and thank you and thank you to the residents who have worked so hard as well. Hopefully when we come back to our general committee meeting there will have been a little bit more progress made so I can say we have been able to support the needs of our residents and a wonderful and contributing church community."

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Neighbours still at odds over Aurora United Church plans

By Brock Weir

Councillors last week said they hoped neighbours could come together to build a consensus over Aurora United Church's redevelopment plans before they render a final decision this summer – but, as far as bridges go, there is still a wide gap to cover.

Crowds filled Council chambers last Wednesday night for the final public planning meeting on the proposed redevelopment of Aurora United Church and its associated seven-storey, 152 unit Amica retirement home.

The assembled audience represented all views on the issue – from neighbours worried the new retirement home building will set a terrible development precedent in their largely Victorian neighbourhood, neighbours who wanted to see some downtown revitalization, and, still, neighbours who just want a place of worship to once again call their own.

Nearly 20 residents came to the podium last week to make their appeals to Council. These appeals ranged from tweaks to – our outright rejection of – the rebuild plans, to just getting on with it, to considering the benefits to the larger community from both perspectives.

One such neighbour urging a significant re-think on the development plans was Tanya Pietrangelo, who said the developers simply had not done enough to change the plan to fit in with the area – "our charming community full of character."

"Our homes will suffer if this development proceeds as is," she said. "My current house value will diminish. Who will pay for that difference? And I am not the only one. How would you feel if a large seven storey building was going to be built right beside your house or right in front of your front door? Or just a few doors down from the house you wanted to call home for the next 60 year and invested all of your savings in? I have spoken to so many of our neighbours on Tyler, Temperance, George, Mosley, Mill, etc., and they all share the same sentiments as I do.

Among those addressing Wednesday's public planning meeting were Aurora United Church ministers Andy Comar and Lorraine Newton Comar. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**

"This has nothing to do with the church or the church plan itself. We support the church in its endeavours to rebuilt, but it is the proposed retirement building plan as is that is not good enough. It is obtrusive. It does not fit in and it doesn't add value to our residential community."

More needs to be done to set back the building from Temperance and Tyler to be more in keeping with the existing homes and, ideally, should not be more than three-storeys high in keeping with what is already in the neighbourhood. She said she understood that it might not be feasible with the developer with whom the church is partnered, but said no more than five stories should be allowed.

"Over 200 of our neighbours signed a petition that voiced their concerns about the scale and size of the building and the issue of adequate parking and increased traffic. Please listen to your residents," she said. "How many neighbours that already feel so defeated? They feel that the Town doesn't care about them. How shameful when residents who pay their taxes and contribute to the community are made to feel this way. Listen to your residents and make the developer come back with a better plan that fits with our homes and our community."

Among those in the opposite corner was Brian Elliott. Although a resident of Newmarket, Mr. Elliott said he has been a member of the Aurora United Church congregation for nearly three decades, drawn to the church because of the wide array of activities it offered and community programs it facilitated, from Inn From The Cold to Alcoholics Anonymous.

Approving the plan would ensure the "Angel of Yonge Street" rises once again in Aurora.

"While of course the building is gone, our spirit continues to thrive. We need help to help us create a new home," he said. "We want to make the church and its facility a centre for the community in addition to it being the church home. To do this, and ensure a legacy, we need funds to make this happen. Unfortunately, even with our insurance settlement, we needed help and we sought out a quality development partner for a joint proposal where we would retain the ownership of the land.

"Contemplate that if this proposal doesn't succeed, what happens? I take a very logical view of things. There seem to be two alternatives. One is to move to a much less costly building and a site, perhaps outside of Aurora's boundaries. There is not a lot of affordable land in Aurora. For us, this is not what we would want to happen. We are an urban church on Yonge Street and we would like to get back to our mission on Yonge Street. The second alternative is to merge with an existing church with existing facilities, possibly outside of Aurora's boundaries. Again, this is not what we want. The congregation is dedicated to Aurora."

There were many additional reasons to go ahead with the plan, he offered. One was to replace a lost building and all the community resources it provides, thus taking pressure off municipal resources to fill the gaps, providing quality retirement spaces for a growing seniors' population, the employment opportunities that come along with it, and meeting intensification targets.

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Pianist Jarvis returns to share his passion with a hometown crowd

ByBrock Weir

Music is the passion that fuels the fire in Harrison Jarvis and growing up in Aurora he had plenty of people to stoke the flames.

Whether it was the guiding hand of a local music teacher who set him on his path, or a community member taking in his talent donating her grand piano to the budding artist so he had something to practice on worthy of his talent, his career so far has been a local success story. And next Wednesday, he's back in Aurora to play for the community that nurtured his talent from his earliest days.

Jarvis, now a student at Bard College Conservatory in New York, will hold a concert at the Aurora Cultural Centre this Wednesday, June 7.

Featuring the works of Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Debussy and Schumann, Mr. Jarvis says he is looking forward to sharing his favourite pieces with his hometown.

"Aurora has been an incredible community to me, growing up here and musically," he says. "I took piano from Stan Cyprys here in Aurora for nine years and he was such a generous teacher and really cared a lot about my growth. I also had Geri Adam who literally donated her grand piano to me so I could have a good instrument to practice on.

"There are so many countless examples of the community in Aurora really helping me develop as an artist and I wouldn't be anywhere that I am today without them. I really thought it would be fun to come back and get to play a concert and share music with the people who helped me so much."

When The Auroran last checked in with Harrison in 2015, he was vying for a spot in CBC's Piano Hero competition. He was bolstered along the way by Mr. Cyprys's guiding hand and able to hone his talent on Ms. Adam's piano, which she donated after first hearing him play and learning that his family simply couldn't afford a grand piano.

"It is pretty critical for a pianist to have a grand piano to practice on because the action is so different," he explains. "When she told me she wanted to donate it to me I was completely bewildered! I still kind of can't believe it, it was an enormous help to me, and I just improved so much because of it."

From that CBC competition, he has performed at New York City's Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center as part of the Gemini Youth Symphony. Since then, he says he has been "thrilled" to be able to study with Benjaman Hochman at Bard College where he is taking a double degree in psychology and piano performance.

He's happy to be home, however, and is preparing a program for next Wednesday designed to take you through the whole human experience.

"There is a rich literature in music and I don't think people have as much exposure to it as they might have had in the past," says Harrison. "This concert is a good way to share some incredible music with people and I hope they get to experience all the sorrow, tragedy, excitement and ecstasy that is found in the music that I am playing.

"I just have a profound love of music. If I go for a few days practicing or a few days without listening to music I actually go a little insane! There is really nothing else in the world I love doing more than playing the piano. It is just my passion. I love to spend time practicing my instrument, exploring the incredible compositions I get to learn and continuing my relationship."

To experience Harrison Jarvis this Wednesday, June 6 at the Aurora Cultural Centre, the concert gets underway at 7.30 p.m. Tickets are $20 for adults and $15 for students and seniors, and available at harrisonjarvis.eventbrite.ca. Proceeds from ticket sales will support his summer studies and performances at Orford Musique in Quebec and Klaviersommer in Cochem, Germany.

Pianist Harrison Jarvis
Supplied photo

Teen Idol is a great opportunity for young performers, says 2016 winner

By Brock Weir

The past 11 months have been a time of growth for Melissa Suma.

Come Canada Day, it will be exactly one year since the Aurora teen wowed the judges with the power of her voice and her presence on stage, ultimately taking the crown in the 2016 Aurora Teen Idol competition.

Now that her time as Aurora's reigning singer draws to a close, she is encouraging other young singers looking for a good opportunity – and a good challenge – to step forward and unleash their talents.

The application deadline for the 2017 Aurora Teen Idol is fast approaching.

If you are between the ages of 12 and 17, a resident of Aurora, and looking for a big break, you have until June 9 to get your applications in.

Following the application deadline, auditions will take place on Wednesday, June 14, from 6 – 8 p.m. with each contestant preparing one song to perform in front of a panel of three judges. From there, nine semi-finalists will be chosen to perform once more in front of the crowds at Aurora's Canada Day celebrations at Lambert Willson Park.

"It has provided so many great opportunities and it really helps you develop yourself as a person and a performer," said Suma, just before going to talk about the Teen Idol program at a local school. "The finals of the competition were a personal highlight because I really wanted to be confident and sing out there on the stage. It was also my first time singing jazz, so it was a really neat experience and I have been enjoying singing jazz ever since. In Teen Idol, you get to perform in front of a lot of great people and it has really helped me develop my confidence as a performer and singer and I think I have really grown as a person from the experience."

2016 Aurora Teen Idol Melissa Suma
Auroran photo by Glen Rodger

The Winner of the 2017 Aurora Teen Idol will have the opportunity to perform at scores of Town events over the following 12 months, from Ribfest in August to the annual Community Recognition Awards held each May. In Melissa's case, she even had the opportunity to perform at a recent charity baseball tournament where York Regional Police took on Toronto's finest.

It has also led to many other opportunities for her as well, including a local production of Tosca, and bolstering her confidence to try out for a new CTV reality show.

"Teel Idol looked like a great opportunity in getting experience competing and performing, and to showcase my talents and build up a performance resume, and I hoped it would help me enter some other competitions as well," she said. "Since then, I have also been focusing more on writing my own music and I have been looking at a few new competitions to try, such as the new CTV show The Launch. It is across Canada and it starts in January. You apply through a video and get a chance to work on some original music with professionals during the process.

"It would be an amazing experience and it would be my first time ever on a TV show! It would be just a great opportunity to further develop myself as a performer and I would be really honoured to participate."

For more information on Aurora Teen Idol and to download application forms, visit www.aurora.ca/teenidol.

Local author offers "fifty shades of green" with sci-fi adventures

By Brock Weir

Inspiration can strike people in the strangest places, and at the strangest times. For Aurora resident Brian Horeck, the commonplace sighting of a few water bugs doing the backstroke in a minnow trap started turning the gears on an unlikely career path.

Now, the Sudbury native, who once saw high school English as the enemy, is a best-selling sci-fi author and will be bringing his Northern Ontario stories to a hometown crowd at this Sunday's annual Aurora Chamber Street Festival.

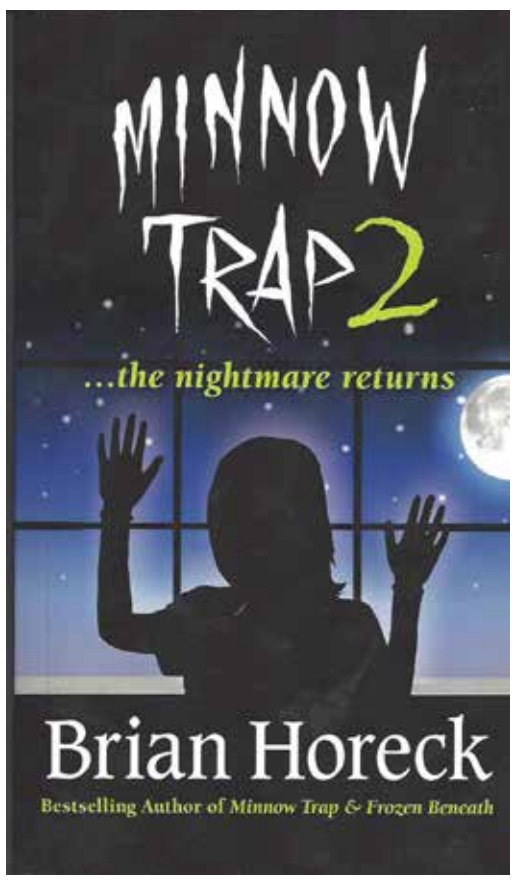
"They look like aliens," was one of Horeck's first thoughts when he cleaned out that fateful minnow trap but, as the creative mind went to work, he pondered, "What if they actually were?"

His first novel, "Minnow Trap", focuses on a Northern Ontario summer where three long-time fishing buddies stumble onto some strange happenings – and critters – at one of their favourite haunts. Soon, they are in a nightmare not only with extra-terrestrial life, but international intrigue.

"English being my worst subject, I hand wrote my chapters and went to the computer to try typing, which I had to try with just one finger," he laughs. "I went to my late wife, who I lost just as I finished writing the book, and I got the book out with her help."

With his first book typed up and ready to go, he set about on a rather unconventional marketing campaign, self-publishing the book and advertising it on billboards scattered along the Ontario stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway. Giving away little more than "Minnow Trap" was coming, it got people pondering just what "Minnow Trap" was.

Soon, Horeck found out that it is a little bit harder than he anticipated to get word out on a self-published novel, but he was confident they would sell, a confidence bolstered by his sure knowledge he had a good story behind him.



"The hardest part is convincing yourself that you have a product," he says. "You have to make a first impression and you only have one chance. I know I am not the best writer and I had that going against me, but I had to get sales up there. I did my best with a run of 3,000 copies. I got them out there and I couldn't believe how they were selling!"

Even at that point, Horeck didn't necessarily see himself as an author and gave little thought to writing a second book but after "Minnow Trap" got out there, he heard from readers wanting more. Before coming up with a sequel to his debut novel, he published "Frozen Beneath," a second novel set in Northern Ontario exploring a meteorite crash.

Only, it's not a meteorite crash. A spacecraft has taken a nosedive into a frozen lake, a craft carrying space tourists. Naturally, chaos ensues when hunters Kevin and John delve deeper into just what is sitting at the bottom of the lake.

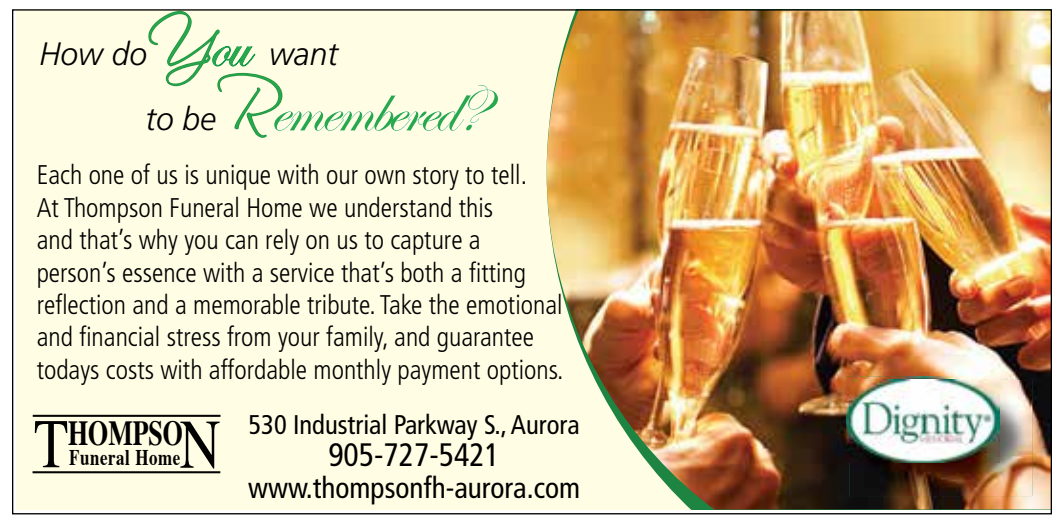
"I know the books before I write them," he said, adding he's always looking for authenticity. "I went ice fishing and watched for everything my friends said or did to pick up stuff, whether they accidently lost the slush scoop through the ice trying to clean the hole up, or dropped their cell phone down. I want people to relate to it and think, 'I feel like I am out there with my buddies.' I wat to relate to people and be real in what is happening. I see tens of thousands of vehicles going up the 400 with ATVs, snowmobiles and boats behind them and they just want to get up to God's country just to relax, fish, hike and I want to write to them."

For example, once up in God's country, he happened to be in a store and overheard one of the locals refer to urbanites as "Citiots," That, of course, made it into the book – only now they are a target audience!

"I read everything now, even romance to get some ideas," he says. "With Minnow Trap 2, I am getting a bit of feedback that it is '50 Shades of Green' with a little something going on there with an alien who is in human form and rather appealing to the men. Now, my Grade 10 English teacher showed up at a book signing at Chapters in Sudbury and she said she had to make sure she saw me in person, saying that the Brian she knew never even read a book let alone wrote a book. She couldn't believe it, so you just never know!

"I felt I was the only person to tell that story."

For more on Brian Horeck, stop by his booth at Sunday's Aurora Street Festival from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., or visit www.brianhoreck.ca.



McGrath calls for party unity in Newmarket-Aurora

From page 7

[fellow nomination candidates] Tom Vegh and Bill Hogg on the recruitment efforts and sincerely hope that we can all work together to win the riding for the PC party.

"I'm excited to put the people of riding first and work hard just as Frank Klees did. I will be a strong voice for them and bring their concerns to Queen's Park. I believe that all local PC members are united in the belief that Kathleen Wynne's Liberal government needs to be replaced in the next year's provincial election and I look forward to working together to create the change that is so very needed in our province today."

Citizen of the Year hailed for quiet acts of giving

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From page 1

Southlake Foundation. "At that time, he had just joined the Foundation Board. Peter served as Director of the Foundation Board until 2015, putting in countless volunteer hours to help bring world-class care closer to home for the people of Aurora and our Region.

"Peter further demonstrated his commitment by serving on several sub-committees, but Peter didn't just attend meetings; he was always a well-prepared, active participant who asked challenging and insightful questions to ensure he was fulfilling the role to which he had committed as a leader from the community.

"He has dedicated a tremendous amount of time and talent as a leadership volunteer to making our community a better place. He has supported this commitment with personal philanthropy and by lending his good name to champion the many causes that are dear to his heart. Southlake would not be the hospital it is today if not for Peter van Schaik."

Outside the world of Southlake, van Schaik's reach can be felt in many areas, from his active support of the Robotics Club at St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School, to the Aurora Youth Soccer Club and the Aurora Ducks Swim Club to, most recently, taking on the role as Honourary Chair for "Happy Hearts," the new $5 million capital campaign launched this month by Community Living Aurora Newmarket.

"He is an unsung hero in the community," says Rosalyn Gonsalves, former president of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, who, in 2007, nominated him for the Business Person of the Year Award. "It was my feeling at that time as well he was an unsung hero in the community."

There came a time, however, when she realised the scope of the behind-the-scenes work being carried out and as soon as she retired from the Chamber, his was the first name that came to mind at nomination time.

"Peter's involvement in the Southlake Foundation and Hospital have been innumerable in his discreet and non-flamboyant manner," she says. "He has worked tirelessly as an unsung hero in our community for many years and there is no one more deserving of the award."

This is the same sentiment shared by his spiritual leaders as well. Van Schaik is an active member of Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church. Former Our Lady of Grace pastor Joe Gorman says soon after coming to Our Lady of Grace, Peter's contributions quickly became clear.

"Peter Van Schaik is a remarkable man. He is a man of integrity, of compassion, he shoots straight from the hip," says Mr. Gorman. "His contributions are not just monetary, it is his time, it is his talent, and it is his treasures. Everything comes back to family: his upbringing, his wife, his children, his grandchildren. Peter is a man, first and foremost, of family. Charity starts at home, it starts with his family, but as an example to his family, it shines to the people around him, not just the people of Aurora but the people across our community.

"Peter is a quiet, simple man. He does things not out of recognition, he does things from the heart because it is the right thing to do. He makes people better, from the time he spends with them, from his advice and guidance, and he doesn't need the spotlight to do what he does. He does it because it is the right thing to do.

"We want to work with Peter because he takes the time to get to know people, takes the time to get to know not just themselves, but their families and their friends."

As he listened to his praises being sung by the Mayor, Mr. Van Schaik's face became red as he realised he was not at Town Hall to see his wife Teresa receive an award – as he was led to believe – but that he was just about to receive the Citizen of the Year honour.

"So, you can see I am not dressed up, but Teresa is!" he said after being called up to receive his award. "I have been very fortunate in life being blessed with health, wealth, and a lot of children and grandchildren, all healthy, so what more can one man ask for? Having said that, giving back to the community is always a wonderful thing to do. The needs are always there, there's more needs than there is a capability, and that is one reason I do get involved.

"Things are needed and because of that we step up to the plate [and] there is a campaign to be finished, so I know there are some people in the audience I will be calling on before the campaign will be over!"

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Community Recognition Awards honour the "backbone" of Aurora

By Brock Weir

Volunteers are the backbone of every community and on Monday night over 20 individuals who work tirelessly behind the scenes to make Aurora – neighbourhoods, business community, schools – what is today were recognized.

Leaders in business, youth, environmentalism and simply leading the way as good neighbours were honoured for their service at the annual Community Recognition Awards held at Town Hall.

Recognized with the Youth Volunteer Award, which is presented to young Aurorans who have demonstrated positive leadership, was Michelle Stewart, a Grade 12 student at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School.

"Michelle has been a part of the Sarah's Stars club for more than three years," reads her citation. "The club began when Michelle was inspired by a local girl named Sarah who, in 2012, was diagnosed with cancer at the age of five. Students have since raised more than $10,000 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada. As Michelle moved forward through high school, she continued supporting Sarah's Stars. In her final year of school, she became chairperson of the club, leading dozens of students to support the fight against cancer. Michelle is a caring and kind leader who has inspired youth around her."

Next up was the Green Award, designed to recognize those who support protection, preservation, sustainability and the conservation of our natural environment. This year's recipient is Windfall Ecology Centre, which was hailed for its efforts with the Healthy Kids Community Challenge, storm water mitigation programs, and helping businesses and residents address climate change.

Aurora Winter Blues Festival co-founder Jamie MacDonald honoured with this year's Arts & Culture Award.

Continued on page 13

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Community Recognition Awards honour the "backbone" of Aurora

The 2017 Community Recognition Award recipients.

Youth Volunteer Award-winner Michelle Stewart, with Dr. G.W. Williams teacher Jocelyn Kervin and nominator Mark Watkin. Michelle helps keep the memory of Mr. Watkin's daughter, Sarah, alive through leading Sarah's Stars at Williams, where the team spearheads cheek swabs for the Bone Marrow Donor Registry.

The ABLE Network received the Community Leadership Award.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

From page 12

Originally inspired by the Johnson Family, it is designed to recognize individuals and groups who have enhanced the Aurora community through their support of the arts.

"Jamie has been a driving force behind the Aurora Winter Blues Festival, having grown this amazing community experience from a house party into a month-long event. Jamie has been instrumental in creating cultural collaborations and networking throughout our Town. From music pop-ups at art exhibitions and local businesses, to summer outdoor band shell performances at the Farmers' Market, there are few residents that have not benefited from his volunteer efforts."

Individuals and non-profits who have enhanced the Town through their contribution, commitment, and leadership in charitable giving, civic engagement and community spirit are recognized with the Community Leadership Award. This year's recipient, participants of The ABLE Network, certainly fit the bill.

"Participants of the ABLE network programs are involved, on some level, in volunteer work on a weekly basis that benefits the Aurora community. The ABLE Network is a not-for-profit community-based program that provides relevant and inclusive work and recreation opportunities for young adults with intellectual disabilities. Participants lead the way in creating a community where everyone has the opportunity to make meaningful contributions."

Some participants have found opportunities at Omar's Shoes and co-owner Raz Khamissa was recognized with the Inclusivity Award.

"He firmly believes that helping eliminate barriers for people will make Aurora a better place to live."

Good neighbours all, but one local couple was singled out with the Good Neighbour Award. Alda and Reggie Lima were recognized for giving of themselves "effortlessly" to help their neighbours.

"From assisting others with projects such as putting out neighbours' recycling, mowing their lawns and helping to fix fences, they do not hesitate to bring their tools and get involved. Not only are they handy, but they are generous with their homemade Portuguese treats, which they willingly share to brighten anyone's mood. The Limas contribute to making Aurora a great place to life."

A great place to live is also a safe place to live, and this year's recipient of the Community Safety Award is Richard Boyne, who was recognized for his work with the Youth Justice Committee, Aurora Police & Community Together (PACT), the Community Safety Village and the York Regional Police Auxiliary Unit.

"Richard has demonstrated outstanding leadership, long-tome volunteering commitment and continuous efforts to raise awareness about safety."

While a great place to live is also a safe place to live, it is also fostered by the contributions of good business, and the recipient of this year's Good Business Award is Magna International which was recognized for the millions of dollars raised for local charities over the decades through Hoedown and giving back in numerous other ways.

Recipients of the 2017 Volunteer Service Awards are (20 Years) Mary Haberer, Janet Metcalf, Janice O'Hara, Penny Stephens, (25 Years) Helen Burlanyette, Suzanne Charlebois-Bin, Brigitta Emes, Diane Schormans, Michael Varcoe, (30 Years) Ken Smith, Rosemary Verge, (35 Years) Jan Gibson, Bruce Walkinshaw, (40 Years) Marion Lougheed and Deborah Simerson.

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One lucky pro-contractor left Aurora Home Hardware Building Centre on Wednesday in a 2017 Toyota Tundra Pickup. Chris Tillsley of Cougar Iron was selected from the Pro Contractor Toyota Tundra Sweepstakes contest held at the Barrie Home Hardware Pro Show on January 10. As part of the show, pro contractors had the opportunity to visit the Toyota booth to fill out a ballot for the chance to win the grand prize.

Auroran photo by Chelsea Ertel

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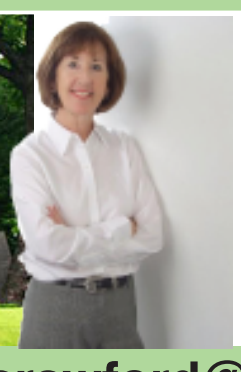

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Aurora United women earn first win of the season

By Jake Courtepatte

All it took was one.

A late goal from Ellie Hayes made her the heroine in the Aurora United FC women's first win of the League 1 Ontario season, defeating the Woodbridge Strikers 1 – 0 in their fourth game.

"I think it's good for the girls to have a good performance today," said Aurora head coach Gianni Cimini.

"This is the fourth game and we finally got a victory. We were pretty tight in most of those matches but couldn't close the deal, and today we stuck with it and got there, in the eighty-seventh minute I think, and it was deserved. I think we hit a couple crossbars, so I was happy.

"I think we tired out a little bit in the second half and obviously you're not going to control the whole game. There are two teams on the field and I think we managed that transition period where they were putting a little bit of pressure on us and in the end we ended up scoring the goal. It was a good game, it was an exciting game all the way through."

Patricia Koutoulas, also a keeper with the national Under-17 club, kept a clean sheet for the home side.

The win vaulted Aurora over the Sanjaxx Lions out of the basement of the semi-pro league's standings, now tied with Durham, Toronto, and Woodbridge.

They face FC London (2-1-0) at 4 p.m. on Saturday at St. Maximilian Kolbe field.

The men's side of Aurora United followed with their second one-goal loss in a row, as they continue to search for their first win of the season.

The Aurora United FC women got their first win of the season Saturday in a 1 - 0 game against the Woodbridge Strikers.

Auroran photo by Jake Courtepatte

Also hosting Woodbridge, Luca Baldassarre was the only goalscorer in the 1 – 0 match, finding twine in the 41st minute to preserve his team's perfect start to the season.

Losing midfielder Jackson Tooke to a red card in the first half and fielding only ten men, Aurora failed to find the opportunity to beat keeper Quillan Roberts.

"It's similar to last week against Masters when we had three or four good chances and I think everyone saw today we had the same," said head coach Derek O'Keeffe. "If you score one of them, it's a different game. We went in at half-time and we were positive about what we were doing but we felt that we would get more chances."

"However, when you lose a man against a team like Woodbridge, your back is always going to be against the wall."

Despite the outcome, O'Keeffe said he was "very, very proud" of his players.

"They gave me everything and they still kept the score line 1-0. We still kept our discipline. Obviously our attacking momentum had dwindled due to the player sent off, but they kept going right to the end. Woodbridge knew they had a game there tonight, they really knew they had a game."

The men are winless through their first five games of the season, playing to a 0-4-1 record. They face a tough opponent in the 3-1-1 Vaughan Azzurri on Saturday at the St. Max field.

Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

For stats and schedules, visit www.league1ontario.com.

York Regional Police run for Special Olympics in memory of detective

Story and photo by Jake Courtepatte

The York Regional Police are ensuring one of their own's passion for the Special Olympics lives on forever.

Rob Plunkett, a strong ambassador for the Special Olympics in life, lives on in death through the annual Race for Plunkett, held Wednesday at Riverwalk Commons in Newmarket.

"Rob Plunkett's passion for Special Olympics, and his leadership, has always motivated members of our police service and the community to get involved," said Thomas Carrique, York Regional Police deputy chief. "This event is a testament to Rob's legacy, as both a person and a police officer."

Though the torch run by law enforcement was celebrating its thirtieth anniversary this year, it was the ninth to be named in honour of Plunkett, who served as chair of the 2000 Special Olympics Spring Games in York Region.

Plunkett was the victim of a botched car theft in August of 2007. After his death, two other York Region officers stepped in to take on his role as the coordinator of the torch run, which now accepts citizens outside of law enforcement and draws hundreds of participants each year.

A gold medalist at the Canadian Police Olympics and the "Toughest Cop Alive" contest, his love for sports fueled his passion to get as many people as possible into the game.

"Rob was committed to helping people be the best that they could be," said Carrique. "He is really a shining example for all of us."

The event, which begins in the Commons and follows routes of both five and ten-kilometres, raised over $30,000, all of which goes to the Special Olympics program.

Over the past three years, the event alone has raised over $90,000 for Special Olympics.

Both the 2013 Summer Games Legacy Fund and YRP Association donated $2,500 to the cause. The Lang family were the highest team fundraisers, bringing in over $2,700, while the highest individual total went to Michelle Paddison.

"It's great to see so many people dedicated to such a cause," said Newmarket Mayor Tony Van Bynen. "There are many things you can be doing on a Wednesday, but the fact that all of these people are here today making a positive difference in the lives of others is something everyone should be proud of."

As is tradition, prior to the run, members of Special Olympics Ontario carried the torch across the grounds of the Commons to the podium before reciting the Special Olympics motto: "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

Registration fees and donations to the event went directly to supporting athletes living with intellectual disabilities, helping cover the cost of transportation, programming, uniforms, and more

Get on your feet – or go to the dogs: June is Recreation & Parks Month

By Brock Weir

June is Recreation & Parks Month and there is something for everyone – whether you have four legs or the more conventional two.

This Saturday, June 3, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sheppard's Bush is ready to go to the dogs once again for Aurora's Paws in the Park. Back for 2017 after the inaugural event last year was all but completely washed out due to huge downpours, this year's event is intended to celebrate Aurora's love of dogs.

Complete with free treats and activities, an opportunity for pet owners and local pet vendors to meet, as well as a chance to learn more about Aurora's pet bylaws and how to license your pet, it is set to take place rain or shine.

But, this is just the first in a series of events Aurora has planned throughout June for Recreation & Parks Month.

The celebration started in 2005 as an annual "mobilization movement" across Ontario involving parks, recreation centres, schools, and neighbourhoods in general.

"By celebrating June as Recreation and Parks month, we are able to promote recreational programs and park facilities in the community," said Franco DeMarco of the Town of Aurora. "Each year through this initiative the Town of Aurora successfully engages hundreds of participants in activities that increase physical activity, promote healthy eating and encourage safe play. 2017 provides a special opportunity as we celebrate Canada's 150th birthday and the many benefits of parks and recreation in our community.

"We know that participation, both structured and unstructured recreational, sport and cultural activities improves physical, psychological and emotional health. It can reduce rates of sometimes chronic diseases including diabetes and heart disease. Recreation services fosters social, intellectual, physical and emotional development. Participation in recreation and sport and cultural activities reduces the reliance on health and other social services."

If you're a senior, head over to the Aurora Family Leisure Complex on Thursday, July 8, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for the Seniors Information & Active Living Fair, featuring 35 exhibitors, 12 on-stage fitness and active living demonstrations, three health-related seminars and, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., a community barbeque hosted by MPP Chris Ballard.

The Fair is sponsored by the Town, Club Aurora, Activate Aurora, the Aurora Seniors' Association, the Older Adult Centres Association of Ontario and the Ministry of Seniors Affairs.

Next, on Saturday, June 10, from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex is the Aurora Playlist Challenge, which will give families to come out and try over 10 different activities from Participaction's 150 Playlist, dubbed the ultimate list of Canada's Favourite Activities.

Those are just two examples of events on tap this month and if you take them all in, you could win. Pick up a "passport" at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex or Town Hall beginning this Thursday, June 1, and have them stamped as you go for a chance to win a $50 credit for Town of Aurora recreation programs.

"We have something for all ages and abilities and the best part is that most of these activities are free," said Mr. DeMarco. "Record the activities that you have completed on your passport and once you have completed four types of activities, submit our completed passport by June 30.

"Submit any photos related to June's Recreation and Parks month to us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram using our hashtag #aurorajrpm2017."

Barbarians winless through two games

The Aurora Barbarians (black) fell 55 - 14 to the Brantford Harlequins at Fletcher's Field in Markham on Saturday.

Auroran photo by Jake Courtepatte

By Jake Courtepatte

The Aurora Barbarian men are still looking to put their mark on the 2017 Marshall Premiership season.

A 55 – 14 loss on Saturday to the Brantford Harlequins at Fletcher's Field in Markham has the Barbarians riding a two-game losing streak to start the campaign, after a loss to the Markham Irish two weeks prior.

The Barbs have struggled defensively so far, giving up 94 points, the most allowed in Rugby Ontario's most elite competition.

They next face Stoney Creek RFC in an away match on Saturday, in which one team will come out the winner of their first game this season.

The women's side, meanwhile, are off to a hot start after a win over the Markham Irish to increase their record to 2 – 0 to start the season.

They take to the road to visit the winless Yeomen Lions on Saturday.

Pictured above is Mellisa Cellitti; hair stylist at Giampierre's Beauty Salon located at 265 Edward Street in Aurora, celebrating her 15 year anniversary at the Salon with friends, family and clients. Melissa is an aesthetician working with all the new trends and has built a base of many loyal clients over the last 15 years. Giampierre's Beauty Salon has been in business 40 years as of this fall.

Why not come to Open Streets Aurora during the Aurora Chamber of Commerce Street Festival? Walk or wheel our 'Open Streets' in historic Old Aurora Village and the Cultural Precinct. Enjoy music, activities and interesting displays. The streets are 'Open' for you!

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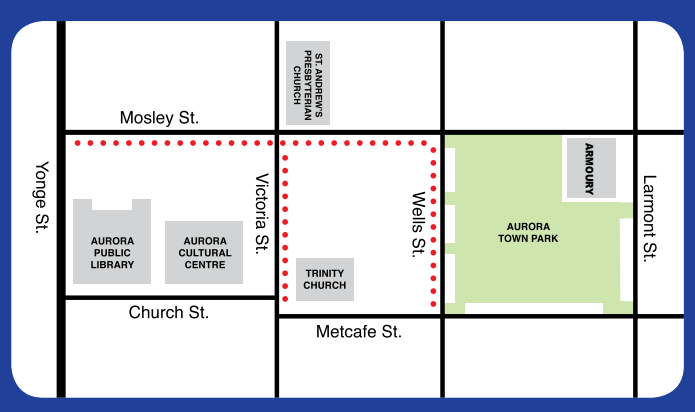
Visit our Open Streets Aurora Facebook page for up-to-date information.



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Next phase of Library Square development approved

By Brock Weir

The future of Library Square took another inch forward last week as Council gave the green light to beginning design options on just what might replace the former homes of the Aurora Public Library and Seniors' Centre on Victoria Street.

Firm in their vision of a public gathering space of some sort, Council formally approved the demolition of the two buildings and putting out a new Request for Proposal for a company to bring this vision – and the vision of the community to life.

While it is not the big leap forward some neighbours might have been hoping for, Council members insisted that this "baby step" was closer than Aurora has ever come to resolving the nearly 20-year debate on what to do with the old buildings.

"We have heard from our community, we have heard from our community partners, and we have heard from all of our boards," said Councillor Tom Mrakas. "We are moving forward as we all want to, and as the community wants to. Last June we made a decision to demolish two buildings, we have already made that decision, we're moving forward with putting out the tender in having someone do the demolition for us. We're also putting out the tender to have someone do those detailed designs. We haven't done that.

"We have had some high view concepts. That's what we've done and now we're looking for those detailed designs. I am excited just as everyone else is to get this done and finally move forward and have something special in that area."

Councillor Mrakas was responding to Councillor John Abel's observation that with last Tuesday's vote they are essentially back to 2013, but other members said they disagreed.

"While I understand where Councillor Abel is coming from in starting at square one, we're actually starting right now after doing some much needed research on repurposing old buildings in our community. It has been up in the air for a very long time," said Councillor Sandra Humfryes. "We have been able to do lots of community consultation, lots of lots of public information sessions where the public were able to engage and give input on both of those options. I think we have officially conducted those surveys and those consultations officially for repurposing and that is what the biggest difference is.

"There are lots of different ideas and lots of different perspectives and we just wanted to make sure that this term we were actually able to get here. At this point there is no way but forward full force."

This was a view shared by Councillor Michael Thompson who called the process to get to this point a "challenging one" that has been addressed "umpteen times" for almost 20 years, garnering "dozens and dozens of staff reports. While he said Councillor Abel is right that this was talked about in 2013, it was also discussed in reports and talks dating back to 2003.

"From my perspective, I think this Council is closer than anyone has ever gotten in turning Library Square from a concept into a reality," he said. "I don't necessarily see us starting over. It has been a struggle, it has been baby steps, but sometimes it is two steps forward and one step back but I think we have all seen the progress and I am optimistic that we continue to drive this forward and hopefully see it come to fruition in this term."

From Councillor Paul Pirri's perspective, Council was not back at the starting post but making an informed decision after two years of consultation on the Cultural Precinct Plan.

"Politicians often get in trouble when they make evidence-based decision-making but go down the path of decision-based evidence-making," he said.

Looking over the history it has taken to get to this point, Councillor Wendy Gaertner says it is a matter that has been tackled by five Councils now and, so far, it has proven to be a "very difficult decision to make." Aurora has done a lot of public consultation, she said, and now the Town is on the right track.

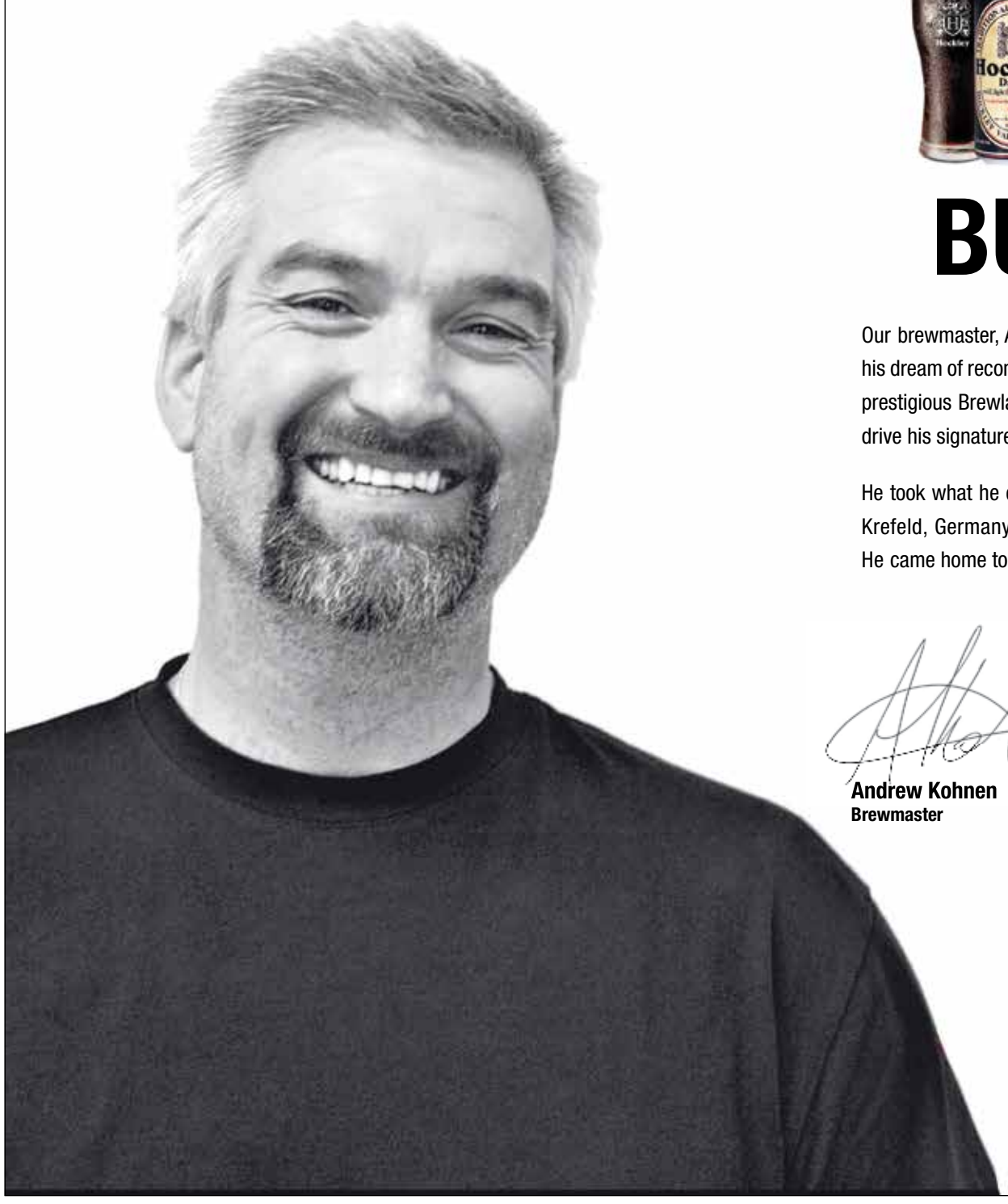
"I am very sorry about the demolition of the Old Library, which was our Centennial gift to ourselves and I am opposed to demolishing it before we know what we're going to be doing with the property, but it is the will of the majority of Council and I do congratulate this Council on taking what I believe is one step forward as well." Added Mayor Geoff Dawe: "I do believe we're moving forward, perhaps faster than some might like, and not as quickly as others, which means we're probably at the right pace! I do think we're moving in the right direction and I am looking forward to continuing with that process."

Ultimately, the "baby step" forward was carried unanimously on a recorded vote.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

York Regional Police threw open the doors of their Aurora headquarters on Saturday morning for a colourful celebration to mark Asian Heritage Month. (Top) Young Nicole Min performs a Burmese dance. (Middle) A Lion Dance offered by Northern Legs Southern Fists. (Bottom) Singer Martina Ortiz-Luis.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir



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Andrew Kohnen
Brewmaster

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Hybrid voting model will be in place for 2018 municipal election

From page 1

free of contention, ultimately coming down to a 7 – 2 vote, with Aurora's two youngest Councillors – Paul Pirri and Jeff Thom – being the loudest champions of traditional paper ballots.

The irony was not lost on other members of Council who championed electronic voting not only as the way of the future, but also as a way of opening the vote up to more people, whether they are physically unable to make it to a polling station or simply don't have time to make it before or after the daily commute.

They were nevertheless firm in their convictions.

Speaking against the recommendation, Councillor Thom cited a number of studies from British Columbia to the City of Toronto, to Australia recommending against internet voting to 2013. Despite the expansive staff report on different voting options pursued by other towns and cities, it did not address why places like Waterloo, Whitby and Guelph have either moved away from, or rejected, internet voting.

He also referenced recent security hacks, including one at Disney, as being a cause for concern when it comes to the safety of the vote.

"We all want everyone to be able to exercise their constitutional right to vote and I think is very sacred but we have to make very sure that we have the safest method possible to conduct our elections and we owe that to the residents," said Councillor Thom. "If one day every four years the people of Aurora have to put it in their calendar and say I am going to make efforts to vote – I agree that it would be better for inclusivity for people with accessibility issues but I think the risks associated with internet voting don't outweigh the benefits. The status quo is fine to me."

In his report, however, Town Clerk Michael de Rond cautioned that no voting method is 100 per cent risk-free. While a hybrid voting system might be more expensive at first than either paper-only or internet-only methods, there are significant benefits in the end.

> *We all want everyone to be able to exercise their constitutional right to vote and I think is very sacred but we have to make very sure that we have the safest method possible to conduct our elections*

"There is no such thing as a perfect election," he said. "Unexpected issues always arise and staff are forced to think quickly about how to solve problems. These issues could manifest themselves in situations like temporary election staff not reporting on election day, a power outage, or any number of other hitches. Likewise, staff also accept that there is an inherent risk with any method of alternative voting. Our commitment to Council is to prepare as thoroughly as we can for the method of Council's choosing.

"Does the status quo of a paper ballot counted by vote tabulators create a problem? Staff's response would be no, as this is a proven model in this municipality to elect representatives. However, the addition of internet voting does enhance the democratic process for the residents of Aurora. By providing voters an additional option from the traditional paper ballot, the election becomes much more inclusive to the whole population of Aurora."

Ultimately, this was a deciding factor for Councillors like Wendy Gaertner who were not altogether enthusiastic about an internet model.

"I am going to vote for this because I believe that anything that can contribute to accessibility is the right way to go for this Council, so I will be in favour," she said. "I am not happy about it, but there it is!"

Others, however, were more fulsome in their support, including Mayor Geoff Dawe, who was in favour of internet voting at the outset.

For Councillor Michael Thompson, convenience was just one deciding factor with accessibility the other.

Some, he said, find it a challenge to get out to vote, particularly those with mobility issues and the cost of getting to the polling station could be an additional barrier to exercising their democratic rights.

"This option allows all a better opportunity to get out and vote," he said. "They may not exercise it, it might not approve numbers as some Councillors have alluded to, but it does create a more equal playing field and allows people the opportunity to vote who may have had challenges getting out in the past.

"I don't believe that internet voting in any way elevates the risk to the Town. We conduct a lot of online business. If someone wants to attack the Town through malware or a cyber security attack, having online voting or not will not increase or elevate our exposure level."

Added Councillor Joh Abel: "We pay our taxes online, we should be able to vote online. This is where we're going. We're going to be online and using technology. This is where we're going with our lifestyle. I would be in favour of going hybrid. The safeguards will be in place."

With a hybrid model in place, staff will be gauging its success next year. If the success is resounding, the Clerk noted there is a possibility there could be a further push to move towards 100 per cent electronic voting by the time of the 2022 municipal election.

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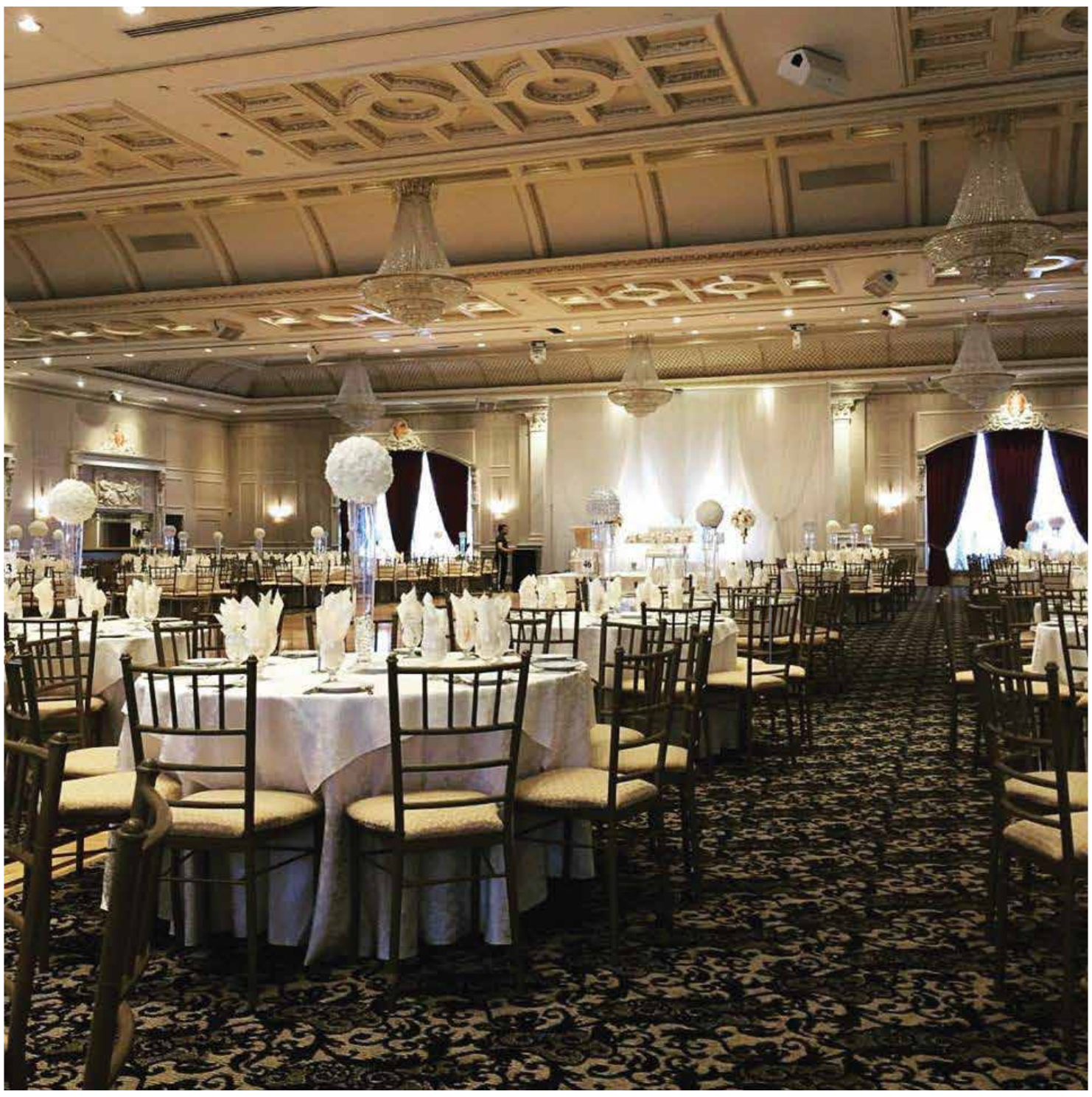

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THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW

THURSDAY, JUNE 1

Celebrate the first 25 years of Light of Christ Catholic Elementary School today with an open house and community barbeque. Light of Christ CES is celebrating 25 years of excellence in Catholic education on June 1. Mass will be celebrated at 1.30 p.m. followed by speeches. An Open House, Art Gala and BBQ will be hosted at the school starting at 5 p.m. All current and former staff, students and parents are invited to attend. For more information, visit loc.yrdsb.ca.

****

Come out to Hillary House tonight for their first ever Youth Music Night. Come and showcase your talents in a beautiful, historic park-like setting. All genres welcome. Come and perform or just enjoy the music under the stars – rain or shine. Tickets are $7. For more information, visit aurorhs.com/activities.

SATURDAY, JUNE 3

Aurora hosts its first-ever Indigenous Festival today with The New Beginnings Pow Wow at Lambert Willson Park from 12 noon to 9 p.m. Free entry to the Pow Wow featuring traditional dancing and drumming. Food festival featuring traditional food and classic favourites. Multicultural performers and a market place. Please no dogs permitted, service animals excepted. For more information, visit www.aurora.ca/powwow

****

Celebrate your love of dogs today at Aurora's Paws in the Park. Taking over Sheppard's Bush from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., enjoy free treats, activities, meet other pet owners and local pet vendors, and learn about the Town of Aurora's pet bylaws and how to license your pet. For more information, visit aurora.ca/pawsinthepark or call 905-727-1375.

****

PFLAG hosts York Region Family Pride today at Richmond Hill's Town Park (43 Church Street South) from 12 noon to 4 p.m. York Region Family Pride provides families with a fun and welcoming safe space where you can teach your kids about inclusion and the diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, featuring crafts, a bouncy castle, games, a DJ dance party from 1 – 3 p.m., Doo Doo the Clown, the Magic of Aaron Matthews at 2 p.m., LGBTQ-friendly vendors and much more. Family Pride is an official Stand Proud York Region initiative hosted by PFLAG Canada York Region, with support from the Town of Richmond Hill.

****

Come out and celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary by learning a bit of code today at STEM Minds from 12 noon through 2 p.m. Located at 212 Earl Stewart Drive, Unit 3, STEM Mind is is proud to offer a free coding workshop in partnership with Canada Learning Code as part of the #Canada150 celebrations. Come out and learn how to code in our hands-on workshop in our brand new location! Whether you are a beginner or an expert, there is something for everyone. While you're here, learn more about our programs, summer camps, and get a tour of our new makerspace! Register for your free ticket early to secure your spot at www.stemminds.eventbrite.ca.

****

Hear the Paskke String Quartet in a unique close-up experience that cannot be matched in a large concert hall this afternoon at the Aurora Cultural Centre. From 2 – 3.30 p.m., the quartet will be joined by award-winning Canadian pianist Elissa Miller-Kay. See and hear the performance including: the Dvorak Piano Quintet Opus 81 and the Mendelssohn String Quartet Opus 12. Each work is introduced with an informative narrative. Tickets: Adults $15, Seniors and Students $10.

SUNDAY, JUNE 4

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce will hold the 22nd annual Aurora Chamber Street Festival today from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Running along Yonge Street from Wellington to Murray, the festival is family-friendly and fun for all ages. There are over 500 vendors on Yonge Street, fantastic street performers, delicious food, musical entertainment and so much more. The event happens rain or shine. Parking and admission are always free!

****

Running in conjunction with the Street Festival is Activate Aurora's "Open Streets Aurora," a neighbourhood experience designed to encourage people of all ages to visit an interesting location by providing activities that are non-commercial and engaging. Open Streets Aurora will encourage active transportation through walking or wheeling in the Cultural Precinct. FREE parking has been arranged for the west GO Parking lot for all participants' convenience.

****

Ride 4 Styles – Now in its seventh year, the Ride 4 Styles honours the memory of fallen officer Constable Garrett Styles. The 2016 Ride raised more than $20,000 for York Region charities and welcomed 150 riders. Since the inception of the ride, the event has raised more than $80,000 for York Region charities. Proceeds from this year's ride will be donated to Victim Services of York Region, Jumpstart - Canadian Tire and the Aga Khan Foundation Canada. A donation will also be made to the Canadian Police Memorial Ride to Remember. 7 a.m. to 12 noon at the Community Safety Village (3291 Stouffville Road). Registration is $50. Ride begins at 8 a.m.

THURSDAY, JUNE 8

The Town of Aurora will host the Seniors Information & Active Living Fair today at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (135 Industrial Parkway North) today from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Fair will feature over 30 lifestyle exhibitors, fitness demonstrations, health seminars, grab bags, healthy snacks and, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., a community barbeque hosted by MPP Chris Ballard.

SATURDAY, JUNE 10

KC's Cancer Cushion will hold its 11th annual Pub Nite & Silent Auction this evening from 7.30 – 1 a.m. at the Newmarket Community Centre (200 Doug Duncan Drive). Bid on work of local artisans at the silent auction, dance to live music of POGO RODEO featuring Tyler Stewart of Barenaked Ladies. Enjoy a great late night buffet. Tickets are $35. Contact us KC's Cancer Cushion at cushionfund@gmail.com, 905-836-8592, or www.cushionfund.com. Since 2007, KC's Cancer Cushion Fund has been providing financial assistance to Cancer Warriors. At a point when fulltime work is impossible, many cancer patients do not have the money to pay uninsured medical expenses or additional expenditures related to things like childcare, parking or meals in hospital. Proceeds from this event will help cancer patients pay for uninsured medical costs and essential daily living expenses.

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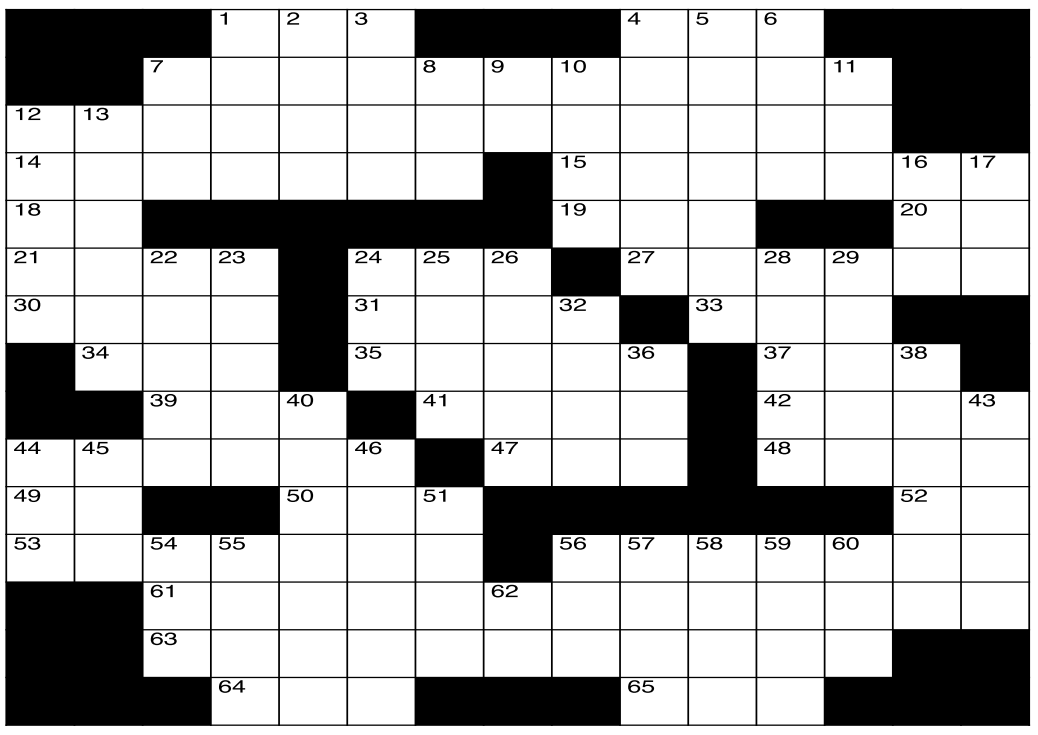

CLUES ACROSS

1. Formed by burning tobacco
4. Luxury automaker
7. Religious residences
12. Crusaders
14. Puzzled
15. In a curt way
18. Selling tool
19. Solid material
20. Gold
21. Thick piece of something
24. Pouch
27. "Wonder Years" actor Fred
30. Strong and healthy
31. Waste matter
33. Apply lightly
34. Type of squad
35. Secret political faction
37. Mock
39. Immoral act
41. Early Syrian kingdom
42. Neutralizes alkalis
44. Loud, confused noise
47. Sweet potato
48. Yemen's largest city
49. Farm state
50. Bird's beak
52. Measures distance
53. Pacify
56. Spanish noble
61. Lodging supplied for public convenience
63. Womanized
64. Not divisible by two
65. Monetary unit

CLUES DOWN

1. Used in perfumery
2. Arabic man's name
3. Assess
4. Prickly plants
5. Falsely assess
6. "__ the whistle"
7. Mama
8. Rocker __ Vicious
9. Toward
10. Prefix meaning within
11. Midway between south and southeast
12. Cause to be embarrassed
13. Pandemonium
16. Fall behind
17. Cantonese
22. Shad
23. A way to make dark
24. Specialized systems consultant
25. Wings
26. Taxi driver
28. Linear units
29. Large Philippine plant
32. Celebration
36. Fugitives are on this
38. Chinese tree
40. Not sour
43. "Bourne" actor Matt
44. Former OSS
45. Runners run this
46. Offered again
51. Sanctuary
54. Food suitable for babies
55. Caused by a reflection of sound
56. Mortar trough
57. Days in mid-month
58. Exhibit the courage to do
59. Disk of the sun in Egyptian mythology
60. Protects from weather
62. Manganese

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

D	A	D	A				A	R	T		R	U	S	T
A	V	I	L	A			B	E	E		A	N	T	A
R	E	V	A	M	P		O	L	M		M	S	E	C
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B	O	S	C		T	E	E				S	E	A	T

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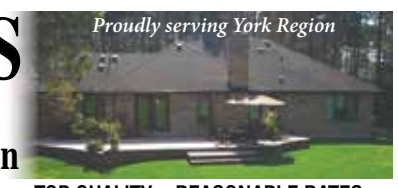

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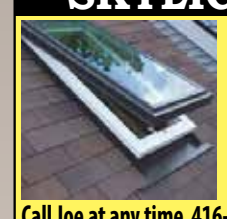

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- Diploma in journalism preferred
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