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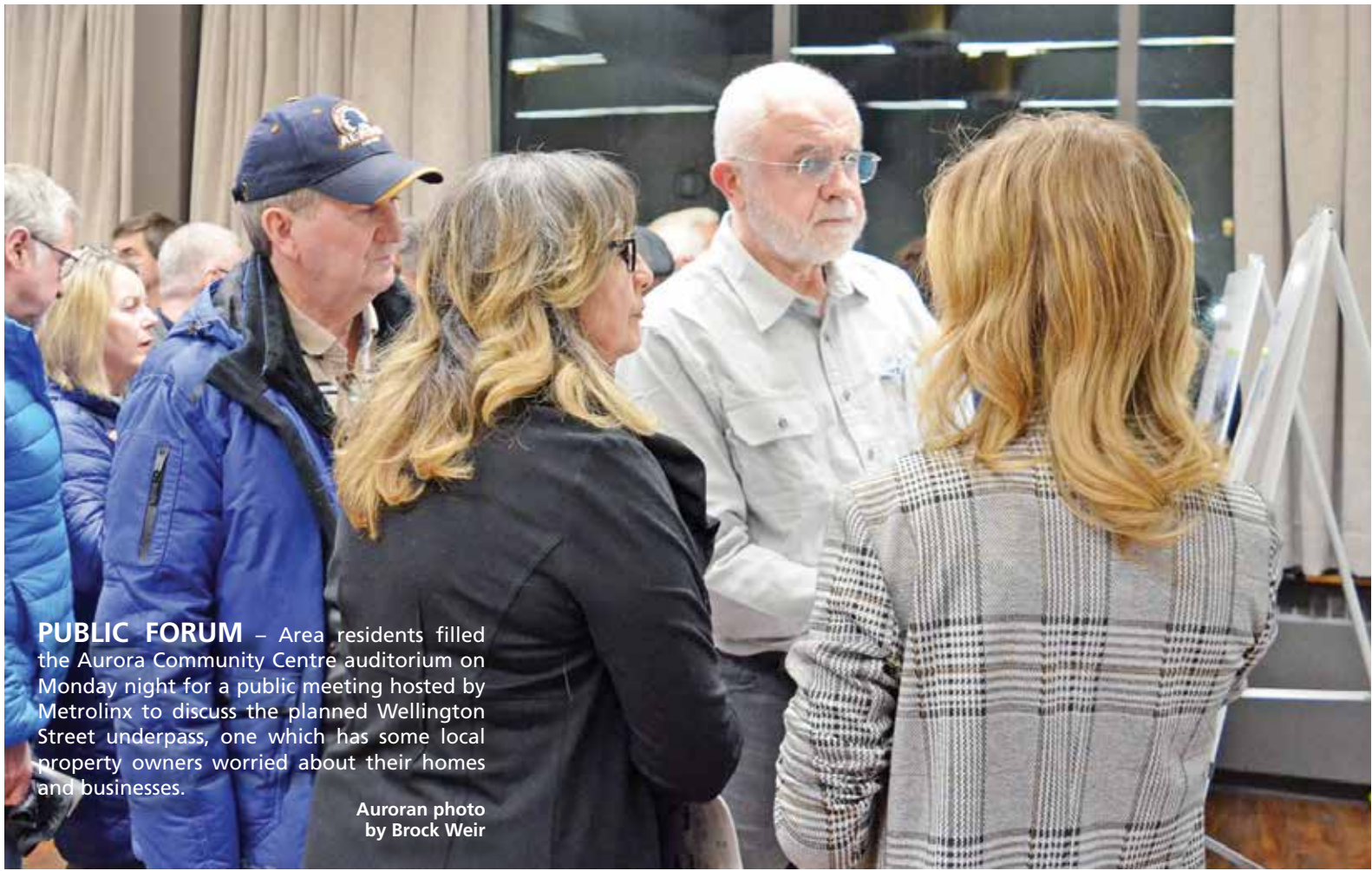
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ROYAL LEPAGE YOUR Community REALTY

THE AUROREDAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 20 No. 19 905-727-3300 *TheAuroran.com* FREE Week of February 27, 2020 CMCA AUDITED



PUBLIC FORUM – Area residents filled the Aurora Community Centre auditorium on Monday night for a public meeting hosted by Metrolinx to discuss the planned Wellington Street underpass, one which has some local property owners worried about their homes and businesses.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

Wellington Street business owners raise alarm bells over future underpass

By Brock Weir

Dr. Philip Kritzing says he has been down this road before. He opened the doors to his York Laser & Med Spa in Aurora just over two years ago, having moved the clinic from Newmarket's Davis Drive to a brand-new build on Wellington Street East.

At the time, Davis Drive was undergoing significant reconstruction

to accommodate new bus lanes for the VIVA Rapidway, putting stress on area businesses whose customers and clients couldn't readily get to their destination.

Now, Dr. Kritzing is braced for being back at square one. He was one of more than 125 residents who came out to the Aurora Community Centre on Monday night to seek answers as Metrolinx held an open house to discuss expanded GO Train service.

As part of the ongoing rail expansion project, Metrolinx is slated to build a vehicular underpass beneath the current rail line that crosses Wellington Street. While the underpass is expected to ease traffic flow in the long run as the Province moves towards all-day two-way 15-minute GO Train service along the Barrie corridor, area business owners are speaking out on the short- and long-term impacts this construction will have on the community.

"The construction is going to

Continued on page 22

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Mayor focused on keeping Magna in Aurora

By Brock Weir

Mayor Tom Mrakas has reaffirmed his efforts to keep Magna's headquarters in Aurora.

Mayor Mrakas outlined ongoing talks between his office and Magna, one of the Town's largest employers, at the annual Mayor's Luncheon, hosted by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday afternoon.

Nearly 250 Chamber members, dignitaries and residents at large came out to the Royal Venetian Mansion on Industrial Parkway South for the

Continued on page 6

STATE OF THE TOWN – Mayor Tom Mrakas made his annual address to the Aurora Chamber of Commerce last Wednesday afternoon.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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TOWN OF AURORA

Notice Board

AURORA

Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Tuesday, March 3	9:30 a.m.	Holland Room	Joint Council Committee
Tuesday, March 3	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, March 3	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	General Committee
Wednesday, March 4	4 p.m.	Holland Room	Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee
Tuesday, March 10	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Finance Advisory Committee
Tuesday, March 10	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Public Planning
Wednesday, March 11	6:30 p.m.	Aurora Cultural Centre	Aurora Cultural Centre Board (Public Meeting)
Wednesday, March 11	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Accessibility Advisory Committee
Thursday, March 12	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Committee of Adjustment

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

Council meetings are open to the public. For a full list of upcoming meetings, please visit aurora.ca.

What's Happening

March Skylight Gallery artist

The Skylight Gallery artist for March is Thelma Sellers.

Thelma paints in colour and texture to describe her art work *Oh, The Places I've Been*. Thelma's work in acrylic, collage and water media express her celebration of nature through shape and colour. Sellers' paintings reflect serenity, light-heartedness and exuberance in abstracted renderings of farm landscape and rural wilderness sites. Award winning artist Thelma Sellers has been painting for over 30 years and currently lives on a farm with her family in Sutton, Ontario.

This exhibit is open Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the Skylight Gallery at Aurora Town Hall, 3rd floor.

What's Happening

Notice of service disruption

Please see below for a scheduled service disruption at the **Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex (SARC)**:

- The SARC pool will be closed from **Monday, March 23 to Friday, March 27**. Please review the AFLC pool schedule for available times during this closure.

We apologize for any inconvenience. For more information, visit aurora.ca/notices.

Seniors' Active Living Fair on March 28

The Seniors' Active Living Fair will be taking place on **Saturday, March 28** at the Aurora Seniors' Centre. Admission is free. Enjoy exhibitors, fitness demonstrations, health seminars, grab bags and more.

Visit aurora.ca/seniorsservices for more information.



Register now for spring & summer 2020 recreation programs & summer camps

Registrations are now open online or in-person for our exciting spring & summer recreation programs. In addition, you can also register for your favourite summer camps.

Please check out the *Spring & Summer 2020 Program Guide* for details or visit aurora.ca/recguide.

Register for Spring 2020 Aquatics Programs

Starting **Monday, March 2**, Aurora residents can register online or in person for our Spring Aquatics programs.

Please check out the *Spring & Summer 2020 Program Guide* for details availalbe online at aurora.ca/recguide.

Stay busy during March Break

Stay busy during this March Break. The Town of Aurora has many activities and programs for everyone in your family to enjoy.

Visit aurora.ca/marchbreak and check out our recreation schedule for the week of **Monday, March 15 to Friday, March 21**.

APPLY TO JOIN OUR: COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Aurora Council is recruiting one citizen member for the Community Advisory Committee.

This Committee advises Town staff in various issues that affect the Town of Aurora including recreation, facilities and cultural services, parks and trails, traffic and the environment.

You are encouraged to read the Terms of Reference and the Policy before applying to serve on a Board or Committee. More information and applications available at: aurora.ca/committees.

► Application Deadline: Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.

AURORA

What's Happening

AURORA'S 2020 COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AWARDS

The Town of Aurora believes in recognizing citizens who have made a positive impact and generously contributed to the greater good of the community.

Do you know an individual, corporation or business who has...

- ★ given their own time for the benefit of others?
- ★ gone the extra mile in supporting our community?
- ★ made Aurora a better place to live?

Download a nomination form at aurora.ca/cra or pick up a copy at any Town facility customer service desk.

★ NOMINATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED UNTIL ★
FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 2020

905-726-4762 • aurora.ca/cra • #AuroraCRA

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

AURORA

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

AURORA

JOIN US! SPORT & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOCUS GROUP FOR NEWCOMERS

March 3, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Aurora Public Library

Are you a newcomer to Aurora or Canada?

Participate in a Town-led focus group and share your feedback about sport and physical activity.

For more information or to register, email: ehamilton@aurora.ca

AURORA

Information sought following Hackwood Crescent shooting

By Brock Weir

York Regional Police are looking for two suspects following a shooting on Hackwood Crescent, southwest of Bayview Avenue and Stone Road, on Friday night.

Police responded to a report of a shooting in the neighbourhood shortly after 9 p.m. on February 21. There, Police say they found a 31-year-old male suffering from gunshot wounds.

He was taken to hospital for treatment and is expected to survive, said York Regional Police Constable Andy Pattenden on Monday morning.

“Investigators believe that the victim was in his vehicle, a dark-coloured sport utility vehicle, on Hackwood Crescent when he was approached by two men who were operating a grey sedan. One of the occupants of the grey sedan shot the victim then fled the area,”

said Pattenden. “Officers are asking any witnesses who may have been in the area at the time who have not yet spoken to police to please come forward. Investigators are also seeking any video surveillance from the area or anyone that may have captured dashcam video on the roadways in the area of any of the incidents.”

Just hours after the incident, Staff Sergeant Andrew Bell told The Auroran Police believed the suspects left the scene in “an approximately 10-year-old Cadillac” which was believed to have damage on “possibly the tail lights and the back end.”

“York Regional Police reminds residents and business owners in our community they can partner with us in community safety by signing up for the new Security Camera Registry,” said Pattenden. “The Security Camera Registry gives members of the community the option to let York



Police were called to Hackwood Crescent, southeast of Bayview Avenue and Stone Road, on Friday night.


Auroran photo by Brock Weir

Regional Police know they have installed residential or commercial security cameras, which may assist police if a crime later occurs in that area.

“With just a couple of clicks, you can make your neighbourhood a safer place. Participants can visit yrp.ca/RegisterMyCam and complete the brief online registration form to add

their cameras to the registry. Upon completing the form, participants will also be asked to verify their email address in order to complete the registration.”

Anyone with information is asked to contact the York Regional Police #1 District Criminal Investigations Bureau at 1-866-876-5423 x7141.



TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION

The Town of Aurora is in receipt of the following Complete Applications under the Planning Act.

APPLICATIONS: Proposed Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications to expand the existing E-BP(398) Zone across the balance of the subject lands; and to accommodate “Motor Vehicle Sales Establishment” and “Commercial Self Storage Facility” as permitted uses on the subject lands.

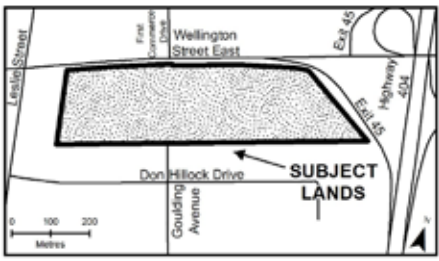
PROPERTY: 1623 Wellington Street East

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Concession 3, Lot 20

APPLICANT: 1623 Wellington Street Developments Limited

FILE NUMBERS: OPA-2020-02 & ZBA-2020-02

RELATED APPLICATIONS: SP-2018-05 & C-2020-01



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Additional information and material regarding the proposed Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications is available for public inspection at the Town of Aurora office located at 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON, L4G 6J1, Monday to Friday between 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Please contact **Matthew Peverini** of the Planning and Development Services Department at 905-727-3123 extension **4350** or at mpeverini@aurora.ca.

Should you wish to provide comments, they may be provided by mail to the Planning and Development Services Department at the same address above, by fax to 905-726-4736 or by email to planning@aurora.ca prior to the meeting. Please quote the File Name and Number.

A Statutory Public Meeting to obtain input on the proposal will be scheduled in the future. Notice of the Public Meeting will be provided in accordance with the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13.

INFORMATION ABOUT PRESERVING YOUR APPEAL RIGHTS:

Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw

If a person or public body would otherwise have an ability to appeal the decision of the Council of the Town of Aurora or the Regional Municipality of York, as the case may be, to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal but the person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Aurora or Regional Municipality of York, as the case may be, before the proposed official plan or by-law is adopted, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision.

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Aurora before the proposed Official Plan amendment is adopted and the proposed by-law is passed, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal unless, in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to do so. If you wish to be notified of the decision of the Council of the Town of Aurora, or the Regional Municipality of York, as the case may be, on the proposed official plan or by-law, you must make a written request to the Town of Aurora to the attention of the Director of Planning and Development Services.

If you have received this notice as an owner of a property containing seven (7) or more residential units, the Town requires that you post this notice in a location that is visible to all the residents

PERSONAL INFORMATION COLLECTION NOTICE

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

DATED at the Town of Aurora, this 27th day of February, 2020.

Town of Aurora 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1

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APPLY TO JOIN OUR:
COMMUNITY
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Aurora Council is recruiting
one citizen member for the
Community Advisory Committee.

This Committee advises Town staff in various issues that affect the Town of Aurora including recreation, facilities and cultural services, parks and trails, traffic and the environment.

You are encouraged to read the Terms of Reference and the Policy before applying to serve on a Board or Committee. More information and applications available at:
aurora.ca/committees.

► Application Deadline:

Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Get the trains moving: Reader

Canada is now dysfunctional. Leadership that won't lead. Law enforcement that won't enforce laws. Radical Native minorities and their supporters holding Canada hostage. Tens of millions lost. Safety of municipal water supplies due to chlorine supplies sitting in inert trains. Commuters missing funerals. Job losses.

For what? A few indigenous groups that can never accept fair consultations, legal injunctions.

I wonder how John A. Macdonald would deal with this?

It would not be to talk it to death. It would be to quickly act for the common good.

Get the trains moving Ottawa, Queen's Park, Canada.

Richard Doust
Aurora

Retired teacher "appalled by attack on education"

As a retired teacher, I continue to be appalled with the attack on education by this government.

When Mr. Harris was in office, he placed a high school dropout, Mr. Snobolen, in charge of education. His claim to fame was: create a crisis - and he did – just as this government is doing today.

The teachers are not being unreasonable. They know the research on class size and e-learning and they are desperately trying to keep their students well educated and safe. Every classroom has a number of students who are intellectually, physically, or behaviourally challenged- sometimes all in the same room.

Each of these students deserves a good education.

As a teacher, I remember not having even 10 minutes per student to check their work and make sure they were on track.

Evidently, the Province told the public that the government was committed to a 22.5 student ratio in the classroom. The Fact finder has found that: Nowhere in the government's spring announcement on class size was there any mention of a "22 plus attrition" class size average – not in the speech, not in the accompanying press release, and not in the technical documents that outline how education funding flows to school boards.

In fact, every statement the government made since announcing class size changes in March indicated an average of 28 students per class, to be phased-in over four years through attrition – that is, by not replacing teachers who retire or leave the profession.

Because of this, school boards have made difficult staffing decisions, which have led to courses and programs being cancelled, course options being limited, teaching positions being lost, and secondary class size averages that exceed 22.5.

The statements do not seem to fit the facts.

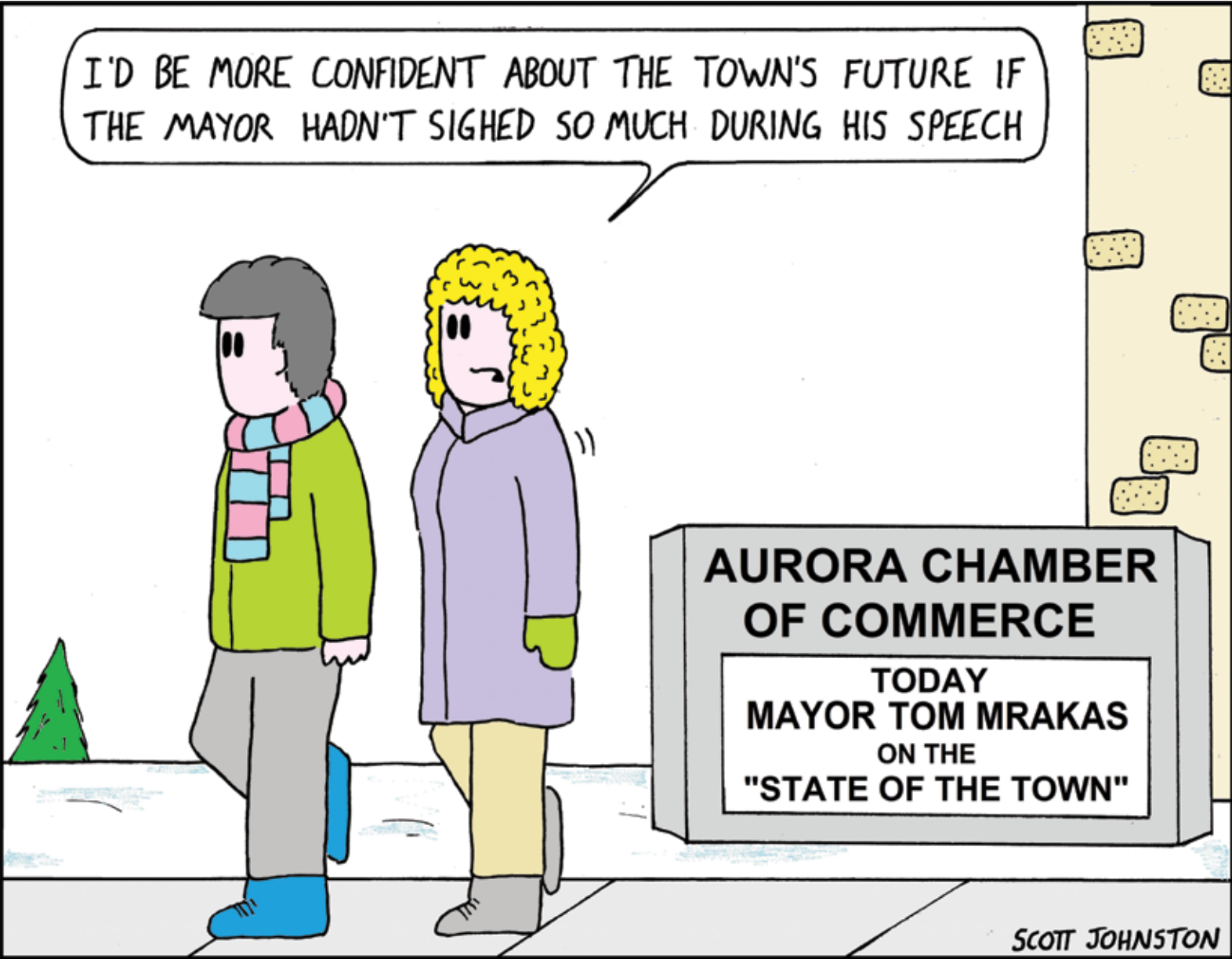
According to this government, this form of learning will save money. I ask for whom?

Certainly not for students, especially those whose learning is already challenged, certainly not for those students in northern rural communities who have little or no internet, certainly not for students living in poverty with limited access to computers.

The cost savings will not help students who were relying on the courses that have been cancelled or limiting their options because teachers were let go due to class sizes changes.

E-learning works for some
Continued on page 11

Machell's Corners



Where do we go from here?

As she waited for a red light to change at the busy Yonge and Wellington intersection last Thursday night, Jacqueline Benn-John had some time to look around.

Headed for the Aurora Public Library, where she was one of three featured panellists set to participate in a panel entitled Being Black in Canada, Ms. Benn-John, Executive Director of the Women's Support Network of York Region, eyed the vivid mural depicting many facets of Canadiana.

While the mural celebrates myriad achievements made during our country's nearly 153-year history, she noticed something missing.

"I didn't see myself represented – again," she said.

That is why discussions like the one she was headed to that evening, were – and are – important.

As moderator of the panel in question, I couldn't agree more.

When I was asked to moderate this panel of Black community leaders a few months ago, I found myself questioning the place I had as a White male to even entertain the invitation. Having assurances from the organizer that my job was simply to get the ball rolling with some questions and moderate those from the audience, my mind rested a bit easier knowing that I was simply there to facilitate a discussion from which I and so many members of the community have much to learn.

Our panel was united by several threads, the most prominent, in my view, being their respective passions for education.

Initially intended to lead the discussion using education as a starting off point, but our panelists beat me to the punch, reflecting in their respective opening remarks on various opportunities for growth and learning that exist around us.

"I certainly feel as a nation we have a lot to be proud of and a lot of people admire Canada for its stance on multiculturalism and our efforts in that direction, but I also know that current events in the news, even right now with the Indigenous stand-offs that are happening and our struggles with coming to grips with Truth & Reconciliation, we recognize we have a long way to go," said musician Glenn Marais, who dedicates his time and talent to bringing these topics to students across the Greater Toronto Area.

Marais' parents came to Canada from South Africa in 1964 to escape Apartheid and these early experiences



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

had a profound impact on their son and the work he continues today.

"I am fortunate that through my music I am able to speak in the school system," he said, noting that Black History Month means February is a particularly busy time for this mission, where they deliver a message that is unfiltered.

He asks students to pull out Canada's new \$10 bill, featuring the portrait of Viola Desmond, and reflect on her actual story: of being violently ejected from a segregated Nova Scotia movie theatre, while also considering the trail she blazed as a successful, dynamic businessperson.

"I want you to stop for a minute and look at her and understand the reason you have that freedom to spend that \$10 is because of her. She fought for freedom," he continued. "Take a moment and reflect on that. I think it is really important in our own progress as a nation and as people that we take moments to reflect... not just on where we want to go but where we are and in our own understanding not just of ourselves but every single culture that is around us in the world. Education is the only way we're going to knock down ignorance and fear."

This was echoed by Tessa Benn-Ireland, the first Black trustee to serve on the York Region District School Board. Opening with John Fitzgerald Kennedy's iconic quote, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can for your country," she said Black history is made every day.

"What legacy will you leave in our history if it is not documented?" she asked. "A history that is not documented is left behind. We have made achievements in arts, education, religion, politics, agriculture, medicine and science. Black History Month is a time to learn more about these stories and the many important contributions of Black Canadians to the growth and development of Canada and about the diversity of the communities in Canada and their importance. The history of the country: Canada."

Ms. Benn-John built on this theme.

"It is important to me, as an African-ancestry Black woman, Black Canadian woman because, in my experience, Black History discussions have been relegated to one month out of the year," she said. "When discussions about Black Canadian History specifically take place throughout the rest of the year, it doesn't normally include people like me and if I just told you about a mural where I didn't see myself represented at a very prominent place in this lovely city, I think about the discussion in classrooms, in homes, in your homes, in places of business, where you work.

"The experiences, contributions and knowledges of African-ancestry Black people is invisible. When will Canadian history include Black history? When will Indigenous and other people of colour's stories be part of Canadian history? In preparation for today's panel, I asked myself if being Black in Canada today is different than it was 20 years ago? 50 years ago? 200 years ago? Indeed, we have come a long way, as you have already heard. As Canadians, we have come a very long way. For example, we have key legislative and legal instruments, such as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act... However, barriers to housing, health care, social supports, employment, promotion, education, and other forms of inclusion persist.

"The experience of invisibility is common to women of colour in Canada who often find that their experiences of racism are not reflected in men's academic work on racial oppression. Yet, their experiences as women are not reflected in hegemonic feminists' work concerning sexism and gender-based violence here in Canada.

"What can we all do about this? We have heard a little bit about what I have been doing, but I think the challenge is really to think about what can we do about this? As we continue on this evening, really give that some consideration. Think about what you, what we, can do about this."

Before turning the evening over to the audience and their questions, I asked how might Black History Month be marked in the decades ahead, and, if we reconvened last Thursday's panel 10 years from now, how the overall question of what it means to be Black in Canada might be different?

If we continue to ask that question, "What can we do about this?" those answers will likely be very different and will be a step in the right direction.

THE AURORAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

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Publisher is not liable for slight changes or typographical errors that do not lessen the value of an advertisement. Disputes must be brought to the attention of the publisher prior to the following edition.

To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to letters@auroran.com.

Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating... The Leap Year! (February 29)

Once every four years we get an extra day in February to make like a frog (and leap) in order to align with modern time keeping practices. This cast iron doorstep was found in the old stable of the Fleury family home. It is said to be an example of the frog doorstoppers that were made in the Fleury foundry, but some recent research suggests that it may be a “Jackson Frog” produced in the USA. Looking for a way to commemorate the Leap Year? How about writing a letter to yourself and opening it on the next Leap Year, which will take place on February 29, 2024?



TIME TRAVELLER’S DIARY

By Jacqueline Stuart

Here today...

The other day I found myself standing near the former Canadian Tire store on Yonge Street, opposite the war memorial, wondering about the future of the huge empty building. An elderly man caught up with me and stopped. He commented that perhaps this building would be the next to go. He explained that a Sterling Drug plant had been erected on the site in 1958. That plant closed in 1991 and the building was demolished in 1992. A building not even forty years old: what a waste! [The Canadian Tire store was erected on the site later in that decade.]

We both moved on, but something was nagging me. Something to do with a short-lived railway station? I took myself over there to look for clues. A local heritage plaque on the present building gave a construction date of 1900, so I time travelled back to a not quite random point: February 1900.

What luck! Construction had just started on the new station, close to where the very first station had been in the 1850s and almost directly across from the existing station which stood on the west side of the tracks.

The current station seemed to be in good shape: why was a new one needed? I crossed the three tracks then in place and put my question to the man in the station office. He told me that there had been many complaints about the building in which we were standing, which was only four years old. It was too small and unattractive, said some. The platform was too narrow and was high above the track, with no guard rail. I could not quite see how a whole new station was merited.

I travelled a few months forward in time to May of 1900 and the opening of the newly completed station on the east side of the tracks. At first glance it was identical to the station still in use today. But I’m a time traveller: I knew that the 1900 station did not remain untouched over the years.

For instance, grey Insulbrick was wrapped around that 1900 structure at some point in the 1950s. Not looking like brick, not beautiful, but an asphalt siding that saved a great deal of maintenance work. Also in the 1950s, an extension was made to the south end. Ironically, this was to accommodate the increase in freight business brought on by the opening of Sterling Drug – the industry which started me off on this trip.

There was a period when it seemed that the station might close. The introduction of a commuter service saved the day, and the building. In 1990 Aurora was one of the first twelve stations recognized under the federal Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act. Two years later, GO Transit restored the exterior of the building to something almost identical to its 1900 appearance. Bye-bye Insulbrick and welcome back board and batten siding!

What happened to that second station? Was it like Sterling Drug, here today and gone tomorrow, as I had thought? In fact, that station building stood until the 1970s, in use as a freight shed and later leased to Stiver Brothers, a grain, feed and seed business. My apologies to the railway.

THIS WEEK’S POLL

Would a Yonge Street "road diet" have a positive impact on traffic?

Yes No Unsure

www.theauroran.com

Previous poll results

Should Council lift one-way traffic restrictions on Centre Street?

RESULTS TO DATE February 25, 2019	YES	NO	UNSURE
	58%	25%	17%

Illegal blockades and the impact on Canada’s future

For over two weeks, our country and our economy have been paralyzed by protests and illegal blockades. Transportation networks for Canadian goods, services, and people are at a standstill; over 1,500 employees have lost their jobs, while shortages of home heating oil, propane, and chlorine for water treatment jeopardize the health and safety of Canadians across the country. The Government’s vague and inconsistent response has not only failed to resolve the issue but allowed it to escalate with no end in sight.

To understand the current situation it is important to outline the context and events that led to this point. The Coastal GasLink is a project to build 670 km of pipeline to carry natural gas from Dawson Creek to Kitimat, BC where it will be exported to Asian markets. It will take approximately four years to build, create 2,500 jobs and contribute in excess of \$42 million in direct economic benefits to British Columbia, and an even greater amount in indirect benefits to the national economy. The project will positively contribute to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions by delivering natural gas to China enabling them to transition away from coal. Natural gas produces about half the carbon emissions of coal and China accounts for half of the world’s coal consumption.

On December 31 2019, British Columbia’s Supreme Court granted Coastal GasLink an injunction calling for the removal of any obstructions on the land the company had been authorized to use. In response, a few Wet’suwet’en hereditary chiefs of the unceded territory served Coastal GasLink an eviction notice stating that workers were “trespassing” on unceded



MP’S REPORT

Leona Alleslev, MP
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

territory. Shortly after, the Wet’suwet’en hereditary chiefs agreed to meet with the province of BC to de-escalate the situation however, these talks were unsuccessful.

The position of the few hereditary chiefs of the unceded territory is in sharp contrast to the majority of hereditary chiefs, Wet’suwet’en people and all elected band council members who support the Coastal GasLink project. Wet’suwet’en Hereditary Chief Theresa Tait-Day stated “in the case of Coastal GasLink, 85% of our people said yes, we want this project.”

Despite the stated support, the situation has escalated to become a national crisis. Protestors, apparently in solidarity with the Wet’suwet’en people, have barricaded railway lines and demonstrated at key landmarks across the country. Via Rail was forced to stop all passenger travel service between Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal. Barricades blocked CN rail traffic in Toronto and Montreal and commuter train service on the Exo Candiac line, as well as all transport between Prince George and Prince Rupert, BC and shortly after CN rail shut down all operations in Eastern Canada.

Winter 2020 – This and That

Before this column returns to the local themes of people, politics and public affairs, below are some unconnected, stream-of-conscious and (most likely) incoherent musings and observations regarding the winter season in Aurora.

I have four items to discuss.

First, I am really not a big fan of social media.

Our society is very fortunate that the communications industry has made such great leaps that we today have individual cell phones and devices that let us keep contact with one another virtually where ever we are in the world.

However, I have not really found anything much good or productive to come from social media. To me, for the most part, it is just an outlet for mean spirited rants from usually anonymous individuals and crazies.

Second, my fellow old timer hockey players were in the dressing room discussing whether or not the NHL players should participate in the next Olympics.

We all agreed that we would like to see this happen, but that the NHL would have to pay the costs of insurance, which seems to be one of the sticking points.

One gentleman raised the issue that he would like to see the summer Olympics in Toronto.

I said that I would not like to see it and reminded them that in 2015 Toronto Mayor John Tory made the announcement that Toronto would not enter a bid for the Olympics.

Not only was this a wise decision given that Toronto would be up against some stiff competition from the other six potential host cities, but unless the private sector was willing to pick up a large share of the actual event costs, this could have been a financial nightmare.

As we saw with the Pan Am games staged in the GTA a few years ago, the cost of security is extremely high and that was only for a regional event. Imagine what these costs would be for an Olympics.



FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE

Stephen Somerville

Second, traffic congestion on the Don Valley Parkway was a big problem during the Pan Am games. Again, imagine the traffic headaches with the amount of people an Olympics would bring.

To this writer, the only possible way that these games could have worked is if they were run like the 1984 Games in Los Angeles when the Corporate Sector basically paid for all of the venues.

From what I recall, these were the only games in history that turned a modest profit. You might recall the \$50B - yes, that is right - \$50B price tag for the Sochi Winter Olympics.

I am not saying that would have happened here, but with cost overruns and security concerns, you never know.

I do love sporting events – having attending NHL playoff games, the 1992 World Series in Toronto, World Cup soccer games when the event was held in the U.S. in 1994, but this is one time I won’t mind just watching them on television!

Third, I wrote about customer service a couple of weeks back.

One of the key elements of the column was that I did not see my concerns being given careful consideration when I made them.

An excerpt from that column:

“There is a local organization that purports to have a loyalty program but I don’t see much sense in it. A certain retailer in Town of golf equipment has what is

The courts have ruled these blockades illegal, issuing injunctions, many that have yet to be enforced. The economic impact is widespread and significant. Manufacturers rely on 4,500 rail cars a day to get their goods to market and lose millions every day the rail is not operating. Grain farmers lose \$50 million every week they are unable to ship their grain. Ships carrying goods to Canada are being diverted to the US as our ports reach maximum capacity. The stability and security of our trade network hangs in the balance, risking present and future exchange.

Canada was founded on the tenets of peace, order and good government. At the center of our democracy is the trust and confidence that the government will equally and justly apply the rule of law. Canadians have the right to freedom of speech and freedom of protest, but they do not have the right to break the law, completely shut down Canada’s economy and prevent Canadians from going to work.

This federal government has abrogated that responsibility. They have allowed our nation to become fractured along political and regional lines, pitted industry against industry and groups of people against other groups. This Prime Minister stands idle as our nation tears itself apart from within, at a time when we are witnessing even greater threats to our unity and prosperity from outside our borders. Only with the completion of big nation building projects that leverage every strength of every region across the country will Canada maintain the vibrancy it has enjoyed in the past. It will take courage, unity, and strong federal leadership to position Canada for that future.

known as a “Leaders Board”. Every time that I purchase something in the store the cashier asks for my phone number to input this information into their system and also asks if I am a member of this club. I faithfully say ‘yes’ that I am a member of the ‘Leaders Board’ and provide my phone number. I don’t get any discounts off my purchases but I do receive – via e-mail – their flyer showing new sales. The last couple of times in the store when I have been purchasing something I have asked that cashier to pass on some information to their management. I tell her that my family and I have purchased a lot in the store over the last couple of years – clubs and bags for all of us – and you continually ask us for our phone number but we have not received any discount for being members of this club.”

I had the following e-mail in response to that column.

Good Morning,

I just wanted to pass on if you have a complaint or concern in a store, direct it to head office or manager. I have worked in retail for years and if we pass on comments nothing is done or addressed. If someone asks us to pass it on we tell them they need to do it. We are just minions and aren't listened to. It's amazing how many customers get indignant and tell us it's our job to pass on comments. We are a great team of sales people and try to extend ourselves to serve customers to their satisfaction. Please pass on though if anyone has a thought, complaint or notion on how to improve the business relationship you need to go to the top.

Jane Haagsma
Aurora

Thank you for the feed-back, Jane. Shoppers, like me, have a long memory. “Remember, a happy customer means a customer that will be coming back.”

Stephen can be contacted at stephengsomerville@yahoo.com

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Mayor outlines successes and future challenges in “State of the Town” speech

From page 1

occasion, which has become a “State of the Town” tradition for the Head of Council.

There, Mayor Mrakas focused on a year of “positive change” as well as tasks ahead.

Among these tasks, he said, were making the Town an attractive place for Magna to stay, securing government grants to bring Council’s vision of Library Square to fruition, and addressing the needs of Wellington Street East businesses that will be impacted by Metrolinx’s ambitious project to build an underpass across one of Aurora’s busiest thoroughfares ahead of increased GO

Train service.

“One of the things I am most proud of is the work we have done and are continuing to do to keep the Magna headquarters in Town,” said Mayor Mrakas. “Although calling Aurora home since 1997, Magna announced in 2015 that they would be leaving their existing headquarters and would [build] a new facility in a neighbouring municipality.”

Magna’s decision to build a large campus on lands secured in King Township have been put on the backburner since then and Mayor Mrakas said, “the company recently began their search for a new home once again.”

“Since becoming Mayor, I have made it a priority to work with [Magna CEO] Don Walker and senior executives at Magna to ensure that they stay here in Aurora,” he continued. “Now, I have been a very vocal advocate for Aurora as the best place for them to stay and continue to grow their business. Since joining our community more than two decades ago, they have been one of the biggest corporate headquarters to call Aurora home. Magna has not only brought international recognition to our Town, it has generated hundreds of important jobs for our community. Aurora offers a highly educated and skilled workforce and having residents be able to work close to home at companies like Magna has always been a priority.

“When Magna announced that they would be moving out of Aurora, it was a huge blow to our community. Aside from the economic impacts of Magna leaving, there are social impacts as well. Magna has been an incredible community partner; supporting many of our local charities through the Magna Hoedown. This annual event has raised over \$13 million of much needed funds for hundreds of charities. Through its Magna in the Community organization, Neighbourhood Network, Magna has shown a strong commitment to building a better community.”

Since his election in 2018, Mayor Mrakas says he has been able to sit down with Magna executives to “get a sense of what is needed to keep them” in Aurora and “make Aurora as attractive as possible for businesses to see our community as a place where they can build, and grow, and thrive. Now, I am optimistic that companies will see Aurora the way I do and will consider making an investment in their future by coming to or staying in Aurora.”

Ahead of Wednesday’s lunch, Mayor Mrakas promised a “big announcement” but, at the last minute, this announcement was postponed, pushed to the weeks

ahead. He was mum on any possible teasers on what the announcement might entail, but said “it is a very exciting time for Aurora.”

But there are also some challenges ahead, some of which were addressed to the Mayor following the speech in a question and answer session led by Sandra Ferri, Executive Director of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

Here, Ms. Ferri pressed Mayor Mrakas on what he attributes the cause of so many storefront vacancies along the Yonge Street corridor.

“I have always said we haven’t invested in our own community and we’re starting to do that,” he said. “Through the Library Square project, through the Armoury. Library Square is a \$51-, \$52-million project. We, as a Town, are investing in our own community and that says a lot to the development community and other businesses; if someone is looking to invest their hard-earned dollars into our community and we’re not willing to invest in it...I am hearing a lot [from] the development community they’re looking to come in now because they see us taking action and making decisions.”

The future of Library Square, he stressed, was not contingent on grant funding from the upper levels of government.

“The grants are a bonus,” he said. “If it happens, we get it, it’s great. We have the money, we have the Hydro Reserve funds. We sold a Town asset (Aurora Hydro) and those funds were earmarked for creating a Town asset and that’s what we’re doing. As much as we would love to get the grants...I am going to fight tooth and nail to make sure we get that money, those grants, but at the end of the day, the Town has the assets to be able to develop this project and it’s the right time, the right place to develop this project for the Town. It is only going to mean bigger and better things for our Town through economic development and our business communities.”

GRAND OPENING



Maryam Aslanzad, Beth Stefaniuk, Paul Mason, Andrew Stefaniuk, Mayor Tom Mrakas, Nick Mason, Tracy Howard, Maura Howard, Deborah Wilson, Jennifer Ross, Ken Wilson, Jakob Schneider.

On Friday February 21, The Aurora Music Academy celebrated its Grand Opening and ribbon cutting ceremony with family, friends and Mayor Tom Mrakas. The Aurora Music Academy recently moved its studio to 330 McClellan, Unit 5, where they have designed and built a "State of the Art Teaching Academy" which boasts 10 acoustically-designed teaching studios, as well as a Grand Piano Performance Room. In addition, this amazing facility has a waiting room designed for true comfort for the parents while they wait for their children or spouses. Excitement is high as we launch our new programs, which focuses on musicianship, creativity, building confidence, persistence, discipline, not to mention GREAT FUN! Our private lessons are complemented with group classes, (rock, blues, jazz,) choirs, (all ages) musical theatre prep, band, (Grades 5-12) orchestra, all ages, and percussion, (drum circles, drum lines, hand drums), to name a few. Lastly, we have just launched our pre-school and kindergarten programs - Li'l Musicians (2,3,4 yr olds), which begins this Friday February 28 at 5 p.m. Some spaces are still available. 905-900-0094. Come join the fun!



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Mayor reflects on year of “positive change”



Sandra Ferri, Executive Director of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, shakes hands with Mayor Tom Mrakas following an on-stage interview.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

By Brock Weir

Change is inevitable, but how does one go about ensuring such change is positive?

For Mayor Tom Mrakas, it depends on “taking purposeful action.”

That is the message he brought to the local business community last Wednesday afternoon at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce’s annual Mayor’s Luncheon, hosted at the Royal Venetian Mansion.

Here, Mayor Mrakas delivered the annual “State of the Town” address, one which focused on “positive change” that has been, he said, the hallmark of the last twelve months.

“While reflecting on this past year and what we have achieved together, one constant theme has emerged: positive change,” he told the 250-strong audience. “From the opening of the Canadian Food & Wine Institute (CFWI) in the newly-renovated historic Aurora Armory, to the first event of the York University Scholars Hub, from the approval of our new Economic Development Strategic Plan, to the positive impacts of changes to Development Charges for major office developments, it has been an exciting year of positive change in Aurora.

“The question is how do we ensure we get more? It is true: change is inevitable, but whether that change represents an obstacle or opportunity rests entirely in our hands.

Our future—tomorrow, five years, ten years, 20 years from now – is entirely dependent on what we do now. I believe in effecting positive change, in taking purposeful action towards a desired outcome. In other words, getting things done and done right. Positive change isn’t a given, it doesn’t just happen, it takes a shared commitment by all of us: community, business, Council members alike, to work together for a better future and in just one short year, we have seen the results of that strong, shared commitment.”

Among the results, he said, was Aurora welcoming 73 new businesses over the last year, most of which would be classified as small businesses, as well as 3.4 per cent employment growth.

The last year also saw the realization of several projects Mayor Mrakas characterized as “key economic development initiatives” – top of which, he said, was the arrival of the CFWI.

“This extraordinary repurposing of one of our heritage buildings is an important milestone in the revitalization of the downtown core,” he said. “In November, we hosted the grand opening of the building and it has been a huge success to date. The transformation of the building itself is absolutely incredible. It is a stunning combination of modern functionality and historical aesthetic.

“Our partnership with Niagara College and the Canadian Food and Wine Institute has already had a positive impact on our

community. Through the CFWI, the space is being used for culinary classes, wine tasting, corporate team building, special events, lectures, and a host of other activities that offer endless opportunities for our residents and visitors.”

The Armoury is just one project key to this Council’s vision for downtown revitalization. The centrepiece of the vision is the redevelopment of Library Square. In his speech, Mayor Mrakas highlighted Council’s approval of the budget required to bring Library Square to fruition and the financing plans needed to issue a tender package for Library Square’s construction.

“As you all know, a thriving downtown isn’t just good news for businesses in the core, it is good news for all businesses,” he said.

But, Mayor Mrakas added that not all change is positive.

The negative impacts of climate change are already being seen in “virtually every aspect of our lives” and “in ways we have yet to understand,” he said.

“In fact, it may not even be us sitting in this room who have to deal with the full impact of climate change,” he said. “It will be our children and our children’s children and I don’t think we want that to be our legacy. It is clear we need to take action, but what? What can we do as residents, as business owners, as a Town, to positively address climate change? The answer, unfortunately, isn’t as simple as

a motion or two to Council. Just as our climate is a complex interaction of multiple environmental factors, the response that climate change will necessarily be similarly complex.

“Aurora has taken positive steps over the past two decades to proactively address climate change. We joined the Climate Protection program in the early 2000s and have taken direct steps to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through our Corporate Energy Management Plan, the Building Condition Assessment and Energy Audit, and the Town-wide green development guidelines. We have also recognized the importance of trees in managing climate change by implementing initiatives to increase our tree canopy, improve our tree biodiversity, and reduce the number of trees that can be cut down. These are all good initiatives and many of our neighbouring municipalities have undertaken similar good initiatives to combat climate change, but climate change doesn’t end at municipal borders.

“To effect real change, we need to take an integrated region-wide approach to finding solutions that work. The Regional Climate Change Action Plan looks to do just that. This plan, to be presented to Regional Council soon, will outline both the mitigation and adaptation measures we, as individual municipalities and the Region, can implement to address climate change in our communities.”

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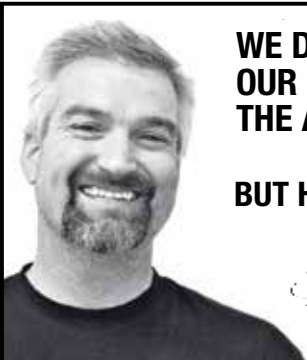
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Aurora barber celebrates 50 years in the business – and 50 years of friendship

By Brock Weir

As Alfredo Tamburini makes the final couple of snips on a fresh, new haircut this February morning, it's not just another haircut. It is a scene that has played out, almost without change, for the past 50 years.

The gentleman in the chair is no longer an Aurora resident, but he has made the drive to A&F Hair Elite to meet up with Alfredo, who has been keeping his hair styling for more than five decades.

By now, this is no ordinary barber-client relationship, it is a genuine friendship, one which is dearly valued by Alfredo.

For him, that is what this business is all about – and it is a philosophy that has stood him in good stead as he prepares to mark his 50th anniversary at the Aurora Shopping Centre-based barber shop.

Alfredo is the “A” in A&F Hair Elite, a 50-year partnership with Franco Scavello.

Franco founded the shop nearly 57 years ago and Alfredo bought into the business shortly after arriving in Aurora in 1970.

“Aurora was a very good place to come in 1970,” says Alfredo. “I was 20 years old and I wanted to see what Aurora was all about.”

Alfredo was just 10 years old when he first became interested in becoming a barber in his native Italy. While most of his peers spent their free time playing soccer, Alfredo often took a break from the pitch to carefully study the work of his local barbers. After coming to Canada at the age of just 16, he began pursuing his dream.

“I knew I was on the right path when I came up here,” he says. “When we bought our shop, we were just four barbers in a little shop in the corner of this plaza. When we moved to our current location, we expanded [our business] for ladies’ styles – adding women like Teresa, Louise and Anna to our company – and we only grew from there.”

“What keeps the business growing is our clientele. Some have moved from Aurora to Newmarket, Keswick and everywhere else, but they still come down to see us and that’s the reason for our success. The man I just finished has been coming here for 55 years and that means a lot to me – it means friendship.”



Alfredo Tamburini celebrates 50 years at A&F Hair Elite this year.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

As he prepares to mark his half-century of barbering in Aurora, Alfredo has no plans of either hanging up his scissors or slowing down.

“I want to be healthy and stay here for another 50 years!” he says with a laugh. “I want to be here to beat all the records of everyone else here! I don’t think there is any other business in Aurora that has been here serving customers for so long. We don’t sell, we serve. I am very happy to be here and over the years we have served doctors, hockey players, journalists, TV writers, you meet a lot of people, and in 50 years I think I have met everybody! I just enjoy talking to people.”



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Students showcase performances at Mayor’s Celebration of Youth Arts



Students showcased their performing arts talent at the Mayor’s Celebration of Youth Arts on Wednesday night.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

By Kinjal Dagli Shah

Youth artistes from four Aurora high schools took the stage on Wednesday night to treat the audience to musical performances as part of the Mayor’s Celebration of Youth Arts at the Aurora Cultural Centre. From Gord Downie and Lewis Capaldi to Bill Evans and Jamiroquai, Brevik Hall resounded with famed lyrics as young voices displayed

their talents. Following a welcome address by Suzanne Haines, Executive Director of the Aurora Cultural Centre and greetings by Stephanie Lane from Geranium Homes, Mayor Mrakas emceed the event from start to finish. “The Mayor’s Celebration of Youth Arts is an important event, providing an opportunity for young people to come together, be creative, have fun and experience something unique,” he

said, encouraging the youth to enjoy the evening. “Our Aurora youth truly are amazing. Tonight, we celebrate the vital role that the performing arts play in inspiring, empowering and sparking the imagination for our youth. “The performing arts, be it music, dance, theatre or spoken word, help us understand each other and, through performance, we learn about the world around us, inspire social change and express our creativity. “Young artists, you should be very proud of your hard work, passion and dedication.”

Kolbe Catholic High School put together their performance in two weeks. “I attended the art show earlier this month and saw the sign for the performing arts night. I’m a part of the school choir so I wanted to get our school to be a part of it. I asked my principal and my friends if they wanted to do it, and everyone jumped in,” said Nia Hughes, one of the performers.

“We currently don’t have a teacher, so it was all on our own merit to pull it together. We practised at lunch breaks and after school. Most of the work on the harmonies was done by Louisa,” said Alexandra Pantorilla and Kayla Clotildes, who were also part of the performance.

The camaraderie among all the school groups was evident.

Louisa Barbosa, who also played the guitar in one of the songs, said, “My role in the choir was to come up with arrangements; they sent me a song and I compartmentalise it into soprano, alto and tenor. Then I make a video of each part, send it to the group and then we reunite at school and try everything out,” said the Grade 11 student, also thanking Christian Cameron, who accompanied them on the piano.

As Sarah Gangl pointed out, the dedication to hit the stage was what mattered. “We’ve been through a lot as a choir with teachers coming in and out, but when we set our mind to something, we really want to pursue it, and that’s what happened tonight.”

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By Brock Weir

In this spirit, Shyam took the audience



Auroran photo by Brock Weir

“Behind every number there is a face, a story, a kid that can be younger than my age, living in these traumatic experiences

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From page 4

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—THE AURORAN—

Signage should be placed to promote Industrial Parkway as Yonge bypass

Traffic infiltration
addressed
in Master
Transportation
Study

By Brock Weir

Council is once again raising the issue of promoting Industrial

Parkway for use as originally intended: a Yonge Street bypass. Signage to promote Industrial Parkway, which begins at Yonge Street in Aurora’s south end, before ending at St. John’s Sideroad, as a bypass of Aurora’s busiest thoroughfare, were explored by Council last week as they examined the Town’s proposed new Master Transportation Study. The study, which was formally presented to lawmakers at last week’s General Committee meeting, shines a light on options to address the infiltration of traffic into residential neighbourhoods abutting Yonge Street. It also takes into account traffic originating from neighbouring

municipalities like Newmarket and King diverting through residential streets in Aurora in order to avoid major arterial roads and intersections. The study found that Aurora Heights Drive and Mark Street are currently being used as commuter routes for this “external traffic” looking to avoid Bathurst, Yonge and Wellington, while Centre Street “remains used as a pass-through route for external traffic” despite morning peak restrictions and one-way conversion between Spruce and Wells. Internal traffic was explored as well and the study found that Mark Street is also being used by Aurora residents to bypass the Yonge and Wellington intersection, while “internal traffic” was using Centre in a similar way.

It notes Elderberry Trail in Aurora’s south end, is also being seen as a traffic cut-through, a situation that could benefit from continued monitoring. “Concerns can potentially be addressed by improvements at the Yonge-Wellington intersection,” said Michael Bat, Traffic Analyst for the Town of Aurora, in his report to Council, adding that moves to create a right-hand turn lane for southbound Yonge Street traffic at Wellington will help alleviate the situation. “These improvements are critical to mitigating pass-through traffic volumes east of Yonge Street, including improving operations for all movements at the intersection which may be achieved through the proposed southbound right turn lane and/or implementation of a road diet concept.” But Council members questioned whether a solution might also be found in going back to basics on

Industrial Parkway. Mayor Tom Mrakas, for instance, asked whether the study had taken a closer look at the possibility of lane configurations on Industrial not only to allow for bike lanes but a dedicated lane that can be allocated to northbound or southbound traffic depending on peak traffic times. “We did not look specifically at that as a major issue,” said project manager Jonathan Chai. “When we looked at the traffic demands of the Town, we didn’t see any major issues, particularly on Industrial Parkway, with respect to peaking. That could be addressed more at the intersections because those tend to be the major bottlenecks where you could have dedicated turn lanes, which I believe are there today.” But Mayor Mrakas said it was worth taking a closer look, particularly where Industrial Parkway North meets St. John’s Sideroad. “I think as we grow and as we continue to grow, we’re going to find struggles as far as handling the traffic volume that is going to [come] as we intensify throughout the Town,” he said. “That traffic is going to have to go somewhere and I think a lot of people are travelling [to get] to Wellington and the 404. They’re coming from up north, Newmarket, East Gwillimbury and they’re travelling down St. John’s. If we don’t make Industrial Parkway an ideal place for them to come off of Yonge and get down to where they’re going, they’re going to continue down Yonge and I think that is going to be more problematic as we start to intensify.”

Councillor Sandra Humfries agreed, adding that signage earmarking Industrial Parkway as a Yonge bypass was “critical.”

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Full impacts of Yonge Street “road diet” need to be assessed, say Councillors

By Brock Weir

A proposal to dramatically change the current traffic flow of Yonge Street from Orchard Heights in the north to Golf Links in the south could be subject to further review this fall, separate from the study from which it originated.

Last week, Council members took their first formal review of the Town’s draft new Master Transportation Study, a plan which proposes a “road diet” on the Yonge Street corridor which would see the current traffic flow reduced to a single lane in each direction, a centre lane dedicated for turning and the balance of road space turned over for bike lanes and/or on-street parking.

The draft Master Transportation Study was presented to lawmakers at last week’s General Committee meeting by project manager Jonathan Chai, who said a similar traffic pattern was being explored by the City of Brampton.

“We assessed Yonge Street from an operational perspective as well as a safety perspective,” said Mr. Chai. “[A road diet] basically means there are two lanes in each direction on Yonge Street today and that could be reduced to one lane in each direction. In order to do that, the way that turns are made from Yonge Street today, they are shared with the thru-lanes. As soon as a car is waiting to turn left and access a driveway or to turn onto Wellington Street, for example, effectively the number of travel lanes becomes one thru-lane per direction in any event.

“We feel [a road diet] would be a key recommendation for the Town through the Downtown Core. The other benefit of the road diet would be there would be more space for sidewalks and for streetscaping to improve the overall attractiveness of the street for people to gather. You could also provide dedicated parking spaces along Yonge Street where you don’t have the dedicated turn lane. A number of opportunities are opened up by this improvement.”

This is not the first time Council has considered a model to change the lane configuration of Yonge Street through the Downtown Core.

A similar model was proposed in the last term of Council by then-mayor Geoff Dawe, one which would have seen Yonge reduced to a single lane in either direction with the balance of space turned over for a significant increase in on-street parking.

That idea fizzled at the table and this latest “road diet” proposal was also received last week with a degree of skepticism.

“What happens when there’s a bus and it stops?” asked Mayor Mrakas. “We block the traffic, or would there be a lay-by for the bus?”

Mr. Chai responded that a more detailed feasibility study would need to be undertaken to examine the full impacts of the road diet.

“I will say that with two lanes, you can design it in a way such that you have the turning lane at the intersection, but set back or on the other side of the intersection, there could be space for a bus lane,” he said. “There are ways to do it and more studies need to be done to address that.

“The detailed feasibility study would include more detailed traffic analysis as well as probably a preliminary design. We’re

envisioning it as a conceptual design to look at how those lanes could be implemented within the existing corridor and the existing right of way. We would need to work with York Region to make sure they are in agreement with the conceptual plan that would be developed and the traffic analysis would need to support the recommendations of that conceptual plan.”

Analysis, however, will need to be extensive, Council agreed.

While the “road diet” proposal came out of the draft Master Transportation Study, Council voted to take this particular proposal out of their overall approval of the Study in favour of looking at the proposal on its own to consider the full impact such a change might have on the community.

In a decision set to be ratified this week, Council voted to refer the matter for further consideration as part of the 2021 Capital Budget talks set for this fall.

“We have a substantial idea to reconfigure our downtown core with this road diet which we have, as a group, agreed that downtown revitalization is one of the primary objectives of this term, and what I have before me says that the road diet concept is generally referred to as a transportation improvement concept,” said Councillor Michael Thompson. “I get that, yet I am also asked to endorse in principle moving forward with this concept [but] I have very little information from a broader perspective to understand what the impact [is]. At the same time, we’re going to be asked to move forward on a \$50 million project for the revitalization of our Downtown Core. I would like to understand the relationship of those two pieces.”

Supporting Councillor Thompson’s motion to refer the matter to the Capital Budget process was Councillor Rachel Gilliland.

“This allows us to have more time to learn and grow and see what that looks like,” she said. “I still have a hard time envisioning what that would mean for our Yonge Street downtown core. I am interested in seeing what Brampton has to offer. I think it would be good to pass it by the Economic Development Board [and] the Community Advisory Committee to get their feedback as well.”



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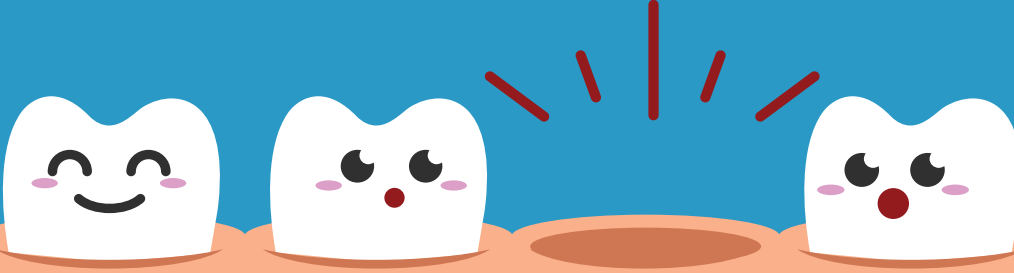
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Shelter Movers arrives in York Region to help women and children flee abuse



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Marc Hull-Jacquín, Executive Director of Shelter Movers, right, is congratulated by York Region Centre for Community Safety Executive Director Jaspreet Gill at Aw, Shucks on Monday. There, Shelter Movers launched its expansion into York Region, helping women and children flee violence. Auroran photo by Brock Weir

By Brock Weir

Women and children fleeing abuse in York Region have a new helping hand with Shelter Movers.

Shelter Movers, a national organization that provides free moving and storage services to women and children fleeing abuse, has helped nearly 1,100 families in Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa and Halifax since its inception in 2016, and, on Monday, formally launched their services in York Region.

Partnered with the York Region Centre for Community Safety (YRCCS), Shelter Movers is the only organization in the

country providing free moving and storage services for individuals fleeing abuse. The service is accessed by a referral from an agency or shelter and, once that referral has been made, Shelter Movers connects with the client and the referring agency to plan moving logistics.

They consider the needs of each individual, including storage, pet fostering and translation services and, with the help of community business partners, securing storage units for those leaving violent situations is often provided free of charge.

“At Shelter Movers, we often say violence against women is not a women’s issue; violence against women is, in many ways,

Continued on page 21

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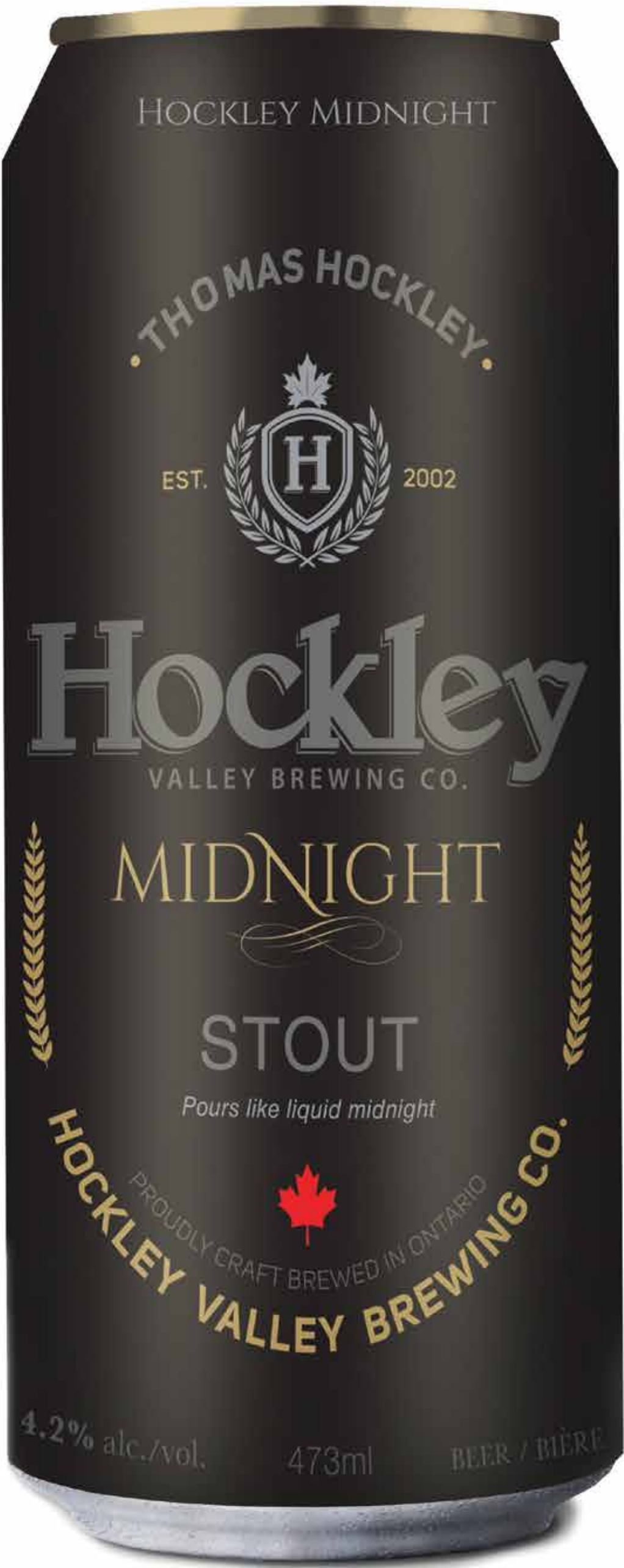
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- various game strategy
- techniques to improve playing in game situations



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- leadership games



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(completed Grades 3-8)
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- rules/scoring



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Tigers end season with loss to Pickering

Season-ender
featured poignant
ceremonies

By Robert Belardi

The Aurora Tigers ended off their season on the road against the Burlington Cougars and were welcomed back home last Saturday for the finale against the Pickering Panthers – in front of a warm crowd and the minor Tigers.

It has been a roller coaster year for the organization, but these last two games meant a lot. Following a 6-2 loss on the road against an experienced Cougars team, the Tigers came back home Saturday night.

“The team loved it,” explained head coach Jim Wells Jr. “I know the players really enjoyed the turnout, that meant a lot to them. It’s been a long year for them. They never quit as a team and to have a good crowd come out, I know it meant a lot to them.”

Prior to the match, the club held some pre-game ceremonies.

Matt King was voted the Scotiabank Fan Favourite Award for the Tigers and Trevor Grasby received the OJHL Community Heroes Award for the player who best exemplifies himself as a role model in the community.

Shortly after, there was a moment of silence held to honour long time Town of Aurora employee Brian Kent Pidgeon, who passed away on February 20 at the age of 59. He was considered to be an honorary member of the team.

Afterwards, the Tigers organization unveiled the new name of their

commentary booth, officially named after Steve Mitchell; a long-time videographer for the Aurora Tigers. Mitchell had a heart transplant last year and is cautious on where he goes. His family was there to receive the honour.

The Tigers lost their final game 7-1 against another experienced team, the Pickering Panthers.

After going down 2-0 after the first period, the Tigers responded well in the second.

“Well, we came out flying in the second to get back in it, we got 21 shots,” said Wells.

“I can’t ask anything more out of the guys.”

After conceding another two goals in that period, heading into the third, Wells commended some of the players on the ice that played exceptionally well this year despite the numbers. He calls them soldiers, even silent leaders.

“There we are, down five nothing or four nothing, he’s out their penalty killing and blocking pucks. He’s a silent leader,” explained Wells when speaking about defenceman Cael Cavallin.

Wells commended Grasby as a silent leader as well and went on to praise newcomer Nicholas Primomo, who joined the team late this year.

It is in these games the Tigers do the little things right. Although the execution of finding the back of the net overshadows the game most of the time, understanding the growth of some players is essential moving forward.

Blake Frost for instance, has been working hard all year and finally managed to get some points on the board because he has never given up this year and helps lead the boys in the room.

Another player Wells spoke highly of, was Alex Ridolfi, who has made vast improvements over the course of the

year.

“He was with the Tigers, went to Markham. We brought him back. He’s not a point guy, but he’s a guy who is unbelievable in the room. He’s a silent leader, works hard at his game.”

The team has had a taste of winning recently. Most notably, a 3-2 win against the Oakville Blades, handing that team their third loss of the year at home. There was a 63-point difference between these two clubs when they went head to head.

Wells said that he loves the pieces he’s got to build a team around. He also went on to add that with this taste of winning, the boys will want it all the time.

Mauro Biasutto, Blake Frost and Braeden McKinnon all crash the net, trying to solve goaltender Darius Bell in the first period.

Auroran photo
by Robert Belardi

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Aurora High School knocked out by rivals Father Bressani

By Robert Belardi

The Aurora High School Eagles were ousted in the semi-finals by the Father Bressani Eagles this past week.

In the battle of the birds, this was not the first time these two have gone head to head in a pivotal game.

Bressani defeated Aurora in the finals last year in York Region’s Division Two hockey league.

This matchup had everything a fan wanted: hard-nosed hockey near the boards, chirping on either side of the bench, and feistiness after the whistle.

In this tale of the road team, Aurora travelled to Al Palladini Community Centre to face Bressani last Tuesday to get this underway.

Aurora’s Carson Maybury skated circles around the defence. Jake Adams, his line mate, had a nice chance shorthanded that was denied by Christian Forgione. Dylan Ozols was also on this line with Maybury and Adams. This was the veteran line that made things happen.

It was Bressani, however, that made something happen first. Massimo Baldassarra and Alexandros Vena’s interplay worked some space to find Aidan McDaid in the slot. McDaid fired a low shot that crept underneath the pad of goaltender Brian Cook for the early lead.

In the second, Aurora kicked it up a notch. A few notches, if you will. The boys chocked Bressani in their own end, forcing a lot of errors and



Jacob Ewacha rips the puck top shelf past goaltender Christian Forgione to give the boys a 2-1 lead in the second period.

Auroran photo by Robert Belardi

turnovers. That’s what you have to do to turn things around and the boys were rewarded.

Maybury fed the puck to Ozols, whose shot forced a rebound. There to clean up the garbage was Adams to even the game at one.

Later on in the period, Andrew Flores was denied by the flying blocker of Forgione. Close to the end of the frame, a wrist shot from the right hash marks from Jacob Ewacha beat Forgione top shelf.

In the third period, it was Bressani who dominated and came close to tying it. Marco Mignosa rung one off the post. Aurora held on for a 2-1 win.

“We lost to them in the finals last year and we wanted revenge. Today was our first chance at getting them. First game we played them this season,” said Aurora goaltender Brian Cook, who kept Aurora in the game in third.

Head Coach Scott Green spoke about adjustments throughout the game that were made that led to success.

“This team is a coachable team, so we picked up on a few weaknesses that

they had from the first and the second periods overall,” said Green. “We relayed those to the guys and the guys responded properly.”

In the second game, Bressani also made a few adjustments and ultimately took home the victory at the Aurora Community Centre last Thursday.

Baldassarra opened the scoring just over seven minutes into the first period. With over a minute left in the frame, Stefan Forgione made it 2-0.

Aurora did make it interesting. Owen Papulkas scored with 0.1 seconds left to go, a goal that could have changed the game down the stretch.

Unfortunately, that was the only goal from Aurora.

Bressani popped in two more goals by the end of the game to win in regulation 4-1. Because Aurora won the first game and Bressani won the second, a sudden death over-time will decide who moves on.

In overtime, a scrum in front of the net led to the puck falling to Panagiotis Tsementzis, who scored the winner, sending Bressani to the YRAA finals.

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St. Andrew’s 16UA Basketball team on a roll

By Robert Belardi

When the coach does not adulate his players excessively, that is a sign of a team that is ready to win a championship.

“I’ll be honest with you, half of those games, we didn’t start very well,” said head coach of the U16A basketball team at St. Andrew’s College Marcello Lio.

Lio acknowledges the good and the bad. Even though there is more good than bad, it’s a great way to improve on more aspects of the boys’ game. It’s a knack for any coach striving for perfection.

The boys have had tremendous second halves to balance to counter-weight their starts. His team has dialled in, focusing on the little things.

The Saints extended their winning

streak to 10-games, with a 57-33 win away at Crescent School last Wednesday, earning them a first-round bye in the playoffs.

In that game, the Saints held Crescent school scoreless in the first quarter. Their style is predicated on hard defence. Sound familiar? Sound like a Canadian, professional NBA team that does the same thing?

“The only thing you can control is your defence and how hard you work. These kids have really bought in, we’re a pretty athletic team so they work really hard.”

Of course, with a team that works hard come leaders that are prepared to take it to another level.

Sophomore, Kyle Murphy is one of the most lethal scorers and can play hard-nosed defence. Freshman Anthony Lio is a bona fide point guard who doesn’t miss a step on both ends of the floor. These two boys are the make-up of the team. They have the ice in their veins. When it comes down to crunch time, there are no other players to elevate the team to another height, no other players who want that final shot more.

The third player has been Nihaal Rana, running the floor from the power forward/centre position, dominating down low. He averaged around 12 to 13 points a game over the nine- game winning streak, before the recent win against Crescent School.

But, the player that has coaxed head coach Lio over the course of this season is Kai Erkkila.

Lio was rapt when Erkkila finally showed off the potential he thought he had, with a solid game as a starter.

It was a game against St. Michael’s. Three boys were away on a class trip. Two were starters.

Erkkila was called up to the floor for tip off.

“This was a task that we threw at him, he knew it was coming, and, man, did he perform. He gave us incredible minutes; I don’t think he left the floor. We only played with seven that game or eight.”



Marcello Lio (far right) stands with the boys after winning the Crescent School tournament.

Contributed photo

As Coach Lio stopped at Tim Hortons to pick up a coffee and an oatmeal raisin cookie before study hall, he shared his thoughts with The Auroran.

Lio has been coaching basketball for the past eight years in the rep scene. He is the head coach of the football team at St. Andrew’s as well.

Outside of school, his team Breakdown North were Provincial champions last year in the OBLX league in Ontario; the highest in the province.


He loves the guidance factor of being

the basketball coach, and loves when the game lies in the boys’ hands. You can’t control every move, so it’s fascinating to see the maturity and the decision making on the floor.

You can prepare the boys as much as you can and seeing it unravel before your eyes, well, it’s rewarding.

Coach Lio and Coach Jeff LaForge have been doing that and the preparation will be tested in the playoffs.

The Saints finished the year 7-3, earning a first-round bye.



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Getting Things Done

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

My recent motion at Regional Council was a straight-forward motion, solely asking for information on a potential option for alternative governance models.

In order to complete a thorough governance review and ensure a timely, effective and informed decision, all members of this Council should want complete information – on all options.

The issue of appropriate representation of member municipalities has been an issue at the Region since its inception over 40 years ago. What began as a Council comprised of nine municipalities with a wide diversity of populations gave rise almost immediately to concerns about how best to deal with the disparity in numbers, how to ensure votes were “fair.”

The response has always been imperfect.

In 1970, Council was comprised of the nine heads of council – the Mayors – and, to offset the disparity in population across municipalities, seven Regional Councillors were added and provided votes at the table.

A “one member; one vote” model of representation by population.

Since that time, as our population in York Region has grown, the Council has also grown by four Regional Councillors, providing extra members – and extra votes – to the municipalities of Vaughan and Markham.

As a result, since its inception, the size of this Regional Council has grown by almost 25 per cent and the associated costs have

grown even more.

York Region will continue to grow.

Representation by population will continue to be an issue.

If we maintain our current practice of adding Regional Councillors to address the issue of voting equity for population disparity, our Regional Council will continue to balloon in size – and cost.

Clearly, we should explore more cost-effective options than our current approach of adding members to solve our representation issues.

So, how do we address this issue of appropriate representation by population? We look at alternatives.

One alternative to consider is to reduce the size of this Council to Heads of Council only and implement weighted, double majority voting. That is all this motion is seeking – to consider this particular alternative.

The status quo is not equitable. With our current structure, some municipalities are under represented; and others are over represented. We have a responsibility to continually seek to do things better. This governance review is part of fulfilling that responsibility.

Reducing Council and implementing weighted double majority voting is the most cost-effective way to achieve equitable, effective decision-making at Regional Council.

At the very least, it is our duty to consider it.

Until you happen to need it, you might never consider just how valuable it is to have great healthcare options close to home. I came to realize that last summer after learning I had a serious issue with my heart.

I'd long been aware that I had a fairly common heart condition called a mitral valve prolapse – which is generally not cause for any alarm. So, I'd gone about life completely as normal. In fact, I ate right, stayed active and fit, and thought I was a health guy. But a checkup last year proved otherwise.

I was shocked to learn that I now had severe mitral valve regurgitation – an abnormal leaking of blood backwards through the valve following every heartbeat.

Left untreated, the increased strain might lead to a number of complications – shortness of breath, premature heart failure, or even a stroke. I needed surgery.

My first thought was that they would have to “crack me open” – leaving a big scar down the centre of my chest, followed by a lengthy recovery. Next, I wondered where the procedure might be done. “Probably Toronto,” I thought.

To my surprise, my cardiologist suggested a cardiac surgeon in Kingston. I live in Aurora. Were there no closer options?

I was soon relieved to learn that there actually were other options – and happily, the best one was virtually in my own backyard.

It turns out that Southlake Regional Health Centre in Newmarket is home to one of the few expert surgeons in the province who can perform minimally invasive mitral valve repairs. In fact, Southlake is the only hospital in the GTA that offers this



SOUTHLAKE
SNAPSHOT

By Daniel Bryan
Southlake Regional
Health Centre Foundation

procedure. It's part of the full spectrum of treatment options for mitral valve disease performed by cardiac surgeon Dr. Carolyn Teng.

Instead of conventional open-heart surgery that involves cutting through the sternum, this innovative approach involves making a 2-inch incision in the tissue between the ribs on the right side of the chest. Through this small hole – and by using a high-definition camera and specialized instruments – Dr. Teng was able to access my heart and successfully repair my faulty valve.

‘Minimally invasive’ doesn’t just mean being left with a smaller scar; it means lower risk of complications and infection, and a faster overall recovery.

Just four days post-surgery, I was back at home. Sore, for sure, but fully mobile. Day-to-day improvements were remarkable. It’s amazing to think about what Dr. Teng has done for me and how she did it.

I feel incredibly fortunate to have received such a high level of care – and to have had access to it so close to home, which was important to me because it meant my family and friends were able to be with me during my recovery. But you should know that as a Regional Cardiac Care Program, Southlake offers innovative care, including mitral valve repair and so much more, for approximately 10,000 patients every year across York Region to South Simcoe County, and even as far north as Muskoka.

During Heart Month this February, I'm grateful to the experts at Southlake who gave me this amazing care, and to the donors whose contributions to the hospital put the right tools in their hands to do it.

Shelter Movers arrives in York Region
to help women and children flee abuse

From page 14

a men’s issue,” said Marc Hull-Jacquin, Executive Director of Shelter Movers, speaking to community partners gathered for the York Region launch at Aw, Shucks on Monday afternoon. “This is about men hurting women. Do women hurt men? Yes, they do, and that’s terrible, we support men and have moved men, but we try to call this out for what it is. We have an opportunity to bring together men and women under the same umbrella to help solve this problem.

“In York Region only a few years ago – and these are only the reported cases – 5,300 cases of intimate partner violence [were reported] in York Region, increasing year over year. In Canada last year, there were over 93,000 cases – again, only the reported cases – and Shelter Movers has completed about 1,100 moves. We’re moving about 60 families a month between our four cities and we’re very proud of that number and our staff and volunteers work very hard. Really, it is just the tip of the iceberg. There is so much more we need to do. If we’re really going to take a bite out of this problem and really address it, we need greater resources and more awareness. Your being here today is a step in the right direction and I appreciate the time you’re making to be here.”

Speaking on behalf of YRCCS, Executive Director Jaspreet Gill shared an early success story of the partnership between her organization and Shelter Movers.

“We are beyond thrilled to welcome Shelter Movers to Greater Toronto to this partnership and to York Region to better serve the residents of York Region, those women, and the majority of them are women, but also men are also victims as well,” she said. “We recently had one of our York Region clients referred to Shelter Movers Greater Toronto and this is her testimonial: ‘I am writing this email as a humble note of appreciation for the outstanding volunteer services provided by Shelter Movers. I was facing a long-standing problem and this service took the ability to provide the resolution quickly, which exceeded my expectations. I really commend the prompt service provided by Shelter Movers. I am really pleased with the professional services provided by the team. Keep up the good work!’

“As we know, this service is important. The services provided by YRCCS and partners are important for the clients we serve, but there is no reduction in gender-based violence and violence against women and we can’t do this alone as individual agencies; it requires all of us coming together as a collective, as an entire sector, in order to create some real change, because the systemic barriers remain. When we can all come together to create that change... this is the first of many steps we will be taking together as a collective.”

For more information on Shelter Movers, visit sheltermovers.com or call 1-855-203-6252. For more on the York Region Centre for Community Safety, visit yrccs.ca.



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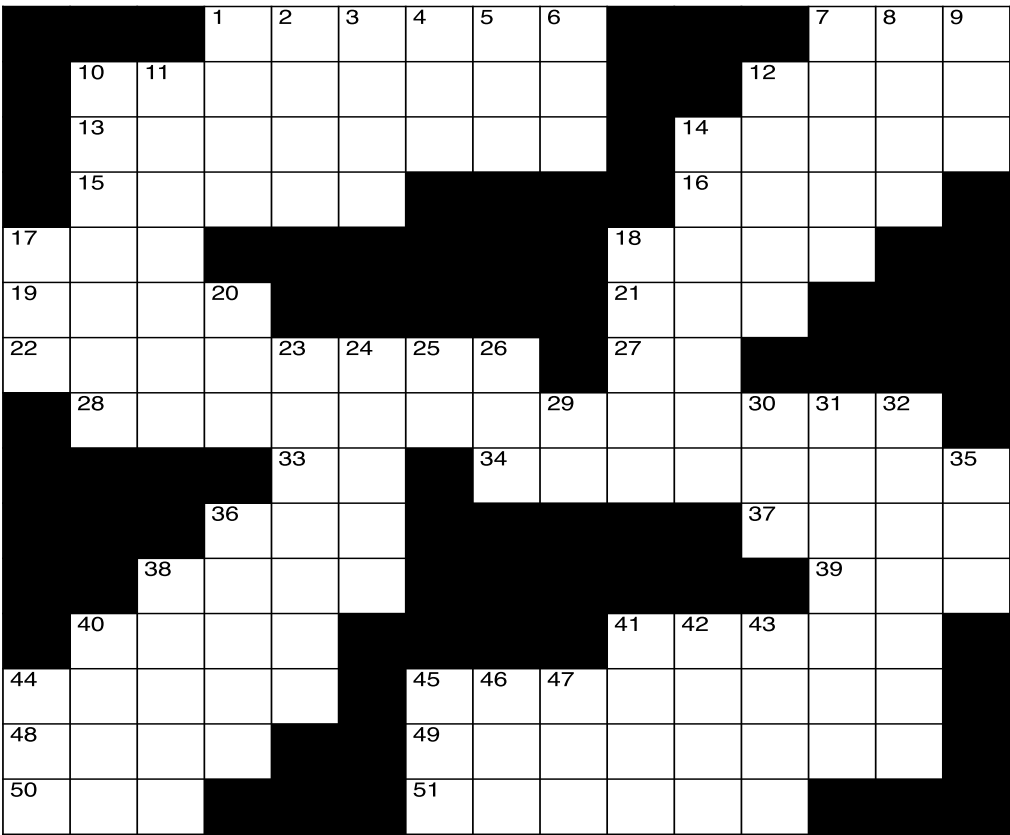
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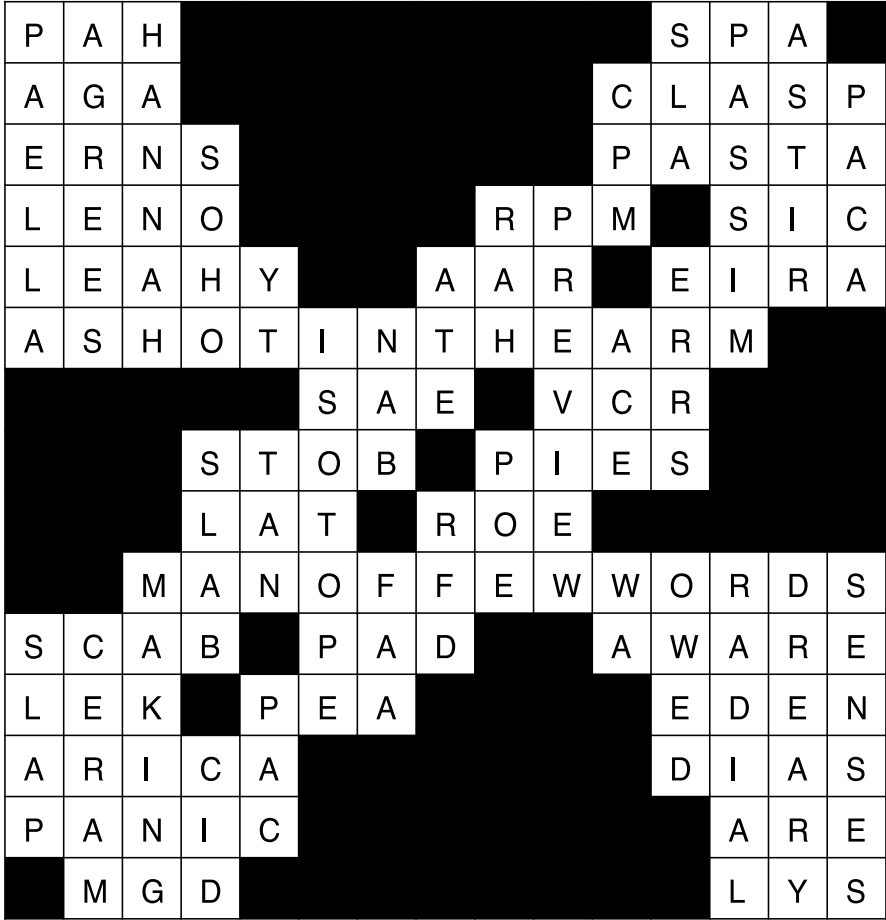
CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Stain one’s hands
- 7. Subdivision
- 10. A passage to be performed slow
- 12. Invests in little enterprises
- 13. Medians
- 14. Member of the giraffe family
- 15. Makes official
- 16. Choose in an election
- 17. Hill or rocky peak
- 18. Member of an ancient Iranian people
- 19. Crest of a hill
- 21. Small, faint constellation
- 22. Cultivated from crops that yield oil
- 27. The ancient Egyptian sun god
- 28. Hollywood tough guy
- 33. Chinese drums
- 34. Merits
- 36. Indicates center
- 37. Increases motor speed
- 38. Mentally fit
- 39. BBQ favorite
- 40. Wings
- 41. Female parents
- 44. Marks left from wounds
- 45. Soften by soaking in liquid
- 48. They resist authority (slang)
- 49. Formats
- 50. Many subconsciousnesses
- 51. Vogues

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Mental object
- 2. Blackbird
- 3. Undergarments
- 4. Old cloth
- 5. One from Utah
- 6. Greek goddess of the dawn
- 7. Become less intense
- 8. Developed to readiness
- 9. Defunct phone company
- 10. About Freemason
- 11. Taking everything into account
- 12. Famed Czech engineer
- 14. Impress into silence
- 17. Boxing term
- 18. Marketplaces
- 20. Pounds per square inch
- 23. Locomotives
- 24. Short musical composition
- 25. Football position (abbr.)
- 26. Heavyhearted
- 29. Denotes particular region
- 30. Famed NHLer
- 31. Ingested too much
- 32. Formulates
- 35. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
- 36. Broad, shallow craters
- 38. Thick cuts
- 40. Breezed through
- 41. Breakfast is one
- 42. “Rule, Britannia” composer
- 43. Periodicals (slang)
- 44. Indian title of respect
- 45. More (Spanish)
- 46. Creation
- 47. A loud utterance

PUZZLE SOLUTION



THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW

FEBRUARY 26 – APRIL 1

Kingsway Place Aurora (145 Murray Drive) hosts Caregiver Support Sessions with March of Dimes Canada. For those caring for someone who has had a stroke or other chronic illness. Meet other caregivers, share your story, learn about resources in the community, stress management and more! 1.30 – 3 p.m. For more information, contact Victoria at 416-729-4092.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Canadian Blood Services will host a Blood Donation Event today at the Royal Canadian Legion (105 Industrial Parkway North) from 2 – 7 p.m. 96 donors are needed.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 29

Newmarket-Aurora MPP Christine Elliott will host a free family pancake breakfast today from 9.30 – 11.45 a.m. at the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Hall (484 Water Street, Newmarket. For more information, call Dawn at 905-853-9889.

A Splash of Pink Gala in Support of Dragonfly Wellness for Women will take place tonight at the Royal Venetian Mansion. Join us in support of local women affected by cancer. Dragonfly is hosting its first gala in celebration of its 5th year anniversary. Bring family and friends for a night filled with great food, dancing, live music, silent auction and much more. An antipasto bar will be followed by a 4 course meal, open bar, and late night station. For more information, including tickets, email info@trustyourwings.ca.

FRIDAY, MARCH 6

The Aurora Cultural Centre presents QW4RTZ tonight from 8 – 10 p.m. QW4RTZ is four amazing vocalists who join their voices to make you laugh, dance, sing, but most of all, leave you amazed by the sound of

their vocal harmonies. Hailing originally from Trois-Rivières, Quebec, each member of the quartet is a gifted singer in their own right. Their songs – in English, with some French and the odd recognizable Spanish-language pop hit – are beautifully crafted using the breadth of all four voices. Together, they bring all of their talent, their senses of humour, beatboxing chops, dance steps – and ability to unite the audience on a memorable musical ride. For more, visit auroraaculturalcentre.ca.

Yellow Brick House will hold its annual Gala tonight beginning at 6 p.m. at Le Parc Banquet Hall (8432 Leslie Street, Markham). On Friday, March 6, 2020 be part of the celebration of courage to Break The Silence surrounding domestic violence. Join the movement and purchase your tickets today! For more, visit yellowbrickhouse.org.

SATURDAY, MARCH 7

Embrace your feathered friends today from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the Aurora Seniors' Centre. Join us for a workshop where you'll have the opportunity to learn how to start birding, the benefits they have for your mental health, bird feeding tips, and how to turn your yard into a bird-friendly haven. This workshop will be held in the Priestly Activity Room at the Aurora Seniors' Centre. For more information, call Aileen at 905-853-3171.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

The PROBUS Club of Aurora hosts their monthly meeting today from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the Royal Canadian Legion (105 Industrial Parkway North). Today's speaker is Janet Rurak of the York Region Seniors Strategy. For more information on this month's speaker, contact David Brisley at 905-841-0338. New members welcome! Contact Brian Walsh brian.walsh1@sympatico.ca or be our guest at the meeting.

Property owners worried

From page 1

hurt me a lot,” said Dr. Kritzing. “I moved from Davis Drive a few years ago after having put up with construction for almost four years and now I am going to do it all over again. Traffic will stop driving by, people will be unwilling to come into my office because of the construction mess and I lose two things: I lose business because people won't want to come into construction, and I lose business because there's less drive-by traffic seeing my property for two years or three years. They say two years, but I don't believe it.”

Business owner Farid Ameryoun will also be directly impacted by the underpass construction.

Ameryoun is a realtor at York National Realty, located just west of the former Baldwin's building adjacent to the current rail crossing.

The business operates out of the former Hartman's Corners schoolhouse, one of the Town's oldest standing buildings.

Metrolinx's underpass plans have left Ameryoun questioning whether the building will even be left standing

once the project is completed.

“We're going to be sitting 15 feet up from the road,” he said. “There will be no exposure from the road and we will lose access from Wellington Street. I came here tonight hoping to find some information on what they plan to do with these properties, and Baldwin's next door. I will have access from Centre Street so that could help [offset not having passing traffic] but there is talk of expropriation and that's what really interests me. We have one of the oldest buildings in York Region from 1838 and that is a concern. We spent quite a lot of money trying to preserve it, and get it designated as a heritage building and it would be a shame to see that building gone.

“With the detour on Centre Street, you can imagine the nightmare that is going to create for all those residential neighbourhoods behind; it is constant traffic at that time. What's promised and what actually happens are very different. We're probably looking at long-term construction. I can't see it happening in two years and the neighbours behind are going



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about impact of Wellington reconstruction

to be impacted.”

Monday’s public meeting also attracted those slightly removed from Wellington Street, but whose neighbourhoods could also be impacted by traffic flows looking to get around the construction snarl.

“Speaking as an individual, I think that change is really good for the Town,” said Anna Kroeplin of the Town Park Area Ratepayers Association. “I think keeping our character is incredibly important and significant and that is what makes Aurora so attractive to everybody, but we need to change with the times, we do need to make it accessible for everybody. The underpass is going to be awful growing pains, of course, but I think, in the long run, it will be worth it.”

Representatives from Metrolinx on site for Monday’s meeting declined to take questions from the media, instead referring all questions to the Crown Agency’s Director of Communications. A response had not been received at press time.

While the full impact of the underpass is not yet clear, the issue was addressed by Mayor Tom Mrakas last week as the Aurora Chamber of Commerce hosted the annual Mayor’s Luncheon on Wednesday afternoon.

Mayor Mrakas was asked by Sandra Ferri, Executive Director of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, to elaborate on the Town’s plans to keep Wellington Street East businesses “thriving” during the construction.

“My job as Mayor, Town Staff, Council, is going to be to work as hard as we can to make sure we mitigate the amount of impacts that will be put onto our business community, our residents in the area,” he replied. “It is something, unfortunately, that is coming from the Province, it is something that has to be done.

“if you can imagine 15 minute all day every day GO trains coming in and out on Wellington and those arms



A map showing Metrolinx’s plans for the Wellington Street underpass.

Image courtesy of Metrolinx

dropping down, you can imagine the traffic nightmare. It is that old saying: short term pain for long-term gain. I can guarantee you... we’re going to be working as hard as we can, working with Metrolinx, working with the Province to make sure that those impacts that are felt by our business community are as minimal as possible.”

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10:45-11:30 am	Basketball Skills & Training
11:30-12:00 pm	Lunch (provided)
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