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THE AURORAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

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“They need to know they are supported and not forgotten”

Family of late Chartwell Aurora resident leads campaign to support frontline staff

By Brock Weir

As Patricia Anne Peterson battled pneumonia in the last days of her life at the end of April, the nurses and staff did everything they could to make sure somebody was always with her. As a resident of long-term care, being there during the COVID-19 crisis was easier said than done for her children and grandchildren.

Ms. Peterson was a resident of Chartwell Aurora (formerly Resthaven) for more than two years battling Alzheimer's Disease. In her final weeks, the residence became the epicentre of Aurora's fight against COVID-19, with staff working every day to combat the outbreak within its walls.

“It was clear to us how hard the staff at Chartwell Aurora were working while my mum was there and, since then, the circumstances are pretty desperate there,” says Ms. Peterson's son Kyle who, along with sisters Kymm and Korri, have started a Go Fund Me campaign in their mother's memory to benefit the frontline workers who not only cared for their matriarch but continue to care for the more than 200 residents at Chartwell,

Continued on page 14

Aurora eases some restrictions on park use

By Brock Weir

As the COVID-19 curve begins to show some early signs of flattening, some restrictions put in place in response to the pandemic have begun to ease.

Following the Province's decision to allow garden centres, landscape companies, and other businesses with the space for curbside pickup to begin working with customers again, the Town of Aurora has eased some

Continued on page 8



Former “Land Girl” rallies neighbourhood to help Aurora Food Pantry

93-year-old Aurora resident Alma Durkin beams with pride outside her Ardill Crescent home on an unexpectedly snowy Saturday on May 9 seeing the results of a neighbourhood-wide grocery drive for the Aurora Food Pantry. As a member of the United Kingdom's Women's Land Army in the 1940s, Ms. Durkin knows all too well the importance of having quality food during times of emergency. So, armed with an iPad and an idea, she galvanized her neighbours to help make a difference for local residents struggling at this time to put food on the table. For more, see Page 3.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger



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RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS

See Page 17 for more RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS

Farmers’ Market aims to re-open May 23

By Brock Weir

Some sense of spring normalcy might soon return to the community as the Aurora Farmers’ Market aims to re-open in a new way.

Should the Aurora Farmers’ Market (AFM) get the go ahead from York Region Public Health this week, produce and food vendors will once again be greeting customers – back on Wells Street and under new circumstances.

“Because we have been designated an essential service for only food and farm, if we’re allowed to open on May 23, it will just be farmers and food vendors, with the exception of [vendor] Kim Boland for soap and hand sanitizer,” says Market Chair Cathy Williams of Catharina’s Kitchen.

“There would be one way in and one way out where everyone coming in will use hand sanitizer, go around the market and come back out. We will only have so many people in at a time and volunteers and our two paid staff as well will be maintaining social distancing.”

At press time, Ms. Williams

says AFW’s aim to re-open for the Saturday following the Victoria Day weekend has received the enthusiastic support of the Town of Aurora – along with Mayor Tom Mrakas and Councillor Sandra Humfries, Council’s Market Liaison – and the Municipal Bylaw Department.

Should the Market get the final go-ahead, 16 vendors have confirmed their attendance.

“Everybody is thrilled, everybody wants this,” says Ms. Williams. “It kind of lends a sense of normalcy, which we have been lacking for a while. We’re going to have as many things in place [for hygiene] as a supermarket would, but we’re just going to be going outside. It’s all fresh from the farm.”

“The Town is behind us 100 per cent.”

Added Councillor Humfries: “During these times when all seems to be so different and difficult, it’s wonderful to hear that the province is allowing farmers’ markets to open under the new safety guidelines. The AFM has worked diligently with Town Staff and Public Health Department to

Continued on page 12

Decision on Kitimat sidewalks delayed following cost increase

By Brock Weir

Families in the neighbourhood of Aurora Heights Public School will have to wait until June for a Council decision on nearby sidewalks intended to improve pedestrian safety.

Council members, meeting remotely at the Committee level last week, voted to delay a decision on sidewalks on Kitimat Crescent to get a “full picture” on possible safety measures in the school area.

The decision to delay a decision until a more fulsome report comes back on June 2 came as Council members faced a budget increase on the sidewalk project of nearly \$93,000.

Council approved the \$100,000 sidewalk project for inclusion in the 2020 Capital Budget last fall, earmarking land directly adjacent to the curb on the north and west sides of Kitimat in order to preserve as much of the neighbourhoods’ driveways as possible.

The decision to move forward was not without controversy with the neighbourhood split on whether sidewalks were necessary, or would even improve pedestrian safety.

The question of safety, above the heftier price tag of \$192,700, was the hallmark of Council’s discussions last week.

I do not believe this is going to address the concerns that are happening there every day, and there are significant changes that will cause such a relief to the school and parents.

Provincial Act under maintenance. It also creates a lot of problems having the sidewalk right up against the curb.

“Most important to me is the safety issue. We’re doing the sidewalk so we can improve safety conditions. By having the sidewalk right up against the curb, we’re removing what is known in some circles as the ‘kill strip’ and that is because if a car comes up on the curb, there’s protection for the pedestrian on the sidewalk. To me, these are all very significant issues apart from money.”

These concerns were also shared by Councillor Michael Thompson who pointed out last Tuesday’s meeting was the first time Council members learned the sidewalk, due to the design process, had to be flush to the curb in order to preserve the driveway space of existing residents who might otherwise only be able to fit one car in their driveways.

“I appreciate staff trying to find a solution that works all around, but I do share Councillor Gaertner’s concerns about reading in the report that it doesn’t meet standards and it does pose a greater risk to us than, say, a regular sidewalk.”

Councillor Sandra Humfries also raised liability concerns, suggesting Council look at the “full safety scope” of the project before “jumping the gun” on this project.

Citing a working group struck by the Town and stakeholders in the Aurora Heights Public School Committee, the Councillor said “some really great ideas” had come out of those discussions and should be given due consideration by Council before moving forward with the Kitimat sidewalks.

“The issue of sidewalks is here because is what is happening [at the school] during drop off and pickup hours, but they have some amazing solutions,” she ventured. “I don’t know how much we need to rush this forward. Do we have to have it going right away? We have waited a long, long time.”

“I do not believe this is going to address the concerns that are happening there every day, and there are significant changes that will cause such a relief to the school and parents. If what I heard six months ago is able to come to fruition, I am just asking for a referral [for the working group’s report] to come back to us and it would be something Council would like to see.”

The motion to bring the working group’s report back to Council by June 2 was seconded by Councillor Gaertner and approved by Council.

Councillor Harold Kim, however, injected a note of caution into the debate.

“Having a sidewalk, even if it is a non-conforming sidewalk is better than not having anything at all,” he said.

Added Mayor Tom Mrakas: “I don’t mind waiting until Council at the end of this month, but I think at that point we will probably have to make a decision.”

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Priorities may have to change: Councillor

We are living in a time unlike anything we have experienced before.

I couldn't be more proud of Aurora residents, demonstrating your courage, strength and compassion every day in getting through this crisis together.

The sober reality is that many people's personal finances have been affected; and businesses, charities and service organizations have taken a hit. The foundations of our financial structure have suffered, and we are facing a major challenge as we plan our path forward. As a member of your local government, representing you, the residents of Aurora, I feel that it is important that your voices should be heard to help guide the way.

As we re-open the economy, it will not be "business as usual", not just picking up where we left off before the COVID-19 crisis.

Priorities may have to change.

Re-evaluation of needs may be required.

For example, it may be prudent to re-assess some pre-COVID-19 decisions to ensure that we have sufficient reserves for pressing community needs, both immediate and into the future. Personally, I believe that mitigation for the future implications of climate change is be a priority.

We need sufficient funds to follow through on our planned flood prevention measures, energy initiatives, requirements in Aurora's Corporate Environmental Action Plan; and protection of environmental land and our trees. The Province has mandated Community Action Plans.

We need to prepare a resilient community and ensure a reserve of money to face whatever comes at us.

Council's role is to lead and make the best decisions possible, but we need to know how you see your community going forward.

I believe that public input is crucial, especially at this time and in the months ahead.

Please let us know what you think.

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Councillor Wendy Gaertner
Aurora



Getting Things Done

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

I wanted to say that I am so proud of our community.

I have witnessed so many selfless acts of generosity as our community has stepped up to help each other through this very stressful time.

Our Town has always been supportive, generous and dedicated to helping those who are less fortunate.

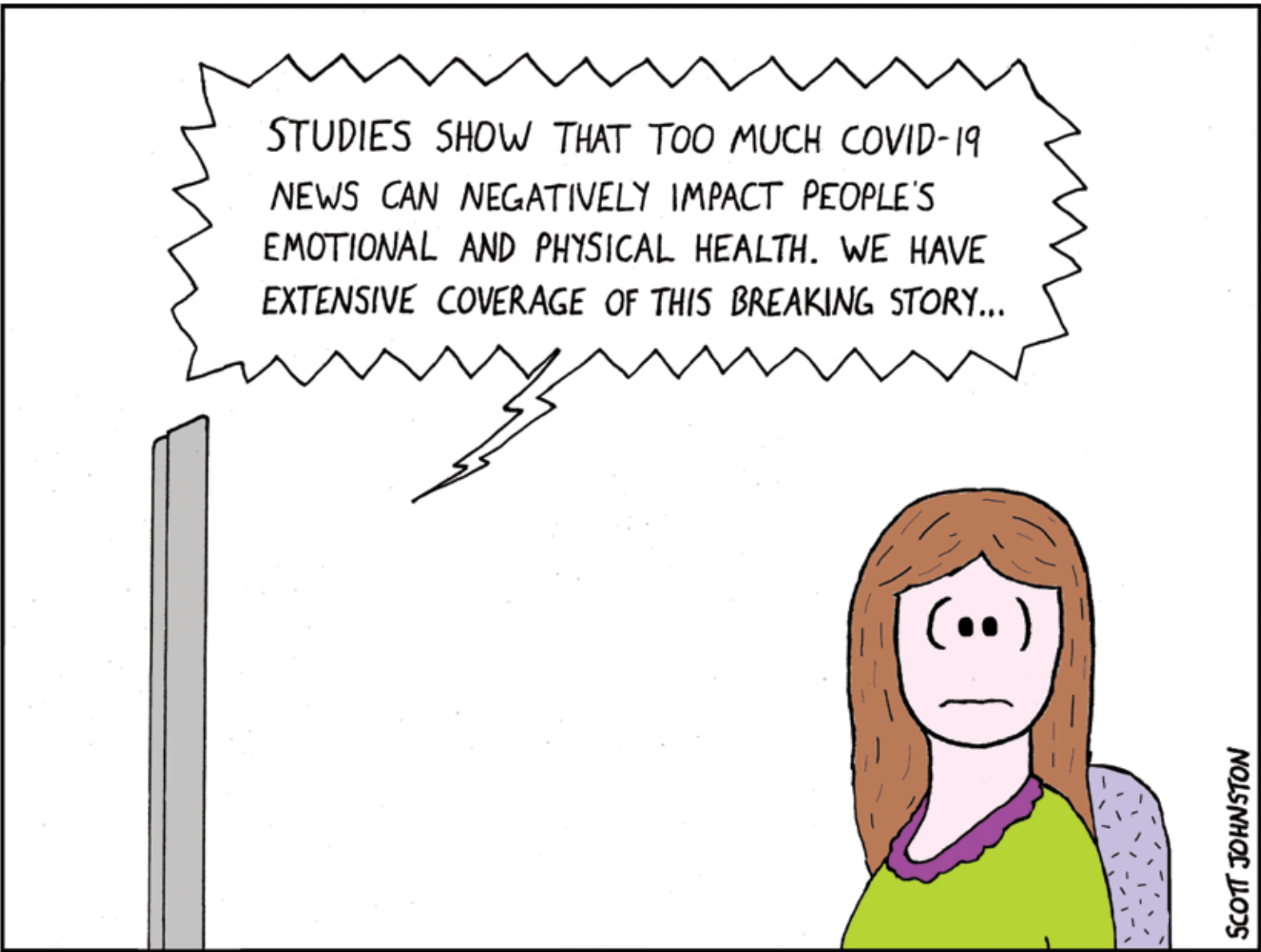
During this pandemic, I am awed by the number of residents who have helped fellow Aurorans; from volunteering time, to making donations, to supporting our local businesses.

I know this has been hard, but there is light at the end of the tunnel. We are seeing the flattening of the curve and the Province announced the first stage of opening up the province this week.

We are turning the corner because of what we have sacrificed together. This community has come together to ensure that no one is left behind and found opportunities to become a stronger community as we build towards a brighter future -- together.

That is what Aurora is all about: working together and getting things done

Machell's Corners



The Streets are Not Empty



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

I never thought I was much of a stickler for a firm routine.

Circumstances change, as we know all too well in our present situation, and you need to roll with the punches – and yet, I now find myself a guy who gets just a little bit cranky when, for whatever reason, I can't take my post-work stroll.

Indeed, in a time where working from home is the norm and turning the laptop off at the end of the day doesn't have the same positive feeling of being able to leave work at the office, the evening walk has become a very important part of my own new normal.

It restores balance, offers a fighting shot at physically-distanced human interaction, and offers plenty of reminders of the beauty that is all around us if we only take the time to look – and we all have a hell of a lot of time at the moment.

The cold snap over the weekend disrupted this routine slightly, but a few days before, I stumbled upon a poignant scene that was, although sad, quite beautiful in its own way.

After a refreshing walk on woodsy trail, I started heading home. Rather than taking my usual circuit, I decided to take a road which was, at least in my own experience, the one less travelled.

Rather than a return through nature, this road took me through a relatively busy neighbourhood and past a long-term care residence I am very familiar with, not solely due to its proximity to my own home but from the number of residents that have welcomed me into their apartments to share their stories.

As I got closer to its familiar red brick walls, there looked to be a fair bit of activity on the sidewalk ahead. As people stood among the shrubs, the scene could have been mistaken for a group landscape project, but as I got closer, it became clear it was anything but.

About seven or eight people stood on the sidewalk that spanned the building's south façade. Some were holding colourful banners, some balloons, a couple of youngsters were waving with their necks craned high.

It was a resident's birthday and, as long-term care residences are presently closed for obvious reasons, this group of well-wishers was doing their best to make it a happy occasion under trying circumstances.

I didn't want to intrude, so I paused for a moment to watch at a distance, wondering if the parent, grandparent, relative, or friend they had gathered to celebrate was one of the residents who has been so generous with me over the years.

Over past decade-or-so, I have been lucky enough to sit down with some of the veterans who call this residence home. They have been kind enough to share their very personal experiences with me, experiences that have been forged in circumstances that, thankfully, most of us can only begin to imagine, yet are as vital and relevant as ever before.

They have lived through hardship. They have lived through war. They have lived through times of pandemic. They have come out the other side to share their experiences and the lessons learned in the process, and these should be taken to heart.

In recent days, I have been moved by the efforts of our eldest surviving generation once again answering the call in these very trying times.

Many of us now know the story of Captain Tom Moore, a British Army veteran of the Second World War, who started a grassroots campaign to raise money for the United Kingdom's National Health Service by polishing off his walker and taking pledges as he walked laps around his garden. His aim was simple: doing his part. And he did so with a very modest goal of £1,000. By his 100th birthday at the end of this past month, he was nearing a whopping £33 million in donations.

Closer to home, I was thrilled to talk

to 93-year-old resident Alma Durkin who also did her bit during the Second World War as a "Land Girl" in England, making sure the nation was fed through the agricultural sector.

From her Aurora home this past weekend, and armed with little more than an iPad and some groceries, she mobilized her community to help her once again feed her community by arranging porch donations for the local food pantry.

Friday marked the 75th anniversary of VE Day, a singularly memorable day for these remarkable individuals. On that occasion, we heard from another person who came into their own during those exceptional times which, I am sure, struck a chord with all of us.

"Whether it be the men and women called up to serve; families separated from each other; or people asked to take up new roles and skills to support the war effort, all had a part to play," said The Queen, of the Second World War, which seemed, in some ways, to speak of our present circumstances as well. "At the start, the outlook seemed bleak, the end distant, the outcome uncertain. But we kept faith that the cause was right – and this belief...carried us through. Never give up, never despair. That was the message of VE Day.

"Today, it may seem hard that we cannot mark this special anniversary as we would wish. Instead, we remember from our homes and our doorsteps. But our streets are not empty; they are filled with the love and the care that we have for each other."

That street underfoot just a few days ago was indeed filled with the love and the care that we have for each other, as was Ms. Durkin's street over the weekend, as is the now-well-worn path in Captain Tom's garden.

It is important that we remember this once we reach the brighter days that are ahead – and I hope that whoever was celebrating their birthday with their family on the other side of that pane of glass will soon be able to feel the love from his or her family in person.

THE AURORAN

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Welcome to Library Land

By Reccia Mandelcorn

During the current COVID-19 pandemic, many of us have had to pivot our work to an online, virtual environment. For my Boomer generation, this has been quite a challenge, but also, a learning curve. We are discovering how to translate in-person conversations to platforms like Zoom; we are maximizing our reach through social media and some of us are learning how to structure our days in ways that allow us to be focused and productive working from home.

This new reality affects people in all workforces, but for those of us who define the success of our efforts through immediate personal feedback, we sorely miss the adrenaline rush we get from an appreciative audience, or for those in Library Land, our communities.

Perhaps some of the workers experiencing the greatest difficulties during this online transformation are those who are involved in the arts and culture industries. I received a survey from a theatre company I frequent asking me if I would purchase tickets for streamed performances. On my iPad? Not so much, I'm afraid. And a ballerina acquaintance confided that she will be looking for a new career, believing that the dance world will be one of the last to recover.

Working in Library Land, delivering large community events, my rush comes from creating an experience that is well-received. Although "Likes" and "Comments" online are hugely appreciated, they just don't replace the satisfaction of seeing the enjoyment on our visitors' faces. And I am really missing those moments.

Libraries have survived throughout history at all odds. We transform ourselves as societal needs change; we are multifaceted in resources and in how we deliver services to our communities. Already we are adapting to this new reality through increasing our eResources, taking storytimes online and developing new virtual programs to help our communities cope during this global crisis.

In a recent conversation with a friend, she reminded me of a comment I made after a large event at APL when I shared that if this was the culmination of my career, it would have all been worth it. This crisis will be over and we will emerge, likely stronger and more appreciative of each other. And I will take my unexpected dive into virtual space in new directions. But the day I can again see joy in the faces of community brought together at their public library – well, that is the day I am waiting for.

Reccia Mandelcorn is the Manager, Community Collaboration at Aurora Public Library. The opinions expressed in this column reflect her personal thoughts about the engagement of community with their public library.

THIS WEEK'S POLL

Do you support the Ontario Government's measured approach to reopening the province?

Yes No Unsure

www.theauroran.com

RESULTS TO DATE May 12, 2020	YES	NO	UNSURE
	89%	11%	0%



The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating... Victoria Day Weekend!

You've likely heard the golden gardening rule of waiting until (or after, depending on who you ask) the May Long Weekend to plant your garden. While we can't predict the weather, this weekend might be the ideal time to prepare those garden beds, planters and baskets. If done correctly, in a few weeks from now, you could be basking in a bountiful garden – just like Mrs. Petterson, who is pictured during the 1920s posing amongst her tulips.

Unprecedented Times



Parsa's Perspective

Michael Parsa, MPP
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

Since I last wrote to you, Ontario, Canada, and the world have been weathering unprecedented challenges that have never been experienced before.

Here in Ontario, the health and safety of Ontarians has been the government's top priority. The measures that have been taken since mid-March have in no way been easy, but they have directly resulted in our ability to reduce the number of daily COVID-19 cases.

Currently, we are observing a reassuring decline in the number of daily cases, and we are waiting to see if the daily declines are part of an overall pattern and trend.

In recent weeks, the government put forward the framework to re-open Ontario in a safe and gradual manner that focuses on the health and wellbeing of Ontarians, as well as the economy.

As of this past week, we have initiated stage one of a three-stage process for re-opening the province.

The initiation of stage one has allowed for the re-opening of select workplaces that can meet current public health guidelines. Some parks and outdoor spaces have been re-opened, and street-side pick-up and delivery from businesses with street-side access is now fully underway.

This initial stage is the government's first step towards opening up Ontario gradually and safely.

If all goes well in the next two-to-four weeks, and Ontario's Chief Medical Officer observes a strong downward decline in COVID-19 cases, then we will seek to move to stage two of re-opening the province.

I know that the last several weeks have been profoundly difficult for all Ontarians.

There have been no easy choices as we continue to battle this deadly viral threat;

however, in these challenging times of hardship and difficulty, the shining spirit of Ontarians and Canadians has been a source of incredible inspiration.

From the selfless heroism of our frontline healthcare personnel, to the courageous fortitude of the essential workers that keep this province running, these unprecedented times have put the strength and resilience of Ontarians on full display.

These challenging times will pass, and with your continuous help and consideration, this episode in the world's history will soon be a distant memory.

Until then, please stay safe, remember to practice physical distancing, and stay up-to-date with the advice of our medical professionals.

As always, my staff and I are here to serve you. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any concerns you may have; we're working hard to answer your questions as they come in, and address any concerns you may have.

COVID Chronicle – Part 3

Some continued personal and local observations regarding the ongoing COVID-19 situation, picking up where I left off last time.

April 15

Another supply run. At the stores there are fewer crowds, people are being given more space, and shelves are fairly well stocked. Shoppers seem to be quickly adapting to the "new normal", including the excessive use of that phrase.

Fortunately, the stores seem to have scaled back their rationing policies. Now shoppers can buy enough of certain products to last for a week or more, rather than having to defeat the intent of social distancing by being forced to return to the store every few days.

Despite stocking up on groceries, in the evening we took part in the new initiative promoting Wednesday night as a night to get local restaurant takeout or delivery. Have found a new non-chain location we'd heard of but never tried. Will definitely be back.

April 17

Have started seeing painted rocks in our neighbourhood with messages of hope. They do bring a smile. I hope kids keep up this trend when all this is done.

April 20

Another thing I hope continues when the pandemic has run its course: doctor's appointments by telephone. Of course, there are many things one must see a doctor in person for, but there are

some that can be done remotely. The couple of phone appointments I've had the past few months have been a lot handier and more pleasant than driving just to sit for 20 minutes in a packed waiting room full of sick people.

April 22

To put the pandemic into perspective, based on 55 reported cases in Town as of today, about one in a thousand Aurorans have now been infected. While the risk of infection is both real and scary, keep in mind that so far 99.9% of us have gotten through this unscathed.

April 24

Sadly, we all aren't so lucky. The Town has now lost 6 people in total, many of those at Chartwell Long Term Care Residence. Fortunately, it's the only such facility in Town that seems to have an outbreak.

April 29

Noted on today's grocery run that most people are now wearing masks, a



INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

trend that is likely here to stay for some time.

The only items that seem to be in limited supply on the shelves are baking and cleaning products. Based on that, when this is all over, I envision slightly heavier Aurorans emerging from much cleaner homes.

May 2

Based on news reports and social media feeds, a combination of better weather, cabin fever and jurisdictions outside Ontario putting up their "we're open for business again" signs, locals are increasingly, and understandably, anxious for this to be over.

May 4

Did a curbside pickup to get supplies to work on a home repair project. The process was handy and efficient, but I somehow miss the hardware store experience of dodging forklifts, and wandering the aisles looking for products and home improvement inspiration.

May 6

The province announces more retailers that can open with curbside pickup starting over the next few days.

Are we at the beginning of the end of all this, or with further pandemic waves anticipated, is this just the end of the beginning?

Only time will tell.

Feel free to e-mail Scott at:
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Ontario's Declaration of Emergency has been extended until June 2.






Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



If you must leave the house, practise physical distancing – stay 2 metres away from others.

It’s time to question what we want out of a “new normal,” says psychotherapist



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By Brock Weir

In this time of global emergency, people are taking comfort where they can find it.

Some are finding it in shows of solidarity all around us. Others are pointing to cleaner air and some of the positive environmental impacts that have come about as a result of staying home.

But, as the curve starts to flatten, it might be time to consider just what we want to get out of a “new normal,” according to psychotherapist Adam Segal.

Indeed, it is a question Segal’s clients are grappling with as they address mental health challenges that have been exacerbated by the many arms of COVID-19.

“We’re learning a lot about what makes us tick,” he says. “I don’t want to put too much pressure on people because I know there are people who are baking sourdough bread and doing all these amazing things, and that’s great if you have the energy for it, but some people don’t. It might just be that their thing is, ‘even though I’m home every day, I am still going to

wake up, take a shower and get dressed as though I was going to go out because it gives me that sense of a new day has begun.’ That might help shift their mindset. If someone is working from home, maybe they are done at 5 p.m. or whatever, to try and keep a schedule and not have their work or personal life become so melded they can’t see the difference. Maybe at the end of the workday they close their laptops and go for a walk.”

Segal says many clients have talked about how they really value the “transition” value of their commute, whether it to get them in the zone for the workday ahead, or to “take a few breaths” listening to soothing music or a podcast on the trip home.

“There are none of those transitions that actually serve our mental health,” he says. “We might have to get creative in terms of implementing some ritual starting the day and ending the day.”

Couples living together, for example, are now working from home, he illustrates, and spending a lot more time together now than they were in the “old normal.” These couples, he says, might be

I don't want to put too much pressure on people because I know there are people who are baking sourdough bread and doing all these amazing things, and that's great if you have the energy for it, but some people don't

more “mindful” and “intentional” on creating date nights at home, special occasions, and demarcating weekends from weeks.

The pandemic, he adds, is anything but positive, but individuals might just learn a thing or two through the process.

“My clients are mentioning that they actually really like working from home and that might shape their choices going forward,” he says. “I think there are some cases where this experience can be elucidating of some of our preferences, learning some things about how we like to work. We might learn that our relationship really functioned because we often got space from each other.

“A client of mine who often has stress in his romantic relationship and there is often conflict, they are getting along so much better now that they have so much more time together. They’re maybe realizing the constraints on time were often causing stress in their relationship and this might highlight to them that when life does return to some version of normal, they are probably going to have to figure out if there is a way for their relationship to be under less time constraints.

“Are there going to be some people on the other side of this who simplify their lives? A lot of what is happening is obviously very challenging for people, but I think some people might realize, ‘I don’t particularly miss that particular thing so much. I thought every Friday night I would go to the pub and drink with friends, and I am not actually missing [that and] maybe I was doing that out of habit. What I really miss is being able to go to that bookstore on Saturday and look at all of the titles and see if there is something new.’ This could put up a mirror to us in terms of our relationships, our likes and dislikes, what really feeds us.

“Does shopping really feed us? We’re not able to do that so much. Is it going to force us to do things that are actually a bit more nourishing for us? We don’t have access to the easy things right now like to go out and shop and drink. Some of the things we have to do now require a bit more intention and that might not be such a bad thing.”



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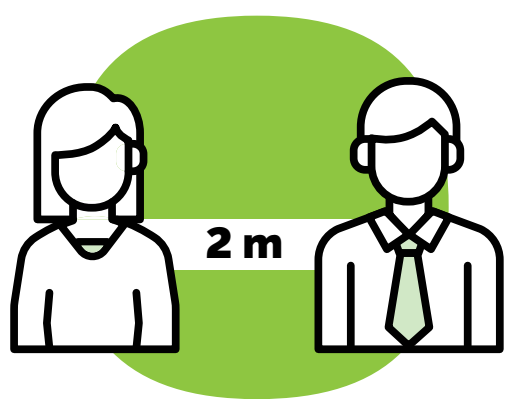


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More than 1,000 gift bags thank individuals leading the COVID fight

By Brock Weir

How do you say thanks to the frontline heroes at the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic?

It's a question many of us are asking as doctors, nurses, first responders, and others share harrowing stories from the heart of the battle, but Rob Rathke came up with a way, and more than 1,200 frontline workers last week and into this week received a morale boost from nearly two dozen Canadian companies.

It was a quiet, sunny morning last Tuesday as Rob and his brother Mike Rathke, owner of Aurora's MR Menswear, rolled up in their van outside of the Edward Street fire station, but there was excitement in the air as the siblings unloaded scores of gift bags and other donations for members of the Central York Fire Services.

Not yet 10 a.m., it had already been a busy morning for them as they made the day's first donations at Southlake Regional Health Centre, with further stops planned at hospitals, police stations, and fire halls in sixteen Ontario communities.

Each item contained nearly 30 different products donated by more than 15 individual companies, ranging from KIND granola bars, to Coors Light for a bit of refreshment along the way, to tooth brushes and other swag donated by a Toronto dentist for the aftermath of a snack.

"I felt like I wanted to do something, like so many other people," explained Rob after he and Mike finished emptying the van.

Rob, a resident of Milton, works for TC Transcontinental, which operates a plant in Aurora. Through his work, he has an extensive network of friends and colleagues in the packaged goods industry and the first step in giving was tapping into this resource.

"I reached out my network to say I was thinking about doing this, and I asked them whether they thought it was a good idea and if they can contribute," he says. "It all happened very organically. People just started texting me and connecting with me

on LinkedIn saying where they could kick in. There are probably about 28 items in the bag from 17 – 20 different consumer packaged companies.

"I said to Molson folks, 'I think if anyone deserves a beer, it's these people,' and they said, 'I think you're right.' Everyone is thinking the same thing: everyone wants to reach out and do something where they can. This was a relatively easy way for a lot of different folks to say, 'I'm participating and I am giving back to a community that is really giving a lot of themselves right now.'"

Among those stepping up to the plate with donations were Mike Rathke with gift certificates for MR Menswear for those within close proximity to the shop, along with Campbell's Soups, Clif Bar, Club Coffee, David's Tea, Galderma, Grace Foods Canada, Iconic Brewing, KIND, Molson Coors, Nature Clean (Hand Lotion), Nestle Confectionary, Nestle Waters, Pillers Fine Foods, Riverside Naturals, Sanofi – Gold Bond Hand Lotion, Schneider's, Maple Leaf, Toronto Beach Dental, Yellow Fruit/Froba, and Zevia Organic Tea.

All told, the initiative will reach frontline workers in Aurora, New Tecumseth (Stevenson Memorial Hospital), Milton, Oakville, St. Catharines, Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo, Orangeville, Georgetown, Newmarket, Barrie, Richmond Hill, Toronto (Mt. Sinai, St. Michael's, SickKids, Baycrest), Mississauga, Etobicoke, and Brampton.

"Obviously, with only 1,000 bags, not every nurse or paramedic, etc., in the GTA will get something, but I hope the gesture tells them we're all thinking about them and we're all grateful and appreciative of their efforts and sacrifices, particularly now in this fight against COVID-19," says Rob. "I am thinking about all the hands that went into the bags. I am the lucky one because I get to deliver it. There are a lot of people that contributed to those bags, not just the individuals who are brand managers, but all the people who did the approvals, all the people who did the shipping. I am feeling



(Clockwise from foreground) Mike Rathke of MR Menswear, Rob Rathke, and CYFS members Darryl Bryan and Shaun Mitchel.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

like they are all with me handing it over. There's definitely a sense of pride in doing that. There's gratitude.

"We're just trying to express our thanks in a way other than just saying it. We hope at the end of the day they take that bag

home and it puts a smile on their face, and we want them to know that there is a big community out there that is grateful and appreciative of everything they are doing, not just during this time, but especially now, given the crazy circumstances."

Aurora eases some restrictions on park use

From page 1

restrictions around the use of park spaces.

On Thursday, the Town announced a return to "limited" use of public open spaces across Aurora, with the exceptions of play structures and playgrounds, swings, washrooms, benches, picnic tables, shelters and the off-leash dog park.

"By allowing our residents to use our open park spaces, we are providing much-needed access to families of the same household to spend time outdoors," said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. "This will aid in the health and wellbeing of our community and give residents a chance to flatten the COVID-19 curve and practice safe physical distancing, washing our hands often and following the provincial orders.

"Aurora will fully reopen its parks and facilities once it is safe to do so. Our

number one priority is the safety of our residents, visitors and community."

As Provincial Orders are still in effect, the ban on organized public events, gatherings of more than five people (inclusive of gatherings on private property, but excluding family members who reside at the same address) physical distancing of at least two metres for non-household members during all outdoor activities, and entry to and use of certain outdoor recreational amenities still stand.

Examples of activities permitted once again in parks by the Town include playing catch or kicking a soccer ball, flying a kite, exercising and stretching on a yoga mat, but not in a class, and letting young children run around these green spaces.

Open spaces owned by local school boards and the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, including Sheppard's Bush, remain closed.



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Community leaders come together to raise thousands for Southlake Foundation



Sue McCabe (left) and Kelly Broome (right) are part of the NewRoads Community Crew, putting lawn signs up around town to thank front-line healthcare heroes at Southlake Regional Health Centre, with proceeds supporting Southlake Foundation's COVID-19 Action Fund as part of a community initiative led by NewRoads Automotive Group and Neal Brothers Foods.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By Brock Weir

Signs of gratitude are popping up across our community during the COVID-19 crisis, some of which are helping to raise money directly for our frontline heroes at Southlake Regional Health Centre.

Nearly \$10,000 has been raised to date through lawn signs spearheaded by NewRoads Automotive Group in partnership with Neal Brothers Foods.

With a donation of \$50, NewRoads has been delivering close to 250 signs across York Region and South Simcoe, installing signs on lawns and providing purchasers with a \$35 tax receipt.

The idea was first pitched by Aurora resident Chris Neal, a long-time supporter of Southlake, and his wife, Wendy Harper Neal.

“At the end of March, the first couple of signs started showing up in Aurora, small ones supporting healthcare workers and essential workers, there was really just a desire for Wendy and I to get a couple for our lawn,” says Chris. “We have friends and neighbours involved at Southlake and we have supported Southlake for years. Our children were born there and I grew up in Aurora. A neighbour gave us one early in April, a different iteration, and I said I was willing to buy one if need be to show some support. That was kind of the ‘click’ – if I would buy one, who else out there would buy one? If there was a fundraiser behind it and a tax receipt behind it, maybe we have got something here.”

Mr. Neal’s next step was reaching out to NewRoads owner Michael Croxon, who serves on Southlake’s Philanthropy Cabinet.

“The idea seemed like a no-brainer,” says Mr. Croxon. “It’s a way we can acknowledge the efforts and sacrifices of our frontline workers while also raising some much-needed funds for Southlake’s COVID-19 Action Fund. We knew that we had the resources to help at NewRoads, like willing volunteers among our staff and delivery vehicles that we could deploy. We’re hoping to generate a lot of community support and see literally thousands of signs across the Region.”

So far, the response has been overwhelming and organizers have had to have a second round of signs printed at Motive Media in Bolton.

“Mike and I are thrilled,” says Mr. Neal. “We have played with the number of 1,000 signs, we played with 10,000 signs. I think the more signs that show up, the more people will be curious about it. The process of purchasing them has been streamlined: The people at NewRoads have developed some software so it is a much easier process to go through than it has for the first number of weeks of the process. They are popping up in my neighbourhood now and it feels great. It feels like something so simple is going to help

Southlake in their efforts.

“Donating to the hospital might sometimes seem...an overwhelming process and I think we have made it really easy. I think for a relatively small fee of \$50, they are not only supporting the hospital with funds but they are showing support for anyone who you would call an essential worker right now. Mike and I both have people who are working right now because we’re essential services for distribution of food and the servicing of vehicles, but I also think you’re showing support for the grocery cashier, the person stocking the shelf next to you, and certainly for much of the community, we all have people who work at the hospital in one capacity or another. It is kind of a sign with benefits: you get to make a contribution to the hospital, you get a tax receipt for it, and you’re supporting through a visual means, the support of people who are out there every day and contributing to a pretty significant time in our history.”

And Southlake appreciates the support.

“This initiative is really a special way for our frontline healthcare heroes to see the strong support of our communities and know that they are truly appreciated, especially in such a challenging time,” said Susan Mullin, President & CEO of the Southlake Foundation. “Our staff are certainly feeling the gratitude through the donations of personal protective equipment, food and messages. Now they can see and feel that sense of community on their way to and from work as well, and they have an opportunity to participate and share their own gratitude for the other essential workers in the community that we, in turn, depend on.”

For more information on the program and how to purchase a sign, visit newroads.ca/southlake.

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- ❑ Change batteries in your fire alarms & carbon monoxide detectors
- ❑ Purchase paper compost bags for yard cleanup
- ❑ Change your furnace filter
- ❑ Check caulking around your kitchen counters and tubs or showers. Have fixed if needed.
- ❑ Clean kitchen exhaust hood and filter, vacuum refrigerator coils
- ❑ Check fire extinguishers, this should be done at least once a month
- ❑ Clean gutters, check for leaks & make sure they are attached securely
- ❑ Clean & seal deck, check exterior paint & touch up as needed
- ❑ Check foundation for cracks & leaks
- ❑ Check siding, masonry & fences for damage & schedule repairs
- ❑ Remove install window screens if they have been removed
- ❑ Inspect caulking around windows; if cracking re-caulk
- ❑ Check roof for damage & schedule re-roofing if needed
- ❑ Check attic for leaks, mold, moisture intrusion, fire hazards & critters
- ❑ Schedule annual dryer exhaust cleaning & check up
- ❑ Check water heater for leaks—schedule inspection if older than 5 years
- ❑ Schedule a maintenance and/or energy efficiency inspection
- ❑ Check air ducts, remove covers and vacuum dust from vents
- ❑ Check and clean the heat recovery ventilator (HRV); wash or replace the filter
- ❑ Check driveways and walkways for frost damage or loose masonry
- ❑ Turn on exterior water supply

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– Last month through May 11, the Town of Aurora issued a challenge to the community to decorate their windows to show gratitude for “those who continue to care for us and ensure we have enough food and supplies throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. And the community answered the call. (Top) Amy and Ryan deployed their teddy bears to send a message: “We are feeling so blessed to be able to stay at home. At the same time, we really appreciate frontline workers for making this possible for us!” (Centre) The Aurora Food Pantry also sent their thanks, specifically to Helen Avraam Neophytou for making signs for clients to join in the thanks with donations from each sign purchased going to the Food Pantry. “Thank you to Helen and the community for supporting all of our valued healthcare professionals, first responders and essential workers who are out there making a difference every day!” (Above) Cascindra Kawczynski posted multiple messages in her window, including rainbows for frontline workers. Photos courtesy of the Town of Aurora





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FEEDING THE COMMUNITY



Vital community meal programs led by the ecumenical organization “Welcoming Arms” were back up and running last month, albeit in a very new way, following their temporary closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Welcoming Arms spearheads “Welcome Table”, a weekly dinner program out of Trinity Anglican Church, and the lunchtime “Martha’s Table” out of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church. While neither church can re-open their doors to the general public just yet, the Trinity parking lot has been transformed into a drive-through meal service with local food provided by a number of local restaurants, including Bijoy’s, Catharina’s Kitchen, and a small group of volunteers who have leant their time preparing sandwiches in the St. Andrew’s Kitchen. Getting the meal programs back up and running has been made possible in part through the contributions of the Aurora Rotary Club and the Aurora Cares Community Action Team, a group of community leaders established by the Town in the wake of the COVID-19 emergency, to identify and address the needs of Aurora’s most vulnerable. (Top) Welcome Table volunteers prepare to serve on April 29. (ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT) Martha’s Table prepares to welcome guests.

Auroran photos by Brock Weir

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Week of May 14, 2020



Aurora Tigers preparing for the unexpected

By Robert Belardi

The Aurora Tigers are set to begin preseason preparations despite the uncertainties which may lie ahead.

Head Coach Jim Wells Jr. says he is trying to envision what next season might look like.

“The biggest thing we’ve been doing as a group is trying to figure out what next season is going to look like,” he said. “We’re waiting for the league and their direction. Right now, we’re on a no recruit, no scout.”

The team must also wait for the provincial and federal government decisions for recreation.

Once a decision is processed, the team can begin to see when training camps can take place.

The Tigers want to execute this three-phased plan in the middle of this month.

Despite the strenuous efforts within the club to prepare for upcoming events ahead, there is no telling whether or not their plan in motion will be able to

combat any unexpected difficulties.

“What we’ve done is we’ve put plans in place, with plan A, B, C. And, we don’t even know if A, B, C are going to be the scenarios,” Wells added.

“What traditionally has happened in hockey is going to be drastically changed. We just don’t know how it’s going to be changed and we’ll have to be prepared to adjust quickly and accordingly.”

That begins now. Wells intends to begin hosting Zoom calls with the team followed by individual chats. Finally, fitness routines will be implemented to supplement the loss of the sport for the past few months.

It has been a tough adjustment for the players to get used to the mere fact that hockey has almost unequivocally been wiped out from their daily lives.

The boys have had to adjust to a new way of living since the quarantine without access to the rink.

Aurora Tigers defenceman and Clif Bar OJHL Community Award winner Trevor Grasby says he has taken this time to work on things he may not have



Jim Wells, Jr. looks on from the bench in one of the Tigers’ final home games of the season in February against the North York Rangers.

Auroran photo by Robert Belardi

had the chance to practice before.

“I’ve been in the driveway basically every day for an hour shooting pucks or stick handling. That’s actually helped and hopefully it can translate on the ice whenever we get to go back on the ice,” Grasby said.

Grasby uses this time to exercise in the backyard to stay in shape and spend quality time getting closer with his family.

He works out with his 14-year-old brother, Kyle, who also plays hockey. The two of them motivate each other through this time.

Grasby has found another way to practice some way of skating. He has purchased roller blades and says although it is not the same as the ice, it’s the closest thing he is going to get.

As for the team, he says the boys are anxious; deprived of the sport and of each other’s company. They all frequently communicate with one another. The Facetime calls are not cutting it anymore.

“We’re all just anxious to get back together. Aside from getting back on the ice, you just want to be able to see your friends. There is a difference between getting to Facetime them and getting to see them in person. It is all pretty much the same feelings, we’re just chomping at the bit to get back at it,” Grasby explained.

If it’s one thing that both Wells and Grasby have in common, it is watching NHL rewinds on Sportsnet.

Wells is a historian of the sport and he is interested in re-watching classic hockey games to occupy his time while keeping close tabs on how the NHL is set to bring back their season.

As for Grasby, the feeling is quite similar. The defenceman says it’s been interesting to see how the game has evolved over the years.

For now, the team is excited to enforce their plan ahead of the 2020-2021 season.

July start would be a pleasant surprise, says Aurora FC head coach

By Robert Belardi

It would be a pleasant surprise to see League 1 kick off the season by July, says Aurora FC head coach Mike Aquino.

All sports coming to a complete standstill as a result of the pandemic has made it increasingly difficult to predict when the appropriate time is to get back out on the field.

“I’d be pleasantly surprised, I’d be happy for it to get back at it and do something. I just don’t believe that we’re positioned to start any earlier than July,” Aquino tells The Auroran.

The start to the year was postponed on March 20 and the process hasn’t gotten any easier. Aquino says his players have been contacting him for any updates and further news.

Much to the dismay of the entire team, there is no information on when the League will resume.

He is encouraging his players to exercise and stay healthy as best as they can. As for the technical and tactical side of the sport, there is not a whole lot that can be done without team practices.

“Then the problem with the league becomes [the fact that the] majority of the players are players who attend college and university, wherever that may be, and they’re all gone by the end of August.”

Hypothetically, if the league does begin in July, players will not have a proper season, which could have ramifications on a player’s talent moving forward.

“Soccer is their life, that’s all they want

to do. So, for them, they miss it.”

“They want to be out on the field playing enjoying themselves and enjoying the game they play each and every day and doing what they do best.”

As players continue to endure this temporary moratorium from soccer, the prospect of all players seeing time away from the sport has hurt.

Aquino asks, what does this mean for players of all ages? If an eight-or ten-year-old experiences time away from the game, will that player lose their talent? Will lost time away from pivotal years of learning key elements to the game that could affect their future?

The holistic impact on players ranges from the amateur, to semi-professional, all the way to professional players and the same concern is raised regarding the clubs.

Aquino says there has been talks within League 1 to investigate the financial stature of all clubs.

“Right now, they’re in talks with all license holders to see where clubs are at financially. Where are they at financially, where are they at with their commitment to League 1.”

He says he can see two or three clubs opting out of the competition for this year. The league should gather all the intel by June and there should be definitive answer shortly after.

As soon as Aquino knows when the potential start date is scheduled, then he will put a plan in place. Right now, there isn’t a whole lot he can do and not a whole lot Aurora FC can do as well.

All anyone can do is wait.

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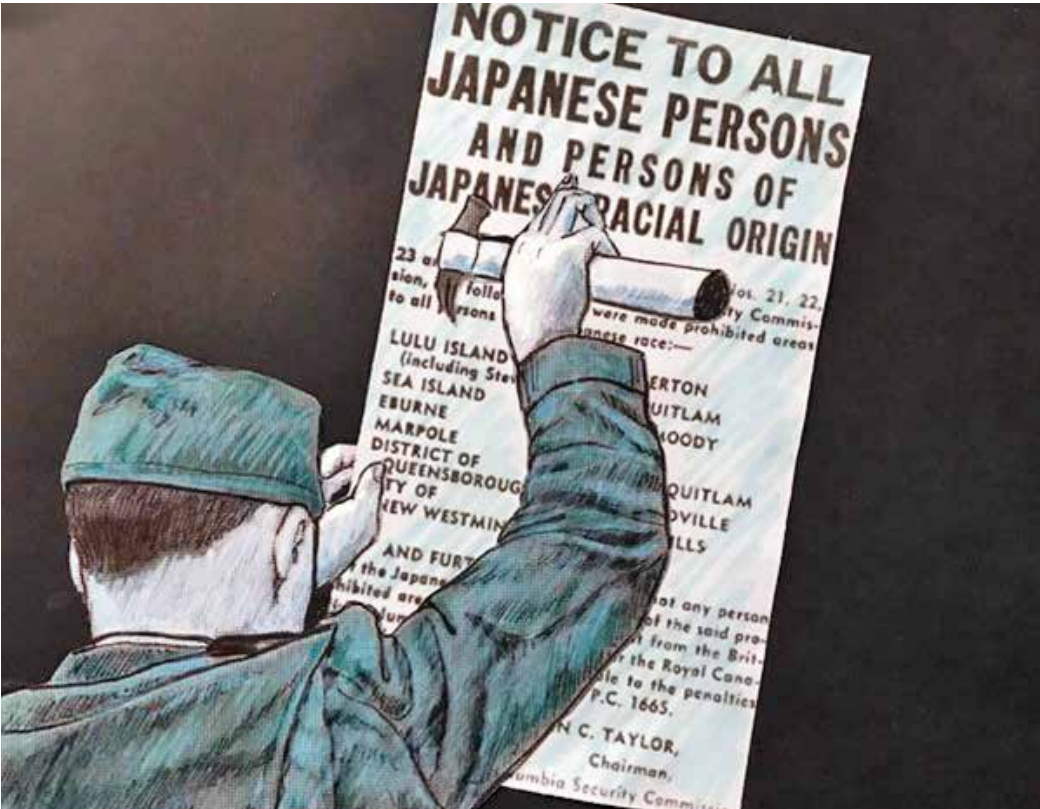
Out of the Ashes is personal story of Japanese internment and the healing power of art



By Brock Weir

The rising phoenix is a potent symbol of a fresh beginning. From time immemorial, the mighty bird rising from the ashes and beginning life anew is an icon that has transcended cultures, and its invincibility is, in the words of Lillian Michiko Blakey, “a testament to its determination to survive.” There is probably no title more fitting for the collected works of Ms. Blakey, a Newmarket-based visual artist, as she

communicates her own personal story of survival as a Japanese-Canadian interred during the Second World War; and she is now doing so in a way that wasn’t even considered just a few months before. For more than 20 years, Ms. Blakey has been exploring the struggles experienced by not only she and her family, but hundreds of other Japanese-Canadians, during the Japanese interment through art. It is a way of harnessing the power of various media to educate Canadians young and old about a reality some of us have either forgotten or find difficult to



address and drive home the message that what happened to our citizens following the attack on Pearl Harbour never happens again to any group. Lillian Michiko Blakey was set to bring her art and her powerful words to the Aurora Public Library (APL) for a talk on Wednesday, May 6. While this event had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the message is nevertheless ringing loud and clear throughout our community. Instead of speaking before a crowd at the Library last week, the artist was invited to transform her talk into a multimedia three-part podcast, which is now streaming on APL’s website (aurorapl.ca) and on YouTube.

“For almost 20 years, I have been focusing on telling the story of my family from World War 2 until now, how Japanese-Canadians were forcibly removed from our homes,” she tells The Auroran. Her artistic exploration of this difficult personal topic began in 1995 when she asked her mother to sit down and write a story about their family’s experience. It was a topic that was not often discussed in their household after a return to some degree of normalcy, a typical phenomenon amongst families that went through the trauma, she explains. “As a result, my generation, the third generation, sort of grew up in denial,” says Lillian. “We didn’t want to be seen as Japanese-Canadians and, therefore, many of us married outside our culture and didn’t really take our children to any cultural events. It was difficult finding our own identity, so I started in 2001 with one painting, which I showed to four of my friends who were superintendents and directors of education, and when they said they never knew [of the Japanese internment] I thought, my goodness, if they didn’t know, how is the rest of the country ever going to understand what happened and that it can never happen again?”

As an artist, she says this is her way of dealing with “hard issues”, not an easy task for more than two decades. But she says she is driven by a sense of responsibility. Some people, she says, take citizenship for granted. Citizenship is an “amazing thing” as is “the feeling of being protected by a country that you choose to live in.” While Out of the Ashes explores what it means when those rights are taken away, she says she hopes the art and words that come together through this new podcast underscore to inspire others.



Among the images incorporated into Lillian Michiko Blakey’s new podcast, Out of the Ashes, are evocative pieces of original art and poignant and personal family photos.

Contributed photos

“It is like cultural genocide in a way when you make people feel like they want to belong somewhere...and you want to belong to the dominant culture and leave yours behind, whereas we encourage people from diverse countries to keep their culture and belong, which is quite different from when I grew up, she explains. “I really wanted to make this a journey to see if it could lead to a final acceptance of who I am and it has,” she says. “In a way, with art, it is almost like talking to yourself: you tell your story without fear of who is going to look at it and that is really important. I think art is a better medium to educate children rather than having them read tons and tons of text. It just makes more sense to bring them right into the story. It is a way of supporting children while understanding the past. “For me, art, film and plays have the biggest impact on people because it is immediate. There is a whole generation of people who need instant gratification and a lot of people do not want to read through whole volumes of books to get the story.”

Farmers’ Market aims to re-open May 23

From page 2

ensure the AFM is opening with the new safety standards while still allowing all farmers’ market patrons to enjoy. “I’m personally very excited that our Market is opening up. We need some positive news and things to look forward to and I believe the opening of the AFM will lighten spirits of our Town residents and all those who enjoy shopping on Saturday mornings beginning at 9 a.m. until 1 p.m.

“It is a bittersweet time as I know many will miss seeing our very own Jan Freedman (The Jam Lady) on opening day; If she were here, we would be busy discussing all the details to make a perfect opening for everyone to enjoy. I know Jan will be smiling down at us and making sure all goes perfectly on May 23.” For more information about the Aurora Farmers’ Market, including an updated roster of vendors, visit theaurorafarmersmarket.com.

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Off-leash dog park in Highland Gate area moves forward



Dogs are pictured socializing at Canine Commons, thus far Aurora’s only off-leash dog park, while their humans practice social distancing in March, a week before emergency orders forced the shutter of this and other municipal parks. A second dog park, serving the Highland Gate community, is set to take another step forward this month.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

By Brock Weir

A new off-leash dog park in the redeveloping Highland Gate community is set to take a significant step forward this month.

Council last week gave the tentative green light to a new off-leash dog park on the former golf course lands. Their decision, made at the Committee level, is set to be ratified at the end of the month and will direct staff to design and construct the park through the future subdivision agreement.

An off-leash dog park was first proposed to Council by students at Regency Acres Public School as a way to bring community benefit from an overall loss of green space.

In giving their thumbs-up last week, Council said it was a prime example of democracy in action.

“About two years ago, they came forward and they wanted to put a dog park in this park,” said Operations Manager Al Downey on the parkland at the heart of the Highland Gate redevelopment enshrined by the Town and the Developer in their minutes of settlement. “We sat down and talked about what they were looking for. We said we needed to take it back to the Residents’ Association in Highland Gate and present it to them, which we did.

“We went back and forth with Highland Gate and the Committee as to what they wanted to see there and...taking it to the residents, it was addressing their needs as well as Highland Gate’s.”

Among those supporting the plan was Councillor Sandra Humfries.

“I am looking forward to it and I know the kids at Regency Acres will be thrilled to know this is actually coming to fruition and I really love to [say], ‘Look at this, democracy at its best,’” she said. “You have young kids who had an idea through a situation that was tough, with what happened to Highland, and they are coming up with a great idea to make it positive. Congratulations to those kids and I hope this moves forward.”

If it does indeed move forward once Council meets remotely to ratify its decision on May 26, the off-leash dog park will comprise of .35 hectares designated for neighbourhood use and accessed by walking through the central Highland Gate park via trails.

The concept plan includes a continuous trail through the park, enhanced buffer plantings along residential property lines to the south, fencing around the dog park proper,

with planting and seating areas on site.

“Off-leash dog parks are recommended within the (Parks and Recreation Master Plan) as a medium priority,” said Sarah Tienkamp, Manager of Parks and Fleet, in her report to Council. “It also indicates that a similar model to that for Canine Commons (Aurora’s present off-leash dog park on Industrial Parkway North) be used, whereby a community organization is primarily involved with the establishment, general maintenance and ongoing operation of the park.

“There are several benefits a dog park has to offer as far as pets are concerned, but owners can garner the effects of many of the same advantages, which include: socialization – while this is important for pets, it is just as important for people and provides an opportunity to meet and get to know your neighbours; no leash – allows both you and your pet to roam free without being tethered to one another, less effort and stress on both parties; shared experiences – allows you to converse with like-minded individuals and share information regarding your pet experiences; pets playing – owners enjoy seeing their pets having fun, creates a sense of happiness; and taking a break – park setting provides for an overall sense of calm as there are seating areas, trees, greenery and fresh air, [and] allows for a change of pace/routine.”

But, if the new dog park, once approved, follows the same model as Canine Commons, there needs to be a community buy-in.

This issue was highlighted by Councillor Wendy Gaertner who said Aurora “had so much trouble with the last dog park, getting residents to maintain and run it.”

“What happens if we have the same issue here where residents don’t want to take charge of this?” she asked.

Mr. Downey replied that after taking the proposal to the Town’s Community Advisory Committee, he believes there is a resident who is “very interested” in taking on that job.

“If, for some reason they aren’t and another resident who doesn’t step forward, we will not be proceeding with this dog park,” he said.

Replied Councillor Humfries: “If there is an issue with the resident maybe not wanting to follow through, I hope we can come up with a good, solid plan to see if there are other individuals who would like to be a lead in putting a committee together because I am sure that it will be well-received in the community and we will have lots of volunteers.”





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CROSSWORD

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Seed part

7. Productive

13. Popular cocktail

14. Sausages

16. Western state

17. Natural desires

19. Defunct British automaker

20. Early media tycoon

22. Move from one place to another

23. Letter of Semitic abjads

25. Female birds

26. Umbrella brand

28. Delinquent

29. Tax collector

30. Cooking tool

31. Female sibling

33. Flat-topped hat

34. Angolan currency

36. Boardwalk candy

38. European nation
40. Leaflike part of palm

41. Removed with solvent

43. Uttered words

44. Unfashionable person

45. Disappointed

47. Controversial device in soccer

48. 007’s creator

51. Pain

53. UCLA mascot

55. Razorbill

56. Turkic people

58. Mimic

59. Crime involving fire

60. And, Latin

61. A saponaceous quality

64. Dorm employee

65. Estate lands

67. States

69. They slow you down

70. Gets up

CLUES DOWN

1. One or the other

2. Doc

3. Songs have them

4. Record of payment (abbr.)

5. Speak endlessly

6. American state

7. Digressions

8. Tell on

9. Brews

10. Belongs to the bottom layer

11. American cigarette brand

12. Legal voting age in US

13. Dish

15. Expelled air from the nose

18. Body art

21. Fierce, destructive act

24. Bear bright yellow flowers

26. Japanese delicacy

27. Get off your feet

30. Male organs in some invertebrates
32. __, so good

35. Cleverness

37. Protest yacht

38. Anesthetized

39. Mollified

42. Touch lightly

43. Diego, Francisco, Anselmo

46. Some windows have them

47. National capital

49. Squirrels like them

50. Grandmothers

52. Painter’s tool

54. News organization

55. __ and thesis: musical term

57. Famed activist Parks

59. __ Spumante (Italian wine)

62. A number or amount not specified

63. Body part

66. Of I

68. Old English

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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Family of late Chartwell resident calls for community support for long-term care staff



CHARTWELL STRONG – As Chartwell Aurora continues to grapple with an outbreak of COVID-19, displays of support are popping up around the long-term care residence, and from within.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

From page 1
more than 40 of whom are presently battling COVID-19.

“We figured this is a good way to honour our mum’s memory by giving support to those who supported her,” continues Kyle, who served as Newmarket-Aurora’s Member of Parliament from 2015 – 2019. “I think we need to make sure they are supported, taken care of and they’re not forgotten. They care about the people more than themselves and that is universal among them.”

With a fundraising goal of \$1,000, the campaign aims to raise enough to provide staff with “meals, snacks, treats and masks” and anything else that is needed to lend a hand to the “heroes at the frontline of the pandemic.”

It has been a difficult period for the Chartwell Aurora community.

As of Tuesday, the long-term care

residence was addressing 54 confirmed cases of COVID-19, 43 of which are reported among residents and 11 cases among healthcare workers. By May 12, 11 residents had lost their battle with the virus.

Aurora-wide, the Region of York reports 43 active cases of COVID-19 within the community. Of the 92 total confirmed Aurora cases since the start of the pandemic, 36 cases have resolved and 13 individuals have died.

The Region classifies 49 cases (53 per cent) as related to institutional outbreak, 23 cases (25 per cent) to close contact, 10 cases (11 per cent) to travel, and 9 cases (10 per cent) to local transmission. At press time, 1 case was presently under investigation.

“We have always been pleased by the level of support our mum received from the staff at Chartwell, but I think now, just the general public is more

aware of long-term care and the gap there might have been in our healthcare system,” says Kyle. “The pandemic has clearly shown those gaps in stark relief, so it certainly is something that needs to be addressed when all this is said and done. The staff is incredible and their commitment, hard work and all of that has always been evident, evident before this but even more so now. Long-term care shouldn’t be this bottom-of-the-list priority when it comes to healthcare in Ontario. I think it needs to be elevated to a higher status; especially as the population continues to grow older, it

is going to become more and more of an issue, so it will be more of a priority than it has been necessarily.

“On behalf of my sisters and myself, from a family member, we want to thank them profusely for the hard work I know they do all the time and the dedication they have to all the patients there. We just want to thank them for that and let them know that it doesn’t go unnoticed by us or the community.”

To contribute to the Support Chartwell Aurora Frontline Staff campaign, visit www.gofundme.com/jf/thanks-chartwell-aurora-frontline-staff.



STAY STRONG – Matthew and Elizabeth Watkin have sent a strong message of support to their community, collaborating on a sign that now proudly stands outside their Mavrinac Boulevard home.

Contributed photo

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Teachers and staff from St. Joseph's Catholic Elementary School in southwest Aurora might not be able to welcome students back into classes just yet, but they welcomed them back to school nonetheless over the weekend for a parade to show support for the St. Joe's community. Teachers lined the school's drop-off area on an unexpectedly snowy Saturday morning to greet dozens of students (including Areg and Taon, second from top, and Joshua and Benjamin, bottom) and their families, and drive home the message that they can't wait to get back to some degree of normal. "In this time of social distancing, we are all missing the close relationships we share with our students each day," said Elaine Williams. Students were also invited to participate in a Community Outreach Project to draw pictures and cards with positive messages which will soon be shared with residents of area retirement homes. "Small acts of kindness mean a great deal during times of isolation!" said Ms. Williams.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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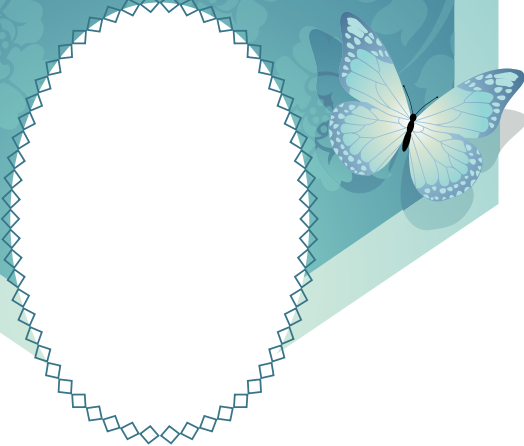
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IN MEMORIAM



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Better Together



No colour is more powerful than the colour of *Love*

Gino discovered a *love* for painting.
And it became a family activity most nights.
~ Franca Marroccoli



Dear Friend,

Gino, Marissa and I were a very close family.

We were strong, we were happy. And, like most families, we thought we were invincible. We believed we could weather whatever storms life presented. What we didn't know is that we'd be hit by a storm that would require us to lean on many shoulders.

I'm sharing my story with you because it's important to me that everyone in our community understands that while the pain of witnessing a loved one's illness is extremely hard, Margaret Bahen Hospice and Doane House Hospice provide critical support that will help you through one of the most difficult times in your life.

Generous community financial support of these two outstanding organizations has enabled them to provide programs and services that would not otherwise be available to families like mine. I hope you will consider joining their family of supporters by sending a gift today to help them continue their important work.

This is our story.

Gino and I met in 1994. We were blessed with love, friendship, laughter and our beautiful daughter, Marissa, who is now 14. We would never have guessed back in those happy, care-free days that we would face a 24-year journey with cancer.

It began in 1995 with a mole on Gino's leg that was determined to be skin cancer. It was removed and life carried on. Three years later, the cancer was back and had invaded his lymph nodes. He underwent surgery and immunotherapy – and life continued. All seemed relatively well until 2015.

Then, life as we knew it began to unravel.

Gino's annual scan in 2015 brought the news we had been dreading. The cancer had spread and there were tumours in the muscles behind his kidneys and spleen. The prognosis was 12 to 15 months if we did nothing. Participation in clinical trials at Princess Margaret could prolong his life. Gino jumped at the chance.

653 Queen Street, Newmarket ON L3Y 2J1 www.myhospice.ca



Gino Marroccoli

So began more than four years of various experimental treatments, some very invasive, some that temporarily gave us hope, and others that made Gino extremely ill. Then he was sent home with a hospital bed, daily PSW visits and a pain pump. He had a wound from the last procedure that wouldn't heal, and we were told there was nothing more to do.

Doane House Hospice was there for me.

In my role as caregiver, I did my best to stay strong for Gino and Marissa, but there were days I wondered how I could keep going. The Caregiver Support program at Doane House Hospice enabled me to share my experiences and understand that my thoughts and feelings were not unusual. The intimate bond I forged with the participants and facilitators was instrumental for the last 1.5 years of Gino's life.

Margaret Bahen Hospice was there for all of us.

On July 3, Margaret Bahen Hospice became our new home away from home. The staff and volunteers helped Gino live out the rest of his life with joy.

Gino was seldom alone. So many family and friends wished to visit that we needed to devise a schedule for guests so that we could ensure separate time just for the three of us. Gino learned about the Art Therapy program and discovered his love of painting. It became a family activity most nights.

The little touches provided by Margaret Bahen Hospice will always be happy memories for Marissa and me – the memory box outside Gino's room that contained his favourite things and the freshly baked chocolate chip cookies, always at the ready when Gino had a hankering.

Gino passed away peacefully on August 1st. I remember the calm as we accompanied Gino on his last journey, with the staff and volunteers standing by. I remember the beautiful quilt that covered him – the white crosses and blue doves. And, I remember the song that was playing, "Goodbye, My Friend."

In the months after Gino died, I attended grief counselling at Doane House Hospice. While Marissa and I struggle each day with the loss of Gino, the program facilitators helped us understand that the loneliness, sadness and waves of overwhelming grief are normal.

Thanks to the combined compassionate care Margaret Bahen Hospice and Doane House Hospice provided to our family through our difficult journey, we were able to share many joyous moments during Gino's final days.

They supported us as a family, and I hope my story will inspire you to consider making a gift to this life-changing place.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Franca Marroccoli

P.S. The COVID-19 crisis has impacted hospice financially and they need your support more than ever. Please consider sending a gift today.



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How home design trends are evolving for social distancing

COVID-19 has brought changes to everything, and home design is no exception. Experts are expecting to see lasting impacts on everything from the materials we use to the rooms we prioritize. Check out these and other noteworthy trends:

HOUSES OVER APARTMENTS: Many people who live in condos or apartments do so to be closer to the action — work, entertainment and shops — and never planned on spending much time at home. But the pandemic has changed that, and more people are going to want a home that offers plenty of room and outdoor space in case they need to self-isolate again.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY: A hard lesson we've learned is that things and services we thought we could

count on aren't necessarily a sure thing, so items that increase self-reliance will become very popular. Expect to see more homes with sources of energy like solar panels, sources of heat like fireplaces and stoves, and even urban and indoor gardens that allow you to grow your own produce.

OUTDOOR LIVING: Between playgrounds closing and parks becoming overcrowded, many of us are turning to our balconies, patios and backyards for fresh air and nature. This means we're going to be investing more in our outdoor spaces, with functional kitchens, soothing water features, cozy firepits, and high-quality outdoor furniture to create a much-needed escape.

HEALTHIER SPACES: Thanks to spending more time indoors and reprioritizing our health, we'll turn to design to help ensure our homes are safe and healthy for our families. We'll see a rise in products like water filtration systems as well as materials that improve indoor air quality. For new homes and additions, alternatives to wood-framing like insulated concrete forms from Nudura, which

offer improved ventilation for healthier indoor air quality and an environment that's less susceptible to mold, will be key.

HOME OFFICE SPACE: Business experts are suggesting many companies will see that working from home is not only possible but offers tangible benefits, like saving money on office space rent. With working from home on the rise, creating a home office space that inspires productivity will be a major project many of us tackle. Luxury home office furniture that feels chic and blends into your décor as well as ergonomic chairs and desks will see a major boost.

CUSTOM AND QUALITY: With the hit to the economy, people are going to be buying less, but what they do buy will be better quality, while at the same time making an effort to support American businesses. When it comes to design, trends will shift to locally made furniture, custom-built homes and pieces and materials that stand the test of time.

Find more information at nudura.com.

Turn your new house into a home

Historically low mortgage interest rates are helping to drive a new wave of home sales. Statistics Canada's Canadian Housing Survey found about half of Canadian households have either moved within the past five years or intend to do so within the next five.

People relocate for various reasons. After moving into a new house, it can take some effort to turn that house into a true home and feel comfortable in your new environs. These steps can help that process along.

Create at least one complete and serene space. Focus on setting up the bedroom so you can retreat at the end of the day. Invest in new furniture or get new bedding to give the room this comforting feeling.

Create an organizational plan. It can be tempting to want to throw everything in closets and unpack quickly, but give yourself time to fully analyze where you want to store items, where you may need to paint or reconfigure spaces, as well as any home improvements you want to make before taking out all of your stuff. When you fully unpack, you can immediately enjoy your hard work.

Hang artwork. Hang a few select pieces of artwork or family photos shortly after moving in. Surround yourself with things that make you feel good.

Bring mementos. Your first home may bring about warm feelings. While you can't recreate it entirely, you can use a piece of furniture or a few family heirlooms to make your new space feel homey.

Rely on familiar scents. Break in the new space with familiar aromas, whether it's preferential air fresheners, scented candles or baking your favorite chocolate chip cookie recipe.

Moving into a new home can be exciting. Certain touches can help make the new space feel more like home.



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RESALE
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By Julien Laurion
The Big Tuna of Real Estate

Flags For Aurora

MY FELLOW AURORANS, this month I wanted to use this space to share my empathy and support for our community as we navigate through this pandemic. We have embarked on a whole new journey. We have not seen a disruption like this in our history. It is truly amazing how quickly life can change in a matter of months. The impacts of this virus have been far-reaching; job loss, deaths of loved ones and the freedom to move about in our daily life without fear or worry.

The economy has been hit hard with almost two million Canadians losing their jobs this past month, which is both sad and shocking. As a business owner myself, this pandemic has changed everything and given me much to think about in the days since we entered into a state of emergency. In both the personal and professional, I feel that we, as a community, will have some real obstacles to overcome in the coming months to get back on our feet. I have admired so

many of my friends and colleagues who are looking for ways to help and continue to be inspired by their family and work life. With this in mind, the Flags for Aurora Campaign was born.

As I have experienced a major shift in my professional life, I began to explore my passion for wood-working to keep busy and I began to create wooden Canadian flags for family. It occurred to me that I can offer these to the community and mobilize our collective goodwill and Canadian spirit to raise money for a charity in need and brighten up our backyards this summer, while we spend a lot of time at home.

The Flags for Aurora campaign will last until Canada Day with a goal to raise \$1000 minimum for the Aurora Food Pantry. A portion of the proceeds from each flag sold will be directed to the Food pantry. I hope to help our local businesses by buying all my supplies here in Aurora and will share on my social platforms; we all need a little light shone on us during this time.

If you are interested in purchasing a flag, please visit my website www.bigtuna.ca and click the link 'flags for aurora'. From there, please fill out the order form and I will be in contact with you shortly. Each flag will sell for \$120.00 with \$40.00 from each flag going to charity.

I know we will get through this so let us stay Aurora Strong.

Julien Laurion AKA Big Tuna, is a local Real Estate Sale Representative with Royal LePage Your Community Realty in Aurora. I am a real estate agent who has expertise in both Real Estate and Renovations and have been involved in this community for over 20 years. If you have a question for my monthly article or if you are considering buying, selling or leasing a home please feel free to call or email me directly at (416) 402-5530 or julien@bigtuna.ca or by alternatively visiting my website www.bigtuna.ca or Facebook page @bigtunarealty

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Ask A Realtor®



We have waited to sell until the pandemic ends, is now a better time?

While many wanting to sell their home this Spring paused taking this action due to the COVID-19 pandemic; others needing to sell have been successful within a month of the home being placed for sale. The more preparation in advance of placing the home on the market while staying safe at home will benefit how the home attracts buyers.

Book a video conference consultation with a REALTOR® to discuss your home selling needs. The upside to a thorough marketing consultation with a Seller's Representative Specialist (SRS) is they will be able to guide and provide the best plan of action checklist to prepare the home for sale.

It's essential to consider the risks of potential exposure to COVID-19 with the home placed for sale if it's currently occupied or even if it's vacant and have that discussion with your REALTOR®. COVID-19 protocols would be a necessary conversation around safely navigating through physical showings. Will Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) be provided and health checklists signed prior to showings? How much of the process can be handled safer with virtual means right up until the closing of the sale? Ideally the REALTOR® may be able to provide virtual staging, guided live interactive walk through videos for buyers since open houses have been stopped.

Ask if negotiations and offers can also be handled electronically. Pricing is crucial as always and a detailed comparative market assessment would need to be reviewed virtually as well. Marketing the home in the best clean, repaired, bright and spacious condition is essential for photography and video.

Buyer demand is strong yet the experience of shopping for a home has shifted online more than ever before and quality images matter. Does the REALTOR® use drone video and images? Do they use Matterport technology or iGuide for images, floor plans, video walkthroughs and what is the difference? Seller's in most cases want to be sure that Buyer's are indeed serious and well educated before they are permitted for safe physical showings. Buyer's agents need to ask more questions to uncover all of their clients needs, wants, pre-qualified budgets and lifestyle preferences to be a more suitable home finding matchmaker.

— Written by Connie Power

Connie Power is the Assistant Manager, Sales Representative CNE® SRS® ABR® SRES® for RE/MAX Hallmark York Group Realty Ltd., Brokerage serving York region and beyond in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Empowering you in Real Estate, Call Connie today to make an appointment to discuss your next move at (905) 726-0856.

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Did you know?

Outdoor living is wildly popular, as more and more homeowners are bringing elements once reserved for home interiors into their backyards.

When designing outdoor living spaces, homeowners may learn about biophilic design, an architectural concept that aims to incorporate natural elements into outdoor living spaces. Proponents of biophilic design say it satisfies an innate human need to affiliate with nature, thereby helping to reduce stress that people may experience after being stuck indoors for much of their days. Biophilic design is often part of a home interior design, but many homeowners also embrace it when designing their outdoor living spaces. For example, surrounding outdoor living areas with noninvasive plants, flowers and trees and using natural materials like wood and stone when building such spaces are great ways to embrace biophilic design and create a tension-free ambiance in outdoor living spaces.



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3 perennial gardening pointers

Gardening is an engaging hobby that can provide a host of benefits, some of which may surprise even the most devoted gardeners.

For example, the Harvard Medical School notes that just 30 minutes of gardening activities burns 135 calories, making gardening a fun and simple way to incorporate more exercise into your daily routine. In addition, scientists have long proven that gardening releases the hormones serotonin and dopamine in the brain, each of which are associated with improved mood.

Perennial gardens can be especially attractive to seasoned gardeners and novices. Perennials are plants that come back year after year, and committing to a perennial garden can ensure people stick with gardening for the long haul, reaping all of the rewards that come with making such a commitment.

Before planting a perennial garden, those new to gardening may want to consider these three tips.

1 Make a plan. A perennial garden comes back year after year, which means any mistakes you make when planting are likely to haunt you year after year as well. Factors like space and location must be considered before planting. Many gardeners utilize garden planning applications like GrowVeg to make the process of planning a garden simpler and more organized. Such applications can be especially useful for novices.

2 Consider aesthetics. Gardens can be awe-inspiring, especially when gardeners consider aesthetics prior to planting. The DIY Network advises gardeners to consider scale before choosing which perennials to plant. Tall plants and wide beds tend to look best outside large homes, while short plants in small beds tend to look better outside small homes.

3 Work with a professional. Local garden centres can be excellent resources when planning perennial gardens. Representatives at such businesses can offer tips on native plants, which will be more likely to thrive year after year than non-natives. Such representatives also can help you choose the right plants based on the amount of sunlight the plants will likely get after being planted. Each of these factors can be easily overlooked by people without much gardening experience.

Perennial gardens can provide years of joy and inspiration, especially when gardeners give ample attention to certain details prior to planting.



8 garden tools for beginners

The right tool for the job is essential to working safely and efficiently. This is as true in the workplace as it is in the garden.

Novice gardeners may not know where to begin in regards to which tools they need. The following are eight items that can serve as a solid foundation for beginning gardeners.

GLOVES: Your hands will be working hard, so it pays to protect them from calluses, blisters, splinters, insects, and dirt. Look for water-resistant gloves that are also breathable.

HAND PRUNERS: Hand pruners are essential for cutting branches, cleaning up shrubs, dead-heading flowers, and various other tasks. Choose ergonomic, no-slip handles that will make work easier. Rust-resistant, nonstick blades also are handy.

WHEELBARROW: A wheelbarrow can transport gear to garden beds or tote dirt, leaves, rocks, and other materials around the landscape. A good wheelbarrow is strong but light enough to maneuver when full.

LOPPERS: Long-handled loppers will fit the bill for thick branches. The long handles provide leverage to cut through branches an inch or more in diameter.

HAND TROWEL: A hand trowel is a handy tool that lets you dig holes or unearth weeds. While shopping for a trowel, consider getting a hand-held garden fork, which can aerate soil and cut through roots.

HOSE/WATERING CAN: Keeping gardens hydrated is part of ensuring their health. That makes a hose and a watering can two invaluable tools to have around. Invest in a lightweight, expandable hose if storage space is at a premium. An adjustable nozzle will enable you to customize the water flow as needed. A watering can is an easy way to tote water to hard-to-reach pots and containers.

GARDEN KNEELER: Gardeners often bend and kneel while working in the soil. That puts pressure on the back and knees. A comfortable garden kneeler with memory foam or one made from shock-absorbing material can reduce aches and pains.

GARDEN HOE: Garden hoes till soil, remove weeds and perform many other tasks. A garden hoe can be used along with a full-sized shovel, trowel and garden rake.

This list is just the tip of the garden tool iceberg. Visit a garden centre and speak with a professional about other tools that can be added to the mix.



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RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS

How to maintain your gas grill

GRILLING IS A WILDLY POPULAR way to cook meals. According to a 2018 survey from The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association, 70 percent of adults in the United States owned a grill in 2017, while 80 percent of Canadians could make that same claim. While grill ownership figures have remained relatively steady over the last 20 years, spending on grills has been on the rise and industry-wide revenue is expected to reach \$7.2 billion by 2022.

Such figures illustrate that grills have become increasingly significant investments. The HPBA survey found that gas grills are the most popular type of grill, and adults investing in a new gas grill would be wise to protect such investments by learning how to maintain them. Weber*, one of the world's leading manufacturers of gas grills, offers the following maintenance tips to gas grill owners who want their grills to keep cooking great meals for years to come.

Clean the outside of the grill lid. A paper towel and some cleaner can help gas grill owners keep their grills looking good on the outside. If your grill has a porcelain-coated lid, use glass cleaner. Stainless steel cleaner can be applied to stainless steel lids. When cleaning a stainless steel grill, use a microfiber towel and buff with the grain instead of against it for the best results.

Don't overlook the side tables. Many people love gas grills because the side tables provide a great place to place cooking utensils or spices and other special ingredients. Keeping these tables clean can prevent the formation of potentially harmful bacteria and also maintain the appearance of the grill. Use a microfiber towel and stainless steel cleaner, again making sure to buff with the grain, if cleaning a stainless steel side table. Tables made of thermoset plastic can be cleaned using a mild dish detergent and warm water.

Don't shy away from cleaning the cook box. The cook box can seem like an intimidating part to clean, but Weber notes that it's actually quite simple to maintain the cook box. Wait until the grill is completely cool before you carefully remove the cooking grates and Flavorizer bars. Then use a stainless steel brush to brush all excess grease and debris into the bottom tray. Once all of that is in the tray, it's easily discarded.

Burn off leftover residue. Let heat help you when trying to remove stubborn food debris from your grill. Turn all burners on high for 15 minutes before grilling. As the temperatures rise, any remaining debris will turn to ash, making it easy to remove using a stainless steel brush.

Maintaining a gas grill can help it ensure it's around to cook delicious meals for years to come.



Real Estate Market Update – Aurora

Carefully Selling Homes

The COVID-19 Pandemic has caused a global pause and shift to staying at home and minimizing all outings to stay safe and healthy. The strong start to the 2020 housing market has shifted to caution and necessity as the drivers until the Ontario and Canadian governments declare safer times. Interacting face to face happens with social distancing now and the recommendation of wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for outings which should be limited. Real Estate has remained an essential service throughout the pandemic and many who need to sell are still achieving success across the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board.

There were 2,975 sales across Toronto and the Greater Toronto area in the month of April with very low inventory of homes for sale to select from which lead to multiple offer scenarios in many cases. In Aurora, 40 homes sold at an average price of \$943,712 and there were 81 homes placed for sale with 158 homes in total for sale as of May 1st. With the current demand from buyers to meet the supply of homes it would take just under 3 months to deplete that current homes for sale inventory of all home types.

Typically, Seller's received 97 per cent of the asking price within a month of placing the home for sale in April.

The average price for a detached home was \$1,182,150; even in times of pandemic, homes are still maintaining their values while interest rates remain low. Buyer's in need to make a purchase continue to shop virtually and can attend live streamed open houses. Showings may be more limited as Seller's agents follow COVID-19 protocols and encourage most of the shopping to occur online prior to home visits.

Call your real estate professional for a video conference to discuss your real estate needs and examine the area statistics in depth as you plan your next move.

– Written by Connie Power

Connie Power is a Real Estate Sales Representative CNE® SRS® ABR® SRES®, Assistant Manager, Mentors and Develops New Real Estate Sales Representatives for RE/MAX Hallmark York Group Realty Ltd., Brokerage serving York region and beyond in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Empowering you in Real Estate, Call Connie today to make an appointment to discuss your next move at (905) 726-0856.

*The statistics provided herein were obtained from the Toronto Real Estate Board; Regional Housing Market Tables; York Region, Aurora for April 2020 and the Summary of Existing Home Transactions of all home types, April 2020 for all TRREB Areas.

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