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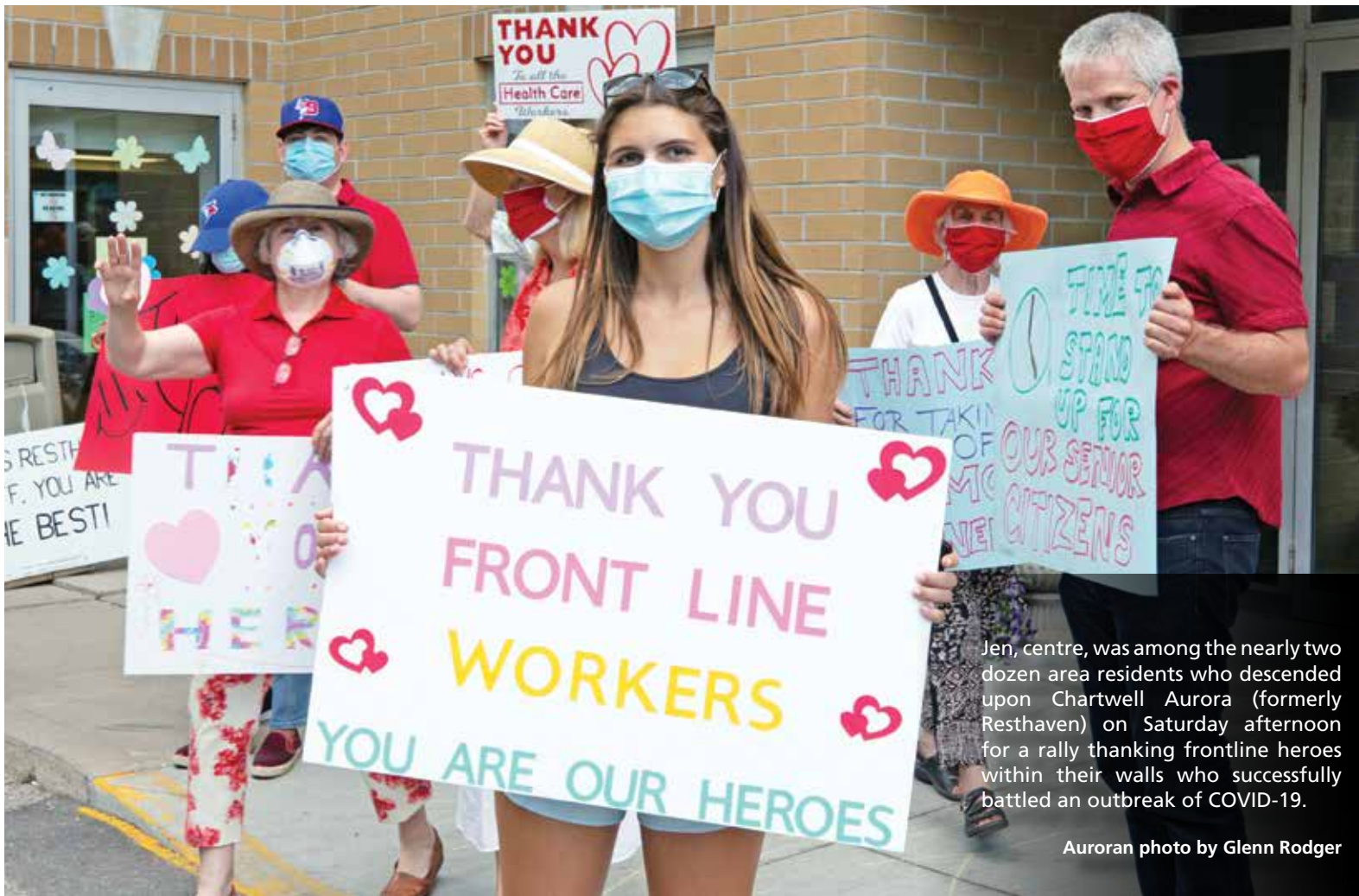
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Week of June 25, 2020



Jen, centre, was among the nearly two dozen area residents who descended upon Chartwell Aurora (formerly Resthaven) on Saturday afternoon for a rally thanking frontline heroes within their walls who successfully battled an outbreak of COVID-19.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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## Rally thanks frontline heroes at Chartwell Aurora

By Brock Weir

As numbers related to the COVID-19 pandemic continue to show encouraging signs, people are now setting their sights on how to adequately say thanks to the frontline heroes that helped keep communities safe and healthy at the peak of the outbreak.

One such show of thanks-giving took place on Saturday afternoon outside Chartwell Aurora (formerly Resthaven), the downtown Aurora long-term care

(LTC) residence that experienced a nearly 50-day outbreak of the virus.

With COVID-19 now eradicated within its walls, families of loved ones who call Chartwell Aurora home were finally able to reunite – albeit at a distance – on Thursday as the Province eased restrictions of such visits.

Family members joined the rally in a show of solidarity.

“We wanted to take a few minutes and thank the workers – all of the workers, not just the Personal Support Workers,

the cleaning staff, the food services staff, the admin staff, everyone who has been through a very, very difficult time,” said Michèle Bussi res, who co-organized the rally in conjunction with the Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill Federal Liberal Association. “This was the long-term care home that was hardest hit in the riding.

“This is a way of saying thank you, and we just really want to connect with the residents to say that we have all been isolating to some varying degrees but they

Continued on page 20

**Building consumer confidence is key to reopening: MPP**

By Brock Weir

With Ontario's re-opening efforts underway, more work needs to be done on rebuilding consumer confidence, according to Newmarket-Aurora MPP Christine Elliott.

Speaking to The Auroran on Friday afternoon as York Region moved into Stage 2 of the Province's

Continued on page 8



**MEET AURORA'S 2020 TEEN IDOL** – Alessia Bozzo, left, 14, has been named Aurora's 2020 Teen Idol after the annual talent competition, traditionally held to coincide with Canada Day, moved online. Joined by runner up Shizuka Watanabe, 17, the duo received their sashes at Town Hall last week. For more, please see Page 16.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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# Council moves one step closer to adopting Six Ward system

By Brock Weir

A six-ward electoral system is inching closer to reality in Aurora.

Meeting at the Committee level last week, Council members gave a tentative green light to adopting a six-ward electoral system in time for the next municipal election in 2022.

If the proposal gets final approval at Council this week, Aurora’s present at-large electoral system, whereby eligible voters select one mayor and up to six councillors to represent the Town as a whole, will be set aside. In its place, a new model will be adopted where the mayor will represent the whole community while each Councillor will be elected by certain neighbourhoods to represent

their interests at the table.

A six-ward model was moved forward to Council on a 5 – 3 vote, with Councillors Wendy Gaertner, John Gallo and Rachel Gilliland expressing misgivings that such a move doesn’t yet have a buy-in from the community.

“I am not confident I have the pulse of the community one way or another,” said Councillor Gallo, citing feedback he has received from the community.

His preference, he said, would be to put the recommendations stemming from the Town’s Electoral System Review (ESR) on the backburner to explore further options on community engagement, including the possibility of another community-wide referendum on the model.

“I just want a better gauge of the public

and I don’t have that,” he continued.

“I feel like we’re kind of skipping a step. I don’t think I am abdicating my responsibilities – I was elected to make decisions on behalf of everyone – but this is one of those big ones that public engagement would be vital and I simply don’t have that.”

Despite assurances from consultants tasked with carrying out the ESR that the level of engagement within Aurora had been far higher than other municipalities that have gone down this road, similar concerns were offered by Councillor Gaertner.

She suggested Council make a decision on its preferred model for a ward system and then put the final decision to the public in the form of a referendum, which Town Clerk Michael de Rond said would take approximately a year to get off the ground and could be held in a style similar to a byelection.

Previously a proponent of Aurora adopting a ward system, Councillor Gilliland said she was hesitating on a final decision as she’s not sure of the overall feeling amongst the public.

“If I were to pick something, I do like the six-ward system that is being presented to us; I just don’t know if that is 100 per cent what the public is wanting to do going forward because that wasn’t really the question that was presented to the public,” she said. “I would still like to digest what we have been presented and what the public thinks.

“We are elected officials making decisions [for the public], that we feel is best for the community, so we can serve our constituents in the most effective manner,” she continued, adding that her colleagues had made some good points from the “pro” camp. “There are a lot of great points on either side of the table here [but] I was taken aback by the go-ahead today when we got this report. I thought we would have a little more time to absorb what was going on and [get] some of the public comments that were around and whether or not we needed to further discuss some of things that were addressed [in the ESR].”

First to give their own thumbs-up to giving the six-ward system the go-ahead was Councillor Michael Thompson who made a motion that the proposed model be adopted for the next election.

In putting his motion forward, Councillor Thompson said local consultation had been “expansive” but conceded there isn’t one “definitive” system out there.

“There are benefits on both sides and I think our community would also, probably similar to previous times, be relatively split on the value of either one or the other... however, when I was elected in 2010, I certainly believed in the at-large system and over the past 10 years I have had many opportunities to either talk to other colleagues in other municipalities about their system of governance, [learn] more about wards, learn how representation works there... and I felt comfortable with [their]

responses.

“For myself, I truly believe that given the fact that we’re 60,000+ (in population), I think we’re either the largest or second-largest municipality by population to still have at-large, I think as changing demographics continue to unfold in Aurora and we continue to grow, the best way to represent all Aurorans going forward is in a ward system – then you will truly have a more diverse and representational Council in the years to come.”

Councillor Sandra Humfries offered a similar viewpoint, stating a ward system would bring a number of benefits to Council and community alike.

“I have heard both sides from a residential perspective,” she shared. “Some residents think it is great because you have an accountable individual. Others want to pick the best Councillor they want to work with. Some are afraid they might not have a Councillor who would support their area as well as another...but what I am finding is... there are six of us, the Mayor, we get emails and all of us are basically doing the same thing. Maybe that is a good thing, maybe it is not...but every area has a little bit of a different intricacy than others. You become more of a specialist in your area while you’re still considering the overall facilities for our residents to enjoy. I think there is a real opportunity here to take full ownership of issues and really run with them and give them the attention it deserves.

“Demographics have changed so much since 2010 and I really believe this is the right way to go. I think when a resident has their Councillor and they’re accountable to them, they have a stronger connection or understanding of who is going to help them through an issue or a concern and I think that is a pretty big deal. I really do.”

Councillor Harold Kim said he too was in favour of adopting the ward model in the interests of finding efficiencies.

“I think the answer [from the public] is almost always predictable because, in general, people believe if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it,” he said. “Having a ward system contributes to that theme of [finding efficiencies]. I think with having a ward system, you do have that specialist who understands their area. For me, it is really the efficiency aspect. We know there is an accountable person.”

Added Mayor Mrakas: “We always want to engage the public. I think from a public perspective, we have engaged them. We have done everything that is required and we have actually gone above and beyond that, I believe. The public has seen the map, the map hasn’t changed since the last time. For me, I think this provides an efficient, more accountable government to the residents of our community, allows our community to have the best possible representation sitting at this table. The most diverse representation, I believe, will occur in moving to this system and I think it is time.”



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**TONY VAN BYNEN**

Member of Parliament Newmarket-Aurora



# New chapter begins for renovated Our Lady of Grace



Fr. Frank McDevitt welcomed social-distanced worshippers into Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church on Yonge Street on Sunday morning for the first time in more than a year following extensive rebuilding and renovation efforts. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

**By Brock Weir**

Catholics across many parts of Ontario celebrated a return to Mass on Sunday morning after restrictions due to COVID-19 led to more than two months of closed doors at many places of worship.

But, for members of Aurora's Our Lady of Grace parish, the return to Mass was extra special as they were welcomed into a brand-new spiritual home.

After extensive renovations, Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church reopened their doors in a limited way on June 21. For many members of the church community, it was their first glimpse inside in nearly two years.

Work on the new church space began in November of 2018.

From the start of the project until emergency orders were handed down by the Province this past March, Mass has been taking place in the Our Lady of Grace Church Hall located, until its recent demolition as part of the overall renovation project, just north of the church building.

"I am so grateful to our parishioners for their patience and generosity to support this project," said Fr. Frank McDevitt, Pastor of Our Lady of Grace, noting it was "providential" that the church was able to open in time for the Province's sanctioned return to formal worship. "I am overjoyed to welcome them back to both Mass and to their restored church."

"Everyone has been doing their best over the last three months, but we have all been missing some pretty essential things and one of them is participating in the life of the church for many people. It is a nice thing to see that although we have limits on numbers and there are all kinds of expectations, people are finally coming back together as a church community and I think that is a great thing."

It was a welcome return to a new normal for the Parish, which required members to book their places for the service in advance to comply with remaining social and physical distancing requirements.

Once current restrictions are fully lifted, the new worship space will accommodate 700 people.

Due to social distancing

requirements, Sunday's opening was fully booked with parishioners spaced out on chairs, the pews still to come.

A highlight of the new church, says Fr. Frank, are the large dormer windows that allow natural light to flood through the space – along with a few other aesthetic changes.

"This church was built in the 1980s when orange carpet seemed like a good idea," he laughed.

Elsewhere in Aurora, several other churches remained quiet – including Trinity Anglican Church which is not only home to the Trinity community but, since the devastating fire in April of 2014, has also served as a spiritual home for the Aurora United Church (AUC) community.

Although the Province has loosened restrictions surrounding places of worship, the Anglican Church has taken a different approach to reopening.

Trinity pastor Rev. Karen Hatch says the Victoria Street church will remain closed until September, at the earliest, as per direction from the College of Bishops of the Anglican Church.

"I think the College of Bishops felt lay leaders and clergy needed some sabbath time or rest going into the summer," she says. "We're still uploading our sermons on Sunday as if we are still preaching to the congregation. Trinity is looking more towards September where we can have a hybrid of worship where we have some people in the building and some people can watch online."

As the Aurora United Church relies on Trinity for space, they are following suit and, in the meantime, continuing their online outreach.

"There are so many steps to put in place before you should open your building back for worship and you need to plan that well for everyone's safety," says AUC's Rev. Andy Comar. "You don't want to be the place where someone contracts COVID-19 because they have attended a worship service. We're going to take it slow."

Adds Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar: "We miss everyone like crazy and Zoom really does not take the place of being with your people, for sure. We kind of just moved church life online. The church is not the building; the church is in the wider world and we are in the world, so nothing has

stopped.

"We have come to know we're adaptable in our communities. What is really wonderful to know ultimately is

our people are so on board. They get it and from day one. That has been amazing. We can hardly wait to get back, but not until we're safe."

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Don't let Library Square be "Aurora's albatross"

I wholeheartedly agree with Lenore Pressley's excellent letter of June 18.

This \$51.6M project has the potential to raise our taxes and should not be undertaken at a time when many people are hurting financially.

As it stands now, Council intends to proceed with this project whether or not we get \$31M in grant monies.

If we are successful in receiving the grant, Council will still have to take somewhere around \$20M from our reserve funds. If we don't get the full funding, we will take the shortfall from the Hydro reserve.

Yes, Aurora has the money to develop the Library Square without the grant. The problem is that Aurora depends on the interest from the Hydro funds to keep our taxes from going higher. We can't use any more of that money without consequences to taxpayer's wallets.

Council just increased our taxes for 2019 to 2021. It is not right to even consider burdening citizens with further taxes—especially for a project of such questionable value and benefit to the community.

We can't let this be an albatross for which future taxpayers must suffer. The whole venture reeks of unchecked political egos.

World leaders and economists predict massive world debt and slumps in the global economy which will probably last for years. It is a time of uncertainty and for increased fiscal restraint.

In 2020, financial prudence and responsibility must be the prime concern for all politicians.

I therefore urge Aurora Councillors to temporarily set aside the plans for the Library Square until the financial situation improves.

Peter Smith  
Aurora

An arithmetic check is needed, says reader

(Re: Parsa's Perspective, June 11)

MPP Michael Parsa writes that, as we read his column, "we are approaching the third month of the challenging and unprecedented fight against COVID-19."

I don't know about Mr. Parsa, but I am not approaching, but well into my third month of self-isolation. I also cancelled a trip to New Brunswick in February and set aside plans to visit friends in Ohio in the summer.

Why? Because I'd been paying attention!

It's easy for the Provincial government to blame previous governments for its lack of preparedness.

However, since the "no-longer-progressive" Conservative administration of Mike Harris, heavily subsidized long-time care facilities have been death-traps-in-waiting due to deregulation.

This government, as well as those of Wynne and McGuinty, allowed the eldercare situation to fester and neglected the recommendations of experts from as long ago as the SARS epidemic of 2003 to be prepared.

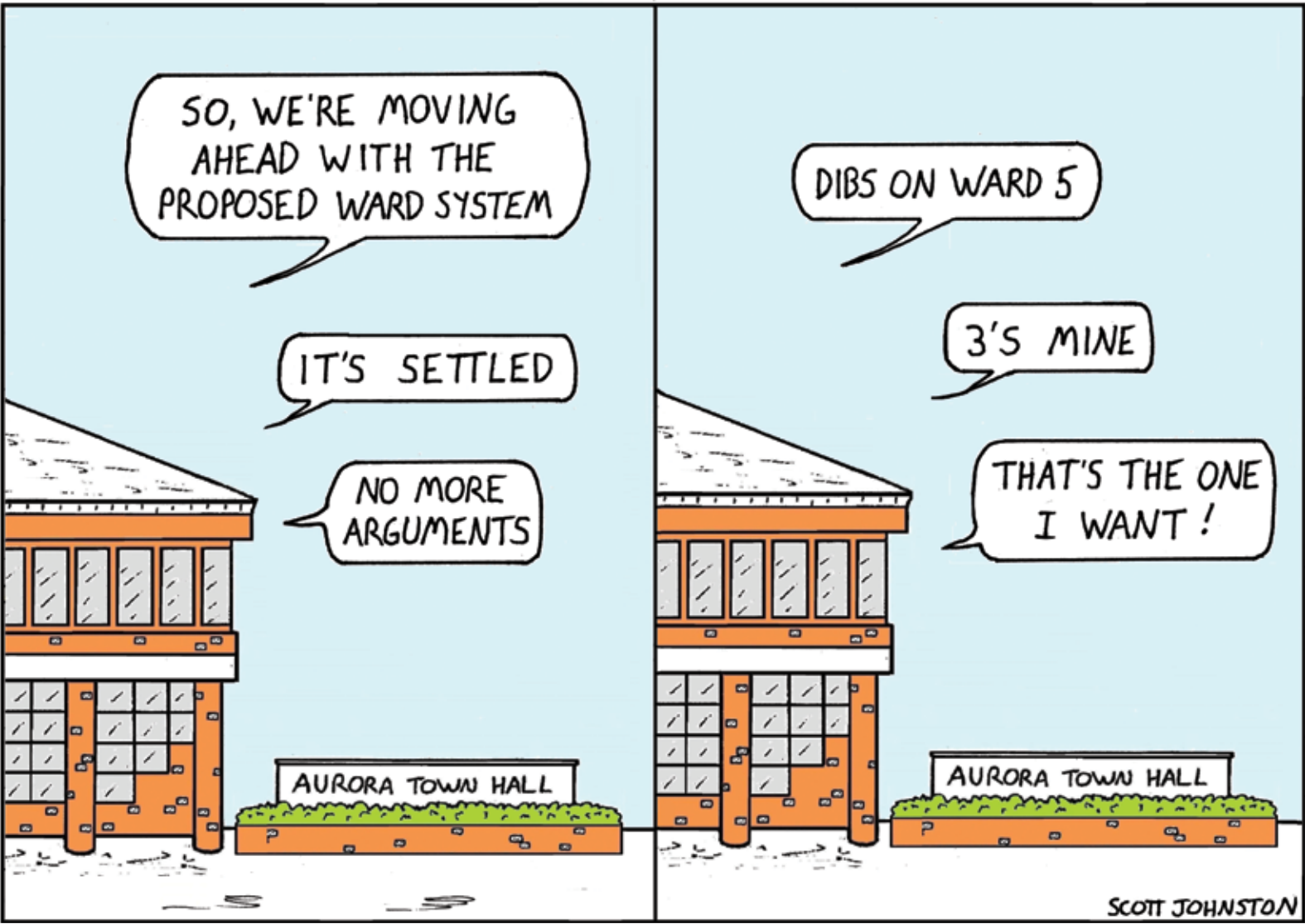
At least Mr. Parsa could get the arithmetic right.

Howard Doughty  
Oak Ridges

Letters continue on page 5

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

Machell's Corners



Opportunities in Time



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

channels, and people who for one reason or another might have felt excluded from certain processes found new doors open to them thanks to technology now deemed necessary for the population as a whole.

Now, as Stage 2 of our re-opening continues and the abundance of time we had for ourselves is allocated once again to things that kept us occupied before March of this year, we're looking forward to some return to normalcy.

We are all looking forward to catching up on the things we have been missing. Over the weekend, for instance, just in time for Father's Day, I was able to see my dad for the first time in nearly four months. I also got a much-needed haircut, although my bi-weekly documentation of quarantine beard and hair will stand as testament to this weird time we've been living through.

And yet, although I didn't vie for that aforementioned gold star, and I feel I have accomplished a great deal as far as work is concerned, I can't help but feel there are many missed opportunities. Books got read, rooms got cleaned, movies got watched, but I have mastered few new skills of any great use aside from those necessary in maintaining connectivity in isolation.

Thankfully, many others have. "Maybe these times are necessary," were among the words offered by Heather Tillock at a Solidarity Walk held locally on June 6 in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

These words have been echoing in my head ever since.

"I started to watch the world pay attention. It made me think that maybe this is an opportunity. Maybe finally there is an opportunity here; the stars aligned and COVID forced us all to be at home, COVID forced us all to be on our phones, on our devices, so we watched the brutality and the death of a Black man. We all saw it, it wasn't

hidden, so now we have an opportunity. There is an opportunity to move the needle, finally. There is an opportunity to speak up for justice, finally. Finally, there was an opportunity for every single one of us to hold each other accountable, finally."

As we move closer to a return to normalcy, for many of us a return to normalcy is neither possible nor desired, and this is a reality of which we should always be conscious.

The pandemic forced us to open our eyes to some harsh truths, harsh truths which are tragically commonplace for all too many.

It afforded us valuable time to learn about things that had either been flying under our radar or were simply too uncomfortable to fully acknowledge and, by extension, address. Others during this difficult time found the chance to seize the opportunity, find their voices and use them to affect change.

Still more woke up to the fact that, through sheer luck, they have been dealt an advantageous hand and have the responsibility to help move that needle.

As we get back somewhat to our regularly scheduled programs, where do we want this needle to hit the record? Do we want a complete return to normal?

These are questions to ponder in the week ahead as we mark Canada Day in a very different way.

With traditional celebrations on ice for another year, we still have some time to consider what kind of country we aspire to be once we're able to celebrate in 2021 and the kind of momentum we want to have behind us.

Personally, I don't want to return to the "old normal", however that is defined. At the same time, with the events of June almost behind us, I can't help but feel we're moving forward with a great deal of momentum when it comes to the human experience, whether it is making a conscious effort to tear down systemic racism in our society, fostering a newfound appreciation for the principles of a basic income, or simply finding more time for each other.

The wind is at our backs and as a return to "normal" attempts to divide our focus, it is incumbent on all of us to do our part to maintain that momentum towards a better future.

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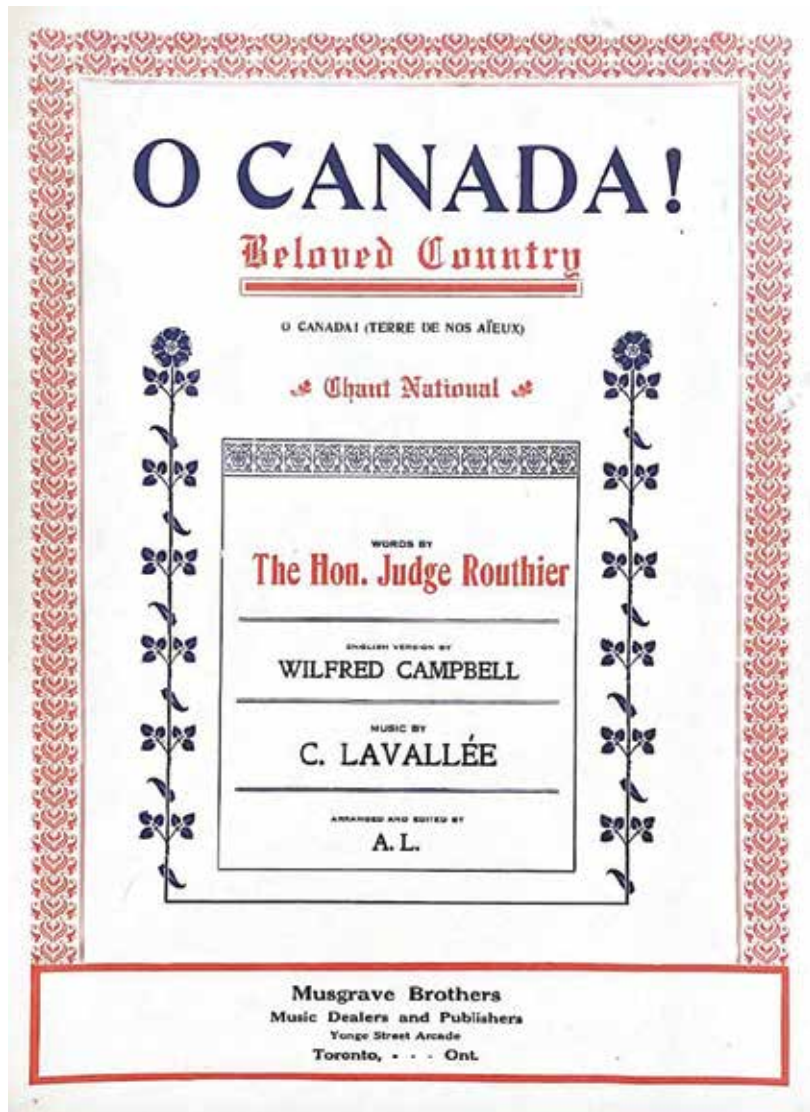
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## The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating... Canada Day! (July 1)

This sheet music contains two musical arrangements that celebrate Canada. The first, “O Canada! Terre de nos aïeux”, was written by Sir Adolphe-Basile Routhier (1839-1920) and set to music composed by Calixa Lavallée (1842-1891). This song was first performed on June 24, 1880 at the National Convention of French Canadians and is considered the original French version of the Canadian national anthem. The second song contained in this sheet music is titled “O Canada! Beloved Country” and was a national hymn written by Wilfred Campbell (1860 – 1918) who is regarded as one of the country’s Confederation Poets.

*For more on how the Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating Canada Day, visit [canadasbirthdaytown.ca](http://canadasbirthdaytown.ca).*



## Getting Things Done

Mayor  
Tom Mrakas

I am sure many folks have heard the news that the Magna Golf Club is being sold – which obviously has raised a number of questions. I want to provide an update and put to rest any rumours about planned development of this site with the facts.

I have met with the new owners, Trillyan Investments Ltd, and you will be pleased to know that this world-class golf course will remain a golf club and the name will remain Magna Golf Club.

They intend to continue to protect and maintain the prestige and reputation of this extraordinary golf course and will be looking to identify areas to make Magna Golf Club even better.

As well, this global business is looking to grow and become an integral part of our community.

Welcome Trillyan!

That’s all for this week. As always if you would like to get into contact with me please feel free to do so anytime by phone 905-727-3123 ext. 4746 or by email [tmrakas@aurora.ca](mailto:tmrakas@aurora.ca) and if you would like to sign up for more newsletters and Council updates, please let me know and I will add you to the growing list of Aurorans that are staying informed. I am here for you.

## LETTERS CONTINUED

### “Doing the minimum you can do is no longer an option”

Four years ago on June 12, we lost 49 lives and 53 others were wounded in a senseless act of terrorism against our Queer Community at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida.

If recent events have taught us anything, it’s that we have grown too accustomed to acts of hate and violence against minority groups, too complicit in the actions of our political leaders.

Our collective memories are simply too short to honour the lives, the struggles, the suffering, and the loss of those who have come before us. Four years later and our Queer Community continues to defend itself from attacks directed at us, and attacks from within.

Trans-Women, particularly of Black and Brown Skin are murdered – their lives dishonoured by systems that are supposed to seek justice for such acts of hate. This systemic racism and unconscious bias was again reflected in how the investigations into the disappearances of eight men from Toronto’s Church-Wellesley Village unfolded.

We allow racism and the people and systems that fuel it to continue to impact our most vulnerable. We have allowed too many people to call themselves allies when they simply have not done all they can do. If all of those individuals were true allies - would we be where we are today?

Let us begin to finally honour all of the lives lost to racism, to queerphobia; so, we can also honour and support the ones that are still with us, and the ones that have yet to come-out.

Doing the minimum you can do is no longer an option.

Pflag York Region

## THIS WEEK’S NEW POLL

Do you support dividing Aurora into six electoral wards by the 2022 Municipal Election?

Yes No Unsure

[www.theauroran.com](http://www.theauroran.com)

RESULTS TO DATE  
June 23, 2020

YES  
38%

NO  
62%

UNSURE  
0%

## Happy Canada Day

I love this country and am proud to be a Canadian

I was born in the Netherlands, and like many Canadians before and after us, my family’s path to this country was paved by war. We came here shortly after World War II, to a country that has always welcomed refugees fleeing devastation and conflict – offering them the promise of opportunity in exchange for hard work and commitment.

As a large family, we struggled in the early years, and when our rented home burned down, I witnessed the power of community. The help we received from friends and neighbours provided lessons I will never forget.

I have seen this same collective spirit as we face COVID-19.

Despite the financial and social hardships it created, we’ve set aside many of our personal conveniences. We have come together to help fellow Canadians and support local businesses – and have adapted to our new circumstances with determined ingenuity. Governments have also stepped forward with unprecedented care and cooperation, and despite the economic challenges that lie ahead, we remain well positioned to recover and prosper.

Our government continues to adjust



## MP'S REPORT

Tony Van Bynen, MP  
Newmarket - Aurora

and create new programs to support Canadians as necessary.

We are providing a one-time tax-free payment of \$300 for seniors eligible for the Old Age Security (OAS) pension, with an additional \$200 for seniors eligible for the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). This measure would give a total of \$500 to individuals who are eligible to receive both the OAS and the GIS and will help them cover increased costs caused by COVID-19. Eligible seniors will receive this money on July 6th.

In addition, we have extended the Canada Emergency Response Benefit by two months. We are providing a taxable benefit of \$1,250 every four weeks to eligible students or \$2,000 to eligible students with dependents

or with disability who are not eligible for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit or Employment Insurance or unable to work due to COVID-19. This benefit is available from May to August 2020. You can stay up to date with all the measures being taken to support Canadians by visiting my website at [vanbynen.ca](http://vanbynen.ca).

For many, this has been a year of tragedy and loss, and for all of us, a year of unrelenting concern. Our world has become a very different place in a few, short months. But as we begin to celebrate Canada Day, let us remember that we live in a wonderful country. We’ve often heard that Canada is the envy of the world, and a quick Google search will show that we rank near the top in a variety of indices that look at quality of life, freedom, and other meaningful measures.

That being said, the events of the last six months have laid bare some of our failings, and we must collectively learn from these. And take action. A great nation must be “great” for all of its people, and a symbol of hope for the world. I know we can move forward and build such a nation, a nation where our children and our grandchildren can inherit a future of true equality.

Happy Canada Day, everybody!

## Future Tense



## INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

effect on people’s health, jobs and the economy. Please tell me this will all be over soon.”

“It won’t be long now,” he affirmed.

“And everything will be back to normal?” I asked with a gleam of hope.

“Well, there’ll be a few surprises, like Library Square.”

“Didn’t it get built? The concept was amazing.”

“Oh, it did, but with the economy hurting and grants drying up, the budget had to be reduced. After it was decided that the Town could substitute things like self-storage space for prestige offices at Wellington and Leslie, it was logical that the situation would be applied to other proposed prestige space in Aurora.”

“So, how did that impact Library Square’s skating rink, food vendors, and expanded museum and the multi-purpose space?” I asked, wide-eyed.

“Those items and their \$50M price tag were all tough to justify in the post-COVID economy, so the design had some...tweaks,” the older Scott explained.

“The most prominent features of that

I was walking in Town Park the other day when I ran into myself.

This is not the first time this has happened to me, as I’d come across the future me last summer when the Stanley Cup was in Town.

Although I was less surprised this time, it’s still a bit bizarre encountering an older version of yourself.

“Hi, Scott,” the other me said. “The Time Traveller who writes the column for The Auroran wasn’t using the machine, so they let me take it for another spin.”

“Just have to follow these rules, of course.” Referring to the screen on his hand-held device, he noted, “No stock market investments, no buying lottery tickets, no trying to dispose of your garbage in the past to avoid the future’s one bag limit ...”

He scrolled for a few minutes. “Actually, there are kind of a lot of rules.”

“I guess it’s easy to change the future.”

“It’s tough not to,” he agreed, pocketing the device. “When I was here last year, I really had to stop myself from telling Tom Connor that he’d be Citizen of the Year in 2020. Although,” he hurried to add, “I’m sure he still would have done all that great volunteering, even if I had.”

“So why are you here this time? The Stanley Cup isn’t even close to being awarded, yet.”

“I know,” he said, rolling his eyes. “Don’t get me started on that. No, I thought I’d come back and see how you’re coping with the year so far”.

“Aagh”, I grimaced. “COVID has been awful. The social distancing, the isolation, the fear, plus the devastating

Feel free to e-mail Scott at:  
[machellscorners@gmail.com](mailto:machellscorners@gmail.com)



# Community Recognition Awards honour nearly 300 years of collective service

By Brock Weir

It is no surprise that volunteers give their time to organizations and causes close to their hearts, but sometimes it is difficult to get a true picture of their impact on the communities in which they live until you take a moment to step back.

That's just what Aurora did last week at the virtual Community Recognition Awards where the Volunteer Service Awards honoured nearly three-centuries-worth of collective contributions.

Recognized for their volunteer

efforts for several community organizations, those honoured for their 20-, 25-, 30-, and 40+ years of commitment on June 15 represent a "total of 285 years of service," said Mayor Tom Mrakas.

"Without volunteers, our community wouldn't have the sports organizations, community events, engaging arts and cultural activities that contribute to making Aurora, in my opinion, one of the best communities in all of Canada," he said.

"Every time you choose to volunteer, you give up your time to visit with friends and family and to do normal everyday activities. Your choice to

volunteer and give back to your community is incredibly selfless. Your unwavering ability to give your time and skills is inspirational and I hope the example you set will encourage others to join you along this journey to make a difference."

continued dedication for the past 25 years."

**25 YEARS – JOHN O'HEIR  
(Optimist Club of Aurora)**

"John has been a Past President and has served on the Board of Directors for a number of years. He was the motivating force behind the annual Soap Box Derby program. John has actively participated in the Aurora Home Sow Pub & Grill, the Club's mobile kitchen, marshalling in all sorts of weather circumstances with the annual Santa Under the Stars parade, the Minor Hockey Optimist Showcase Tournament and has been instrumental with the Central Ontario Leadership Program."

**30 YEARS – JOHN THOMPSON  
(Optimist Club of Aurora)**

"John has been a Past President and has served on the Board of Directors for a number of years. He was the motivating force behind the annual Soap Box Derby program. John has actively participated in the Aurora Home Sow Pub & Grill, the Club's mobile kitchen, marshalling in all sorts of weather circumstances with the annual Santa Under the Stars parade, the Minor Hockey Optimist Showcase Tournament and has been instrumental with the Central Ontario Leadership Program."

**35 YEARS – ALEX ANSELL  
(Optimist Club of Aurora)**

"Alex Ansell has dedicated 35 years of continuous service to the Club. Alex is a Charter member and founding member of the Optimist Club of Aurora and has been the President twice as well as a member of the Board of Directors for a number

Continued on page 19



## Christine Elliott

MPP - Newmarket-Aurora

Wishing everyone in Newmarket-Aurora a safe and happy

# CANADA DAY



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**20 YEARS – TERRY SHERIN  
(Optimist Club of Aurora)**

"Terry has been the President of the Club twice, treasurer, and is a driving force behind the Club's mobile kitchen," said Mayor Mrakas. "He has served several years on the Board of Directors and has participated actively in many events and aspects of the club. These include the Aurora Home Show Pub & Grill, the Club's mobile kitchen, featured at various community events around the Town, the annual Chess Tournament, the annual Beer Tasting event and the Minor Hockey/Optimist Showcase Tournament. Terry is always there, even in the rain and snow, and he always has a smile, volunteering for incredibly long hours to ensure what needs to be done gets done. The Optimist Club of Aurora is better today for having Terry for the last 20 years."

**25 YEARS – VIC METCALFE  
(2nd Aurora Scouting Group)**

"Vic has held a variety of positions to the youth's benefit in the group," said Mayor Mrakas. "Currently, he is the Group Administrator. Vic is also the Council Group Support Scouter for the 2nd Aurora Scouting Group and the 1st Northridge Scouting Group. He has supported other Scouters in the 2nd and also held a term as Area Commissioner for the South Lake Simcoe Area that Aurora is involved with. The 2nd Aurora Scouting Group is very grateful for Vic Metcalfe's



**HONOURED CLUB** – Several members of the Optimist Club of Aurora were honoured at last week's Community Recognition Awards for their decades of tireless community service. And the club's work continues: Last week, members delivered another truckload of supplies to the Aurora Food Pantry, which has seen a significant demand on resources due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pictured here are Optimist Jack Roeleveld, Sandra Seepaul of the Aurora Food Pantry, and Optimists Janice Walsh and Sandy Bundy. The Club's most recent donation was made possible in part through a \$500 donation from the Community Church of Richmond Hill.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger



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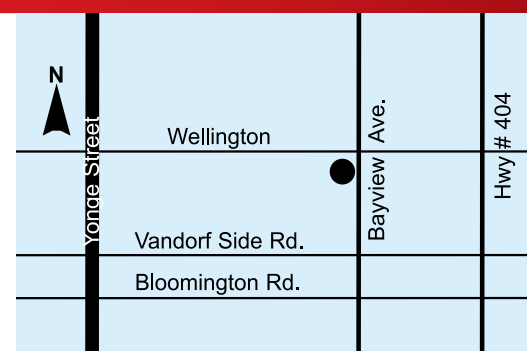
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## Aurora taking “staged approach” to re-opening: Mayor

**From page 1**

re-opening plan, she said local residents should be “congratulated” in their efforts to slow the number of new cases of COVID-19.

“Newmarket-Aurora has done such a fantastic job of following all the public health rules to get us to this point,” said Ms. Elliott, who also serves as Ontario’s Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. “This would not have happened without everyone in the community following those rules. We could have been in a state like Italy and Spain and some parts of the United States, but fortunately we are not. Our hospitals have not been overwhelmed and now that we’re able to open up the economy, people are able to get back to not a normal way that we used to know, but a new normal way of living.”

Before the community could get to this point, Ms. Elliott says she heard from several local businesses that have been “anxious” to re-open.

“They wanted to return to a new normal, and that means getting back into business and having their customers come back to them,” she said. “The Ministry of Health has been working with the Ministry of Labour, who have done a huge amount of work here, and they have produced over 160 different guidelines for workplaces in terms of a return to work, depending on what it is their business is doing. That has been very helpful...so that businesses feel confident that when they do re-open it is going to be safe for their employees as well as the general public.

“I think what we still need to work on is building consumer confidence. People have been self-isolating and remaining in their homes for the last number of months and are still a little bit apprehensive about going out in public again, going back into food stores and pharmacies.”

People need to continue physical distancing, she says, and in situations where physical distancing can’t be done, the Province is asking people to wear a mask “just to make sure we don’t have further outbreaks of COVID-19.”

“We want to keep everyone safe and healthy,” she says.

An important step in building up that consumer confidence once again – as well as confidence of the public at large – is the Province’s new contact notification system. Announced last week, Ms. Elliott says this new contact tracing app will be launching “in several weeks” and available to residents on a voluntary basis to let them know if they have been in contact with someone with COVID-19.

“If they are in contact with someone who has COVID-19, the app will notify them and then they can take the necessary steps to either have themselves tested, self-isolate, and also inform people they have been in close contact with,” she explains. “It is completely anonymous, works on the Bluetooth system, and it has been approved by the Information & Privacy Commissioner of Ontario.

“Privacy is a very important consideration, making sure they are safe and healthy, and also balancing their civil liberties and their right to privacy. We have worked hand-in-hand with the [Commissioner] who is satisfied that the app that has been developed in Ontario and is now going to be used by the Federal government and right across the country.

“This is going to be very helpful, I think, in helping to boost consumer confidence. It is not the only step we’re taking, of course, with contact management, but it is one of the points of assistance that we have in order to make sure that people are safe and that they feel safe.”

As Stage 2 arrived in York Region on Friday, Mayor Tom Mrakas said the Town will continue to work closely with the Province and York Region Public Health to monitor the pandemic and its impact on the community while he also urged residents to remain vigilant.

“Thank you to our residents and businesses for your cooperation over the past few months as we all work to flatten the curve,” he said. “I know it has been difficult, but our collective sacrifices and efforts have resulted in a positive step forward.”

The Town, he added, will initiate a “staged approach” to reopening community resources.

“As the Province begins to reduce restrictions, Town Staff are starting to assess and begin the necessary preparations for a gradual reopening of Town amenities over the coming months. Our top priority is to ensure all considerations are addressed to maintain the safety and wellbeing of patrons and staff. We know residents are anxious to get back to normal, but this will be a slow, gradual process in order to minimize the potential risk of future waves of COVID-19.

“As we enjoy these new freedoms, I ask you to continue to follow the advice of our public health officials. We should all be diligently maintaining physical distance with others, washing hands with soap and water often, wearing a mask if necessary and staying home if you are feeling unwell.

“By following the guidelines set out by health officials, we have been able to move forward and if we stay vigilant we will continue to progress.”

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**Brothers turn love of music into virtual camp for kids**

**By Brock Weir**

Summer camp was a significant part of the lives of Harrison and Luke Jarvis.

For them, summer camp was a rite of passage and a source of many memories they continue to cherish as they pursue their degrees at university. But, conscious of the fact that many youngsters might not be able to make summer camp memories of their own this summer, the Aurora brothers have set out to help kids have that virtual experience – musically.

Pianist Harrison, a student at Bard College Conservatory in New York, who made his Carnegie Hall debut at the age of 16, and singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Luke are the principals behind Jarvis School of Music, which is spearheading virtual summer music camps for budding musicians between the ages of six and 13.

“We came home from university after our classes were moved online and we were quarantining due to COVID-19,” says Luke, who is pursuing music while studying Political Science and Business at Wilfrid Laurier University. “Due to the virus, we lost our jobs like a lot of people and we kept hearing all these stories about parents struggling with online school, struggling with their workload, and kids having all their programs cancelled and dreading a summer without camp, so we figured we could create a virtual music school and have our main offering be virtual music camps for kids to give them that chance to get those valuable experiences that are so formative.”

Infusing their idea with their own unique talents, the brothers launched a “beta” version of the camp last month to try out various models and early trials, they say, have proven “incredibly successful.”

Their own musical educations were pivotal in pinning down what works for different age groups.

Luke, for instance, leads campers between the ages of six and nine in discovering the fun of music. Here, campers learn the basics of music through games and activities while making new friends at the same time.

Campers between the ages of 10 and 13 are led by Harrison in learning music-making programs, song-writing, collaboration, and other avenues to “expand their creative horizons.”

“I start the day with a lesson – musical form, music theory, lyrics – and then we find a way to use

**Continued on page 16**





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# Library Square could be run as a not-for-profit entity

By Brock Weir

The shovels haven’t yet hit the ground, but the future governance of Library Square is starting to take shape.

Last week, local lawmakers tentatively approved a not-for-profit/municipal hybrid governance model for the multi-million-dollar redevelopment that is intended to make Aurora’s historic Downtown Core a destination once again.

Complete with an extension to the historic Church Street School, a bridge connecting the new building with the Aurora Public Library, and the construction of a public gathering space in between, the governance model, as approved at last week’s General Committee meeting, would be similar to the Town’s current agreement with the Aurora Cultural Centre.

“While there is not one perfect governance model to choose from, one of the consistent messages throughout the governance review process was that the Town should leverage resources, skills and expertise already available to it,” said Phil Rose-Donahoe, Project Manager for Library Square. “Each of the Town’s main partners on the Library Square initiative have historically exhibited good governance practices and possess proven track records of delivering quality programs and services to the community. Rather than start from scratch, therefore, the Town should adopt a governance model that builds on the past accomplishments and strengths of its

partners.”  
The governance of Library Square, once complete, is not a subject new to Council.

Council received a short list of possible delivery options this past winter.

After a lengthy debate around the table, they settled on exploring further a direct delivery model as well as a not-for-profit/municipal hybrid structure.

In a direct delivery model, the Town would operate Library Square exclusively and take on the duties of delivering cultural programming, theatre performances, museum administration, and other uses that will be part of a fleshed-out Library Square plan.

But, in his report, Mr. Rose-Donahoe said it was agreed that the present model with the Aurora Cultural Centre provides expertise that can be built upon. Additionally, a direct delivery model could hamper Library Square’s ability to fundraise through donors and granting bodies like the Ontario Trillium Foundation and add an extra layer of bureaucracy to the process.

“Throughout the consulting phase, there was a unanimous feeling that as co-located organizations, the ACC and AMA (Aurora Cultural Centre and Aurora Museum & Archives) have successfully provided cultural and heritage programs/services to the community under one roof,” he said. “Furthermore, many stated that the hybrid model provides a solid



An artists’ rendering of the Library Square plan. Image by RAW/The Planning Partnership

foundation on which to build and should be sustained where possible.

“Some benefits of the non-profit/municipal hybrid model include expertise in cultural and heritage program and service delivery; proven governance integrity as demonstrated by the ACC’s accreditation from Imagine Canada, an organization whose mission is to strengthen Canada’s charitable sector; ongoing development of the AMA’s collection and important strides in exhibition development and public access to Aurora’s material culture; Town oversight through the annual budget process, key performance indicator tracking and participation of two Council members on the ACC’s Board of Directors; [and] a strong network of partnerships with artists, artisans, performers, heritage experts, volunteers, cultural organizations and professionals that demonstrate the municipality’s commitment to local cultural development.”

Challenges with the proposed model include “potential for inefficient customer service due to the absence of centralized leadership and a unified direction for the facility as a whole; greater potential for duplication of program delivery” and lack of municipal control over space allocation. “Therefore, if Council approves the

adoption [of this model] for Library Square, the Town will need to continue to work with key stakeholders to determine how best to address these challenges.”

At last week’s General Committee meeting, the recommendation to proceed with the not-for-profit/municipal hybrid model passed with little discussion, but within the brief discussion, some Council members questioned whether now was the right time to move forward with the Library Square project as a whole.

“I am supportive of this, but I do want to be consistent,” said Councillor John Gallo. “Notwithstanding my support... it remains the same: I don’t support the overall project until such time as we get confirmation from the upper levels of government of the funding we’ve applied for. Should it move forward, should we get the funding, I agree that this should be the model to move forward with its governance.”

Added Councillor Wendy Gaertner: “I thought about this quite a lot and, yes, I am voting on this as what I think is the appropriate governance model – should all those things happen that Councillor Gallo said.”

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# Flags for Aurora Project supports Food Pantry

**By Adam Vanderkolff**

As a realtor, volunteer police officer, and father, Julien Laurion has made it a priority to give back to his community during this difficult time.

With experience working as a renovator, and a passion for woodworking, Laurion began an at-home project of constructing wooden Canadian flags that can be hung indoors or out. Flags can be purchased online for \$120 with a portion of the proceeds being donated to the Aurora Food Pantry.

Laurion speaks very passionately about his community and states that his choice of the Aurora Food Pantry as a place of donation stemmed from his fear of what troubles the pandemic might have caused for locals.

“I know that Canada’s job losses went up, our communities job losses went up, [The Aurora Food Pantry] could be in for an unexpected wave of people that they weren’t prepared for,” he says.

As a member of the Optimist Club of Aurora, as well as the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, Laurion maintains the perspective that in order to make a difference, one must start in their community.

This is why he has ensured that all materials used to make these flags, are bought from local businesses in Aurora.

“As a small business owner myself, I really wanted to help out others in the community who could potentially be struggling with the restrictions that COVID made us enforce... it was important to me that every dollar I spent on this project was going back to helping our community in some way,” states Laurion.

The flags generally measure 18 inches in height and 36 inches in width, although requests have been made for larger and smaller versions.

“We are getting to the point of feeling overwhelmed, in a good way,” he says.

Many of the orders are coming from cottagers as well as others who have found the flags online.

“We have got reach all the way down to Toronto, Muskoka, London, it is somehow making its way all around,” says Laurion about the unexpected success of the project. “I’m quite taken aback by the amount of orders that have come in. If I got 10 orders that would be pretty crazy.”

Currently, he has had over 50 orders for the flags.

“It’s not me as a person to not give back as much as I can to the community



Julien Laurion is spearheading the Flags for Aurora project.

Contributed photo

that in turn, has been good to me, my family, and everyone that I know. It was a no brainer and I’m happy to do it,” he says.

Flags can be purchased on Laurion’s website, [bigtuna.ca](http://bigtuna.ca).

“We are just shy of \$2,000 raised for the pantry and hopefully we can double that by Canada Day.”

*If want to follow Julien on his journey to reaching his fundraising goal, visit his Facebook or Instagram; @bigtunarealty. You can also find Julien’s monthly column in the Your Home section of The Auroran.*

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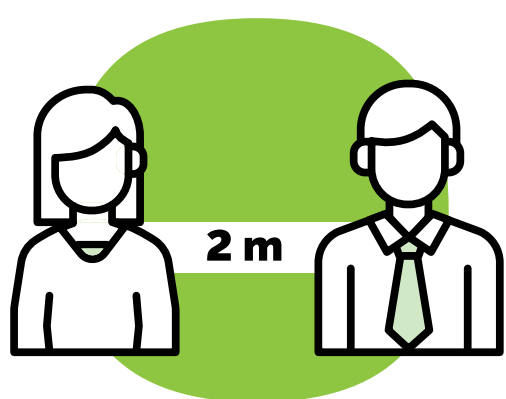
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buns pkg. of 4-8  
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Week of June 25, 2020



## Gary Wright Humanitarian Award-winner forever thankful

By Robert Belardi

It was Brent Morning's life-long dream to skate at Maple Leaf Gardens. He was getting used to his walker on skates, but when the opportunity presented itself, there was no question he was going to learn how to skate and make it happen.

He stepped out on to the ice on December 27, 1985. One of his best friends from King City Secondary School couldn't make it, but he did it on his own and made friends within the first five minutes on the ice. They were going to make sure Morning wasn't going to be trampled by the other skaters in the sanctum of the city's beloved hockey team.

Following a few laps, Morning felt a tap on his shoulder. He turned and it was none other than Bobby Orr. Was it divine intervention? Was this really happening? He didn't know. All he knew was Bobby Orr had asked him how many laps he would skate.

"The pledge says 50 doesn't it?" Morning replied.

And Orr in return, offered to help him in his last few. In those laps, other individuals coalesced to help Morning finish off his skate.

The PA announcer turned everyone's attention to Morning. His mother was racing down the arena steps in excitement.

He was only 16-years-old. It was the start of something special.

It feels like yesterday. Today, at the age of 51, Morning has been awarded the 2020 Gary Wright Humanitarian Award in a virtual gala on YouTube.

Established in honour of the founder of Friends of We Care, Gary Wright, the award is presented to a member of the Foodservice Hospitality Industry who has contributed to the improvement of the community.

"What more can I say? I'm grateful for the community, I'm grateful for the sponsors and volunteers. This has given me a job. When the virus hit, I thought we might as well raise money. Golf is secondary, the money is for the kids," Morning said graciously.

A life-long resident of Kettleby, Morning has hosted a charity golf tournament with Friends of We Care since 2014, amassing \$65,000 in donations in six years to fund local children with disabilities and ensure they can go to summer camp.

Four-time Olympian Brian Stemmler has been his emcee since day one.

Born with cerebral palsy, Morning attended a disabilities camp in Collingwood at the age of eight. He had a blast. He is adamant that other children have that chance to experience what he had.

He's had a knack for fundraising and he discovered this as a local Timmy (Ambassador) for Easter Seals in 1981.

When he was searching for a co-op job in high school years later, Easter Seals seemed to be the best fit. Fluctuating



Brent Morning has been awarded the Gary Wright Humanitarian Award.

between the Public Relations Department and the Fundraising Department he learned quickly how to raise money. He even helped coordinate Bobby Orr's Skate in 1987.

He raised \$8,000 in 10 years.

"I was honoured by my school in front of the whole school in King City, with a bronze skate from Easter Seals and I thought, 'Wow, there's a thousand people in the gym screaming,'" Morning chuckled.

He became a craftsman in his trade. A spokesman for what it meant to donate to a noble cause. At Easter Seals, he directly and indirectly raised about \$200,000 in total in close to his 40-year tenure being involved.

Since joining Friends of We Care, a third-party organization for Easter Seals, he made it happen with support from Kevin J. Collins and a strong group of volunteers. They helped Morning along the way.

"Current President of Easter Seals Ontario Kevin Collins, Susan Shephard and the late Susan Brower were my key influences in fundraising," Morning said.

They taught him how to influence. With more sponsors entering the picture, Morning wanted to set up an affordable golf tournament and in the first two years there were a lot of successes.

"I think the first year we raised \$3,800 and the next year we raised \$7,200. My rule of thumb is let's try to get \$100 per player," Morning explained.

With an affordable price to play, more money can be catered to the donations and to the prized auctions at the end. Morning

emphasized this is all about the children and all proceeds go to their cause.

He is incredibly thankful for all the support he has received. He doesn't believe in an "I". He says without a team, it's just him and this all would not be possible.

He is humbled by his sponsors such as Schomberg Technologies, Motive Media and Priestly Demolition.

"Brent has limitless passion and energy for his annual golf tournament supporting Friends of We Care. His network of friends and supporters are always there when he calls for sponsorship, prize or participation in the event. We Care is truly fortunate to have Brent helping send kids with disabilities to accessible summer camps just like the one he attended when he was young," Executive Director of Friends of We Care Tiana Rodrigue said in a statement.

He says he has lived out every dream he has every aspired to be a part of. He helped out at a Maple Leafs practice and was an assistant equipment manager for the Newmarket Royals. But Morning is disheartened this year's tournament will not be played out.

"I'm sad that we couldn't have the event this year; it would have been last Thursday (June 11), unfortunately, but we've got to be safe."

He encourages people to donate online to Friends of We Care.org, and mark your Brent Morning Charity Golf Challenge.

This year, the golf tournament was set to be scheduled at Kettle Creek Golf Course.

"I never thought in a million years that my little idea... I thought if we raised seven or eight thousand dollars a year for five years that would be pretty good for Kettle Creek, but somehow last year got up to \$19,000."

Morning says 100 sponsors were confirmed before the pandemic and many of them have done what they can.

He understands donations will not be the same considering financial implications as he looks forward to planning the next tournament in 2021. Easter Seals camps have been cancelled and are being held virtually.

Originally from Aurora, his 85-year-old father James Morning could not be prouder of his son.

"The Morning family, myself, my sons and my daughter are very happy with what he has done over the years."

## Sports retailer seeing shifts in demand following quarantine

By Robert Belardi

It all looks different at Play It Again Sports Aurora, according to Store Manager Mohammad.

As health experts and the province of Ontario collaborate to implement the best methods of safety, it is apparent these measures have affected local businesses drastically.

Play It Again Sports, much like other business locations, closed their doors for two months before the company introduced curbside pick-up. Karousi says when the doors officially opened, he didn't anticipate an abundance of customers. But, he was wrong. The store has seen plenty of customers all seeking the same thing and that has completely changed the spectrum of demand.

"It's a completely different store. People are coming in now looking for things that were never in demand before. We turned from a hockey store to a bike store."

Bikes, golf apparel and equipment, weights as well roller blades are the hottest sellers in the market. With every supplier practically sold out, the hope is to last a little further than the duration of the summer.

"We're hoping to have enough stock to hold us until the winter season and we can start getting back into skis," Karousi explained.

Inventory on bicycles and roller blades is running thin and suppliers are sold out. Baseball cleats and soccer boots continue to sit on the shelf while some golf shoes have been sold.

Luckily, Play It Again is continuing to buy products from customers. Customers can enter the premises looking to sell bicycles and golf clubs. Any product that is "easy to clean" is permitted.

As an avid sports fan, Karousi believes, sports "won't be cancelled for the entire year," despite spikes in coronavirus cases this past weekend in Florida. He feels the organizations will figure out a way to get sports back on television; a lot of people have been suffering in many ways in its absence.

Recreationally, Karousi sees sports in the local area calling it a day for the summer. He can't see children and teenagers back on the diamond or the pitch this summer with heightened risks for the youth.

With hockey apparel as its dominant seller, the location hopes everything will be safe in time to resume normal sales and the demand be shifted, back to normalcy.

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# Musical brothers launch mini camps

From page 8

that lesson to create within music-making software,” explains Harrison. “By the end of the week, we will evolve the song together, create it, and then kids will have learned music-making software and have the tools and, hopefully, the inspiration, to learn about it on their own.”

Adds Luke: “For my program, the measure of success will at the end of the week be my campers learning the basics of music, making friendships with other campers, and have an enlightened experience of being able to create and be more engaged within music.”

At the end of the day, they want the program to spark and inspire creativity. From Luke’s perspective, they have devised an online platform that doubles as a “musical playground.”

“It’s about the joy of having creative practice and being so inspired that you want to make something new – and that is so valuable to us,” says Harrison. “I think the most joy I get as a teacher is when class ends and the student keeps creating with the lessons I

taught them.

“I think we have designed a program that is unique in the sense that instead of scrambling to move all these things online, we have created our program to flourish online. There are small class sizes, three to five kids per class, it is live, and...it is just really fun. The kids don’t need instruments, they just need to be passionate and maybe have a love for the arts, music and creative. Based on the experiences we have had teaching so far, I can definitely say it is an enriching experiences.

“It is also the opportunity to meet new people. I think the real magic occurs when you get kids creating together because they actually think really critically about the creative processes and give each other feedback. They all learn something more than they would have been able to do by themselves. Through that, they just foster friendships and the live collaborative function has been really rewarding.”

For more information on camp programming through the Jarvis School of Music, visit [www.jarvischoolofmusic.ca](http://www.jarvischoolofmusic.ca).



Luke and Harrison Jarvis want to make sure kids and teens can have a summer camp experience. Contributed photo

# Alessia Bozzo named 2020 Aurora Teen Idol

By Brock Weir

Alessia Bozzo dreams of being on Broadway.

Rehearsing virtually for an upcoming production of the musical Grease in Vaughan, presently slated for the end of this summer, the 14-year-old St. Jerome Catholic Elementary School student took one more step towards her goal last week by securing the crown in Aurora’s 2020 Teen Idol Competition.

Alessia received her sash at Town Hall last week after vying for the title with a number of local girls through a capella auditions held over Zoom earlier this month before a panel of expert judges.

Aurora’s Teen Idol finals are usually held as one of the centrepieces of the Town’s annual Canada Day Celebrations at Lambert Willson Park.

With celebrations going virtual this year in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, event organizers had to employ some out-of-the-box thinking to ensure the show went on.

“When I started my audition, I had heard all the other girls singing because I was fourth,” says Alessia, recalling what was going through her mind as each contestant waited their turn on the Zoom call. “I was nervous because most of them were really good and I thought, ‘this is going to be a repeat of last time.’”

Alessia is no stranger to the Aurora Teen Idol competition.

Indeed, it is something of a family affair with her sister making the finals in 2018.

“I did this a couple of years ago – my sister got past, but I didn’t, so I took a break between the years, really worked hard on my singing and started taking professional lessons,” says Alessia. “I did shows and stuff because a lot of things went on in my personal life and music just got me through it. I came back this year looking for something to do during ‘Corona’ and this is really cool.”

Keeping her Broadway dreams firmly in her sights, Alessia auditioned with a selection from the musical Anastasia. She connected deeply with the song, she says, but, given her last turn at the microphone in previous years, she was cautious with her optimism.

“I was preparing myself to lose,” she recalls with a chuckle. “Me and some of the other girls were talking over the chat, telling each other how good we were, but the day after was the most nerve-wracking thing for me ever. When I got the email – oh, my God, I was freaking out and it was really fun.

“My sister was really proud of me. She has been my biggest supporter when



Auroran photo by Brock Weir

it comes to music, other than my dad. She was the one who started singing and got me into it. During [my time as Teen Idol] I can say I was able to accomplish something, something I tried hard enough and I proved myself wrong!”

Also going the distance in the 2020 Aurora Teen Idol competition was runner up Shizuka Watanabe, 17, a student at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School.

Shizuka’s family encouraged her to try out for this year’s competition after spending some of her quarantine time singing around the house.

“My mom was like, ‘You sing a lot around the house. Why don’t you do something with your singing?’” she says. “I didn’t really expect a lot from it, but I thought it would be a fun opportunity, so why not? The song I sang was I’d Rather Be Me from Mean Girls on Broadway. When I first heard the song, I really liked it. I never really looked into the lyrics, but later on, when I did, I found it really resonated with me. It sends out a pretty good message and the message I am trying to send up is I don’t care what you want from me; I will be what I want to be and I won’t shape myself to what you want me to be.”

As she handed out the sashes to Alessia and Shizuka last week, Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora, who hosted the 2020 audition round, said despite not being able to spread word about the competition through schools, there was a significant uptake from aspiring singers.

“Doing it on Zoom was a new experience for us, but it was really, really great. It seemed more intimate because we did a dry run the night before so the contestants got to talk to each other the night before, tested out mikes and everything,” she says. “For me, it is always a special experience, but I am so thankful I am not a judge because it is splitting hairs because they were so talented.

“We would love to have an in-person competition [in the future] but each of them were giving each other advice and helping them out and it really made it feel like a team effort.”



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# It’s a swing and a miss for indoor facility as Council eyes baseball for Hallmark lands

By Brock Weir

Baseball diamonds could be back up to bat as Council considers the future of the Hallmark lands.

The land in question, previously owned by Hallmark and purchased by the Town to expand recreation facilities, will be in focus at Council this week as local lawmakers revisit plans to build two full-size baseball diamonds near Industrial Parkway South and Vandorf Sideroad.

Council had previously allocated close to \$3 million to create this baseball hub, but a late-in-the-game pitch from the Aurora King Baseball Association for an indoor training centre, an idea which further evolved into a multisport facility, caused those plans to be put on the backburner while the new ideas were explored.

Last week, as staff recommended proceeding with the diamonds as originally planned, some Council members said they felt like they were back at square one.

According to John Firman, Manager of Business Support for the Town of Aurora, the Town issued a request for information on an indoor facility and received eight responses – only two of which covered the bases of both construction and operation of the centre.

The terms of the operation proposals – as well as feedback from ball diamond user groups who expressed a preference for diamonds – led staff back to their original recommendation.

“At a meeting [this past winter] there was a delegation that demonstrated the possibility of an indoor facility on the lands as a potential alternative,” said Robin McDougall, Aurora’s Director of Community Services. “At the time, it demonstrated it could potentially save the Town costs with this route.”

Exploring options further, Ms. McDougall said the proposals that came back offered a variety of options, but one sought a 25-year lease from the Town and exemptions from property taxes. That, she said, might save the Town some money in bringing sport to the land but this, and an additional proposal, offered very limited hours for user groups Town-wide.

“We have landed back at the desired outcome for our user groups to go with the natural gaming facilities, the natural turf,” she concluded, noting that the Town will now have to go out again with a Request for Proposal, as the previous quote had expired, and there might be cost differences this time around. “We fully anticipate [\$3 million] might not be enough, but we don’t have a figure for that. Until we go back out for tender of this project, we won’t know what the anticipated costs are, so we haven’t put a dollar

value on our request.”

Supporting the move back to the original decision of two baseball diamonds on site was Councillor Rachel Gilliland who said it was important to keep the Aurora King Baseball Association in the loop.

“It is unfortunate that within the respondents that we do have a bunch of questions that were asked to the leagues and I think this has a lot of weight on my decision today about what I am deciding,” she said, referring to feedback received from user groups through the exploration of an indoor facility. “At this point, I am okay with the recommendation on the floor and we’ll see what happens at Council”

While Mayor Tom Mrakas reiterated his position that one baseball diamond and one soccer field was, in his opinion, the best use of the land in question, he said he was in favour of going back to Council’s original decision for two diamonds.

“While I would still like to see multi-purpose, while I still think the more value you provide to the majority of our residents the better... at this point, I am in favour of moving forward and going forward with what the majority of Council decided to approve at the time,” he said.

But Councillor John Gallo, who was never a proponent of the Hallmark lands being used for anything but employment, said he wanted further work done to explore the multipurpose model.

“MY preference would be to at least explore that option a little bit further, and it seems to be dead in the water and, on the staff side, no appetite to continue on that path,” he said. “I really didn’t want to see any recreational facilities on that property, but if we’re going to do it, I would

push towards the best possible use of that land...and I thought an indoor multipurpose facility is far better than two baseball diamonds.”

Should Council formally ratify their decision to go back to the two-diamond model at this week’s Council meeting, there will be two possible paths ahead.

If the new quotes come back at more than \$3 million, Council will

have to weigh in again. If proposals come in within \$3 million, staff will proceed as planned.

Circumstances related to COVID-19, added Ms. McDougall, could have an impact on the final price tag and a lower price might be achieved if companies are eager for the chance to ramp up their work once again.





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Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill

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REFLECTIONS...

Continuum of care

**Brittnei Harris** shares her experience as a Social Work placement student and the importance of quality Hospice Palliative care.

**I**nspiring, holistic, and client-centered are all words that come to mind when I reflect upon my time with Doane House Hospice and Margaret Bahen Hospice as a Social Work placement student. I started with the Hospices back in September 2019 when I entered into my final year of the Bachelor of Social Work program at York University. As someone who has always worked with children and youth, Hospice Palliative Care was a new experience for me. Now, as my placement comes to an end, I cannot imagine working in any other area.

The teams at Doane House Hospice and Margaret Bahen Hospice have not only taught me the importance of what compassionate and holistic continuum of care, but they have also given me the opportunity to experience it firsthand. Due to this commitment, I have been able to support clients within the community at Doane House through weekly groups, while also being there to welcome them to Margaret Bahen when they are ready for end of life care. This continuum of care ensures that clients, their caregivers, and those who are bereaved have access to social, emotional, and spiritual care throughout their entire journey with the Hospices.



These experiences have taught me that ensuring people are able to live with *dignity, meaning and hope* is the cornerstone of quality Hospice Palliative care.



### Thank You

*Doane House and Margaret Bahen Hospice for the enriching experience you have provided and for showing me what quality compassionate and holistic care looks like. Your team has played a vital role in my Social Work education and have taught me invaluable lessons that I will carry forward into my future career.*

*Brittnei Harris*

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Long-time volunteers honoured

**From page 6**

of years. Currently, he is the Secretary of the Club. If that wasn't impressive, I am also humbled to also share that he is a Past Governor of the Central Ontario District and the Past Vice President of Optimist International. Alex is one of the huge contributors behind the annual Minor Hockey Optimist Showcase Tournament as well as the Club's mobile kitchen and the annual Chess Tournament. I can't even recall a Santa Under the Stars parade where I haven't seen Alex marshalling and making sure all the participants are lined up correctly. He is also the Chair of the Aurora Home Show Grill Committee."

**35 YEARS – KEN McISAAC (Optimist Club of Aurora)**

"Ken is a Charter member and founding member of the Optimist Club of Aurora and has been the President twice and has been a member of the Board of Directors for a number of years. Ken is also heavily involved with the Annual Book Sale, the Aurora Home Show Pub & Grill, as well as the Club's mobile kitchen, the annual Chess Tournament and the Minor Hockey Optimist Showcase Tournament."

**35 YEARS – GRANT PERRY (Optimist Club of Aurora)**

"Grant [also a Charter and Founding Member] has also been a President & Secretary as well as a member of the Board of Directors for a number of years. He has participated actively in the Aurora Home Show Pub & Grill, the Club's mobile kitchen, the annual Chess Tournament, the Aurora Farmers' Market, marshalling the Santa Under the Stars parade, and dedicated assistance with the Minor Hockey Optimist Showcase Tournament."

**35 YEARS – ROB WHITING (Optimist Club of Aurora)**

"Since the founding of the Club, Rob has been President and a member of the Board for many years. He was instrumental in resurrecting Opti Hockey, volunteered his time with the Optimists for the Aurora Home Show Pub & Grill, the Mobile Kitchen and various events and is a dedicated marshal for the Santa Under the Stars parade. There hasn't been a Minor Hockey Optimist Showcase

Tournament that you haven't seen Rob helping out with and he has been the Chef Extraordinaire at the annual Club Barbecue."

**40 YEARS – GARY KRYSHKA (Big Brothers Big Sisters of York)**

"Gary has served as a Director, Treasurer and is currently the agency's Board Chair. Gary is the first to step up with his wife Karen for shifts at the annual Magna Hoedown, he volunteers at the annual Bowl for Kids Sake events every year and volunteers monthly at the Big Brothers Big Sisters of York Community bingo. He has no hesitation taking on those late-night shifts to ensure the financial strength of the agency continues to thrive. He has demonstrated his true commitment over the course of his 40 years, first as a Big Brother, then as a member of various committees, and finally as a member of the Board. Gary is committed to playing a key role in ensuring Big Brothers Big Sisters of York continues to serve young children in our community and has seen the agency through financially challenging times, and will no doubt see them through the coming months."



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CLUES ACROSS

1. Protects from weather

4. Superhigh frequency

7. Southern constellation

8. Swines

10. Self-righteously moralistic person

12. United Arab Emirates city

13. Surinam toad

14. Sign language

16. Tattoo (slang)

17. Makes level

19. Sun up in New York

20. It must be scratched

21. Where people live

25. Swiss river

26. Buddy

27. One of two equal parts of a divisible whole

29. Shrek is one
30. Egyptian unit of weight

31. Fiddler crabs

32. Carroll O'Connor's TV wife

39. No longer having life

41. Former OSS

42. A way to emit sound

43. Mandela's party

44. Adult female chicken

45. U. of Miami's mascot

46. Southeastern Chinese people

48. Casino game

49. Amos Alonzo \_\_, US football coach

50. Joint connecting two pipes at right angles

51. Will Ferrell film

52. River in NE Scotland

CLUES DOWN

1. Occur

2. Show up

3. Capital of Taiwan

4. Former French coin

5. Some are bad

6. Monetary unit

8. Package (abbr.)

9. Indian religious person

11. Crew

14. Antidiuretic hormone

15. Makeshift

18. Baseball box score stat

19. Make a mistake

20. Not moving

22. Even distribution of weight

23. Clumsy person
24. Paddle

27. Worked the soil

28. Alias

29. Plant cultivated in Peru

31. Side-blotched lizards genus

32. Wild dog

33. Immoral act

34. Pound

35. Manning and Lilly are two

36. Put on the shelf for now

37. Baltimore ballplayer

38. Cuddle

39. Dashes

40. Related on the mother's side

44. Witch

47. Kilogram force (abbr.)

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Area residents, including members of the Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill Liberal Association, held a rally of support outside Chartwell Aurora on Saturday afternoon.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

# Former Resthaven residence thanks "heroic" efforts of staff

**From page 1**

have been particularly hard-hit. We really wanted to have an opportunity to let them know their community cares about them, that we haven't forgotten about them. The outbreak, using the term the Government uses, is technically over there, but we haven't forgotten about them."

Messages of solidarity have also come out from Chartwell Staff.

Over the course of the outbreak, 42 of 235 residents tested positive for COVID-19, according to Chartwell Aurora administrator Greg Boudreau. Out of 300 employees, 14 also tested positive.

Twelve residents lost the battle.

"Each of those deaths is a great loss and we extend our sympathy to all families impacted," said Mr. Boudreau.

"Our outbreak lasted 47 days and at the time our outbreak was declared resolved we had no active cases and haven't had any since," he continued. "Due to the quick response from the frontline staff, management and our Head Office we were able to contain the outbreak to only one of our five resident Home Areas.

Unfortunately, the outbreak was in the part of our building with four-bed ward rooms. This included providing full PPE prior to our first case.

"Thankfully we did not experience the same staffing shortages that other LTC homes encountered. I attribute this solely to the phenomenal commitment of our frontline staff. There were dozens of daily examples of the heroic nature of all departments in caring for our residents.

"Two events have been indelibly ingrained in my memory. The first is Deon, a PSW who works on the resident home area that went into outbreak. She arrived for her first shift of our outbreak very early in order to be prepared to do what was needed to care for our residents. Not only did she willingly arrive knowing she was putting herself in harm's way, she packed her car with all of the belongings she may need for the coming weeks as she was prepared to stay as long as needed, away from her own family, sleeping in her car, if she had to in order to ensure our residents were cared for.

"The second is Stacey our infection

control nurse who worked 49 days straight, up to 16 hours a day, keeping her from her new husband of six months and their five children, in order to ensure residents, families, staff and all of the various governing bodies were kept up to date so we could provide the best care possible.

"My words can not express the pride and gratitude I have for every single person who put our residents' interests and wellbeing above their own."

At press time, there were a total of 11 active cases within Aurora and 85 cases deemed resolved and recovered for a total of 111 confirmed cases. Of the 11 active cases, nine are self-isolating, one is hospitalized (non-ICU), and one case remains under investigation.

15 Aurora residents have lost the battle against the virus.

Of the 111 total cases, 55 are attributed to institutional outbreak, 25 to close contact, 19 to local transmission, 10 to travel, and two related to a workplace cluster.

Region-wide, as of Tuesday evening, there are 333 active cases, 238 deaths, and 2,323 recoveries, for a total of 2,894.

## Briefly

### RUN FOR SOUTHLAKE GOES VIRTUAL

The postponed 2020 Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake has been officially rescheduled, and this year's event is going virtual. From September 23-27 join the SL5K Virtual Challenge, a 5-day kilometre challenge to see just how much ground you can cover in support of the most urgent needs at Southlake Regional Health Centre. This year's Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake was originally scheduled for April 26th, but was postponed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. With restrictions on large gatherings still in place, Southlake Foundation has embraced the opportunity to create a virtual experience unlike any other. This re-imagined 5-day virtual kilometre challenge will allow participants to choose any distance goal and any number of distance-based activities – run, walk, bike, row, or even hopscotch! Using the My Virtual Mission platform, which can sync to your favourite fitness app, participants will be able to track their kilometres, see themselves advance along the route, motivate fellow teammates through an interactive chat forum, and more. Included with registration is a 2020 event t-shirt, finisher medal and race kit, which will be available for curb-side pick-up at Nature's Emporium in Newmarket September 18 and 19. Exciting new prizes are also available to reward participants for their fundraising efforts. Registration for the virtual event is now open. For full details about the SL5K Virtual Challenge or to register, visit [www.runforsouthlake.ca](http://www.runforsouthlake.ca).

### SURGERIES RESUME AT SOUTHLAKE

Southlake Regional Health Centre has developed a plan to gradually resume elective and scheduled procedures and surgeries while keeping patient and staff safety top of mind. The Ontario Health Central Region has approved Southlake to move ahead with the first phase of the plan to resume gradually. As the number of cases of COVID-19 in the community decreases, Southlake will have more inpatient capacity to focus resources to resume procedures. Patients and families are being contacted to reschedule a previously cancelled surgery, procedure or appointment. Your surgeon's office will be in touch with you when they are able to book your surgery. "We know that it has been difficult for patients and families who are waiting for surgeries and other care. We are working to safely resume and ask for your patience, as we know this will be a gradual process. A shift to virtual care will be part of our new way forward to help safely connect with patients and families and reduce the number of times they need to come in to the hospital," said Arden Krystal, Southlake President and CEO. The first phase of the plan to resume services with a focus on outpatients includes those who do not require an overnight hospital stay. A key priority is efficient screening and registration processes for patients and families.



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DEATH NOTICE

## Lawrence (Larry) Albert Bodnar

1933 - 2020



On June 18, 2020 Larry passed away peacefully at home. Larry was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba the only son of Polish, Hungarian immigrants. He was raised in Thunder Bay. His life was not easy but in 1954 he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force. He was stationed in Europe for most of his 14 years in the service attaining awards for the development of tracking devices. He was also given the distinction of being promoted the youngest sergeant in the Air Force at that time. He had wanted to be a pilot, but due to a blown ear drum that dream faded. Nevertheless being stationed in the Mediterranean area his love of

water, deep sea diving for sponges, fishing for Barracuda he became a diving instructor also. Leaving the Air Force in 1968 and returning to Canada he knew that computers were the wave of the future and his experience in electronics led him to a job in the Geophysics field which became the love of his life. He designed equipment that was put into fixed wing planes or helicopters to find minerals in the ground. He travelled most of the world doing this, even being given the highest government authority to survey Russia. In Geophysics survey circles he was known as the Guru. At the cottage he was a builder, an avid Bass fisherman and snowmobiler having owned three and crashing two of them.

He was a loving father and friend to many, embracing life and living it to its fullest. He is now surveying from on high the loving family left behind. He will be missed.

Virginia, his devoted wife for 51 years.  
Children: Steven, Tony (Nicola,) Gordon (Marilyn,) Debbie, Terry (Lana,) Michelle (David.) (Jim Matthew)  
Grandchildren: Brent, Taren, Krysten, Ryan, Collin, Christopher, Laura (Chris,) Maddison (Matthew,) Ricky (Jenny,) Samuel and Harrison, Eden-Leigh and Lennon.  
Great Grands: Devan, Annabel, Amelia, Aaliyah, Amiyah, Aliviah, Evan, Connor, Rocky, Emily, Alice and Wesley.  
Nieces: Jaqueline, Libby, Shannon, Shalaine, Cori, and Krista

A Memorial Service will be held on  
**Friday, June 26, 2020 at 2 p.m.**  
**at Thompson Funeral Home,**  
**530 Industrial Parkway South, Aurora, ON L4G6W8.**  
(guests are restricted to a maximum of 30,  
please call Thompson Funeral Home if you are planning to attend.  
905-727-5421) The Memorial Service may also be viewed on Facebook  
Live, go to [www.ThompsonFH-Aurora.com](http://www.ThompsonFH-Aurora.com) to find the link.

\*\*\*

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Larry's memory may be made to The War Amps, [www.waramps.ca/ways-to-give/donate](http://www.waramps.ca/ways-to-give/donate); or The Royal Canadian Legion - Aurora Branch 385, 105 Industrial Parkway North, Aurora, ON L4G 4C4 CA, [auroralegion.ca](http://auroralegion.ca).

Fond memories and expressions of sympathy may be shared at [www.ThompsonFH-Aurora.com](http://www.ThompsonFH-Aurora.com) for the Bodnar family.

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**QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Diploma in journalism preferred
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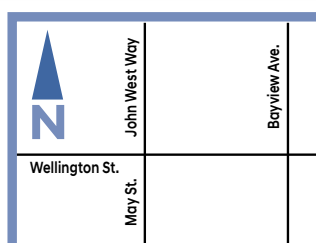
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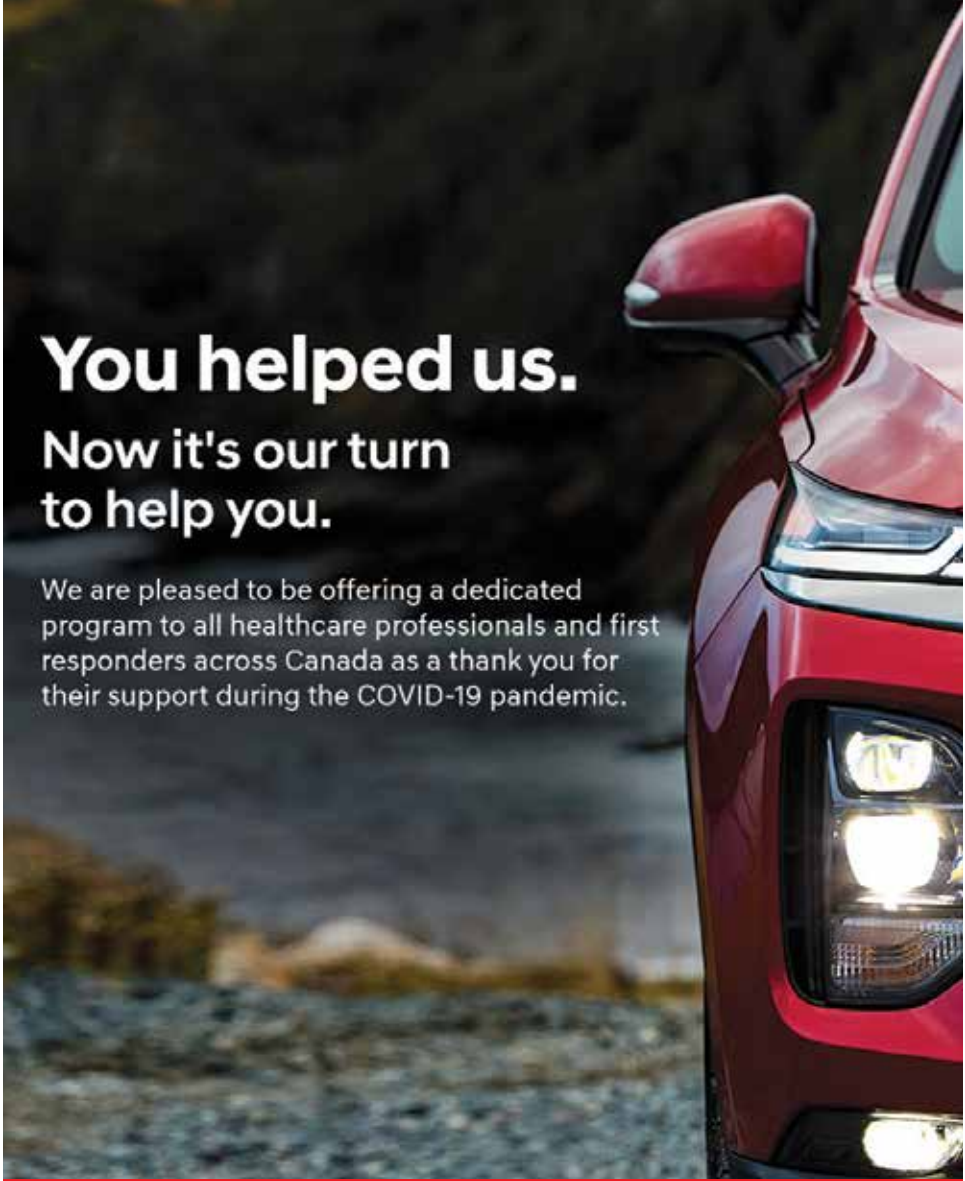
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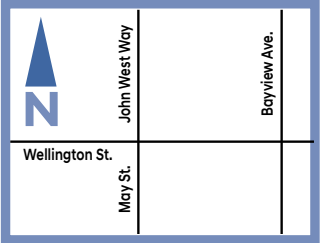
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