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THE AURORED

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 20 No. 43 905-727-3300 *TheAuroran.com* **FREE** Week of August 13, 2020 



Roxana Farrell, an architect, artist and resident of the Town Park area, hopes to spark a discussion with "I Can't Breathe", an art piece she has installed on her front lawn.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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"Don't take a single breath for granted"

Local artist sends powerful message through public art

By Brock Weir

Take a moment to stand still and hold your breath as long as you can. Do you feel the struggle? A surge of strength? A wobble of weakness? When you can't hold your breath any longer, exhale, and take another breath in. That simple action can be a precious

thing, says artist and architect Roxana Farrell, and one that shouldn't be taken for granted. That is the simple but potent message Ms. Farrell wants people to leave with when they pass by her Larmont Street home, just east of the historic Aurora Armoury. There, on her front lawn, Ms. Farrell has installed "I Can't Breathe", a public art display in memory of George Floyd, the Black man killed at the hands of police in Minnesota earlier this year which sparked global waves of demonstrations against

anti-Black racism and in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. Made from wood, the abstract piece ebbs and flows, as it spells out words gasped by George Floyd as a police boot pressed down on his neck: "I can't breathe." "I chose wood for a very specific reason," says Ms. Farrell. "Wood has an evolution of life. I thought, in relation to George Floyd, wood has this element of rebirth. It grows from a seed, it is used in lumber and timber, but it drops its seeds and gives life again. In a way, with George

Continued on page 10

MUSIC IN THE AIR – Aurora's Concerts in the Park series kicked off last Wednesday, August 8, with the Durham Street Band – Classic Rock Revival at Town Park. For more on the socially-distant concert experience, see Page 9.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

Police look to identify youth at-risk of becoming involved in human trafficking

By Brock Weir

York Regional Police will modernize its approach in tackling human trafficking. Two new projects, one tackling human trafficking across the Region, as well as guns and gangs, were announced Monday by York Regional Police (YRP) Chief Jim MacSween and Deputy Premier Christine Elliott, who was joined by area MPPs. The details came following a \$6 million

Continued on page 3

Fall forecast: cool new styles
(arriving daily)

Short range forecast: hot savings
(up to 50% off summer clothing)

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TOWN OF AURORA

Notice Board

AURORA

Council & Committee Meetings

*All General Committee and Council meetings will be held virtually as per Section 20.1 of the Town’s Procedure By-law No. 6228-19, as amended, due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency.

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Thursday, August 13	6:30 p.m.	Video conference	Aurora Appeal Tribunal
Thursday, August 27	6 p.m.	Virtual Meeting	Aurora Appeal Tribunal

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

What’s Happening



ONLINE SKYLIGHT GALLERY

aurora.ca/skylightgallery

AURORA

Online Skylight Gallery Exhibition
Artist: Majella Power & Helen Simpson

During the month of August, “*Reflections of Culture through Landscapes and People*” by artists Majella Power and Helen Simpson take us on a journey through vast landscapes. With each piece they make, there is a captivating story to tell. Whether it is about a once visited landscape, or about a place they wish to one day explore, they express their emotion and wonder through the manipulation of paint. Helen works primarily with acrylic paint and Majella with oil. Enjoy landscapes in Ireland and throughout Europe.

View this online gallery at aurora.ca/skylightgallery.



CAMP IN A BAG

Camp in a Bag - Bring the camp experience home with you this summer!

Our camp team has created 10 amazing options for campers of all ages. Themed bags including everything campers need to enjoy some summer camp fun at home. Each bag contains camp swag, crafts, activities, a note from Town of Aurora Camp Staff and more.

Camp in a Bag packages are available in various options:


- 4 Basic options at \$23/each*
- 6 Deluxe options at \$38/each*

Bags are geared towards kids and teens ages 4 to 16 and can be purchased at aurora.ca/eplay.

Packages are available with contactless delivery (Aurora Residents only) or pick-up from the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex (*receive a \$3 discount if opting for curbside pick-up).

For more information, details on the full list of *Camp in a Bag* options and how to order, visit aurora.ca/summercamps.

MANDATORY USE OF FACE MASKS AND FACE COVERINGS



Effective Friday, July 17, 2020, customers, employees and visitors who enter enclosed public spaces must wear a face mask or face covering. This includes non-medical or cloth face masks, bandanas or scarves that cover your nose and mouth.

Who is exempt from wearing a face mask or covering in a public space?

Those exempt from wearing a face mask or covering in indoor public spaces are:

- Children under five years of age
- Individuals with medical conditions rendering them unable to safely wear a mask including breathing difficulties or cognitive difficulties or difficulties in hearing or processing information
- Anyone who has trouble breathing
- Anyone who is unable to remove the mask without help
- Anyone who is unconscious or incapacitated
- Anyone wearing a face covering that would inhibit the ability to breathe in any way such as, but not limited to, during moderate to intense physical activity (such as running) or activity that would preclude its use (such as swimming)
- Anyone who requires accommodation under the Ontario Human Rights Code

Please continue to follow Provincial orders and Public Health guidelines.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Visit york.ca/mandatorymasks

[@Town_of_Aurora](https://twitter.com/Town_of_Aurora) [@townofaurora](https://facebook.com/townofaurora) [@townofaurora](https://instagram.com/townofaurora)

aurora.ca/covid19

AURORA

What’s Happening

Limited summer swim programs

The Town is now offering the following summer swim programs at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC):

- Lane swims with no spa pool access
- Aquafit classes with no spa pool access
- Private swim lessons for individuals (Levels - Swim Kids 5 and higher)
- Aquatic sport clubs (i.e. facility permitting)

For more information on the modified summer aquatic program and for more details on procedures that should be followed, please visit aurora.ca/aquatics.



PLAY IN THE PARK

Aurora offers new Play in the Park Series for the month of August

The Town of Aurora has introduced a new *Play in the Park* series which offers a variety of recreation focused workshops for tots, children and youth. Each outdoor workshop is 45 minutes and provides an opportunity for participants to spend time playing outdoors and engaging in group interaction through a variety of recreation focused games and activities that encourage play, while maintaining physical distancing.

The *Play in the Park* series will be offered at Lambert Willson Park from **August 10 to September 4**. The workshops are held during the morning, afternoon and evening for three age groups: preschool up to the age of 5, children between the ages of 6 and 12 and youth ages 12 to 17. Programs offered for preschool and children up to the age of 12 require a parent or guardian to participate alongside them or remain on-site at all times.

Registration is now open, participants must pre-register and pay online to reserve a spot at aurora.ca/eplay.

For more information on the many exciting workshops offered in the *Play in the Park* series, please visit aurora.ca/playinthepark.

Recreation at home

It’s easy to stay actively engaged at home with more than 100 online resources available on our *Recreation at Home* webpage. These activities are for all ages. They contain a collection of games, activities and ideas to keep you and your family actively and engaged at home.

For more details, visit: aurora.ca/recathome.


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AURORA



Community Energy Plan (CEP)

Have you taken our Community Energy Plan (CEP) Survey yet?

The CEP is a comprehensive long-term plan to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions locally. To be effective, it’s critical that this plan represents the insights and ideas of our community members. By contributing your thoughts on the vision and goals, we can set a strong direction for the future. We are also looking for your thoughts and input on how you use energy at work, home and on the road to help shape strategies within the Plan.

Complete the survey and share your thoughts at: engageaurora.ca/cep

What’s Happening



TD PRESENTS

FREE EVENT

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CONCERTS IN THE PARK

Town Park - 49 Wells Street

AUGUST 5 12 19 26 SEPT 2 7 P.M. TO 8:30 P.M.

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Food donations for the Aurora Food Pantry are greatly appreciated.

For series line-up and more information, visit aurora.ca/summerconcerts

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EXPLORE AURORA

Region focuses on contact tracing as COVID-19 numbers trend downward

By Brock Weir

As the rate of new cases of COVID-19 within York Region is showing an encouraging downward trend, the Region of York continues to ramp up its contract tracing efforts to

stop the spread. Over the past weekend, Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region’s Medical Officer of Health, said the Public Health department had carried out follow-ups with more than 200 individuals. “Whilst we have collectively made tremendous progress in bringing

down the incidents of COVID-19 in York Region, I do wish to stress that COVID-19 hasn’t disappeared from our communities,” he said. “For example, over the weekend, we had to follow up on 200 contacts. These were low-risk contacts as a result of different cases. So, this emphasizes the importance of maintaining physical distancing and good hand hygiene principles as we have to consider almost everybody else as potentially infectious. In addition, should someone have symptoms of COVID-19, mild though they might be, it is important that you seek out testing through the three assessment centres at our hospitals and they are open seven days a week. It is only through this testing that you would know whether you had COVID-19 or not, and we would know that you had COVID-19 and be able to follow up on your contacts. “Past experience has taught us that

knowing the diagnosis of COVID-19 is important to individuals as sometimes the individuals react very badly to the infection.” Here in Aurora, there were 7 active cases of COVID-19 within the community as of August 11, the first time in two weeks that cases had been back in the single digits. 6 of these cases were related to local transmission or close contact, with the one remaining case linked to an institutional outbreak outside Aurora. Since the start of the pandemic, Aurora has seen a total of 141 confirmed cases of COVID-19, 15 of which have proved fatal. 119 cases are now marked as recovered. There have been a total of 3,332 cases of the virus across York Region, 229 of which remain active. There have been 2,851 recoveries in York Region and 252 deaths related to COVID-19.



Jim MacSween, York Regional Police’s recently-appointed Chief, was joined by Deputy Premier (and Newmarket-Aurora MPP) Christine Elliott, and a host of other area Members of Provincial Parliament, for Monday morning’s funding announcement at the YRP’s Aurora headquarters.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

Police look to identify youth at-risk of becoming involved in human trafficking

From page 1

three-year funding announcement from the Ontario Government last week to “help combat crime and build safer communities” by repurposing funds forfeited during criminal prosecutions. “The Proceeds of Crime Frontline Policing Grant repurposes funds forfeited during criminal prosecutions and helps local police fight gun and gang violence, human trafficking and sexual violence,” said Ms. Elliott, noting the YRP’s share of \$600,000 would go towards two key programs. The human trafficking initiative, she said, will “modernize the reporting process how youth at risk are being recruited into human trafficking” while developing a crime prevention model based on social development. The initiative will also provide resources to address the immediate needs of human trafficking victims. The “guns and gangs” initiative will help identify and examine the “significant increase” in this type of violence by working across sectors to tackle the problem head-on. “The guns and gangs initiative will examine the increasing gun and gang violence in York Region in the past year,” said Chief MacSween. “We know the first step is to understand the underlying factors that cause gun and gang violence. Only then can we tackle education, prevention and enforcement. “The goal of the human trafficking initiative is to modernize how at-risk youth are identified and reported to Police so we can prevent their being trafficked to begin with or assist them with leaving the life entirely. Proactive intelligence-gathering

related to the sex trade and supports for survivors of human trafficking will play an important role in this project, but for York Regional Police the most important element in both projects is the community partnerships we will be strengthening and developing. The ability to identify at-risk youth, connect with them early before they begin down a dangerous path, is vital.” To achieve this, the YRP will be working with organizations such as 360 Kids, Victim Services of York Region, and York University, each of whom will help the police “identify young people who are susceptible to human trafficking,” said Chief MacSween. “We will be collaborating in the development of a program to prevent their recruitment into the sex trade and creating an online tool so social workers can submit reports directly to investigators, reducing reporting and investigative delays,” he said. “The result will be real data and evidence that should help us understand sudden surges of violence as well as the effectiveness of prevention strategies. We recognize education and prevention are important factors, I would say critical factors, in any enforcement strategy. That is why this work is so important. “York Regional Police is truly grateful to the Province for recognizing partnerships and collaboration are the only way to solve complicated issues of human trafficking and violent crime. Law enforcement can’t do it alone. We must continue to employ a holistic approach and use the experience and expertise of our partners if we want true outcomes. The funding for these initiatives will go a long way to assist us in combatting these issues.”

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Council needs to know difference between want and need: reader

Despite the many educated opinions published warning against moving forward on the \$51.6 Million Library Square project, our Mayor, Deputy, and members of Council, with the exception of a few, appear to have difficulty making the distinction between a “want” and a “need.”

Recently, our Federal Government has admitted that household debt will significantly increase. That means more Aurora households will have difficulty paying their mortgages and rent.

While the privileged government class receives annual increases in wages, benefits and pensions no matter what the calamity, the rest of us may struggle. Canada has never before experienced such an economic shutdown and the carnage will continue for some time. Our Reserve Funds should not be touched. It is irresponsible to do otherwise during these uncertain economic times.

I didn’t vote for higher taxes, did you? I would be shocked if the Library Square project could be kept within budget given the history of other government projects. We know that construction debt will add an increase of an extra 1% to our tax bill year over year.

At present, the interest from the Hydro investment is helping pay for operating costs.

Once that amount is diminished it will require an increase in property taxes to cover the difference.

Council announced a “Climate Emergency” for Aurora and they should be focused on installing flood protection devices and infrastructure upgrades, not huge legacy projects.

Why is there not a push from the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to seriously improve government efficiencies in every department including contract negotiations so that we will not be subject to the relentless increase of inflation plus 1% for infrastructure that we are automatically saddled with annually.

Either it is time for a new Business Plan from the Town that takes into account the expected post COVID fallout, or it is time to vote in a fiscally responsible council as soon as we are able.

Linda Landman
Aurora

Numbers can “always back up your argument”

(Re: No one should be surprised by Ward decision: reader, July 30)

Daniel Koffiman has done an excellent job in showing that no matter what you are trying to prove, you can always fiddle with the numbers to back up your argument.

He writes, “In addition to the elected Councillors, Mayor Mrakas was also elected, stating that the shift to the ward system would be brought to council and he would be in favour of the change in the method governance.”

One fact he failed to mention amongst all of the numbers he included for the Councillors is this.

The 2018 Election had four candidates:

Tom Mrakas – 4,781 38%
Geoff Dawe – 3,533 28%
Chris Ballard – 2,475 20%
John Abel – 1,684 13%

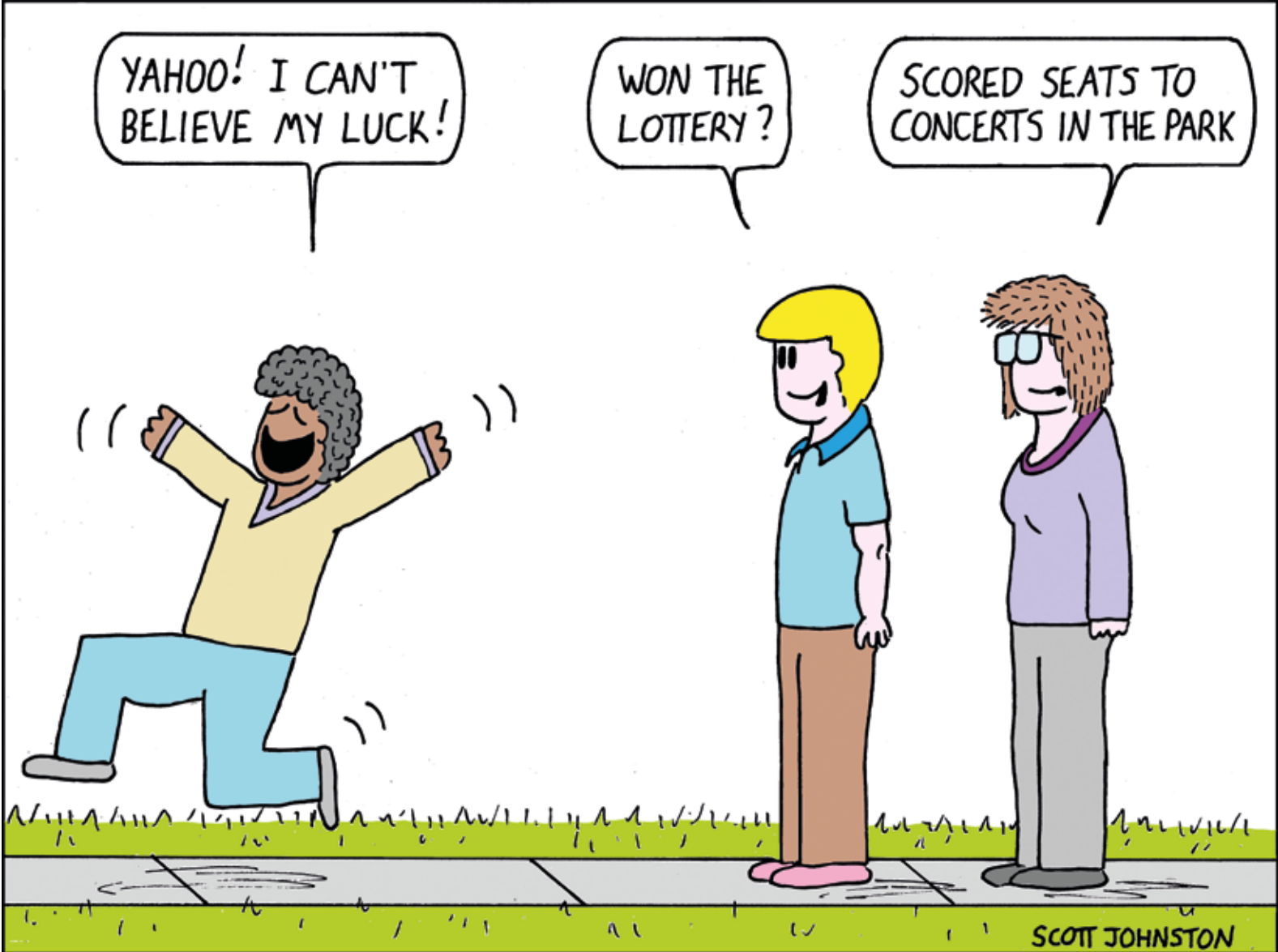
12,473

So, 62% of Aurorans did not vote for wards. See how you can make numbers work?

Bruce Orrell
Aurora

Leters continue on page 14

Machell’s Corners



Ours to Support



BROCK’S BANTER

Brock Weir

Look, I’m not going to pretend I didn’t feel like something of a big shot at the time.

While I can’t remember just how old I was, there came a time in my teens where I had enough money burning a hole in my pocket to buy Christmas gifts for my whole family.

Funds were, of course, limited, so I couldn’t fill a basket with anything too extravagant, but I knew I wanted to get each person something personal that reflected their interests.

So, what were the options?

Amazon was more of a book and DVD affair at the time. Selection at Chapters and Indigo, then separate entitles, was relatively limited. Catalogues? Well, first, I didn’t have a credit card or a chequebook. Second, I couldn’t remember the last time one arrived in the mailbox. That idea went out the door pretty quickly.

One day, however, at a nearby mall, I stumbled onto the perfect solution.

A store, long since gone, was more of a mall within a mall. Rather than having a specific vision of their own, they rented out space for various vendors and consigners to hock their wares. The twist? It wasn’t a flea market free-for-all; it was a space where artisans could share their creations.

If memory serves, about 40 individual vendors filled the space, flogging everything from home-carved wood products to blown glass, from knitwear to baseball caps, from bagged cookie mixes to just-add-water soups in a jar, and everything in between.

As a teen, the possibilities seemed endless, if not overwhelming, and I quickly set to work.

For my mom, I selected a geometric wooden bowl. For my father and grandfather, glass paperweights etched with the images of two different tall ships. For my grandmother, a piece of stained glass. And my brother, for reasons which are very clouded in hindsight, quite possibly the tackiest apparently-hand-carved desktop folder-holder in the shape of a cat. In my defence, he likes cats and, unless he is my family’s answer to Al Pacino, he seemed to like it.

Despite looking back at some of these gifts that are still kicking around and still questioning whether this whole “artisan” concept was a bit of a ruse – after all, I have seen more than my fair share of those paper weights in thrift stores over the last few years, some of which bore “Made in…” stickers of relatively exotic origin –

I remember the feeling leaving the store with items that were unique and that my money benefited creators of a sort.

The feeling has stuck with me over the years, but I have to admit that in some years passed I have felt a bit of pride when I was able to check everything off subsequent wish-lists from the comfort of my computer without setting foot into a bricks and mortar store. More recently, however, the pendulum is swinging the other way.

By the time the season of giving approached last year, getting everything I needed without putting a single item into an electronic shopping cart was a much more satisfying feeling of accomplishment.

As we look to rebuild our economy in the midst of this global pandemic, it seems many of us are also feeling the pendulum move as we look for new ways to shop local and support our community.

We have seen this since the start of the pandemic with drives to support local restaurants with takeout and curbside pickup. We see this every weekend, particularly when it is sunny, with our bustling local farmers’ market with tables groaning under the weight of fresh, colourful bounties.

And, in light of absurd, pandering tariffs coming out of the White House, we’re likely going to see a lot more of it in the weeks and months ahead in a much broader way.

“We need to start getting our manufacturing folks, the packaging folks [to print] the Ontario Made logo,” said Premier Ford last week in response to the White House’s international trade brainstorm. “We can have an impact on our employees, our neighbours, our friends, our families. We do \$390 billion a year, even if we do one in ten purchases that say ‘Made in Canada’ on it, that is close to \$17 billion. That’s tens of thousands of jobs. That’s how we can retaliate, by making sure every product

you buy and every manufacturer out there, and all the big five grocery retailers, on top of the big hardware retailers...

“We need you to start buying more Made in Ontario, Made in Canada goods and requiring the packaging that has Ontario Made [and] we give the consumers a choice to protect our economy.

“We’re an economic powerhouse. We’re an economic powerhouse around North America. We can compete against anyone. We have the brightest, smartest people anywhere in the world. Go out there and buy Ontario-made products. We’re up against a real battle right now. It is us versus them.

“I love the American people, but right now, for the President to come and attack us during these times in a pandemic when we need everyone’s support, is totally unacceptable and we may be small, but remember, we’re a consumer giant in the world.”

The Premier ended his comments with a suggestion for Ontario residents ahead of the weekend that just passed: “When you’re going into a grocery store, until the packaging gets changed, look on the back, see where it is manufactured. If it is manufactured in Canada, buy it. That’s how we can support our neighbours, our families and friends.”

But it goes beyond looking at labels when you’re at a large chain grocer or a big box store. There are so many opportunities we can put this in action.

Patronize the local Farmers’ Market for a wide variety of homegrown and home-raised produce and meats, hand-crafted pieces of art and jewellery, and even books written by local authors. Need a new mask to comply with ongoing rules for mandatory face coverings? Do your due diligence and find a friend, neighbour or community member who has been diligently crafting these garments even before they became a prescribed necessity in the fight against COVID-19. Chances are, you’ll not only support the needle-welder but numerous worthy charities and non-profits in the process.

The possibilities are endless and this is not only a time to send a clear economic message, but it is also a chance for creativity and discovering – or even rediscovering – the resources we have close to home.

Just steer clear of glass paperweights and desk accessories of questionable taste and origin. Don’t be like me and learn it the hard way.

THE AURORAN

Aurora’s Community Newspaper

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



The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating...

World Photography Day

(August 19, 2020)

This No. 1 Pocket Kodak folding camera was manufactured between 1929 and 1931 and was available in four different colours: blue, brown, gray and green. Whether you take pictures on a smart device, digital camera, or use vintage equipment like this, we hope you snap a picture to celebrate World Photography Day.



Time Travellers Diary

By Jacqueline Stuart

At Home in Alexandra Park

A little while ago I took a stroll along one of Aurora's most diverse residential streets: Tyler. I headed west from Yonge, wondering when construction of the new United Church will begin, and what the redevelopment of the former Collis Leather site might look like. But it was the last block of Tyler, west of George Street, which really got my attention.

Almost right away I noticed the dreaded chain link fence around the house at number 84. I felt the same regret for the demolition – probably – of this modest home as I would for a much grander, architecturally noteworthy residence. It was highly unlikely that this dwelling was going to be replaced by one of a similar size, suitable for a small family at either end of the home ownership curve.

What was the history of this house, and indeed of the whole block? Some scope for time travelling here, I thought.

Off I went to May 18 of 1912. An auction of building lots was taking place in the new “Alexandra Park” subdivision: the western part of Tyler, Hillview (then called Lepper), and part of George Street. (In 1912 “subdivision” simply indicated that a large piece of property had been divided into smaller building lots which would be developed by different purchasers.)

Despite the allure of “every man his own lot” in “the most beautiful part of Aurora,” only ten lots were sold in 1912. I travelled forward a few years to see how things were progressing, and in 1915 found a grand total of six houses on the last block of Tyler. The two at the corner of George had been built in the 1880s, so they were only accidentally in Alexandra Park (a name which had quickly disappeared). The dirt road tapered off at the west end and a fence barred access to the stream at the bottom of the slope. No Harriman Road.

A forty-year leap to 1955 found the street fully developed, with construction dates ranging from the nineteen-teens to the 1950s. I guessed that several unassuming dwellings, including number 84, were from the late 1940s. I asked a woman working in her front garden if she knew anything about those houses, and she confirmed their time period. Vacant lots which had fallen into Town ownership because property taxes had not been paid were sold to war veterans for nominal sums, with the proviso that a house be erected within two years.

One house from the 1940s, however, did not fit into this category, although it, too, was quite small. The stone house was the last one on the north side, and had been designed by architect Gordon Fowler for his mother; he later lived there himself. Mr. Fowler had worked on many rather larger projects, including Sunnybrook Hospital. [The Fowler home stood on what had been the Billing poultry yard, ha ha!]

I came back to the present and took another walk along the last block of Tyler. I compared the 2020 streetscape with photos taken on my 1955 visit. Just under half of the houses standing in 1955 have been demolished, including the Fowler house. The bully houses have moved in. And number 84, behind the chain link fence? Gone.

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Has the COVID-19 pandemic changed your opinion on the future Library Square redevelopment?

Yes No Unsure

www.theauroran.com

PREVIOUS POLL
Should students return to classrooms this September?

RESULTS TO DATE August 11, 2020	YES	NO	UNSURE
	37%	37%	26%

Canada needs a National Pandemic Response Plan – Now

Since COVID-19 has gripped Canada, the federal government has pursued a predominantly reactive approach, essentially waiting to act until left with no other choice. Canadians have been asked to remain in a “holding pattern” of varying degrees of lockdown for over five months. We were told it would be for the short term and that once we had flattened the curve and a vaccine had been developed, life would gradually return to normal.

However, Canada's Director of Public Health Theresa Tam has recently issued an alarming statement to the contrary, “we're planning, as a public health community, that we're going to have to manage this pandemic certainly over the next year, but certainly it may be planning for the longer term of the next **two to three years** during which the vaccine may play a role. But we don't know yet.”

Canada cannot survive another two to three years of lockdowns, economic hardship and uncertainty without a proactive, comprehensive strategy.

Canada urgently needs a **National Pandemic Response Strategy and Implementation Plan** that would address the following elements.

Pandemic Monitoring & Communication

Canada requires improved domestic capability to forecast, monitor, validate and communicate pandemic infection and transmission rates. Canada was once a world leader in this area providing highly valuable early warnings of global outbreaks until May 2019 when the Liberal Government disbanded the Global Health Information Network (GHIN). This capability must be re-instated and enhanced to include artificial intelligence, data management protocols and standards, closer integration with the Provinces and clear and concise public communication networks to ensure all Canadians have the same and most up to date information. Additionally, Canada needs to work with



MP'S REPORT

Leona Alleslev, MP

Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

other likeminded countries and the WHO to create a smart fast-moving response team to share research and rapidly respond to invasive pandemics, thereby saving time and sharing costs. Only with accurate and timely information can all citizens effectively prepare and plan for our nation's future.

Critical Medical Equipment & Supplies Self –Sufficiency

This pandemic has laid bare Canada's dependence on other nations for essential medical equipment and supplies. Everything from N95 masks, to ventilators, to active pharmaceutical ingredients, to an eventual vaccine, Canada has been unable to obtain sufficient quantities to meet our requirements, and the situation is worsening the longer the pandemic persists. Canada must be self-sufficient and define a national list and quantities of critical items, and ensure domestic manufacturing and supply capability to meet Canada's needs.

Enhanced Canadian Forces Medical Personnel & Infrastructure

Canada's COVID-19 response illustrated that provincial health care systems generally operate very close to maximum capacity. This is an efficient and effective way to manage health care resources but does not offer resilient capacity to meet an unprecedented situation like a pandemic. Canada's military is historically adept at rapid deployment of mobile field

hospitals and medical capability from doctors, nurses and associated medical professionals. This standby capability must be immediately enhanced to be available to be deployed promptly to provinces and cities during an invasive pandemic, such as we saw with the support provided to long-term care homes in Ontario and Quebec. It could also be deployed internationally to support other nation's pandemic response to prevent the spread of a virus before it reaches Canada.

Economic Modeling & Resilience

Canada requires more comprehensive economic research to model and recommend action plans for federal, provincial and municipal governments in planning, implementing and practicing pandemic responses. The challenges the federal government had in defining and delivering the emergency relief benefits highlighted serious gaps in the national understanding of how the Canadian economy actually operates. Development of realistic and robust economic models is key to forecasting which population groups and industrial sectors will be most adversely affected and targeted programs to support effective economic recovery.

Surviving and thriving another two to three years of the COVID-19 global pandemic, in an increasingly nationalistic focused and competitive world won't be easy. However, Canadians have faced and overcome challenges before and will do so again. We have the technology, the resources and the will to position Canada for a prosperous future – and if we had a National Pandemic Response Strategy and Implementation Plan we would have a comprehensive and integrated plan to get it done.

I would like to thank a constituent, Bill Franklin for his extensive research on this topic and for collaborating with me on this article to position Canada for success during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Stop texting/emailing and driving

This is a public service announcement.

Please stop texting and driving.

When I am in my car waiting for the street light to turn green at intersections around this province, I am continually amazed by the amount of people who are sending texts or checking e-mails on their hand-held device.

I was driving along Wellington the other day in the left lane and out of the corner of my eye I saw a young driver in the other lane looking at her rather large cell phone instead of concentrating on the road.

You need to stop it or, if the urge to look at that incoming e-mail/text message is so overwhelming, then just put the device in your glove compartment.

I will admit that in the not-so-recent past that I have sent texts while driving but no longer. Two things scared me straight.

First, during a long past weekend my family and I were driving back from London along Highway 401.

We were in the middle lane, driving behind a large tractor trailer that was continually swerving between that lane and the left (fast) lane. This tractor trailer just missed swiping a car in the passing lane. I was not sure if the driver had been drinking. I drove up beside the truck and got a look at the driver. He was driving with one hand and texting with the other, all while speeding along at about 130 km/hour.

I shook my head in disbelief and hoped that his activity would not lead to a catastrophe.



FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE

Stephen Somerville

The other reason for not checking text messages while driving in the car is because of a commercial. Prior to COVID, if any of you have been to a recent movie at the local Cineplex you might have seen it.

It shows a person driving a car. He is texting, gets distracted for an instant and his car is rammed from the side. You see the air bag deploying. The next scene has the driver of the car waking up. The camera slowly pans back to reveal the driver sitting in a wheelchair in a room with his care giver.

Just the thought of the commercial sends shivers down my spine. I don't want to be that guy and I definitely don't want to be the person that causes this to happen to someone else.

As I thought about it some more, the commercial brought back another vivid memory of the deadly results that can occur from texting while driving.

A couple of years back I used to drive

the two hours and twenty minutes or so to Nanticoke (past Hamilton, on Lake Erie) as I was developing a large combined cycle natural gas generation facility.

I had negotiated with a famer to use part of his land for our companies' energy project. We were driving to lunch one day when the gentleman farmer showed me the intersection where a car driven by a young man had collided with a car driven by a fellow student.

The driver was texting and went through a two way stop sign at about 120 km per hour and killed the other person instantly. I was shown where the two cars had eventually come to a stop; it was horrible.

The deceased was the son of the farmer's friend and the accident took place only about 1 km from the friend's home.

Thinking about this again the other day shook me up.

I admit that in the past I had occasionally taken and made text/e-mail messages while driving in my car. I almost got into an accident once because of it, which did scare me quite a bit.

The movie commercial made me stop altogether. I will take or make the occasional call with the voice-only device in my car but I do not check or make any texts while I am driving in the car. I will only check the messages when I am at my destination and I have parked my vehicle.

Please make a similar pledge to yourself to stop texting while driving.

Your pledge will save lives.

York Catholic District School Board’s reopening plans to be presented this week

By Brock Weir

The York Catholic District School Board’s reopening plans are set to be presented this week.

The Board was expected to go over the plans on Monday, August 10, with a virtual meeting, but technical difficulties forced the meeting to be rescheduled to Wednesday, August 12.

As parents weigh whether or not

to enroll their children into physical classrooms ahead of the September re-opening or continue in distanced learning programs, more options are expected to be on the table.

Elementary students in the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB), for instance, will have the chance to change from one respective stream to the other as early as October 13. In the secondary school stream, which will operate in a “quadmester”

format, the date to switch will be at the end of the first quadmester on November 12.

“The 2019-2020 school year changed drastically on March 13, 2020,” said the Board in the draft plan released ahead of this week’s meeting. “The coronavirus led to the COVID-19 pandemic, the most serious worldwide public health issue experienced in decades. This required schools to be closed and the teaching and learning modalities to be changed immediately. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the YCDSB senior team members, school administrators and school and Board staff had to quickly adapt to a new normal.

“With a focus on meeting our students’ academic and mental wellbeing needs during the 2019-2020 school closure and to ensure a safe re-entry plan in September, our staff worked closely with the Ministry of Education and the York Region Public Health Unit. This re-entry plan is based on directives given by the Ministry of Education and the Provincial Chief Medical Officer.”

Once elementary school classes resume, they will do so on a regular schedule with enhanced health and safety protocols, including mandatory masks for students in Grades 4 through 8.

This will follow in Secondary School, where students will complete Semester 1 courses in a quadmester model. Here, the first two courses will be completed by November 11, 2020 and the last two courses by January 29, 2021.

Some classes themselves might also look a bit different in this new normal, particularly music and physical education. For music, most objectives will be met without the use of instruments, according to the YCDSB, with choir and band practices and performances cancelled for the foreseeable future.

While some elements of the physical education curriculum will be held outdoors where possible, the Board says gymnasiums should only be used when physical distancing measures can be followed. Therefore, close contact sports are cancelled until further notice.

Outside of gymnasiums, common areas like cafeterias and libraries will be closed to student use. There will be no sharing of school supplies and students will be encouraged to bring their own devices into classrooms. Locker use will be suspended until further notice and extra-curricular activities and field trips are also on the backburner.

“The physical health of all our students is the underlying principle of all our COVID-19-related procedures and

practices,” says the Board. “COVID-19’s spread can be reduced by adhering to the following three principles: physical distancing, regular handwashing, mask wearing. In order to support the physical health of our staff and students, our return to school plan encompasses [all three] components as outlined within the Ministry of Education’s guidance document and supported by York Region Public Health for both our elementary students and secondary students and staff.”

Strategies to reduce the risk of transmission include routine self-screening for all staff and students, where every morning before coming to school a self-assessment will be conducted for all students supported by parents.

While masks will be mandatory for all students between Grades 4 and 12, with some exemptions, younger students will be “encouraged” to wear masks in common areas.

“If families choose to have their children wear masks, care will be taken that the children not be stigmatized,” said the Board. “Correct mask-wearing procedures will be taught, reinforced through signage and verbal reminders. Staff will also be required to wear masks.”

The mental health and wellbeing of staff and students alike, the Board stresses, will remain an important focus once classes resume and the plan evolves.

“Everyone has a role to play in supporting the social and emotional needs of our school communities,” they said. “A tiered approach for mental health supports will be used to support all students and staff. School-wide and classroom-based mental health promotion and prevention activities, as well as group and individual interventions provided by our regulated mental health professionals will be available.

“Staff training will continue prior to the start of the school reopening and will be ongoing throughout the school year. Teachers, support staff, resource staff, administrators and system leaders will receive a professional learning framework and toolkit to support the mental health of all students. The professional learning will have a strong focus on building students’ social-emotional learning skills so students can build resilience, manage their stress and build positive relationships.

“Ongoing staff training will also focus on creating mentally healthy classrooms, trauma-informed practices, creating a circle of support and suicide intervention.”



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Residents call on Council to re-name “Evelyn Buck Lane” after online comments



Luisa Gomez and Maricella Saucedo, residents of Evelyn Buck Lane, are calling on the Town to change the name of their street following controversial comments made by the former Aurora mayor on social media.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

By Brock Weir

Residents on Evelyn Buck Lane are calling on Council to re-name the street after comments from the former Aurora mayor regarding the Town’s recently-approved Rainbow Crosswalk

stirred controversy on social media. Responding to Council’s decision to approve a Rainbow Crosswalk at Yonge and Wellington, a York Region first, Ms. Buck said in a Facebook group: “It no longer surprises me how much some members of the gay community love to talk about themselves. Gay pride parades and rainbow crosswalks make little sense to me. If the need to live like everybody else is the objective, stop talking about your way. Stop banging drums, parades, making an exhibition of yourselves, painting crosswalks and just shut up about being gay for goodness sake. Just get on with your lives, like everyone else and make the best of it.”

These comments raised the ire of several members of the community, including Maricella Saucedo, who lives on Evelyn Buck Lane with her spouse and son.

An Aurora resident of 10 years, Ms. Saucedo says she has “never felt any kind of discrimination” here, but the comments have left her feeling differently and she is urging Council to re-name the street as a response.

“It made me feel sad, disturbed and angry,” says Ms. Saucedo of the online comments, which sparked a volley of heated exchanges between herself and Ms. Buck.

“I have never felt our community attacked in the community we have. We have always felt safe and those comments and that type of rhetoric is what reminds us that we’re still not safe, there are still people who feel this way and it can be dangerous.”

Comments referring to Pride parades displaying “sexual proclivities” is one of the comments Ms. Saucedo says are particularly offensive.

“She is generalizing everybody and putting them in some weird version of what they think the gay community

represents,” she contends. “Everything just pissed me off, to be honest... the way she was speaking about the community and how she would never have supported [the crosswalk] when she was in office, and how we pretty much need to live our lives inside our own bubble and never speak of it again.”

Evelyn Buck is a long-time public figure in Aurora. Having first been elected to Council in the 1960s, she served as Aurora’s first female mayor in the late 1970s. She later returned to politics, serving several terms on Council before narrowly missing re-election in 2014.

Now 92, she remains active on social media and, in Ms. Saucedo’s view, her public profile gives Ms. Buck’s comments extra weight.

“This is a tarnish on her legacy,” says Ms. Saucedo. “By leaving her name on this street and installing York Region’s only Rainbow Crosswalk, it doesn’t send the right message.”

Ms. Buck, on the other hand, says she is content to “let the chips fall where they may” with regards to any potential street name change but insists she is not homophobic.

“I have a hard time finding anything in my comments that is anti-gay, because I am not,” she says. “I am content to live and let live and am content that people should live their lives the way they want to and the way the Charter permits them to. I am glad they are not being harassed by the Police anymore and able to live their lives the way they want to and that is all I have to say about it.

“If I have said it time and time again, my position is if my grandson came to me and told me he was gay I would love him just as much. It wouldn’t change my feeling about him, but it wouldn’t be good news because I think life is a bitch

anyway without having extra problems. I think that is a problem for people.” But Ms. Buck says “I knew I would be stirring up some reactions” with her comments.

“I didn’t say there was anything wrong with being gay, I just said, more or less, stop shoving it into my face.”

If Ms. Saucedo’s efforts to have the name of Evelyn Buck Lane changed do not come to pass, she says she would like a statement from public officials that they are “willing to truly stand for the Aurora of the present and the future.”

“All we’re asking is we get treated like everybody else,” she says. “All we want to do is live a tranquil, peaceful life in a society that doesn’t judge us and doesn’t ostracize us for who we are and that is what we have always had, but comments like this remind us that, no, it is not there yet. These are the reasons why Pride Month continues. These are the reasons why minority groups are always having to teach the majority.”

In a statement, Mayor Tom Mrakas said the Town had been “made aware of the comments that were made in an online forum” and “appropriate action” was being determined.

“Anytime offensive comments are made by a member of our community it is disturbing and disappointing,” he said. “Aurora is an inclusive community and hurtful comments are unacceptable and do not reflect who we are as a community.

“When a member of our community has been honoured with having a street or building, etc. named after them, it comes with a responsibility of upholding the values of our town. With respect to this specific situation, we are currently discussing the matter and determining any appropriate action, inclusive of the considerations involved in changing a street.”

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Hillary House re-opens to public – just in time for staycations



Kathleen Vahey, Curator for the Aurora Historical Society and Hillary House, has been working with Board members to put protocols in place to re-open Aurora's only National Historic Site.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

By Brock Weir

Behind its red-brick gothic façade, is evidence of how our community's earliest doctors dealt with local health crises, including the Spanish Flu pandemic. And now, as the community battles another pandemic, the resilient

Hillary House is adapting to our shared new normal.

Aurora's only National Historic Site and home to both the Aurora Historical Society (AHS) and the Koffler Museum of Medicine, Hillary House is once again welcoming new visitors in dramatically different and inarguably historic circumstances.

The Yonge Street landmark closed to the public at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and by the time York Region moved into Stage 2 of the Province's re-opening plan, they had their own game plan in place for the time they got the green light to open a new chapter on their storied history.

"My overarching theme was to create a plan where all are satisfied and everyone has a safe and enjoyable experience," says AHS Curator Kathleen Vahey.

Ms. Vahey joined the AHS team earlier this year in what is undoubtedly a challenging time for community institutions. Coming to Hillary House with a Masters in Museum Studies from the University of Toronto and armed with a life-long passion for history, she quickly set to work immersing herself not only in Hillary House's collection of artefacts but in the day-to-day running of a National Historic Site.

Ms. Vahey sees the house itself as an artefact, and one which needs to be treated with a lot of tender, loving care.

As such, the AHS has set capacity limits on how many visitors can be in the building at any one time. In addition to maintaining a lower capacity, staff must wear masks while they are inside unless at their own workstations. Visitors must wear masks at all times in accordance with local bylaws.

Visitors are required to stop at sanitation stations at Hillary House's two entrances where they will be required to sanitize their hands and don a disposable mask if they do not have their own.

"We have no touch procedures in place," says Ms. Vahey, noting that while they allow drop-in visitors during normal business hours, pre-booking a visit is encouraged. "We have had a very positive response

from our visitors. It has been surprising how many people feel comfortable coming out, and that has been very comforting. I think that was my strategy going into this: we really want Hillary House to be a place for the community and visitors to feel safe coming in.

"We can't go to a lot of the places we used to be able to go into right now and I want visitors to say, 'Okay, I need to get out of the house but I also want to go where I am going to feel safe' – and I want Hillary House to be that place and I want the staff to feel safe providing that service."

Just a few short months ago, Hillary House was fittingly set to welcome a guest speaker on the subject of the Spanish Flu. Unfortunately, that had to be postponed due to illness but, before they could reschedule, another global health crisis hit.

As a living testament to Aurora's early medical community and the home of an impressive array of medical artefacts from across the country, the connections between Hillary House and the present situation is not lost on the curator.

"There have been doctors in this house since it was first built in the 1860s and they would have had to deal with all the outbreaks and diseases that have come through, now this is another part of Hillary House's history as the house is going through another pandemic," says Ms. Vahey. "Hillary House is almost like a hidden treasure. A lot of people have driven past it for years and have said, 'One day I am going to go in there' or they might not even notice the house because it is hidden by our beautiful gardens, so I think this is the perfect opportunity or people to come out, stay home, and explore their local treasures.

"Even if you have visited Hillary House once or twice, it has a 158-year history of stories to tell and one visit isn't enough. Find new stories every day and even if you have been here, there is always something new to learn, grounds to explore, and that is the best part."

To plan your visit, head over to aurorahs.ca or 905-727-8991.

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Aurora Chamber of Commerce

Virtual Annual General Meeting

Thursday, September 10th

4:30 - 6:00

Join us for the virtual Aurora Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Featuring local business success stories and an update from Rocco Rossi, President of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce

The 2019-2020 Audited Financial Statements and year-end reports will be presented, along with a look into the future. Chamber members will have the opportunity to virtually meet the 2020-2021 Board of Directors.

Please note this is a members only event.
Advance registration is required at www.aurorachamber.on.ca

Concerts in the Park opens socially-distant season



The Durham Street Band – Classic Rock Revival kicked off Aurora's 2020 Concerts in the Park music series last Wednesday night. Bringing together four accomplished musicians, Durham Street (Top Row, Left and Centre) took audiences through a musical journey performing classic rock songs from the 1970s through to the 1990s. (Top, Right) Alessa Bozzo, Aurora's 2020 Teen Idol, helped kick-off the music program. (Middle Left) Celebrating the start of the series on stage were Mayor Tom Mrakas and Newmarket-Aurora MP Tony Van Bynen. Due to social gathering restrictions, this year's Concerts in the Park events are limited to 100 patrons who need to pre-register online. Enjoying the show were (Bottom Row) Krystal and Zach, Andre, Elisa and Ana, and a sea of others who respected protocols and stayed in their "bubbles." For more on upcoming concerts, including how to book your spot, visit aurora.ca/summerconcerts.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger





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Local artist sends powerful message through public art

From page 1

Floyd, his death wasn't in vain, it brought life again; it has brought an attention towards this very dark issue that has been around for hundreds of years and it still isn't resolved."

From Ms. Farrell's perspective, it was Mr. Floyd's begging for air that helped galvanize the world.

"When you're begging for the most fundamental thing of life, I think that drew people," she says. "How can you not just take your foot off a person's neck? It is also the fact there's cameras now. There were so many cameras and with the internet, it goes viral and everyone can know about it very fast."

Ms. Farrell knows the reality of anti-Black racism after living on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border.

The situation is much the same on either side of the divide, she says.

"It is not just in the States, it is right here – the tactics might not be as brutal, but it is still there and it is almost to the point of, 'We're going to fight for that cause, just as long as you don't come to our neighbourhood.' That is the reality and once you enter into the neighbourhood, so to speak, then you are watched."

Aurora, she says, is not immune to this way of thinking.

She gives what she describes as a "middle of the road example" as the "worst and the best might be a bit too much."

That middle road came approximately

eight years ago when she began work on her century home, now known as The Blueprint House for its bold blue paint with white markings inspired by architect drawings.

"I was taking off the [old] siding – a homeowner can do that – but, in the course of me taking off siding I had nine government officials [come by]," she says, before pausing. "I can barely say it because it is almost fresh. I couldn't believe it. They were questioning me. Because I am an architect, I know good and well there is no bylaw that says you can't take off your own siding. People will say, 'Oh, that is a coincidence,' or 'Oh, that has nothing to do with skin colour,' but it absolutely does because that would not happen to another neighbour that is not my skin colour. I was shocked and dumbfounded, but I just kept plugging away because I knew very well there was nothing anyone could do."

But, did this challenge galvanize her forward or cause her to shrink back?

"That's the thing about racial equality," she says. "When you're born with a pigmentation, you learn very early to fight," she says. "Within this community, I have been told, 'You're angry,' and they put these tiles on you. The reality is it is really unfair that because of your pigmentation you have to go that extra mile. You have to stand taller, you have to stand your ground, and when that wrong is thrust upon you, you have to stand tall and say, 'No, this is wrong.' Did I press on?"

Of course!"

The resulting Blueprint House stands just a stone's throw, fittingly, from Town Park, which was the site of a thousand-person Solidarity March inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement. Ms. Farrell says she was thrilled such an event was able to take place here as it is important for people to understand, "If injustice happens to one, it happens to all."

Now, her art stands as testimony to that sentiment.

"Artists have a very important responsibility for changing the human

condition and I find that, through art, you are able to speak change in a more gentle yet strong way," she says. "It has that strength and softness. People can enter into art a little bit easier than through an all-out confrontation. It is not necessarily just through speaking and yelling, but maybe it is easier entering through something like art."

"I want people to take away the urgency, that we need to unify our differences, unify our ethnicities. We are a multicultural society and all our voices need to be heard."

Breath, The Substance of Racial Equality

By Roxana Farrell

Here, in a piece submitted to The Auroran, Ms. Farrell explains the thought process behind her piece of public art.

I can't breathe. When I saw the murder of George Floyd, an African American asphyxiated by a police officer on May 25, 2020, to see this inhumanity towards a fellow human being and for this police officer to deprive the most delicate and fragile, yet at the same time, an essential substance of life in us - breath; I, as a Black person, all that I am, my very life, identifies and recognizes with this situation.

Breath, this invisible substance that we all share with each other and everything on the planet, is part of our constitution and connects everything together that shares the need for breath. Globally, breath is the most communal thing. It is absolutely, the most fundamental element of freedom: to breathe. What does it mean when our policies, institutions, corporations, organizations and communities, take our breath away because of racial inequality? That is to say, that our individuality is not determined by one's own self but outside interests, motivated by an agenda to determine what constitutes being a citizen of the world.

In this art piece "I CAN'T BREATHE," each word is expressed in movement, cascading and twisting, limping and deforming, as each word is falling. Each word increases in length where the last word is six feet, representing the height of a person.

The "I" is very small, as if to represent how much of the individual is left when one's uprightness and self worth is taken away.

The "CAN'T" is in between being vertical and horizontal and sits in the middle of the fall.

It is a vulnerable position where the posture is forced to surrender to the inevitable demise.

The "BREATHE" word has lost its capacity to uphold its form. What is needed is the spine, as it were, of one's dignity but instead, the "BREATHE" has buckled, collapsed, and suffocated.

Yes, indeed, Black Lives Matter, so we all can BREATHE.



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Week of August 13, 2020



YRDSB and St. Andrew's College offer multiple outlooks for sport this year

By Robert Belardi

Of all the uncertainties that have continuously plagued what was previously a robust school system before March, a few things are becoming certain.

When Stephen Lecce announced the reopening of schools in Ontario two weeks ago with specific plans at the elementary and the high school level, there were also very explicit details pertaining to where all the money is going to be invested.

A total of \$308.7 million is going to go towards PPE, more staffing such as 1,200 custodians, cleaning supplies, health and safety, cleaning and PPE for transportation services through the school, testing capacity, 500 nurses, mental health and special needs students.

A school year truncated prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has essentially everything it needs to fully function for the year, given the number of the cases remains low and the potential of an outbreak continues to be mitigated.

What it does not have, temporarily, is extracurricular activities. By and large, sports will have to wait.

"We've been told specifically for right now, there are no extracurriculars right now. That doesn't mean it will be for the year. That's not what is being said. What is being said, is a wait and see thing and that makes sense to me, even as a coach," said Bradley Matwijec, Head Coach of King City Secondary School's hockey and soccer team, as well as the physical education and weight training teacher.

While Matwijec continues to receive information every day from the York Region District School Board (YRDSB), Sick Kids and the Ministry have held conversations regarding a number of sports that may be deemed unsafe to return to play.

Football and wrestling have been discussed and, realistically, it's not the time for that now.

What has been mentioned to return are soccer and hockey. Matwijec said that students may be required to wear a plastic face shield while playing hockey for this season if it does, indeed return.

Soccer is outdoors and although Matwijec says he is nervous and will coach it, there are still potential health implications and the fact that the boys' season would traditionally begin in September.

Matwijec says he guesses that the school board will look into a decision after one month in school.

"It's all going to be what the numbers dictate," Matwijec said.

"They're talking about a vaccine in December. So, what if the vaccine

doesn't come until January? Doesn't matter. That's going to solve a lot of problems when it comes to the sports."

As for St. Andrew's College, the private school division is looking at roughly the same concepts. According to their return-to-school document, the CISAA has released a return to sport plan, a return to sport staircase and a proposed multi-phased approach that looks at bringing sports back as soon as possible in stages. The league confirmed their process is not the same as the provincial government's.

In the multi-phased approach, the CISAA looks to bring back low risk sports such as swimming and cross-country, as well as individual sports in class and intramural sports within schools. The organization looks to ease the return of moderate-risk sports such as basketball and soccer.

Modified practices would begin for higher-risk such as football, wrestling, lacrosse and dance when deemed safe to do so.

Individually as a school, St. Andrew's wants to incorporate sports. The school said their campus allows enough space to hold "fitness activities, such as spin, yoga, track and field, mountain biking and more."

SAC hopes to incorporate intra-school sports opportunities while allowing an open gym for students, under strict supervision by a SAC faculty member. Students can sign up for Fall sports now. The document also includes advisories for middle school and high school students and provides a detailed look at using changerooms.

As everyone can guess, what this year's sports situations in schools can look like, right now, these students need exercise. The YRDSB is considering gym classes in limited capacity and

pushing for classes to be outdoors.

Sports, such as tennis, ultimate frisbee, soccer and other outdoor activities are being considered.

What every adolescent also needs is a leader for their mental, physical and social fitness.

Matwijec is urging that the care of the students is of the utmost importance. Students' education through sport is lost for now, and the things we need remember and what forges who we are are the experiences with our friends, the rapport from our coaches, the memories in the game and the respect of your opponent.

Whenever the school boards decide to discuss a plan to implement the game and should the novel coronavirus remain as far away from schools as possible, these factors must be considered.

Health is a priority, there's no question.

If it can be done, for a lot of these students, sports is more than a game and it's a part of their development, just like the books.

Sports were permitted within the return to school announcement, as long as they adhere to all physical distancing protocols, all equipment is cleaned and areas are sanitized.

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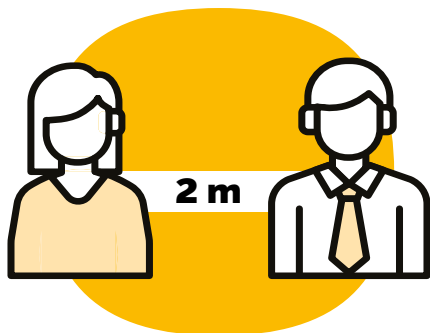
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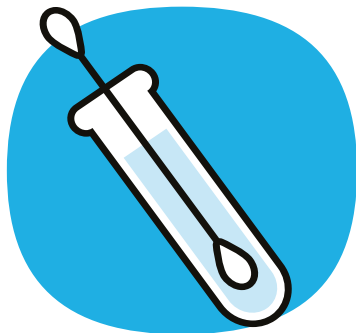
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Wear a face covering where physical distancing is a challenge or where required.



Continue to wash hands frequently.



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Inside or out, stay safe. Save lives.

Newmarket hockey team inspires the community

By Robert Belardi

Grade 12 student Raychel Gillis was scorekeeping her dad’s hockey game last year when one of the fathers in contention collapsed on the ice.

She sprung out from her scorekeeping box and scurried over to the man down. Her CPR training was enough to embolden Gillis to attempt to save the man’s life.

The one key factor you have to remember about someone in cardiac arrest is time. For every minute that passes, the chances of survival decrease by 10 per cent. In essence, there’s ten-minute window.

Everyone in the rink that day saw something. Call it a miracle or excellent teaching, whichever one it is, Gillis saved the man’s life.

Gillis, has earned plenty of praise from her family and friends and is celebrated within the community. She has also inspired a group of young women to promote CPR training.

The Central York Girls Hockey Association (CYGHA) Orange Crush Pee wee hockey the discovered Chevy Good Deeds program. By joining Good Deeds, the hockey team was required to contribute something positive to the community.

Inspired by Gillis’ courageous effort, the girls, along with their manager, Trish Murphy, wanted to increase the awareness and the importance of CPR training. The team raised over \$10,000; enough money to install SaveStations.

“They used our crowd funding platform,” says Deb Hennig, President of SaveStation. “SaveStation [is an] open source crowd funding platform, to help people who want to do similar things and they [used the platform to] spread it out to their network of people and through that network, they were able to raise more than \$10,000.”

Hennig and Murphy have known each other for years and Murphy encouraged this initiative.

The girls’ hockey team began teaching others how to perform CPR and also with the crowd funding platform encouraged the construction of SaveStations in the community.

This month, the hockey team unveiled the first outdoor 24/7 SaveStation AED (Automated External Defibrillator) Tower at the Newmarket’s Riverwalk Commons, which was purchased with the funds raised by the team.

This device can teach people how to perform CPR if they have never been educated to do so and instructs a user how to use the defibrillator.

“You open it. You grab the defibrillator. We really encourage it, there’s a QR code that we actually placed at the front of these SaveStations. You can take your phone now, open up your camera app, hold it over there and it opens up a video, a two-minute video on how to use that defibrillator that’s located inside that SaveStation, and it also shows somebody how to use CPR,” said Hennig.

The goal is to create mass awareness, understanding and facilitate access to this item to empower people for use in an emergency.

If you’re ever in an emergency and someone is unconscious, phone 9-1-1 immediately. The dispatcher on the other line is able to guide you to the nearest SaveStation to be used if the information is available.

On this SaveStation, all the names of the girls on the hockey team will be emblazoned on the tower.

“I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all the members of the CYGHA Orange Crush Hockey team for their commitment to saving lives and for this generous donation that will make Newmarket safer,” said Newmarket Mayor John Taylor.

“The girls hope this will inspire other businesses to get involved and help sponsor the placement of other outdoor SaveStations, in high traffic areas, throughout our community,” added Murphy.

Hennig says she can see SaveStations becoming a prominent feature in communities. She encourages communities to look into these products that you can’t miss by day and especially when the towers are illuminated by night.

Hennig added a SaveStation will be introduced in Aurora soon and will reveal who contributed to its development.

Why Charlottetown just might be the right spot for the Canadian Premier League

By Robert Belardi

The Canadian Premier League’s newly-minted “Island Games” will kick-off at the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) on August 13.

In full perspective, it is a great idea. It makes sense to move to an island with low COVID-19 counts and to be completely sequestered away from other sports leagues and from the mainland itself.

PE.I., won the vote, defeating Langford, BC and Moncton, NB. All three are arguably very safe places. But, down the ladder of consideration, Team Canada Rugby 7s will begin their training in Langford this month. So, maybe that was why British Columbia’s island wasn’t in the mix.

Upon arrival, visitors entering PEI must self-isolate for a 14-day period. But, Commissioner of the Canadian Premier League David Clanachan said in a Zoom conference call with reporters that players, coaching staff and front office will be self-quarantining for 14-days prior to departure, being tested twice for the virus in the process.

“Once we land, along with our health and safety protocol folks, along with their health and safety people, our players will be tested yet again, twice more in a five-day quarantine period,” Clanachan said.

He described this as a “bubble, within a bubble.” While teams take up rooms in Delta Hotels along the waterfront nobody is permitted to interact with residents on the island.

In getting back to play, the Canadian Premier League has wisely chosen to take their time.

“The key here was we didn’t have to rush back into it because we hadn’t started our season. That’s the key thing. A lot of other leagues are trying to finish seasons that they already started,” Clanachan said.

And he’s right. There was no need to rush. The only thing Clanachan had to worry

about was getting a year in before winter comes around and that was plenty of time to form a decision and to ensure the safety of everyone in the league, as well as including travelling media.

In deciding some of the adjustments to the league, Clanachan has paid close attention to other soccer leagues globally. He will be adopting the five-player substitution rule instead of the traditional three substitutions per match. Roster sizes will remain the same at 23.

The Island Games tournament will be a 35-game season set to finish in September. All eight clubs will play each other once in the 28-game first phase with the top four clubs entering a six-match group stage. The top two clubs will then battle it out in a winner-take-all final.

The tournament will feature last year’s champions Forge FC against Cavalry FC kicking off.

But, with the NHL and NBA recently returning, Clanachan believes soccer in the country will not be overshadowed by the other competitions.

“You’re looking at the only Canadian league that’s playing. Soccer supporters are different. I think we have a real opportunity. People are looking forward to live sport,” he said.

“Truthfully, ours is a great game. It’s action-oriented and played at a great pace. I think we’re going to find more fans because of this Canadian league coast-to-coast.”

One Soccer holds the rights to all matches however, Clanachan revealed the CPL is currently speaking to two-linear broadcasting companies in Canada to broadcast matches live on television.

This has posed a challenge not just for the league, but for clubs. Tactically, this can be one of the most exciting tournaments around. Every team is playing as if it is their last game. It seems no team can fall behind without the potential of falling out of the tournament before it even began.

Emergency made Aurora come together as community: Humfries

Councillor eyes Library Square, heritage for fall

By Brock Weir

The global pandemic has been a difficult time for everyone, but, from the perspective of Councillor Sandra Humfries, it has brought out the best of Aurora.

As the Town grappled with the rapidly evolving reality of COVID-19, the Town sprang into action looking at ways to help residents navigate these uncharted waters. Councillor Humfries says she is very proud of what she and Council have been able to accomplish in the first half of 2020 and hopes that momentum will continue into the fall.

Sitting down with The Auroran last week, Councillor Humfries shared her views on Council’s accomplishments in the first half of an unprecedented legislative year and how the last few months will help shape the issues Council will tackle in the fall.

“As things started, I was fortunate enough to be asked to join the Aurora Cares committee and through that committee I got to meet a lot of different individuals of all ages who volunteer in Aurora – from the Aurora Food Pantry, Salvation Army, Southlake, Neighbourhood Network, CHATS and I felt this team was really able to make a difference to help people during this time of crisis – particularly those who don’t have the funds to get through this or even know where to go,” she says.

As they worked together on Aurora Cares, they decided to compile a list of important resources for community members – and not just a list but a living document that will stand the test of time.

Since they launched the document this past spring, Councillor Humfries says it was quickly apparent it met its objectives.

“We have seen it work; we have seen some single moms in terrible situations access it and send us thanks,” she says. “This turned out to be a really wonderful, exciting time. Everybody pulled their weight and more, and I felt that was one of the most significant things we were able to do for our community, not just now, but for the long haul.”

In addition to the Aurora Cares team, Councillor Humfries also served as a member of the Arts & Culture Roundtable, which provided support for a sector that has been hit particularly hard by the pandemic.

One of their first tasks, she says, was creating a music video featuring representation from Aurora’s Arts & Culture community intended to not only remind residents that the industry was still there but also to provide the Town with a bit of inspiration.

“It was difficult to ask because the community is hurting so badly, so how are they going to give? They are just trying to survive and make sure they’re here,” she recalls. “It wasn’t easy, but they did come up with an incredible video of support, of strength, of inspiration, courage and working together.

“We’re going to have some really great memories on how we got through this and came together as a community. For me, that is just super incredible. I am so proud of Aurora.”

As Council’s liaison with the Aurora Farmers’ Market, Councillor Humfries says she’s proud of how the Market team came together to salvage the Market season. Although they opened a bit later than usual as they awaited health and



Councillor Sandra Humfries

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

safety directives from the Province, they were one of the first Farmers’ Markets in Ontario to re-open for regular – albeit socially distant – foot traffic, and their efforts became a template for larger communities, including the City of Toronto.

“Small-town Aurora came up with some pretty cool ideas for this really rough time,” she says. “[I experienced] shock and dismay, and I suffered some depression through [COVID-19] for sure but the community coming together allowed me to accept what’s happening, embrace the positive, get through the negative and continuously strive for a better future.”

A better future, she says, includes the redevelopment of Library Square.

Councillor Humfries concedes she has received a lot of questions on whether the Town will follow through with the \$50+ million project during a time of economic uncertainty, and it is something she says she has considered “long and hard.”

“I ran on it in my platform and it is something I still believe in very, very much,” she says. “I did a lot of research and investigation with our Director of Finance in terms of best and worst case scenarios and through all that I still believe we have an obligation to make sure the Town of Aurora has that future ahead of us.

“For me, we need to make the dream move forward and I don’t want to see it stopped. Some people might feel a little disappointment with my looking at this in a fiscally responsible way, but I believe with the background I know at this time that we’re still in a very strong position to move forward.

“I know, without a doubt, we’re not going to be in this financial position forever. In very short time, we have done a great job as Canadians in following the rules; continue to follow the rules and businesses will open and thrive. I feel like getting back on track and moving forward is important, for sure.”

In moving forward, it is also important to look back and this fall Councillor Humfries says she wants to renew efforts on establishing a heritage district in the southeast quadrant of Yonge and Wellington, particularly in the area of Town Park.

It is not a new concept, but one which fizzled in the last term of Council, but it is a concept which still has value, she says.

“I really feel there was some misinformation at that time,” she says, referring to feedback from residents at the Council podium questioning whether the legislation, for example, if passed, would mean the Town would own their homes and if they would lose the value of their properties. “The neighbours were pretty upset with misinformation from a communication perspective and I want to knock on doors to see if there is an interest. I want to get direct feedback from residents, amalgamate that information and, if there is enough [support] for seeing this protection happen, I would love to bring that forward again.

“If I get negative feedback, it is not going to go anywhere. It has to be positive at the beginning and then we will move full force to move it forward. I really pray it happens because I do walk those neighbourhoods all the time and the ones that shouldn’t be there stick out like a sore thumb and the ones that you want to make sure they are there 100 years from now, you hope they will be. This is the one way to hopefully get that buy-in.”

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Corrode
5. Jean Paul __, author
11. Hebrew unit of dry measure
12. A type of scientist
16. Greek goddess of discord
17. For Red Sox MVP
18. It checks your speed
19. Made dirty
24. The First State
25. Lodgings
26. Spiritual leader
27. Bradley Int’l Airport code
28. Native American people
29. Sharp pain
30. Touch
31. Slowly disappears
33. Indigenous Russian people
34. Narrative poem
38. Some are bad
39. Small quill feathers
40. Tattles
43. Popular Easter entree
44. Beneficiary
45. Clothed
49. Payroll firm
50. Lower Normandy’s largest city
51. Binary compound of halogen
53. The Fighting Irish
54. Skilled, paid worker
56. Eyelashes
58. The 12th letter of the Greek alphabet
59. Large, stocky lizard
60. Made poisonous
63. Former US Secretary of State
64. Sticky substances
65. A type of gin

CLUES DOWN

1. To return an echo
2. Displace
3. Japanese religion
4. Predilections
5. Partial
6. Poisonous plant
7. Road open
8. Atomic #81
9. Accomplished American composer
10. Oh, God!
13. Potato state
14. Most melancholic
15. Supportive framework
20. Hollywood’s Pacino
21. A title for women
22. Popular Grammys alternative
23. Check
27. Bolivian river
29. South Dakota
30. Wonderful
31. Supervises flying
32. Commercial
33. More (Spanish)
34. Even distribution of weight
35. “Arabian Nights” hero
36. Compact mass of a substance
37. Bachelor of Laws
38. Halfback
40. Some of it is ground
41. They play in the trenches
42. Atomic #18
44. Chinese Prefecture
45. Fabrics
46. Being in a direct line of descent from an ancestor
47. In slow tempo
48. Flood
50. Long-necked bird
51. Secondary school
52. Artificial intelligence
54. Structure by the water
55. Lather
57. What happens there stays there
61. A bone
62. The Great Lakes State

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E	P	H	A			E	C	O	L	O	G	I	S	T			
E	R	I	S			M	O			R	A	D	A	R			
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Ward decision doesn't reflect majority: Reader

I write this in full support of the letter by Peter Smith in The Auroran of July 16 as it supports the view that councils are failing the trust and respect of the electorate.

The ward system is one that has been driven through in spite of no real supportive consensus from the electorate and questioned by 50 percent of the Councillors as to the support of the electorate, therefore having the Mayor cast the final vote a for weak passing.

Agreed as noted by Daniel Koffman in the July 30 Auroran, there were promises during election campaigns of implementing a ward system. However, silly me; I assumed that this would take place with input

from the electorate not simply by a 20-year-old self-improvement slogan of "Getting Things Done" which applies to the individual rather than an electorate.

It's these electorates that should have had more input into the Ward Bylaw 6271-20. In the past, the Mayor has commented about doing everything that is required. Perhaps all that is required, but not all that is needed. I don't remember being asked for the type of voting system we should have nor the amount of wards we should have. The \$60,000 Aurora Electoral System Review was never a consensus on whether a ward system should implemented or not, and ended up merely as a guide for

the benefit of Council.

The Town website states that "Aurora Town Council will continue to meet electronically to move forward critical municipal business during the COVID-19 pandemic, until further notice."

I don't think that passing the ward system at this time, a year or more before it needs to be done was a Critical Municipal business. It took 29 days from presentation to passing it into a Bylaw, which will affect every voting resident in Aurora; meanwhile it takes years to get any sort of decision on a vacant plot of land. As well, under the present Council meetings, there is no real interaction with the public; granted, there are electronic options (I.E. social media) but these are not fully or readily available democratic tools and have limited accessibility.

The questions of why the public does not engage itself more in the affairs of the Town is raised constantly.

Public engagements requires mutual confidence in the electorate and in the Council, in that what we all want is the betterment of Aurora, but presently I feel the public view is not being supported by the majority on Council.

We should not be looked upon as a hindrance or ignored. This lack of trust to the above issue and many others over the last few years is the reason why it should come as no surprise to anyone that only 32.1 percent of the eligible voters elected this council and that public engagement is at an all time low.

John Sanders
Aurora





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Johnson’s Creek brings “redneck rock ‘n’ roll” to Concerts in the Park

By Brock Weir

Johnson’s Creek, a popular country rock band with hometown roots, is set to bring its self-described “redneck rock ‘n’ roll” style to Town Park next Wednesday as part of Aurora’s Concerts in the Park music series.

Bringing together the talents of Glenn Code on vocals, Michael Lanteigne on vocals and lead guitar, Mike Crombez on bass guitar and vocals, and Jake Adams on drums, the August 19 concert at Town Park will be something of a homecoming for Crombez and Lanteigne, both residents of Aurora.

“These events bring the community together in numerous ways,” says Crombez, who has been a regular patron of the Concerts in the Park series in previous seasons – but simply as a music-lover. “They have had outstanding performers and performances through the years and for us to be a part of it is phenomenal. We’re happy to be active in the community and engaging with the community, albeit

from a distance at this point in time and we’re really looking forward to it.”

Johnson’s Creek will come to the stage with selections from their new EP, including two singles which have been recently getting radio airplay.

Their songs are designed to get listeners up on their feet, but that will be discouraged next week as the Concerts in the Park series continues with limited capacity, with pre-registration required, due to restrictions put in place as a result of COVID-19.

Nevertheless, the band is excited to get up there to perform as it will be their first public performance since the March shutdown.

“The energy is pent up,” says Lanteigne with a laugh. “Since the social bubble was expanded to 10 people, we have been able to keep our bubble just to the band. We have been writing music and recording.”

Their music is inspired by classic and vintage country and rock, with a splash of Top 40.

The sound is a result of the talents and expertise each band member brings to the

table.

“It has been a matter of honing in on all of those skills we have developed over the years, but we found our sound and we ran with it: a redneck rock ‘n’ roll. We’re not quite rock ‘n’ roll, not quite country, and we fit into that niche.”

Adds Lanteigne: “I hear this every time we play, ‘I don’t like country music but I like you guys.’ We have been described as a country band and have been pigeon holed as that and that is fine because we’re all country music lovers and we’re big fans of the newer stuff. We like that sound. When someone who doesn’t traditionally like country music comes up to you and says, ‘Hey, I really like you guys,’ then you know that you’re taking in a larger audience.

“Come out and have a good time. Our music is great, upbeat music. We’re here to lift up your spirits in a time like this, so come out and have a great party with us – six feet apart.”

For more on the Concerts in the Park Series, including how to claim your spot, visit aurora.ca/summerconcerts.



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- Freelance reporting work for weekly community newspapers and special projects
- Will produce stories and bylines for the events they cover
- Will be paid on a freelance/contract basis per project/story
 - Generate story ideas and follow up on news tips
 - Take photographs
- Work some evenings and weekends, as required

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Diploma in journalism preferred
- Candidates should have experience working on the editorial side of the newspaper industry
- Excellent writing, editing and photography skills
 - Valid driver's license and a reliable vehicle
 - Reporting experience an asset
 - An interest in local issues is a necessity, as the majority of the writing for this role will be local

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