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Vol. 6 No. 28 AURORAN, Week of May 9, 2006 905-727-3300

Jones in race

There will be a race for the Aurora mayor's seat in this November's municipal election.

Current Mayor Tim Jones said Saturday he would seek his fifth term as mayor, and, as such, provide competition for the only other registered candidate to date, Councillor Nigel Kean.

Jones, after signing papers Friday, selected Westview Golf Club Saturday morning to make his announcement "out of respect for the gentleman who developed this facility, Keith Nisbet".

Nisbet, in a lengthy political life, served as councillor, deputy-reeve and mayor of Aurora; and was Aurora's first school trustee when the York County Board of Education was formed in 1969.

Nisbet was also the first mayor to wear Aurora's Chain of Office.

If re-elected, Jones would begin serving an unprecedented fifth term as mayor of Aurora.

He has been involved in Aurora politics for 28 years, 12 of them as mayor.

"The fire still burns," he told The Auroran in an interview. "I like what I do."

While the mayor's job is listed as "part-time", Jones has no other employment, and can usually be found at the Town Hall every day of the week.

Perhaps the real surprise of the announcement was the appointment of Barb Hartwell as his campaign manager.

Hartwell is the widow of Bob Hartwell, a long-distance runner, who served one term on Aurora Council. He died five years ago while participating in a marathon run in Toronto.

Rumours still swirl that Councillor Phyllis Morris will also jump into the frey and cause a three-way battle for the Town's top political spot, but she has withheld any announcement about her future political plans so far.

Mayor Jones fears there may be as many as five new faces on council after the next election.

"We need to continue the experience on council," he said. "Serving the people of Aurora is an honour."

The 58-year-old Jones has accomplished much in his lengthy political career in Aurora, but he referred to one function that gives him "great personal satisfaction".

"I have developed a reputation as a mayor who 'never met a ribbon he didn't cut', and although I have often been the recipient of more than a few jabs on this matter, I am pleased to accept it as a badge of honour."

Mayor Jones has officiated at numerous "official openings" for businesses throughout the community.

"Openings of new businesses are particularly important," he said. "Without the entrepreneurial spirit of our business community, we would not be able to enjoy the quality of life we are blessed with in this town."

Jones said his campaign team would follow two major rules leading up to the election.

"We'll stay on the high road," he said, "and we'll have fun."

Gonsalves will retire from C of C

Aurora's first and only general manager of the Chamber of Commerce is retiring.

Rosalyn Gonsalves told The Auroran Saturday she would end her 21-year career with the organization November 30 this year.

Her husband, George, she said, has accepted a consulting position in Barbados that will cause him to travel to that southern island every three months.

He will spend this summer there, return home for three months, then return to Barbados.

Mrs. Gonsalves plans to accompany him following her retirement.

She joined the Chamber of Commerce in October, 1985, and has been the driving force behind the organization's growth ever since.



Rosalyn Gonsalves



Shortly after their launch, the plastic frogs were confused. Some started floating against the current and heading in the wrong direction but Aurora Rotarians were quick to set them right. Four heats, consisting of 200 frogs each, ran north in Tannery Creek, with 10 winners selected. The final 40-frog heat determined the final winners.

Auroran photo by Ron Wallace

Susan was "McLuckie"

Aurora's Susan McLuckie took advantage of her last name Saturday morning, as her plastic frog outperformed 800 others to win the Aurora Rotary Club's first-ever frog race.

She wins a weekend at the Howard Johnson Hotel in Aurora.

Despite bitterly cold temperatures, several Rotarians showed up at Tannery Creek to launch the frogs on an approximately five-minute journey north of Aurora Heights Drive to Orchard Heights Blvd.

Four heats, each consisting of 200 frogs, were held, with the top 10 of each heat advancing to the finals.

The final 40-frog heat produced the winners.

Other frogs to cross the finish line were purchased by Robert Kerr, Arthur Gorhan, Marion Robertson-Baghel, Jamie Thompson, Brian Whitehead, Delma Wigram, Kevin Lalonde, Frank Mete, Robert Currie and David Falconer.

Despite the inclement weather, Rotarians fully expect the frog race to become an annual event.

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COMING EVENTS IN AURORA

CONTINUING

Aurora Community Garden has plots available to grow fruits and vegetables on Allaura Boulevard. For more information call York Region Food Network at 905-967-0372.

* * * *

Wellington Gallery features the wildlife artwork of Edward Spera and Les Pomeroy in their Best of Breed exhibit. Gallery hours are from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Thursdays and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

* * * *

Weekly lunches will be held from 11.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Wednesday in the Norma Jean Legge Room of the Aurora Seniors' Centre. Call 905-726-4767 for more information.

* * * *

"Martha's Table" offers comfort food and a sense of community at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, corner of Mosley and Victoria Streets. Available are hot soup, sandwiches, and dessert in the hall. Church-sponsored initiative runs every Thursday.

* * * *

Aurora Agricultural Society (organizer of the Aurora Fair & Horse Show) meets on the second Tuesday of every second month, at 7 p.m., at the Aurora Community Centre. New members welcome. For more information, call 905-713-6773 or info@aurorafair.ca, or visit www.aurorafair.ca.

* * * *

Aurora Rotary Club meets every Monday evening at 6.30 p.m. at Gabriel's on Yonge Street. New members welcome. For further information, call 905-841-1352.

* * * *

On the first Wednesday of every month from 9 a.m. to noon, a satellite constituency office for Vaughan/King/Aurora MPP Greg Sorbara will be open in the councillors' lounge at the Town Hall. Call 1-877-880-6770 for information.

* * * *

Independent Order of Odd Fellows Lodge #148 meets the first and third Tuesday of each month at 8 p.m. at 15216 Yonge Street (south of Wellington). For more information, call 905-830-9205.

* * * *

Masons' Rising Sun Lodge meets the first Thursday of each month at The Rising Sun Temple, 57 Mosley Street, Aurora at 7.30 p.m.

* * * *

Robertson Masonic Lodge meets the third Saturday each month at 57 Mosley Street at 10.30 a.m. Coffee club at 9 a.m., lunch at noon. Call 905-727-3032 or 905-727-1080.

* * * *

Gamblers Anonymous, every Tuesday night, Trinity Anglican Church, Victoria Street, 7.30 p.m.

* * * *

Progressive Euchre every Thursday night. Aurora Legion, 7.30 p.m. Call 905-727-9932.

* * * *

Canadian Federation of University Women has monthly meetings at Aurora's Trinity Anglican Church with a variety of speakers. There is also a selection of interest groups. Contact Beverley 905-727-2151.

* * * *

Dancing at the Legion, 8 p.m. every Friday night.

* * * *

Bid Euchre at the Legion, 1 p.m. every third Sunday.

* * * *

Queen's York Rangers Army Cadet Corps, boys and girls, ages 12 to 18. Camping, canoeing, target shooting. Aurora squadron meets every Friday evening. For more information, call 905-726-8600.

* * * *

Towns of York Toastmasters Club meetings, open to the public, are held every second and fourth Wednesday of the month from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Park Place Manor, 15055 Yonge Street, Aurora. For more information see the club web site at www.townsofyork.org or phone Elena Silaev at 905-726-9750.

MAY 9

Aurora Council meets at 7 p.m. in the council chambers of the Town Hall. Aurora Cable Internet will telecast the meeting at 6.30 p.m. the following night and at noon the following Saturday and Sunday.

MAY 9-JUNE 14

York Region 55+ Summer Games hosted by all regional municipalities with the closing ceremonies held June 14th at the Aurora Seniors' Centre.

MAY 10-14

Aurora's Marquee Productions presents the musical "Cats" at the Newmarket Theatre. Call the theatre box office at 905-963-5122 for ticket information.

MAY 11

Nadine Star and Elisia Pisapia are organizing the Aurora contingent that will join more than 200 other YMCA Child Care Centres across the GTA in a walk-a-thon to support the YMCA Spirit of Giving Campaign. For further information call Nadine at 905-751-1189 or Elisia at 905-727-5189.

* * * *

MAY 11-13

Pine Tree Potters will hold a Pottery Sale at 368 St. John's Sideroad from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Thursday and Friday and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday.

MAY 12

Live entertainment by Glenn Marais and Cara Chisholm along with dancing to a DJ, plus a silent auction, and 50/50 draw at the Aurora Legion beginning at 7 p.m. all in aid of Devon Brisbourne Trust Fund. Tickets are $20 in advance or $25 at the door. Tickets available at the Aurora Legion or call 905-727-5642.

MAY 13

Aurora Garden & Horticultural Society annual plant sale at the Aurora Public Library, 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

* * * *

M & M's National Charity Barbeque Day from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in front of the store at 15005 Yonge Street.

* * * *

Merlin's Hollow open to the public today, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Gardens are located at 181 Centre Crescent in the Centre Street/Industrial Parkway North area of Aurora.

MAY 13-16

Join the Aurora Seniors for a trip to Auberge Memphre Inn in Magog, Quebec. Trip includes three nights' accommodation, nine meals and snacks, entertainment, dancing, indoor pool. Call the seniors' centre at 905-726-4767.

MAY 15

Yard Waste Pick-Up Day, with waste in brown Kraft bags or clean, open rigid reusable waste containers, and containing only leaves, weeds, garden plants, shrubs, bushes and flowers, but not grass clippings, sod, or stumps. Waste to be at the curb by 7 a.m. For further information call 905-727-3123 ext. 3447.

MAY 16

Contract Bridge competition to be held at the Aurora Seniors' Centre, 5 Municipal Dr. at 1 pm. For more information go to website www.yr55plus-games.org or visit the Seniors' Centre.

MAY 17

Election and induction of Aurora Chamber of Commerce officers and directors at St. Andrew's Golf Club, 368 St. John's Sideroad East, at noon. To register call 905-727-7262.

* * * *

Aurora Public Library, in partnership with Addiction Services for York Region, presents a free information seminar "Exploring Responsible Gambling", 7 to 9 p.m. in the Magna Room. Pre-register at the adult information desk, or call 905-727-9493, option 4.

MAY 18

Amnesty International group meets at Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria Street for information, discussion and letter writing about human rights issues. New members welcome. For more information, call 905-713-6713.

MAY 19

Last day for the public to submit comments on PowerStream's draft "Conditions of Service" pertaining to its operating practices, connection policies and the types and levels of service. Copies of the draft document are available for viewing at the utility's Markham and Vaughan offices.

* * * *

Nominations close for positions on the Board of Directors of the Aurora Seniors' Association. A ballot box will be available from May 23 to June 2 with results reported June 8.

MAY 23

Aurora Public Library, in partnership with the Oak Ridges Trail Association, presents "Hiking On The Oak Ridges Moraine Trail" with Harold Sellers from the ORTA. Event occurs in the Magna Room between 7 and 8 p.m. Pre-register at the adult information desk, or call 905-727-9493, option 4.

MAY 24

Aurora Horticultural Society presents Entertaining With Spring & Summer Tables at the Royal Canadian Legion, 105 Industrial Parkway North. 8 p.m.

MAY 27

Bike and Board Rodeo at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., free of charge for all skateboarders and bike enthusiasts. For more information contact 905-726-4762 or visit e-aurora.ca.

* * * *

Aurora Farmers' Market opens at 8 a.m. in the Temperance Street parking lot for the fourth year and continues every Saturday through Thanksgiving weekend.

* * * *

"Lilac Tyme Lunch," featuring a ham and salad plate, at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Mosley at Victoria Streets. Lunch will be served from 11 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. Tickets: $8; $4 for children 10 and younger. Sponsored by St. Andrew's Guild.

* * * *

York Chamber Ensemble, conducted by Aurora's Tony Browning, presents "Crowns of Summer," featuring strings and chorus. Trinity Festival Chorus and Trinity Youth Choir will join the orchestra. Concert will take place at Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria Street, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are $15 or $10 for students and seniors. Purchase at the door, or call 905-727-6101.

MAY 29

Aurora Heritage Centre fundraising golf tournament at Aurora's Westview Golf Club. The noon hour shotgun event is limited to 96 golfers to play two of the club's three nine-hole courses for $150 each, including dinner at Dinardo's Mansion. Contact Sharon Nisbet at 905-727-0446 for further information.

* * * *

Yard Waste Pick-Up Day, with waste in brown Kraft bags or clean, open rigid reusable waste containers, and containing only leaves, weeds, garden plants, shrubs, bushes and flowers, but not grass clippings, sod, or stumps. Waste to be at the curb by 7 a.m. For further information call 905-727-3123 ext. 3447.

MAY 30

Business after 5, sponsored by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, presents dart night at the Aurora Legion, Industrial Parkway North, from 6 to 8.30 p.m. To register call 905-727-7262.

MAY 31

From 7 to 8 p.m. in the Town Park, Miriam Goldberger of Wildflower Farms will present a gardening workshop on "Elegant Water Efficient Landscaping". Call 1-888-967-5426 to register.

JUNE 3

An all-new bike clinic covering terminology, bike maintenance, safety skills, equipment, stopping/turning and tricks for ages 7-13 at the Leisure Complex parking lot. Cost is $16. Call 905-726-4760 for further information.

* * * *

Yonge Street Dance, between Murray and Henderson, 7 p.m. to midnight. Sponsored by the Optimist Club of Aurora. Advance tickets at $10 now on sale.

JUNE 4

Eleventh Annual Street Festival on Yonge Street between Wellington and Murray. Booth space available by calling 905-727-7262.

JUNE 7

Civic Appreciation Awards in the council chambers of the Town Hall at 7.30 p.m.

JUNE 10

Merlin's Hollow open to the public today, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Gardens are located at 181 Centre Crescent in the Centre Street/Industrial Parkway North area of Aurora.

JUNE 11

Dick Illingworth turns 90 (do you believe it?) today. An afternoon with Dick is planned at DiNardo's beginning at 2 p.m. Presentations at 4 p.m. Advance tickets are now available at R & R Revisited.

JUNE 22

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce will hold its 2006 Golf Tournament at the Westview Golf Club in Aurora. Westview can accommodate 200 golfers. Additional information and application in the March newsletter and spaces will be assigned as forms are received.

JUNE 28

Aurora Horticultural Society presents a lecture on "Where Have All The Flowers Gone?" at the Royal Canadian Legion, 105 Industrial Parkway North. 8 p.m.

JULY 1

Merlin's Hollow open to the public today, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Gardens are located at 181 Centre Crescent in the Centre Street/Industrial Parkway North area of Aurora.

JULY 9

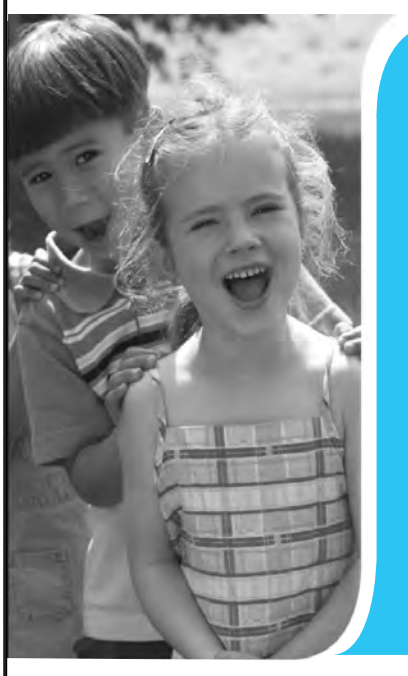
Merlin's Hollow open to the public today, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Gardens are located at 181 Centre Crescent in the Centre Street/Industrial Parkway North area of Aurora.

AUGUST 12

Doors Open Aurora provides an opportunity to visit various buildings and businesses in Aurora including the Railway Station, Baldwin's Mill, Hillary House, St. Andrew's College, Trinity Anglican Church and The Auroran. For more information call 905-726-4762.

OCTOBER 20

Celebrate Business Excellence event in Aurora hosted by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.



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Committee rejects daytime meetings

As part of a review of the procedural bylaw, Aurora town staff recommended general committee meetings, after the next election, begin at 2 p.m. to allow staff to be available to assist in the deliberations of the committee.

The idea didn't fly.

It was pointed out that general committee meetings are meant to be an opportunity for members of council to spend time discussing agenda items and there are times when members other than senior staff could assist in the deliberations.

If the meetings were to start in the afternoon it would be easier to call the staff member into the meeting if necessary, a report to last week's general committee pointed out.

Afternoon meetings, the report said, would also allow residents who are not able to attend evening meetings the opportunity to attend at least general committee meetings.

It was also suggested reports from the advisory committees go to general committee before council with the expectation general committee meetings would become longer and the earlier start time would ensure discussions would not take place late into the night.

It was also suggested that if council members were not comfortable with the 2 p.m. time, consideration be given to a 4:30 p.m. start time.

Declared council candidate Bob McRoberts appeared before the committee as a delegate to oppose the proposed 2 p.m. start time as it was important for the public to hear committee discussions and afternoon meetings would prevent anyone with a day job from attending the meetings and running for council.

Councillor Ron Wallace objected to the proposed change saying daytime meetings are not for the benefit of the people.

He referred to the 9.30 a.m. start of York Regional Council meetings and pointed out that a person would have to take a day off work to appear before council.

Councillor John West suggested the starting time remain as is and noted sending advisory committee reports going to general committee before council makes the committee more important than council.

Councillor Nigel Kean agreed and pointed out that a councillor in Aurora was still considered to be part time and changing the time could eliminate people from running for council.

Mayor Tim Jones noted that many people have flextime jobs and with planning could arrange to attend meetings and he preferred the 4.30 p.m. start time in order that members could finish the meetings earlier.

Councillor Evelyn Buck said that when people run for council they should make themselves available when needed as it was a public service and she favoured the 4.30 start as the town was not getting the best when members of council were required to stay late at night.

Councillor Damir Vrancic said the earlier start time would make it difficult for everyone as normal businesspeople work during the day and council is not a fulltime position.

Both Councillors Phyllis Morris and Wendy Gaertner expressed their opposition to the staff recommendation.

When the vote was called it was defeated with only Councillor Buck supporting it.

The decision was expected to be endorsed by council this week.

Aurora artist donates work

Sharon Temple located on Leslie Street in East Gwillimbury is about to get help from an Aurora artist.

One of the most historic buildings in York Region and Ontario, the Temple was conceived by visionary David Willson and built by the Children of Peace who had immigrated to Canada in the early 1800s with the Quakers but broke away to form their own community and religious life.

But the Temple and its grounds are in need of restoration and funds for protection.

Aurora heritage artist Dorothy Clark McClure who has captured many historic buildings across Canada in sepia prints donated her last 30 sets of two prints "The Temple" and "David Willson's Study" to help save the Temple.

They are sepia ink on cream paper hand signed and annotated by the artist.

The Art and Gift Gallery on Leslie Street in Newmarket will donate the mounting and shrink wrapping of the prints.

Presentation to Jan Emonson, Director of Sharon Temple, took place at the Art and Gift Gallery last week.

The prints will be sold at $195 for the two matching signed and numbered prints, limited to the remaining 30 sets.

There will be a Media Day at the Temple Tuesday, May 16, with the Temple officially re-opening May 20 for the season.



Nigel Kean
for
Mayor
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Poor Richard

Downtown land still undeveloped

Where are all the buildings
After properties meet the test?
The plans never seem to happen,
While owners feather their nest.
- Poor Richard's Scrapbook

Council and staff members spend a considerable amount of time reviewing plans of development, scheduling public planning meetings, and finally approving the applications, sometimes with conditions, yet nothing seems to happen.

Almost immediately after approval, a "For Sale" sign goes up on the property as it continues to sit there vacant as the owner attempts to sell it, likely at a much higher price, as it is zoned and ready for building.

Take the corner of Centre and Yonge Streets as an example.

In 1997, two investment companies purchased a total of six separate properties on the northeast corner of the intersection, including the former Aurora Dairy property, now occupied by a more modern commercial building.

Other buildings were demolished.

A public planning meeting was held in March, 1998, to consider an application for a seven storey multi-use building with commercial space on the ground floor and 72 residential units on the upper floors with surface and underground parking.

Council was advised that staff did not support the proposal in its present format and listed a number of suggested changes.

Although there was some support from citizens and council members about cleaning up the corner, there were concerns about the height of the building, increased traffic, parking, drainage and other issues.

Staff was directed to work with the applicant and the residents in an effort to resolve some of the issues and a second public planning meeting was scheduled, which was held in February, 2000.

By this time the applicant had reduced the height to five storeys and carried out traffic and other studies.

Council approved the application in principle subject to the resolution of technical issues identified in the staff report.

Nothing happened and in response to a staff request in April, 2002, the applicant replied that more time was required but the property remained empty and an eyesore. Fast forward to August, 2004.

The applicant requested that the revised plan approved in principle in February, 2000, be considered for final approval, but due to the length of time, another public planning meeting was held in December, 2004.

By this time, the proposal was for 58 residential units, with 9,950 square feet of commercial space and 104 parking spaces.

The building featured a six-storey corner tower with upper floors tiered back from Yonge and Centre Streets, but the massing of the building was still of concern.

A revised plan was submitted in June, 2005, with six storeys along Yonge Street and five storeys on Centre Street with 62 residential units and 3,230 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor.

Finally council agreed to approve the application subject to the applicant meeting with staff and residents to resolve outstanding issues.

Since then, however, nothing has happened, except the property is up for sale and it continues to be an eyesore.

The same applies to the vacant property at the southwest corner of the Tyler and Yonge Street intersection.

An application was first submitted in March, 1996, a new application submitted in 2000 and finally approved by council in January, 2003.

It remains empty and for sale.

Then there is the Old Arena property on Yonge Street which has been in the mill since 1965 when the rink was destroyed by fire and in spite of several applications and final approval in October, 2002, after an OMB hearing, the property is still vacant and for sale.

While attempts are made to avoid the tremendous waste of time by staff, councillors and citizens attending public planning meetings and meetings with developers, and approval finally given, it's frustrating when nothing happens and the Yonge Street eyesores remain.

Consideration should be given to some form of a Performance Bond to be provided at the time of application to ensure there is some assurance that the applicant is sincere in developing the property rather then flipping it, after approval.



Continuing our series of Church Street School classes, we present two Grade 1 classes that, because of space limitations, weren't even at the school. This photo, taken in 1945, had the children studying across the street at Trinity Anglican Church. Mrs. Kay Bartlett was the teacher. Students included, front row, left to right, Ronnie Holloway, Bert Loveless, Bobby Hickson, Fred Bolsby, Bruce McRae, Peter Ardill and Ronnie Chapman; second row, left to right, Nancy Stocks, Trevor Yake, Bonnie McCachen, Frankie Pattenden, Alice Wells, Tommy Evans, Arlette Buker and Tommy Duff; third row, left to right, Peter Goodman, Kenny McGhee, Harold Bunn, Gerald Clarke, Gloria Sherman, Jean Brown and Ross Patrick; back row, left to right, Danny Patrick, Roy Mingay, Robert Atkinson, Frank Simpson, Carol Thomson, ?, Wanda Ellis and Rosalie Rose. The picture was supplied by Wanda (Ellis) Eveleigh of Cookstown.

Letters to the Editor

What is wrong with living in quiet, comfortable town?

To the editor,

I would like to respond to comments made by "N.W." (whoever you are) in a letter appearing in the May 2 issue of The Auroran concerning his or her displeasure at the ward system question being turned down.

He or she states they are fed up with old fogies whining about change. Fogey by definition is: 1. old fashioned or excessively conservative, 2. a slow or dull person.

As a vocal opponent of the ward system, I assume I am one of the above named fogies.

Now I have been accused in these very same hallowed pages of whining but this is the first time I have been referred to as an old fogey.

Maybe fogey, but surely being still in the prime of my 50s, not "old."

As far as the council is concerned, yes there are some older members and maybe even a fogey or two, but overall not a geriatric or dull group. (If you have attended council meetings you would surely know that).

You state that this council is ignoring the wishes of the greater population re a ward system.

Each one of these councillors is very involved in our town and the population and would certainly be aware if there was a groundswell for such a system, and yet I do not believe one councillor spoke in favour of a ward system.

N.W. also appears to condemn council because they would like to keep Aurora quiet and comfortable.

What's wrong with that?

I personally would like to keep Aurora a quiet, comfortable town no matter what our eventual population.

Aurora is unique in many ways; it's an enviable place to live and for this we can thank present and previous councils.

Certainly we need "new blood" on council but that needs to be balanced by experienced currently sitting members.

As to N.W.'s comment that people who remember Aurora as a small town shouldn't be on council a couple of very wise sayings come to mind…"if you have no past you have no future" and "if you don't know where you've come from there's no way of knowing where you're going."

In some ways this "old fogey" would like to go back to the days when Aurora had a population of 3,000, when you knew everybody in town, when taxes were less, when you could leave your front door unlocked, when people didn't hide behind initials when writing letters to the paper… the list could go on; however this is unreasonable and wishful thinking. Aurora will grow and that's good, it's selfish not to want to share our great town with others.

As to the "old fogies" on council we put them there and we have the option to remove them or re-elect them again.

Democracy, what a wonderful institution!

G. W.
(Graham Wride)
Aurora

ED.NOTE: While The Auroran does not condone anonymous letters, it will print them as long as the author can be established. In this case, The Auroran knows who N.W. is, and can honestly say, it is NOT Norm Weller.

Distressful letter prompts donation

To the editor,

Our family found it most distressful to read of a dog left to die tied to a tree along Vandorf Sideroad (Letter to the editor, Auroran, April 25). Rather than focusing on who could do this and thinking of the last hours of this dog's life we decided to make a donation to the OSPCA on Woodbine Avenue in Newmarket, in memory of the "Vandorf Victim". Perhaps in a small way other animals may have a better life as a result of this senseless act.

We urge others to make a contribution as well.

Kevin & Carole Simmons
Aurora

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Mayor's Report
By Tim Jones

Economic Development: town's busy department

At the April Economic Development Committee meeting held at the Town Hall, Economic Development Officer for the Town of Aurora, Dino Lombardi, presented a report to committee members on the "Quantitative Activity" of his area of responsibility.

Included in this report were a number of interesting statistics I would like to bring to your attention:

ENQUIRIES

• staff handled approximately 300 general inquiries by phone/e-mail/website and personally in 2005;

• 225 promotional economic development "Lure" kits were distributed to interested companies.

LOCAL ECONOMIC INDICATORS

• 24 Industrial Permits were issued with a value of $4,737,000;

• 49 Commercial permits were issued with a value of $15,668,000;

• staff reviewed 64 non-residential planning/development applications;

• 107.55 acres of vacant employment lands were absorbed in 2005;

• 96 new businesses established operations in Aurora in 2005.

PUBLICATIONS

• Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter 2005 Business "Bright Lights" newsletters were produced;

• The Economic Development web pages on the Town's website were updated;

• The Town's "Aurora Quick Facts" document was updated.

AURORA BUSINESS AMBASSADORS

• held two meetings;

• developed a new terms of reference

MEMBER PARTICIPATION IN BROADER INITIATIVES

• staff participated with the York Region Biotechnology Cluster Consortium and the Automotive Investment Attraction Committee Signage;

• developed design options for directional/informational ground signage for use in the Downtown core.

MEMBERSHIPS/ATTENDANCE/AFFILIATIONS

• staff representated Aurora at the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance, Greater Toronto Economic Developers Partnership, Economic Developers Council of Ontario, Economic Developers Association of Canada, Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

Staff presented to the following groups: The Aurora Rotary Club, Aurora Business.com, Canadian Federation of Independent Business, The Aurora Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

Aurora, as demonstrated by a number of reports to Council, has some significant economic development challenges and opportunities, both in retaining and supporting existing businesses to grow in Aurora as well as to build on the success at the 404 with State Farm and First Pro to attract businesses to the available employment lands in this area.

The tax assessment and the employment opportunities are fundamental and of benefit to Aurora's future.

The work of Mr. Lombardi, the members of council and residents who serve on the Economic Development Committee, other related department staff and council who make the final policy decisions, is essential to continuing the positive business development in our Town.

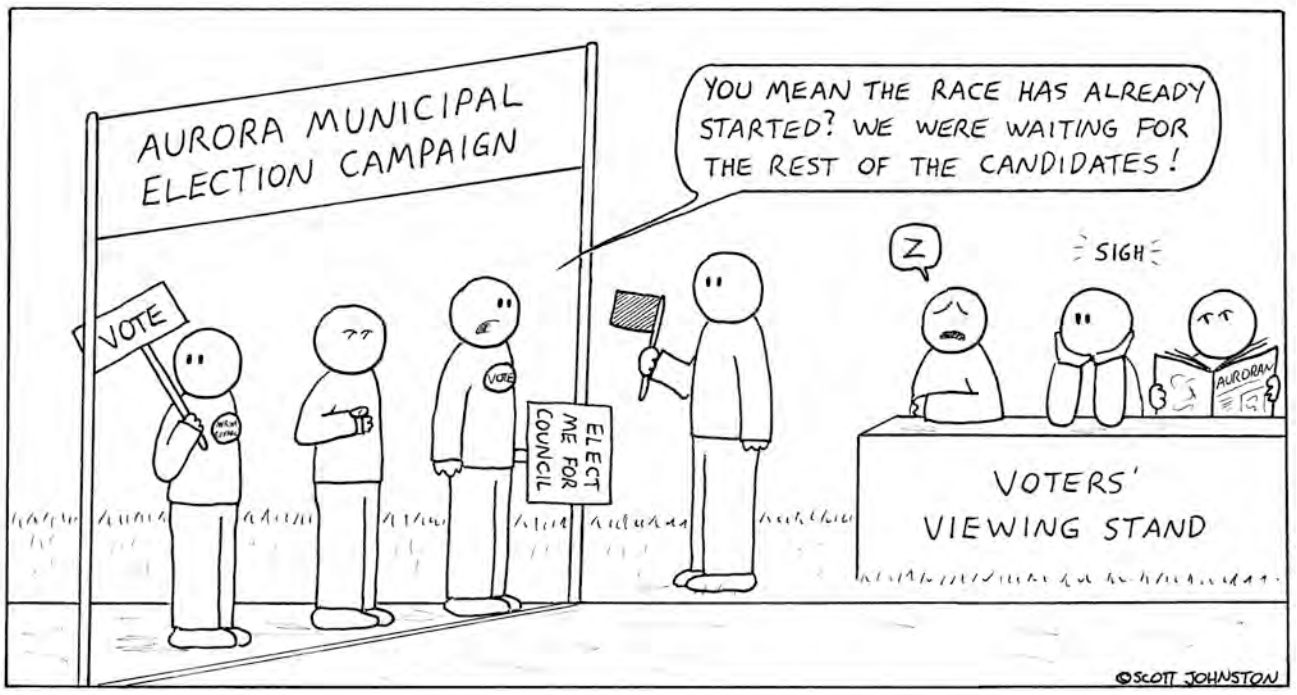
Note: THANK YOU to all residents of Aurora who came out during the Mayor's Anti-Litter Day - Saturday, April 29th, or who picked up litter on other days last week to make our Town a cleaner place.

I would appeal to all residents to help us out in this regard by picking up litter when you see it and reminding others you see littering, not to do so in the first place!

* * * *

Please be advised as a result of my announcement Saturday, this will be my last mayor's report until after the municipal election. If you see something in this column that you wish to respond to, I welcome your comments, either through the paper, to the Town Hall by mail - Box 1000, Aurora, Ontario, L4G 6J1 or e-mail at tjones@e-aurora.ca

Machell's Corners — by Scott Johnston



Letter to the Editor

Anonymous writer is real whiner

To the editor,

I see that once again we have somebody who doesn't want to put their name to their letter to the editor.

What is the matter, not enough conviction behind your statement to admit to Aurora that this is what you think?

Methinks that it is N.W. and other backers of a ward system for Aurora who are the whiners here.

None of them has been able to provide coherent viable reasons to change Aurora over to a ward system, yet those of us who have been here more than 20 years are the ones being called whiners because we remember what Aurora used to be like and don't really want Aurora to become just like Toronto or to be a part of a smothering monstrosity called "greater" Toronto.

I like being able to harangue all nine members of council, in the hope that one might be sympathetic enough to my positions to try and do something about it.

I do not want to be stuck with only being able to deal with one or maybe two when such reduction of numbers actually reduces my chances of being heard.

If all these new people to Aurora want to do is make us more like Toronto, why did they come north from the city in the first place?

Dave Watson
Aurora



Cathy's Corner



A Mother's Day

This year, Mother's Day finds me in labour.

It all began two weeks ago, when my nesting instinct kicked into overdrive in anticipation of both daughters moving back home.

Back in March, I had reserved a 26-foot truck to assist in emptying two apartments and delivering two educated young ladies home to Aurora - Jennifer from London, and Nadia from Waterloo.

The day before, it became clear that I was going to need an epidural to get through the ordeal.

I still hadn't heard from the truck rental company so I still didn't know from which cabbage patch in London to pick up the truck.

Not that I sat around waiting for someone to call. Hey, mothers know how to push!

All week, I obsessively dialed the 800 dispatch line, each time suffering between 20 and 50 minutes of verbal abuse from a talking "Ken" doll stuck in a loop.

"We are experiencing a high volume of calls…please stay on the line and your call will be answered in sequence…" I must have been caller 9,999.

"Breathe," I told myself at 11 a.m. (a.k.a. the 11th hour) as I watched the timer on my phone tick off 47 minutes. Good thing I took those Lamaze classes…

Peter called just as I began to beg for drugs.

"I'm calling about your truck," he said, "when would you like to pick it up?"

I dropped to my knees - partly in gratitude, but mostly because my knees dissolved.

Then, a few hours later, just as my vital signs stabilized, Joe called.

"We won't have a truck for you until 4 p.m. tomorrow," he said.

"You can't be serious!" I screamed.

I had booked the truck more than a month earlier, working on schedule with the elevator Jennifer had already booked.

Since the superintendent wouldn't let us drop her furniture off her 12th floor balcony, she booked the elevator from 2 to 4 - hence I had specifically reserved the truck for a.m. pick-up.

I had two apartments in two separate cities to move on the same day, so 4 p.m. was hardly the bundle I expected!

Joe didn't care how upset I was. His idea of handling a bad situation was to make it worse.

"If you're going to be like that," he said, "I can make sure you DON'T get a truck!"

I think Joe was grown in a lab.

Thankfully, Peter was raised by a good European woman. I called him, unloaded the terror in my heart and cried: "Please tell me it isn't so!"

"Cathy," he said, "I don't know who called you, but the truck is already on my lot. When would you like to pick it up?"

"Tonight?" I had visions of evil Joe sneaking onto Peter's lot and slashing the tires.

"Come at closing," said Peter, "and I won't have to charge you for an extra day."

That would be SAINT Peter to me.

My wonderful in-laws, Tim and Sue, picked it up that night and when we pulled into Damir's parents' driveway beside it I sent many blessings to Peter.

"I will sleep tonight," I thought with a big sigh of relief.

But sleep was not to be had. I finally dozed off some time after 6 a.m., and Damir gently shook me awake just before 9.

"I feel like I got hit by a truck!" I whined.

Damir smiled. "Honey," he said, "You DID get hit by a truck! Remember?"

With a little help from Advil and a lot of help from the London branch of the Vrancic family, I made it through.

The next day, we greeted the new arrival: A fully loaded box on wheels…that had to be emptied into my house!

I've been living in a landfill site for two weeks now, and the labour pains still keep coming.

"Oh, why does my life still revolve around you," I lamented from under the pile of bags, boxes and furniture in my hallway. "You're not little children anymore!"

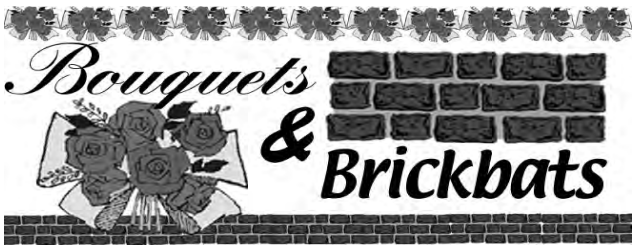
"No," said Nadia thoughtfully. "We're not children anymore, but YOU are still a MOTHER!"

To all the wonderful mothers in Aurora who put their lives on hold so that their children can move in, out, up and on, Happy Mother's Day!

And to all the young mothers in Aurora who think that labour and delivery are over and done, I have news for you: After a child is born, every day is A MOTHER'S DAY and PUSH takes on a whole new meaning.

Happy Mother's Day!

Cathy Vrancic welcomes e-mail at:
laughingmatters@aci.on.ca



By DICK ILLINGWORTH

BOUQUETS to the Aurora Tigers Bantam A hockey team on capturing top honours in the Bantam A division in the 29th Shearwater East Dartmouth Minor Hockey Association tournament in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

BRICKBATS to the 127 motorists charged by York Regional Police for failing to wear their seatbelts during the well-advertised "Seatbelt Blitz" recently. In addition to a fine, there is loss of points. When will they learn the seatbelt is there for their protection?

BOUQUETS to CHATS on being selected by the province to take the lead in coordinating a new Ministry of Health funded health initiative called the Cardiovascular Health Awareness Program in Aurora. Volunteers are needed to assist with the program and training will take place in June.

BRICKBATS to the York Catholic District School Board for planning to build a high school on busy Wellington Street East. If trustees check back through their minutes of meetings they will find problems experienced previously by building a school on an arterial roadway. Trustees should learn from the past.

BOUQUETS to Aurora's John Volpe on being elected President of the Board of Directors for Habitat for Humanity at the agency's recent general meeting.

BRICKBATS to the Toronto Police Services Board for spending $3.7 million to erect cedar fences around their police stations. Not only are they not neighbourly friendly, they send the wrong message about the police and crime. The next step will be pit bulls behind the fences. Public pressure changed their minds!

BOUQUETS to six-year-old Kassidy Yaeck of Aurora for having her hair cut and the locks donated to Locks of Love, a group that will fashion a wig for children with cancer. She says she is going to grow her hair long again so she can make another wig.

BRICKBATS to the McGuinty government for crying poor and running a deficit despite an election promise, but finding $3 million as a loan to help fund the Musical "Lord of the Rings" which opened recently at the Prince of Wales Theatre in Toronto. The reason given was to attract tourists, even though eight out of 10 musicals fail to make back their costs.

BOUQUETS to Harry Shaw on his 80th birthday, which he celebrated recently at the Factory Theatre with family and friends.

BRICKBATS to whoever is responsible for the annual salaries paid to Ontario Hydro officials. Tom Parkinson, President and CEO of Hydro One received $1.56 million, Richard Dicerni, Corporate Secretary Ontario Power Generating received $866,562 and six others received more than $500,000 each. No wonder Hydro is so expensive!

BOUQUETS to John McIntyre for his letter to The Auroran to set the record straight on the merits of a Heritage Conservation District and look at the success of such districts in municipalities across Ontario who take their architectural heritage seriously.

BRICKBATS to Prime Minister Stephen Harper for adopting a "Don't do as I do, but do what I say" philosophy since assuming office. He won the election partly because he promised voters real change in how Ottawa operates and they are still waiting.

BOUQUETS to the staff at Howard Johnson Aurora for hosting two young visitors to Aurora from Aurora's twin municipality Leksand, Sweden, during their recent visit, when they attended a council meeting.

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Letters to the Editor

Democracy is hard to come by: reader

To the editor,

It is very amusing to see the comments on the ward system vs. voting at large.

Twenty years ago, Aurora was too small for wards, but today, the same old arguments are used.

"We like to be small and do not want to divide the town."

Well, if people think Aurora's a small town they need a reality check.

We are four times the size when wards were first mentioned and to say wards would divide council is not a reality.

One only has to look at the past two councils, including the current council, for conflict and division.

The situation in Aurora is spending too much money and not thinking of the taxpayer.

We are the highest taxed in the GTA. Not a good 'first' to be.

A financial review says we will be broke by 2013.

A new seniors' centre we did not need, leaves two buildings empty with council itching to spend money to renovate.

We have two new ice pads and a swimming pool, with someone on council waiting for a late report on the library (is it sinking?).

Now the Region wants us to build the new cancer centre.

This is the only facility (the hospital) that is common to all taxpayers.

It's the only one that will be used by everyone at some time in their life.

It is time to start pushing for user pays for recreation (ice pads, swimming pools, soccer fields, etc.).

Older residents are now paying for the third expansion of ice pads and the second pool.

Now if we were still the little Town of Aurora the last three ice pads would not be needed.

New expansions in population should be paying for new recreation facilities or better still, commercial operations with no taxpayer dollars or subsidy.

If people cannot pay for their own recreation then it should not be available.

So what was done years ago? People with like interests raised money and built rinks and community halls, etc.

They did not have their hands out for government money.

It is too bad it was not a democratic decision about wards, where everyone votes, not just a committee and council.

Democracy is hard to come by.

R.W. Hanes
Aurora

Citizen wants party kept at Town Park

To the editor,

Is what I read true?

Is it true the Special Events Committee has suggested and intends to move the July 1st Eve (June 30) party away from the Town Park out to the Leisure Complex baseball fields. (Auroran, Page 10, May 2).

If this is true, has someone fallen off a parade float?

Why would the Town Fathers spend all that money to refurbish the Town Park, build a new band shell, put new lighting, interlocking brick pathways, etc…just to move one of the town's largest celebrations out to a field in the middle of nowhere, in a wind tunnel, and dust bowl with no trees and limited access for the townspeople (taxpayers) with no services.

To carry on the regular party the Town will have to bring in a portable stage, parking will be a logistical nightmare (have you been out there for fireworks?) and now the people who attend because of the beer garden will have to drive.

Brilliant!

Having attended this event for several years and living directly across from the venue I am aware that there are minor problems with excessive drinking, but this can be and should be dealt with on an individual basis. For example, the committee could hire a few more pay duty police officers and servers could stop serving the intoxicated and have them removed.

There has never been a serious problem, nor has there ever been any vandalism at the park because of this event.

I hope that this is just a rumour and not really going to happen because it would be a shame.

I think it will affect the attendance to the event because people will not want to drive out there and endure the hills and broken paths to get to the venue.

Please rethink this, and keep the Town party at the Town Park.

P. Cooke
Aurora

Man was watching out for my safety

To the editor,

The other day my dad picked me up at the school bus stop.

He was driving slowly beside me and it took me a second to realize it was him because he was in my mom's car.

When I walked over to get into the car, a man slowed down to ask me if that was my dad, and I responded "yes".

At first I was a bit embarrassed and then I thought it was funny and called my mom to tell her the story.

My mom was very impressed by what happened.

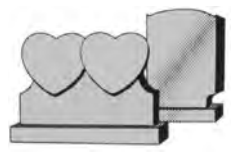
She explained it wasn't a funny story, but a good story because there are people in our community who take the time to watch out for other people's children.

I wish everyone could take the time to be as nice as that man and watch out for other people.

Chantelle, 13
Aurora

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Letters to the Editor

How the tax system works...

To the editor,

This is a very good explanation of how income taxes really work! Sometimes politicians, journalists and others exclaim, "It's just a tax cut for the rich" and it is just accepted to be fact. But what does that really mean?

Just in case you are not completely clear on this issue, I hope the following will help. Please read it carefully. It puts tax cuts in terms everyone can understand.

Suppose that every day, 10 men go out for dinner and the bill for all comes to $100. If they paid their bill the way we pay our taxes, it would go something like this.

The first four men (the poorest) would pay nothing.

The fifth would pay $1.

The sixth would pay $3.

The seventh would pay $7.

The eighth would pay $12.

The ninth would pay $18.

The tenth man (the richest) would pay $59.

So, that's what they decided to do.

The 10 men ate dinner in the restaurant every day and seemed quite happy with the arrangement, until one day the owner threw them a curve. "Since you are all such good customers," he said, "I'm going to reduce the cost of your daily meal by $20."

Dinner for the 10 now cost just $80.

The group still wanted to pay their bill the way we pay our taxes, so the first four men were unaffected. They would still eat for free.

But what about the other six men - the paying customers? How could they divide the $20 windfall so that everyone would get his 'fair share'?

They realized that $20 divided by six is $3.33. But if they subtracted that from everybody's share, then the fifth man and the sixth man would each end up being paid to eat their meal.

So, the restaurant owner suggested it would be fair to reduce each man's bill by roughly the same amount, and he proceeded to work out the amounts each should pay.

And so, the fifth man, like the first four, now paid nothing (100% savings).

The sixth now paid $2 instead of $3 (33% savings).

The seventh now paid $5 instead of $7 (28% savings).

The eighth now paid $9 instead of $12 (25% savings).

The ninth now paid $14 instead of $18 (22% savings).

The tenth now paid $49 instead of $59 (16% savings).

Each of the six was better off than before. And the first four continued to eat for free.

But once outside the restaurant, the men began to compare their savings.

"I only got a dollar out of the $20," declared the sixth man. He pointed to the tenth man, "but he got $10!"

"Yeah, that's right," exclaimed the fifth man. "I only saved a dollar too; it's unfair that he got 10 times more than me."

"That's true!" shouted the seventh man. "Why should he get $10 back when I got only $2? The wealthy get all the breaks!"

"Wait a minute," yelled the first four men in unison. "We didn't get anything at all. The system exploits the poor!"

The nine men surrounded the tenth and beat him up.

The next night the tenth man didn't show up for dinner, so the nine sat down and ate without him.

But when it came time to pay the bill, they discovered something important. They didn't have enough money among them for even half the bill.

And that, boys and girls, journalists and college professors, is how our tax system works.

The people who pay the highest taxes get the most benefit from a tax reduction.

Tax them too much, attack them for being wealthy, and they just may not show up anymore, in fact they might start eating overseas where the atmosphere is somewhat friendlier.

Submitted by:

Craig Deasley
Sam Panzures
Dundee Wealth Management
Aurora

Brisbourne event had plenty of help

To the editor,

On behalf of Connie Bestard, we would like to thank everyone who donated cash and gifts for the silent auction and dance held recently for Devon Brisbourne.

Because of your kindness, the event itself raised $15,310.43.

The bar went non-stop all evening and raised $431, bringing the grand total to $15,741.43.

Thank you to all the volunteers and a very special thanks to Gord Scoular, a former Auroran, who called and managed to obtain a St. Louis Blues sweater which was bought and given to Devon.

All the entertainers sang their hearts out for this function.

Let's not forget our emcee, Terry V. Hart from Comedy Works, who was great.

Thank you to Devon Bestard who drove here from Hamilton to help his mom Connie on the auction table.

Without a doubt, when Connie came on board to help us, donations came in from all the golf courses.

We presented a cheque to the Rotary Club of Aurora at the Aurora Home Show two weeks ago and pictures were taken by The Auroran.

The Auroran, by the way, provided us with advertising and had the dance tickets printed.

God bless you all for your help and direction which made this dance and silent auction such a great success.

Bernice & Randy Skelcher
Aurora

Nursing homes don't live up to lavish advertising: reader

To the editor,

RE: "Nursing home residents crying for lack of care", Era-Banner, April 6.

Once again, the despicable lack of care suffered by our most helpless, vulnerable and those who have contributed the most to our country, is exposed.

As usual, our governments, at all levels, ignore their plight. Why?

Do the government officials, in their arrogance, assume they will never be old, never ill, never be in a car accident, never have a family member ensnared in this plight, never require care?

The reason our nursing homes remain such a disgrace, and why any politician, after visiting most of them should be ashamed to be a Canadian is because no politician has a family member in a nursing home - and, if they do, you can be damn sure they aren't receiving the substandard care rationed out to the mere "commoners".

Would the Minister of Health keep his mother in these conditions?

Would he like to be trapped in them himself?

Like anything else, the only way for conditions to improve is for a politician to be directly affected, otherwise they will do nothing.

If these nursing homes cannot properly care for their residents then why does the government renew their licenses every year?

Why are these homes run by corporations to make a profit? What about care delivery to residents?

Why are these homes allowed to continue to operate with impunity despite unmet standards?

Why are there no penalties for nursing homes that do not properly care for residents and meet their needs?

Many publish lavish pamphlets extolling the virtues and benefits of their institution. Isn't this false advertising?

How can you claim one thing, then deliver another? Department stores can't get away with it, sho how can a place entrusted with the frail and elderly?

Are our elderly worth less (worthless, pun intended) than appliances, toys, clothes and groceries?

I haven't seen any ad retractions lately: "sorry, but we can't provide the care we advertised".

I see corrections for grocery and department stores frequently where they admit they did not have items or an item was misrepresented.

Why is this any different? Just asking. Has anyone else wondered? I'm curious.

Here we now have a newspaper article admitting proper care is not being delivered!

So, what about these lavish brochures? What else is not being done?

How often are patients changed, what about sanitation, medicine, nutrition, dental and medical care? A long list comes to mind.

Why do so many of these places smell so bad?

Hospitals don't smell and they are underfunded, full of sick people, and not run to make a profit.

Something really does stink here.

Where is all the profit going?

Until appropriate care is delivered to the needs of the residents, no more of our tax dollars should be awarded. Period.

Through an accident, any one of us could be next. Baby boomers, beware, is this how we want to end up?

We should be alarmed. What is wrong with our elected representatives, who, by the way, work for us, paid by our tax dollars?

Is there no nursing home act to enforce strict penalties for poor care?

If this were a day care or a puppy mill, there would be a public outcry over the same conditions.

When the rest of us reach this age, is this how we want to be treated?

Why are there no laws to protect these helpless residents - and if there are any laws, why aren't they enforced?

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Aurora



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While several categories were featured at this year's Historica Heritage Fair, the display by Christian Robertson stood out as exceptional. Christian won the Canadian Veterans Award for his display of World War I weapons, and acknowledging his success was Aurora Legion president Len Whines. The event was held at St. Andrew's College. *Auroran photo by David Falconer*

Town's procedural bylaw upstaged by procedure

In a review of town council's procedural bylaw last week, councillors, at one stage, found the procedure getting a little out of hand.

An exchange of words between Councillors Nigel Kean and John West resulted in Kean demanding an apology after West called him "stupid", and West said he was sorry the councillor was stupid.

That brought a further retort from Kean to which it appeared West started to come around the table towards Kean but was interrupted by Councillor Ron Wallace.

Councillor Phyllis Morris, in charge of the meeting, was on the verge of ejecting both councillors, when West announced he had to leave for medical reasons, and Kean later apologized.

The issue erupted following a recommendation that the current position of deputy mayor remain as written in the bylaw until the end of this term.

When the new council is sworn-in in December, it was recommended the clause in the procedural bylaw be amended to mirror the Municipal Act.

The Act states that when the head of council was absent or refused to act, council could appoint a member to act in place of the head of council and while so such member had all the powers and duties of the office.

It was also suggested that rather than having the councillor who led the polls being the acting head of council there be a rotation of the role similar to the way general committee meetings are chaired.

Councillor Evelyn Buck said she could support the first part of the recommendation that council appoint an acting head when necessary but was opposed to rotating the position.

Councillor Kean was opposed to both parts claiming the use of the deputy mayor position had become a tradition and it should remain for the councillor topping the polls as it made the election more interesting.

Councillor West said the appointment of the councillor topping the poll as deputy mayor had been started by Councillor George Timpson and it should go back the way it was with council appointing an acting head when the mayor was unavailable.

And that's when the fireworks between he and Kean started.

The discussion continued when West left the meeting.

Councillor Wendy Gaertner said retaining the position of deputy mayor was a nice honour and should be kept. Councillor Damir Vrancic agreed.

Councillor Bill Hogg asked what would happen if both the mayor and deputy mayor were away at the same time.

Staff replied it would be up to council to appoint one of its own members to act in such circumstances.

When the vote was called the recommendation was defeated 4-3, resulting in the CAO agreeing to reword the section in accordance with council's wishes.

In the days of county council when the voters elected a mayor and a reeve, it was normal for council to appoint the reeve to act in the place of the mayor if away from the municipality or unable to serve.

With the advent of regional government, the position of reeve disappeared and council later adopted the policy of designating the councillor with the highest number of votes to be the acting head in the absence of the mayor.

This was enshrined by a bylaw in the mid 1970s and the bylaw stipulated that the position be known as deputy mayor but the bylaw was not clear on when the title could be used.

The issue came to a head in 2005 when Councillor Phyllis Morris used the term when the mayor was away.

There was a lengthy, heated discussion at a general committee meeting resulting in a 5-4 vote that the title only be used in the absence of the mayor.

When the report came to council, Morris' position and use of the term was defended by a delegation and correspondence resulting in the report's recommendation being lost on a 4-4 vote with Councillor Bill Hogg absent.

A subsequent motion that the issue be referred to a future review of the procedural bylaw was adopted.

Hurry if you want to qualify for Hoedown dollars

There's a few bucks to be made out there if you're willing to work for them.

But you have to hurry. Deadline to apply is this Friday.

The 2006 Wild Wild West Hoedown is inviting Aurora community groups and charitable organizations to fill out an application to become one of this year's recipients of Hoedown funding.

The Hoedown is probably the biggest single fundraiser in the area and has become a tradition on Aurora's Magna property on Wellington Street East.

Any local charity or not-for-profit organization interested in becoming a recipient of the proceeds from this year's Hoedown can apply online at www.hoedown.ca.

Applications are due no later than 4 p.m. Friday, May 12.

This year's charitable organizations will be selected later this month following a review of all applications.

All proceeds from the annual Hoedown are donated to local charities and not-for-profit organizations.

Last year's Hoedown raised a total of $410,000 for 10 community groups.

The Hoedown, sponsored by Magna International Inc., has raised several million dollars for a number of worthy community causes over its 19-year history.

This year, the Hoedown will be held Saturday, September 16th.

For further information, contact Dan Donovan at 905-726-7182.



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Despite bitterly cold temperatures accompanied by a biting wind, St. Andrew's College carried out its 101st annual inspection of the #142nd St. Andrew's College Highland Cadet Corps Saturday. The event, witnessed by scores of people, was held on the St. Andrew's grounds.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

High school would be built in town's east end

Last month the York Catholic District School Board sought information about demolishing five residential properties from 230 to 298 on Wellington Street East for a new high school.

Aurora's Heritage Advisory Committee recommended to council that the request for demolition permits be denied, the request be forwarded to the Environmental Advisory Committee and the Traffic Safety Advisory Board and a public meeting be held prior to the issuance of any permits.

It was also recommended that the residence at 260 Wellington Street East be designated as a heritage building under the Ontario Heritage Act.

It was noted that the saltbox shaped Georgian cottage was built around 1880 according to the assessment rolls but based on architecture, it's believed the structure was built 30-40 years earlier.

The other properties appear to have been built during or after the Second World War and exhibit characteristics of the "Victory House" built under the Veterans Land Act.

John Sabo, Associate Director Finance of the York Catholic District School Board appeared before council Tuesday.

He said if the committee report was adopted, it would delay the board's plans and they were willing to work with staff in order to proceed.

He pointed out that assembling land was a new venture of the board as in addition to the lots on Wellington Street, they needed a 17-acre tract of land to the rear of the houses stretching north to the sports bubble and another property to the west with frontage on Industrial Parkway North.

He suggested it would be a win/win situation for both the town and the board as the board would get a badly needed high school for Aurora students from the north part of the municipality, and it would clean up that part of Wellington Street for the town.

Councillor Ron Wallace noted that Wellington Street was a regional road and wanted to know if it was necessary to demolish the homes if access to the property was denied by the region.

Sabo replied the main entrance to the school would be from Industrial Parkway and it was hoped to have a right-out and a right-in on Wellington Street.

A planner for the board advised councillors that a site plan was being prepared to submit with the application which would answer council's concerns and they were still completing the land assembly.

Councillor Nigel Kean, a member of the Heritage Advisory Committee, said the committee recommendation was based on limited information available at that time, and the staff report was to approve demolition, but the committee changed it.

The staff report recommended the owner be asked to provide a plaque outlining the history of the properties in the area, and the owner be asked to allow the committee to recover significant architectural elements of 260 Wellington prior to demolition.

The delegation was received and council approved referring the request to the committees.

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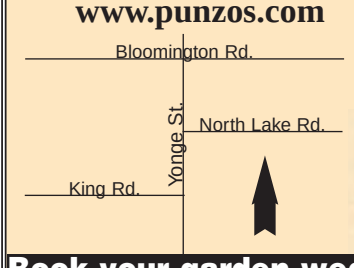
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Buck feels volunteers' wrath

At a recent council meeting, Councillor Evelyn Buck was critical of several items in a report from the Environmental Advisory Committee, especially the role of citizen volunteers on the committee approving expenditures of public funds.

Last week, she planned to introduce a motion listing expenditures by several advisory committees and recommending the terms of reference for advisory committees be altered to remove any item related to expenditures from citizen members.

However, due to criticism and opposition from citizen members and comments from councillors, she said she would withdraw the motion, rewrite it, and resubmit at a future meeting.

In the motion she noted citizen members of advisory committees had neither the responsibility, authority nor accountability to the community for public expenditures.

She also noted that financial recommendations contravening town policies and ignoring approved budgets had been made during the current term of office.

Resident Al Wilson, a member of several advisory committees, said it was a ridiculous motion as all committee budgets are approved by council and staff are available on committees to ensure that council policy regarding expenditures was followed.

Another resident said the motion was distasteful as committees didn't spend money that hadn't been approved by council.

She indicated council had more serious issues to deal with than worry about the committees. Her comments were greeted with applause from the audience in the council chambers.

Susan Walmer appeared before council and said it was ironic that Buck's comments about volunteers should be made during the Week of the Volunteer.

She also noted that all expenditures of the Environmental Advisory Committee had gone through the budget process that had been approved by council and the cost of printing a brochure had been approved by council.

After using Statistics Canada information about the value of volunteers, she requested an apology from Councillor Buck and suggested the councillor get her facts straight and treat volunteers with respect.

Robert Wizeman said he agreed with Wilson and Walmer and was disappointed to hear Buck's comments about volunteers.

Councillors reserved comment until the revised Buck motion is presented.



Susan Walmer, a member of Aurora's Environmental Advisory Committee, pitched in recently at the annual Mayor's Anti-Litter Day, where scores of people picked up junk throughout the community.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Merlin's Hollow awaits visitors

The incredible Merlin's Hollow awaits.

If you haven't been, you're in for a treat; if you have, it's time to return.

Merlin's Hollow is a one-acre garden located in the heart of Aurora that features more than 2,000 different perennials, in a series of gardens within a garden.

"Many visitors like to come to each of the four days we are open as the garden changes significantly every three weeks of the growing season and contains many rare plants," said Dierdre Tomlinson, who with her husband, David, keep Merlin's Hollow growing.

First viewing day is this Saturday, May 13, and the garden is located at 181 Centre Crescent, which runs north off Centre Street, just west of Industrial Parkway North.

Plants will be available for sale during the four viewing days this summer.

Merlin's Hollow is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and there is no charge to get into the wheelchair-accessible garden.

"The garden is now finished and continues to be a haven for wildlife," Dierdre said. "This is partly due to almost no use of chemicals and the diversity of our collection."

On Wednesday, June 21 - the first day of summer - Merlin's Hollow will team up with Hillary House for the only weekday viewing of the garden.

Designed to attract people at home and at work, the garden will open that day from 11 a.m. and close at 7 p.m.

The Hillary House fundraiser will cost $5 admission.

About 2,000 people will visit Merlin's Hollow on its four open days, all of which are listed in The Auroran's Coming Events column on Page 2.




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Emergencies and disasters can happen at any time. Utilities can be out, roads closed and crucial supplies unavailable. While local, provincial and federal officials prepare for emergencies, individuals can plan to be prepared at home and at work. Think of any special needs your family might have and include any other items you would need to this list:

For more information on Emergency Preparedness, please visit www.e-aurora.ca

72 Hour Emergency Kit:

- ☐ Flashlight and batteries
- ☐ Radio and batteries or crank radio
- ☐ Spare batteries
- ☐ First-aid kit
- ☐ Candles and matches/lighter
- ☐ Extra car keys and cash
- ☐ Important papers (identification)
- ☐ Food and bottled water
- ☐ Clothing and footwear
- ☐ Blankets or sleeping bags
- ☐ Toilet paper and other personal items
- ☐ Medication
- ☐ Duffel bag to contain emergency survival kit items
- ☐ Whistle (to attract attention, if needed)
- ☐ Playing cards, games
- ☐ Family specific items

72 Hour Survival Kit Shopping List

- ☐ **First Aid Kit**
- ☐ **Water - 1 gallon per person with a minimum 3-day supply**

Personal Items
- ☐ Toothpaste
- ☐ Toothbrush
- ☐ Soap
- ☐ Shampoo
- ☐ Hand sanitizer
- ☐ Deodorant
- ☐ Blankets
- ☐ Sheets
- ☐ Sewing Kit

General Supplies
- ☐ Plastic bags
- ☐ Paper towels
- ☐ Matches
- ☐ Candles
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Eating utensils
- ☐ Extra batteries
- ☐ Battery powered radio
- ☐ Playing cards
- ☐ Word games

Food Supplies
- ☐ Protein bars
- ☐ Trail mix
- ☐ Energy drinks
- ☐ Juice
- ☐ Granola bars

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Entry Deadline: Friday, May 26, 2006 at 4:30 p.m. - contest entries will be judged and the winner will be notified via telephone by June 9, 2006.

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Award winners throughout the course of the year for the Aurora Skating Club were treated to a banquet last week at the Aurora Community Centre.

Auroran photo by David Falconer



Billed as the Ultimate Frisbee Tournament, several Aurora teams took part in the event held at Aurora High School Friday. Schools throughout the Greater Toronto Area participated in what is becoming a very popular sport among students.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Still room available for big golf tourney

While there is still room for more golfers, the first tournament designed to raise funds for Church Street School renovations, is selling out quickly.

Only 96 golfers - 24 foursomes - will play in the tournament set to begin, in shotgun fashion, at noon, Monday, May 29, at Aurora's Westview Golf Club.

The entry fee - $150 per golfer - entitles the player to lunch at the club, followed by dinner at DiNardo's - The Mansion, after the game.

Also featured will be a silent auction.

Several major sponsors have already kicked in to support the cause.

A golf committee is hoping the tournament will become an annual event to support the planned renovations to Aurora's historic Church Street School.

When renovations are complete, the building will be a heritage centre and museum.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation, the federal government and the Aurora Historical Society have already put in nearly $400,000 to the building's renovations.

That price tag is expected to top one million dollars before the project is finished.

The golf tournament is being organized by Aurora Councillor Nigel Kean who is working with a committee consisting of Margaret Brevik, Mike Nisbet, Sharon Nisbet and Ron Wallace.

If you're interested in participating in this event, you would be advised to call Sharon Nisbet quickly.

She can be reached at 905-727-0446.

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Christine Valentini stands beside her painting that was selected to be part of Aurora's growing art collection. The painting depicts the old Aurora Library on Victoria Street, and was selected Friday evening at the 44th annual Art Show and Sale held at the Town Hall. *Auroran photo by David Falconer*

Centre seeks funding

Nestled in the rolling hills of South Aurora on Bloomington Road is the Blue Hills Child and Family Centre.

The agency has been helping emotionally disturbed children and adolescents cope with their families and the world around them since 1970 and many Aurora residents may not be aware the agency exists.

Blue Hills focuses on social and emotional well-being, primarily for children, youth and their families and includes residential and non-residential programs and provides a range of children's mental health services.

Lovanna Sanders, President of the agency, appeared before general committee last week to seek support in a petition to the Ontario government to secure more funding.

The timing was appropriate as the following week had been proclaimed Children's Mental Health Week by the World Health Organization.

She spoke on behalf of Blue Hills, Kinark Child and Family Services and the York Centre for Children Youth and Families, three accredited children's mental health agencies serving York Region.

In York Region, 39,000 children and youth have treatable mental problems but the agencies only have the capacity to serve just over 5,000.

Last year at Blue Hills, the agency served more than 800 children and youth but there were 230 families on the waiting list and wait times range from five to eight months and longer for some services.

She pointed out that social services in the region have been historically underfunded and quoted from a report in which the per capita spending on children's services was only 49 per cent of the provincial average.

Services cannot be maintained in the face of another year of frozen base funding and a 3 per cent increase would cost each Ontario taxpayer $2 per year, she said.

She asked councillors to endorse the agency's resolution asking the province to add at least three per cent to base funding.

Councillor Evelyn Buck supported the resolution but wondered if it was strong enough.

Councillor Ron Wallace noted that although the agency had been in Aurora for over 30 years, many citizens were unaware of the services provided.

Ms Sanders said Blue Hills was holding an Open House June 21 and she would ensure an invitation was extended to all members of council.

Councillor Damir Vrancic said he had been a member of the volunteer board of directors and was dismayed by the lack of financial support.

There was general agreement and the Blue Hills resolution was adopted as presented.

OMB will let MOE decide noise level

Aurora Cable Internet (ACI) will be allowed to erect turbines on its Ridge Road property, but it will be up to the Ministry of Environment (MOE) to decide if they're too noisy.

Following an Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing recently, it was decided three turbines and a shipping container could go on the ACI's 11-acre site at the end of Ridge Road, but the OMB deferred the noise issue to the Ministry of Environment.

Several neighbouring residents had appealed an Aurora Committee of Adjustment decision to the OMB.

In its concluding remarks, the Board noted, "that if the proposal requires substantial revision in order to comply with Ministry of Environment noise guidelines, a new application would have to be made to the Committee of Adjustment providing an opportunity for adjacent residents to consider any proposal substantially different from the one to which they objected".

The board dismissed most of the appeal, including the issue of visibility.

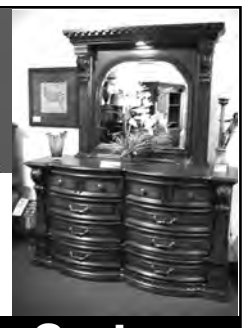
Neighbours argued the turbines, that would be installed on 18-metre towers and would require the removal of four poplar trees, would be visible.

The Committee of Adjustment, in approving ACI's request, said the turbines and shipping container had to be set back a minimum of 50 metres from any property line.

That happened at a meeting last September, and several area residents appealed the decision to the OMB, which heard the appeal in March.

"The Board understands that the proposal requires a Certificate of Approval, which will include a noise assessment," the Board said in handing down its decision. "In the Board's view, the MOE and not the Board should make the final determination regarding compliance with Ministry guidelines."

Regarding visual impact, the Board noted it did not hear "convincing evidence that the variance should be refused on that basis alone".

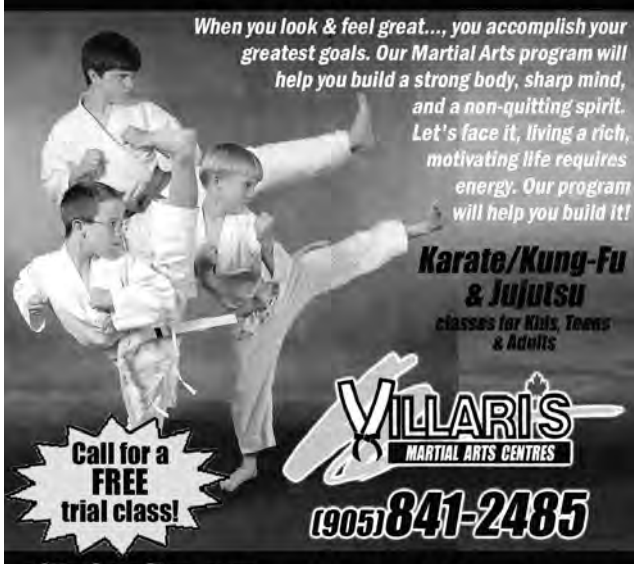
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E-den Chung, left, and Oliver McKay celebrate their Maestro Awards for Jazz and Concert Band recently in New York City. With them is Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School music instructor Penny Sedore. A total of 150 students spent five days in the Big Apple, performed in the classic music festival and received "superior" and "excellent" ratings. Meanwhile, both bands were rated "gold" at Toronto's Music Fest and the senior band received "platinum" in York Region.

Council reviews setup of its meeting agendas

During the current review of Aurora Council's procedural bylaw, town staff recommended three changes in the order of business for council meetings.

It was recommended that the terminology entitled "In Camera" in the order of business be amended to read "Closed Session".

It was also recommended that the terminology Other Business - Councillors be amended to read New Business/General Information - Councillors and Chief Administrative Officer.

A new provision would be added to the bylaw stating that any new business and general information considerations that result in a direction to staff requires a resolution of council and/or committee to authorize such direction.

It was also recommended that "Open Forum" become a part of the formal order of business of council and the provision should read that any ratepayer of the town is entitled to make a deputation to council on matters that are not on the agenda provided the maximum time allotted is five minutes for each speaker and the total time for all speakers be limited to 20 minutes.

The change in terminology to "closed session" was adopted without debate.

Questions were asked, however, about the timing of the New Business/General Information on the agenda as by the time it was currently introduced towards the end of the agenda, most of the public had left the council chambers.

It was suggested staff investigate the recommendation again.

A question was also asked as to the rationale of adding the CAO to the section.

CAO John Rogers said it was common in other municipalities as there were occasions when staff members had an item to bring forward.

Councillor John West, a constant critic of the section, said it was never intended to be wide open the way it has developed but was designed for members of council to ask questions, not to make motions.

Councillor Nigel Kean disagreed saying members of council should be able to congratulate individuals and groups at the meeting and agreed that it should be earlier in the meeting.

Staff pointed out that the section was never meant for making motions as that was contrary to the Notice of Motion policy, which was designed to alert other members of council that a potential motion would be presented

There was little agreement and with a 4-4 vote the item was referred to a future meeting for further discussion.

With regard to the Open Forum, Councillor Ron Wallace said it was a unique idea and expressed concern about imposing a time limit on speakers.

Councillor Evelyn Buck said that Open Forum was meant to be informal and previously was held half an hour prior to the time of the council meeting and was never intended to be part of the meeting.

Concern was expressed about limiting Open Forum just to ratepayers, but councillors agreed that five minutes was sufficient as it could be extended by council if required.

They supported Open Forum being part of the meeting.

There was general agreement that the speaker should be a resident or a representative of a local agency.

Councillor Wendy Gaertner supported Open Forum being part of the meeting and included in the minutes.

There was general agreement that Open Forum would last for 20 minutes prior to the meeting and be open to ratepayers or representatives with no time limit.

Open Forum was adopted by Aurora Council in 1972 for a three-month trial period and was introduced by former Councillor Len Ostick.

Currently, a Winnipeg resident, Ostick picked up the idea while attending a conference of the Good Roads Association of Ontario.

Open Forum has continued since then, except at municipal election time.

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Memo provides hope for continued funding

In 1995 a group of Aurora citizens created the Aurora Community Arboretum program to work with Leisure Services to "green" the municipality by planning trees and shrubs.

The Arboretum or tree museum was planned to encompass 100 acres of town-owned land along the East Holland River Valley between Wellington Street and the St. John's Sideroad and be a place where trees and woody plants could be grown for educational and scientific purposes.

A Master Plan was developed to cover the entire 100 acres which was presented to the Leisure Services Advisory Committee last October and endorsed.

When the report came to council, it was returned to the committee for more information.

Funding was a major concern at the time.

Last March the final version of the Master Plan was presented to the advisory committee and endorsed with a recommendation that $100,000 be committed per year for a 10-year period and $91,800 for the first year.

Following the presentation, Councillor John West proposed the Master Plan be adopted and the request for $91,800 be referred to staff for inclusion in the 2007 budget as funds were not in the 2006 budget.

An amendment was made to his motion that staff be asked to try and find the funds in 2006 and bring back a report which was adopted by council.

At a subsequent meeting staff recommended council approve the $91,800 funding from the 2005 surplus estimated at $1.3 million and approve funding for the following nine years subject to budget deliberations.

Councillor West was adamant that council couldn't commit future councils to the proposed funding plan and said he could not support using the 2005 surplus to fund the first year requirement of $91,800.

After considerable debate, council adopted the West motion that the funding request for $91,800 from the 2005 surplus be denied.

His request to deny funding for the remaining years was defeated and a subsequent motion was adopted that the request be considered during 2007 budget deliberations.

In a memo to last week's general committee meeting, Councillor West wrote that he had to leave the meeting before the final outcome of the funding was finalized.

In the memo he suggested efforts be made to find a donor to fund the $91,800 for the first phase and that area be named in honour of the donor.

But since the councillor had left the meeting before his memo was introduced, it was referred to a future meeting.

That meeting is expected to happen soon.


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DETAILS REGARDING THE FIELD AVAILABILITY IN AURORA AND THE SPORTS FIELD USE POLICY

Aurora Town Council wishes to provide the residents of Aurora with current detailed information regarding the development of a Sports Field Use Policy associated with Town owned outdoor sports fields.

- The Sports Field Use Policy applies to all sports groups, however, the Aurora Youth Soccer Club (AYSC) has raised issues regarding the policy.
- The Town of Aurora and the AYSC have come to a mutual agreement regarding the AYSC's playing field concerns and the Sports Field Use Policy has been revised and approved by Council on March 28, 2006. The revised policy ensures the same level of play in 2006 and 2007 as was available prior to the Policy being developed.
- The Town of Aurora subsidizes the AYSC as the league is charged by the hours played so it is easy to determine the subsidized level.
- The Sports Policy states that allocation of parks and sports fields, facilities and block bookings will be given to youth organizations being first priority provided their membership is comprised of 80% Aurora residents. The AYSC is over the set percentage of out of town players.
- Aurora Town Council prides itself in working with all sporting groups in all matters of interest. Council has an ongoing commitment to funding capital and maintenance programs and to working closely with all user groups.
- The Leisure Services Department explores every possible option and opportunity to promote and encourage the youth of the community to be involved in minor sports. This is a direct result of Council approving the construction of one new senior soccer pitch at Optimists Park in 2004, the Soccer Bubble in 2005 and the installation of new lights at Sheppard's Bush soccer field in 2006.
- Council supports all user groups to the best of their ability with the resources available and in fact, enters into use agreements with the private sector to assist in obtaining additional facilities when possible (e.g. Magna property use, former Aurora Conference Centre, Cousins Land).
- In early January, our staff attended a meeting with the staff at York Region District School Board (YRDSB). At that meeting our staff were presented with a Draft Shared Field Use Agreement and were advised that the YRDSB would require the Town to execute the Agreement prior to the 2006 playing field season. Several discussions were held regarding the shared use agreement and the Town and YRDSB could not come to a satisfactory agreement. In response, Town staff recommended not entering into a shared use agreement with YRDSB. YRDSB and the AYSC were to directly discuss permitting AYSC to use the YRDSB playing field in hopes of coming to an agreement.

The Department of Leisure Services has been unwavering in terms of the support and assistance that is continually provided to all sporting groups. Staff also feels very confident in the level of communication and consultation extended to all sporting groups and to the collaborative agreement between the AYSC and the Town of Aurora.

AURORA



MP REPORT

By Belinda Stronach (Newmarket-Aurora)

No big surprises in Throne Speech

Parliament resumed last month with the traditional Speech from the Throne.

Although there were no surprises in the Conservative Government's first Throne Speech, there were a number of disappointing omissions - particularly in regard to education and municipalities.

Most disappointing to me was the fact that Prime Minister Harper failed to address how his government is going to keep Canada competitive and maintain the level of prosperity Canadians now enjoy.

I don't believe the Harper government fully appreciates how important it is to preserve Canadians' jobs in the face of growing competition from countries that are intensely focusing on enhanced productivity and education.

Over the remainder of this session of Parliament, I will work very hard to hold the new Conservative government to account on these and other issues, and I will speak out on matters that are most important to residents here in our community.

Please join me in congratulating a couple of outstanding Aurora residents.

The Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, presented Aurora's Peter Storms with the Meritorious Service Cross at a ceremony at Rideau Hall recently.

Peter received the decoration for his work over many years in connection with the hands-on development and implementation of strategic public safety policies affecting youth and citizens in social, political and civilian organizations at risk in Canada and in other highly sensitive areas around the world.

Congratulations also to Jacqueline Stewart, who retires as curator of the Aurora Museum, a position she has held with great distinction since 1981.

A number of local residents paid tribute to Jackie at an Open House that took place recently at Hillary House, where they thanked her for her dedication to keeping Aurora's history alive and wished her all the best in her retirement.

Congratulations as well to everyone who took part in last month's Bob Hartwell Runner's Challenge here in Aurora.

The Runner's Challenge has become a great community event and a fitting tribute to the legacy of long-time Aurora resident Bob Hartwell.

Proceeds will go toward supporting Bob's favourite charity, the Community Safety Village of York Region, which opened last fall and has helped teach thousands of elementary school children fundamentals in traffic and fire safety.

And congratulations to all of the men and women in blue from Aurora who work for York Regional Police and who were honoured at the 14th annual police Appreciation Night.

The Police Appreciation Night event has raised more than one million dollars over the years for worthy initiatives such as Crime Stoppers and the "Say No To Drugs" Program.

Recently, I was honoured to take part in the "Mending Hearts" Charity Gala hosted by Aurora's Yellow Brick House, which provides emergency shelter and services to abused women and their children.

Yellow Brick House relies on the support of the community and I was pleased to do my part to help this important local organization.

On a final note, I wish to thank the many individuals in Aurora and across Canada who encouraged me to run for the leadership of the Liberal Party and who pledged their support. Thank you for your encouragement and your vote of confidence.

Although I am not seeking the Liberal leadership at this time, I will continue doing everything I can to serve my community and my country.



As it has been in the past, Aurora's annual senior citizens' sale was a huge success Saturday, as hundreds snapped up the varied bargains available. It's the first time the sale was held in the seniors' new building on Municipal Drive, and the spacious room was filled with items for sale.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Defibrillator training starting this month

In response to an item that appeared in The Auroran's Rumours and Ramblings column as to what had happened to the Defibrillation program, Councillor Nigel Kean raised the question recently.

He was told there were two defibrillators on hand and two coming from the "Mikey Network", staff training will get underway in May and the equipment should be available in four facilities in June.

One defibrillator each will be placed in the Seniors' Centre, the Community Centre, Leisure Complex and the new Recreation Centre.

It was last November when Councillor Kean asked about the status of the program.

Staff replied that they were working with a group to obtain two free defibrillators and a training program would be established before Christmas as it was a high priority program.

Councillor Kean pointed out that money had been included in the budget to purchase the defibrillators and questioned why they had not been purchased.

He was told funds that had been included in the budget were being used for training.

This did not satisfy Councillor Kean and council supported his request for a full report to be prepared for a general committee meeting.

The report provided an understanding of the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and its operation as well as providing information of action taken to date.

Last October the Mikey Network, an operation established by Heathwood Homes and The Heron Group of Companies in memory of a business partner, agreed to donate two Lifepak CRplus Defibrillators and once initial training was complete the defibrillators would be delivered.

The organization had requested that the defibrillators be placed in the Seniors' Centre and the Recreation Complex.

The report was received as information without comment or discussion.

It is believed that as many as 40,000 Canadians, including 1,000 York residents, die every year from sudden cardiac arrest.

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Trillium arrives

After long months of wishing and wondering, then thinking and planning, gathering quotations, and making an application; after experiencing the agonizingly long waiting part of a funding process, while the funders followed diligent and due process, and then, quite suddenly a letter with a cheque announcing that success is ours, we have received funding.

We have, in fact, been supported by means of a substantial cheque from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, [Trillium]. Thank you Trillium!

This is the function for which Trillium was designed, and Trillium has identified and accomplished its mission.

I declare that Trillium scored a touchdown, and the Aurora Seniors' Association [ASA] also scored, with a home run and the bases cleared. When the cheque arrived, so did jubilation and elation, high fives, hugging, laughing and complete exhilaration.

This, in essence, is another high water mark for the ASA and for all seniors, and all who wish for a long life, since this centre will serve those who follow us.

As everybody knows, the ASA took possession, quite recently of a new 14,000 square feet centre and moved in, complete with old equipment and furniture.

The members, many of whom believed they would never see this day, were delighted at that time, totally overjoyed with the centre, and enchanted by the view of the park, which is now our backyard.

In passing, let me acknowledge and salute the Aurora town councillors and administrators, for their fundamental and outstanding support in the development of the new centre.

Fundraising has been an indefatigable, persistent, and often very demanding, but ultimately, very rewarding and successful senior initiative. The opportunities were out there, and are still out there; the challenge was to go get them, and led by the tenacious Flo Murray, we went out and got them.

We are not done yet though, and probably we will never be done; but the heavy fundraising workload is behind us.

The funding from Trillium is for specific equipment, and we are setting in motion a process which will deliver us the very best bang for our newly funded Trillium bucks.

We have excellent planned space awaiting equipment for a woodworking shop; and equipment for this is funded.

If you have an interest in woodworking, and I know many do, why not join the seniors now and make known your preferences?

Perhaps the skills that you possess will be instrumental in improving what we are about to complete.

Dust extraction advice, placement of equipment and sundry other expertise would not be amiss at this time.

We will have a new pool table to go with the three existing snooker/billiard tables.

We have room for players, male and female, who enjoy good company. We want players who are competitive and players who just want to play for fun.

This environment is excellent for both men and women, playing a game both can handle at their own personal level. Being a part of the social scene is the best part.

Trillium has supplied two new sewing machines for our ladies who fabricate fabulous fashions.

If you sew, join us, and if you need advice on a difficult piece of work, such as a garment or a fancy table cloth or whatever, we have ladies with skill who would be delighted to assist you.

A sewing workshop is a very friendly place that designs and creates works for everyday use and also work of superior quality.

Maybe in the future, some of today's work will be preserved and stored lovingly to be cherished by our descendants.

Potentially, such a work is a fine quilt named 'Wyoming Star', made by Joan Levert, and donated to the centre.

The last issue I want to talk about includes the 12 new computers that Trillium has funded for our computer room, where currently we have computers that have performed sterling service for many years, and for many seniors.

This is the equipment on which many seniors learned to compute, including this writer, four years ago.

I started to help with the teaching a few months after I learned some of the basics, which is where I learned that teaching is like learning twice, or far better.

I would think we could be the best computer equipped seniors centre, maybe in Ontario, once installation is complete.

The old computers will continue and prosper in different locations in the Centre, as viable alternatives for various interests, pursuits and diversions, including computer games and hopefully interactive games.

These recreations and diversions pump blood through the brain, they break barriers down effortlessly, and seniors are better for it.

The new computer equipment will be used for teaching and for personal activities, and that includes use by novices, not just experienced members.

As a general rule we do not allow storage of personal information on the ASA computers.

The normal procedure is to produce personal work, and then print it, or save the work to a floppy disc or CD, or better still, just e-mail it to a computer back home.

Information tends to be saved and forgotten, with the result that in the past, our computers became clogged.

We plan to install software that will allow us to restore the computers from time to time, to a former pristine condition, and we hope and expect this to maintain the computers in the condition we want them to remain.



Aurora's newest elementary school held its official opening recently. St. Jerome's Catholic Elementary School is located on Bridgenorth Drive in Aurora's north end.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Seniors' art show set May 26 & 27

Every Tuesday morning from 9.30 a.m. to noon, a group of seniors gathers at the Aurora Seniors' Centre to draw and paint.

They work under the direction of well-known Aurora artist Dorothy Clark McClure.

McClure has been teaching the group since 1992. The course is sponsored by the town's Leisure Services Department and courses are held during the fall, winter and spring.

"It's never too late to learn and for many seniors, 55 and over", she said, "they experience the magic of painting, the gift of creating something and a new way of seeing."

The students, 55 to over 80 years of age, range in talent and experience from beginner to near professional level.

In 1995 to culminate the year's work, the seniors held an Art Show and Sale, with the artists in attendance.

The event has continued over the years and this year it will be held at the Seniors' Centre Friday, May 26 and Saturday, May 27.

Opening reception will be Friday, May 26 from 7 to 9.30 p.m. and the art show and sale continues Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

In addition to the Art Show and Sale, there will be a Gift Boutique featuring hasti-notes, bookmarks, mini-paintings and other gift items.

Following the official opening of the show by Mayor Tim Jones Friday evening, he and Councillor John West will have the difficult task of selecting a painting from the "Historic Aurora, Our Kind of Town" category for the town's permanent collection.

Following the opening of the new Seniors' Centre the historic paintings were hung in the facility and are on display for all to see.

It was in 2001 when the Town agreed to purchase a painting from Historic Aurora Our Kind of Town category and paintings purchased to date include "Old Fleury Works", "Field House", "The Chateau", "New Connexion Methodist Church" and "Doan Hall".

Over the years paintings were purchased by the Purple Pig Restaurant, A.B. Cox Pontiac Buick, Jersey's Restaurant, Howard Johnson Aurora, Embassy Publishing, Graystones Restaurant, Oakland Hall and Wireless World.

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When Tetra Pak opened in Aurora

It was in September, 1983, when the Swedish firm Tetra Pak held its official groundbreaking ceremony in Aurora for the construction of a 50,000-square foot, $20 million first phase of its first Canadian plant.

The Inauguration Dinner was held at the Ontario Science Centre the following month with numerous guests including Ola Ullsten, Swedish Ambassador to Canada.

After dinner, the guests were entertained and danced to the music of Norm Bernard and Ultimate Sound.

It was pointed out that Aurora was selected because it was close to major markets, easy road and rail access, co-operation of town officials and the close relationship the town has with Sweden after twinning with Leksand.

In March, 1988, King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia of Sweden visited Aurora for the official groundbreaking ceremony for the firm's $25 million expansion program.

As a memento of the Royal couple's visit to Aurora, Deputy Mayor George Timpson presented them with a commemorative plate of some of the town's historical landmarks by Aurora artist Dorothy Clark McClure to mark 1988 as Aurora's Centennial as a town.

Then in November, 1996, Tetra Pak officials announced the plant was closing and moving its operation to Texas to optimize North American manufacturing capacity and reduce operating costs.

The Aurora plant ceased operations in June, 1997.

Currently, the huge Vandorf Sideroad building is used by Van Rob Stampings.

NO FRILLS OPENS

Aurora's former Loblaws store in the Aurora Shopping Centre was converted to a No Frills store in May, 1985.

On hand for the official opening were No Frills senior director Mike Lewis, store manager John Dalesandro, district manager Peter Fisher, general manager Jim Greco and then Mayor Dick Illingworth.

BANKING ON CANADA

Rick Arlt, founder of the national debt fighting Bank on Canada Campaign believed that Canadians must feel patriotic about the nation in order to improve its future.

In July, 1991, his campaign with the support of local businesses, awarded a dinner and show for two at Hotel Aurora to Jack and Jean Moore of Wenderley Drive for flying the Canadian flag in front of their home.

John and Micheline Thompson of Crawford Rose Drive won a dinner for two at the Trio Restaurant for flying the Canadian flag in the side yard of their home.

JUST IN CASE YOU FORGOT

It was October 4, 1993, when Bell Canada changed the area code from 416 to 905 for the area outside Toronto, including Aurora.

Toronto subscribers retained the 416 area code exclusively.

As growth and the introduction of the fax machine and cell phones had doubled the demand over the previous few years, the switch to a new area code became necessary.

It wasn't long before people living in the 905 area became known as "905ers" and Toronto residents as "416ers".

FROM SWEET SMELLS TO OUTSIDE STORAGE

Aurora oldtimers will recall the sweet smells of bread and pastry emanating from Scanlon's Bakery on Yonge Street in downtown Aurora.

The store opened in 1880 by Richard and William Scanlon, two Irish immigrants.

Around the late 1920s the business was taken over by one of Scanlon's daughters, Mary, and her husband Charles Peterson.

Under the Petersons the bakery expanded to 15 stores and until World War II home delivery was made in the local area.

In the early 1960s the company was taken over by Gib Smith and William Williams and in 1967 as a Centennial project the whole operation was switched over to making butter tarts and soon Granny's Butter Tarts were being shipped all over the province.

The demand was so great a new plant was constructed on Industrial Parkway and the Yonge Street store was closed after 89 years of operation.

The new owner opened The Yonge Street Warehouse and used the rear portion of the property as an open storage area for restaurant supplies including metal coolers, sinks and some automobiles contrary to the zoning bylaw.

In July, 1984, the owner was charged by the town but defence solicitor Barry Switzer challenged Justice of the Peace Ivan Bates on the basis on a recent Supreme Court decision and the case was postponed until September.

It dragged on with continuing complaints from neighbours until the business closed.

Finally in December, 1997, part of Aurora history died when the new owner demolished the long neglected building to make way for a new apartment/retail complex.

WHAT HAPPENED?

At a council meeting in March, 2005, a question was asked about an update on the letters that had been requested be sent to developers along Yonge Street asking them to clean up their properties.

Staff replied that the letters had been sent to the owners of the four identified properties but no action had been taken, resulting in other letters sent out under the Clean Yards Bylaw giving the owners seven days in which to comply.

What happened?

Last October, Aurora Council endorsed a recommendation from the Aurora Heritage Advisory Committee to recommend to the Ontario Heritage Foundation that certain sites and people be nominated for awards under the Heritage Community Recognition Program.

What happened?

LITTLE CHANGE

In May, 1989, in a report to the provincial government, the Regional Government's Task Force Report on the deteriorating state of provincial and municipal roads was presented to provincial officials by York Region Chairman Eldred King.

The strongly worded document pointed out there was no time for delay if regional and provincial residents wanted to maintain their standard of living and quality of life and businesses to remain viable.

Among the suggestions for the province to consider was a dedicated fuel tax to help pay for expansion and maintenance of roads and the report listed the current state of the roadways and resultant gridlock.

Not much has changed over the years.

While a portion of the fuel tax is now available, the condition of the roads and the gridlock remain.

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Deadline set for fund applications

The Aurora Arts and Culture Fund was established to promote artistic and cultural activities in the municipality, by providing grants for specific projects.

Citizens are invited to submit nominations for worthy individuals and Aurora-based organizations needing financial assistance from the Fund to promote their projects.

Nominations should outline the nature and general activities of the individual/group and the specific use to be made of the grant.

Due to the large number of applications received each year, the amount of the grants may vary and the total yearly distribution is approximately $10,000.

Deadline for application is June 16, with decisions made by July 31.

Cheques are presented at a council meeting early in September.

Applications, which are available at the Town Hall, are to be submitted to the Arts and Culture Fund, c/o Mayor Tim Jones.

It all started in 1973 when the late David Merkur, owner of the Aurora Shopping Centre, donated $10,000 to the town to establish the Arts and Culture Fund for individuals or groups to be paid over a 10-year period at $1,000 a year.

Theatre Aurora and the Aurora and District Historical Society were the first recipients.

Merkur said Aurora citizens had been good to him and the merchants in the shopping centre and he wanted to give something back to the community.

He invited other businesses to join him in contributing to the fund.

Ten years later, Merkur increased the grant to $25,000 to be paid out at $2,500 annually and he was still hopeful others would join him.

In March, 1988, he increased the amount to $50,000 over a 10-year period at $5,000 per year.

During the mid 1980s, Joe Lebovic of Lebovic Enterprises, a developer in Aurora, joined the fund with matching contributions.

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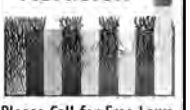
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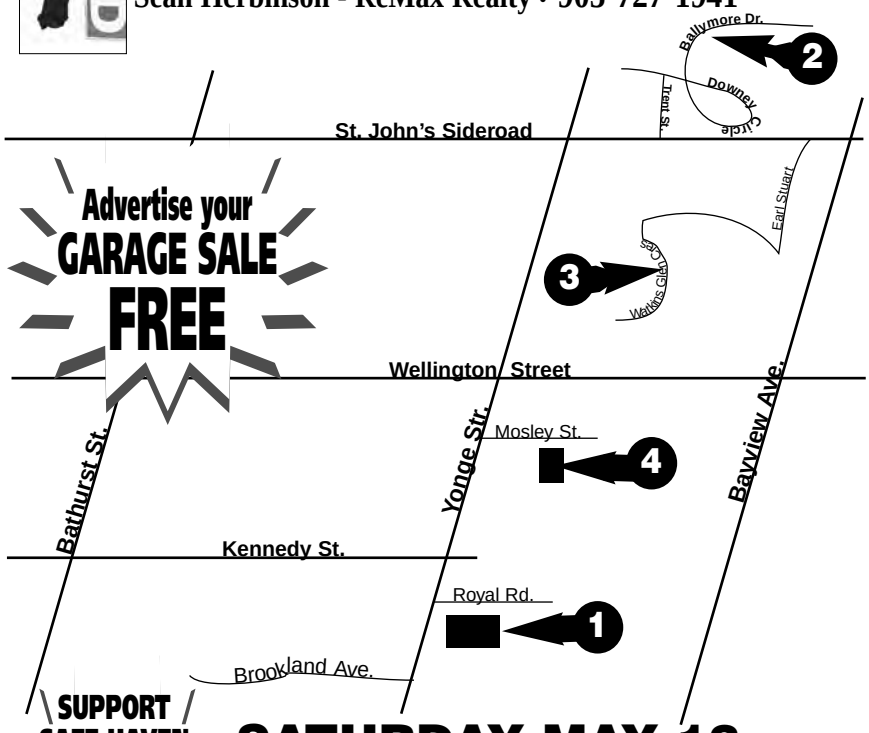
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This is the final chance for theatre-goers to see Aurora's Marquee Productions version of "Cats". Above, Carly Block, obviously, plays a cat. The presentation may be seen at the Newmarket Theatre now through May 13 at 7.30 p.m. with matinees May 13 and 14 beginning at 2 p.m. For tickets, call 905-953-5122.
Auroran photo by David Falconer

Aurora gets $$ grant for energy efficiency

In May 2004 during the planning of the new recreation complex, it was suggested council consider a system that would provide energy avoidance benefits.

The suggested system was known as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.

Town staff was asked to investigate the new system.

Council later adopted the Ecochill system which enhanced the conventional glycol system with added heavy recovery features.

The additional cost was shown as $123,200 with an estimated $65,700 annual cost reduction and a payback of 1.9 years.

At last week's general committee meeting, Leisure Services Director Allan Downey said the town was successful in qualifying for the Ministry of Natural Resources, Commercial Building Incentive Plan.

As a result of the new technology and energy efficient design incorporated into the new recreational complex, the town received a cheque for $48,000 which represents 80 per cent of a total payment of $60,000. The remaining $12,000 will be paid upon completion of the complex.

The Ministry program recognized the town's commitment to energy efficient design and reduction in operating costs.

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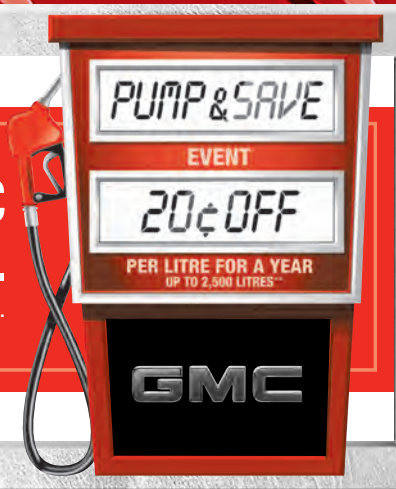


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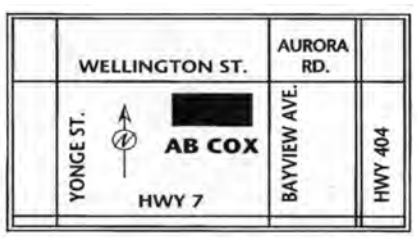
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