

Better late than never -- Aurora's 2015 Citizen of the Year receives honour



By Brock Weir

When Diane Buchanan was named Aurora's Citizen of the Year last month, she had no idea the award was coming and, as such, was enjoying a previously-booked golfing holiday in Myrtle Beach when she received the call from Mayor Geoff Dawe.

Speaking live over the phone to approximately 200 people gathered at the Aurora Seniors' Centre at the May 25 Community Recognition Awards, Ms. Buchanan told Mayor Dawe she was shocked and overwhelmed by the honour ? and that was a feeling that spilled over last Tuesday as Council Chambers were filled to capacity by family and friends eager to see Ms. Buchanan accept the gong in person.

?[At the Community Recognition Awards], it was certainly wonderful to recognize all the hard work and dedication of the residents of Aurora at that time and I was pleased to announce then the Citizen of the Year, which was resented to Diane Buchanan,? said Mayor Dawe. ?Diane, at that time, would rather be away golfing than here, which I really don't understand! [But tonight] we're holding a special event to recognize Diane to recognize her for her passion for Aurora, her volunteering and her just general demeanour in everything she does.

?Diane has been a resident of Aurora for more than 50 years. She actively supports many, many local organizations, including the Salvation Army, the Optimist Club of Aurora, the Aurora Home Show, the Royal Canadian Legion, and the Aurora Farmers' Market. Diane spends countless hours working diligently year after year to make life better for the less fortunate. For the many in the community who nominated her, [the words] ?dedicated', ?supportive' and ?deserving' were mentioned frequently. Tonight we would like to officially ? and in person ? congratulate Diane for her tremendous contributions and her selfless dedication to the Town of Aurora.?

After an ovation from the audience, with her children and grandchildren providing some of the loudest cheers, Ms. Buchanan was front and centre in the Council chamber to receive her award ? and a significantly-sized bouquet of flowers ? from Mayor and Council. As it turned out, Mayor Dawe noted, following their phone conversation last month, Ms. Buchanan told him he had cut her short. Neither party were going to let that happen again, as the newly minted Citizen of the Year took the podium.

?At first I just wanted to say thank you and exit stage right, but I thought it would be more appropriate to say sorry, sorry for all the headaches I caused when I planned my vacation months ago having no idea that I was about to be selected Citizen of the Year,? she said. ?I had no idea the lengths my friends and family had to go to with the people here at Town Hall to coordinate everything to make it all possible.

?When my friends presented me with the award on Saturday before the Community Recognition Awards, I just stood there in complete shock before crying. When they read out the nomination letters, I had no idea what they were talking about but then it started to dawn on me about the third letter in and I was just so overwhelmed and I didn't believe it. I thought they were pulling my leg, but this really isn't something to joke about.

?I just want to say thanks to my nominators, Elaine Steenhorst and Kimberley Kerr ? thank you ? and I will try to make the town proud.?