



Sean Herbinson
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No matter which way you looked at it, the crowd at Sunday's eighth annual Aurora Street Festival was considered "capacity". Officials are estimating that up to 35,000 people visited Yonge Street during the six-hour event. Cool temperatures and sunny skies helped make the festival the best ever, according to committee chairman Regina Brown, seen at the bottom centre of the main photo. That shot was taken looking north on Yonge Street, while the inset picture was shot from the Tyler Street area, looking south. A rumour last week that the SARS epidemic had forced the cancellation of the festival helped the crowds when reports of its denial were aired on several radio stations. More photos on Page 8.

Auroran photos by Ron Wallace

Elder to ride Friday

The word is out. Jim Elder will defend his title Friday at the grand prix event of the Aurora Fair and Horse Show.

Elder, an Olympic medal rider, in two rounds last year, won the horse jumping event, handily defeating numerous younger riders.

The 2003 edition of the annual event gets underway with the Grand Prix at 6 p.m. Friday, then continues throughout the weekend, with a plethora of events and attractions.

Meanwhile, Elder will not be alone in the "senior citizen" end of the competition this year.

Harry deLeyer, 76, has been a life long friend of Elder and will be staying with him this weekend while he competes in the grand prix.

The award-winning rider, deLeyer

Please see page 11

Briefly

Gary's back...

Complete with the hat and the stride, Gary Sinjakewitsch appeared out of the blue at last week's Aurora Council meeting.

Sinjakewitsch finished a distant fourth in the four-person race for Aurora mayor in 2000.

Shortly after the election, the cane-carrying man who regularly walked the streets of Aurora, disappeared.

Reportedly moving to Bradford, Gary has rarely been seen in Aurora since.

After watching the proceedings for a few minutes Tuesday, he left the council chambers abruptly, before anyone had a chance to ask him about his plans involving the upcoming election.

Fundraiser back, too

Remember the fundraiser that used to happen in the Shoppers Drug Mart (Doane Hall) front yard? It's back.

Plans are underway for the event, which raises money for Southlake, to be held Saturday, June 21st, from 10.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.

Proceeds this year will go directly to the new Regional Cardiac Unit.

The event will include a barbecue, live music, a car wash, silent auction and a raffle.

Raffle tickets are on sale at Doane Hall (sorry, Shoppers...it will always be Doane Hall to us) until June 27th.

The silent auction consists of a framed needlepoint, framed original paintings, jewelry and a computer desk.

In the five years that the event was held, more than \$20,000 was raised for the hospital.

The event is spearheaded by Shoppers' staffer Sue Gwilliam.

Building will remain a bingo location if...

It was a case of a landlord covering all the bases Wednesday night.

Willow Pond Services, owners of the Aurora building where the soon-to-expire bingo license is used, hopes a new licensee can be found, but just in case, they want a zoning change to allow the building to be used as a storage facility.

The structure, at the corner of Edward and Engelhard, has been a bingo hall for several years, and only recently did its proposed demise become public.

Aurora bingo players and charities were shocked in April when it was learned operator Harvey Klein planned to close the facility June 30.

He hoped to retire, rather than incur the costs of constructing a designated smoking room as required by the region's new smoking bylaw.

Closing the bingo hall would mean a loss of about \$1.3 million for 34 regional charities including 12 Aurora organizations.

With the potential closing of the building, the owners applied for a rezoning to convert the structure and add two self-storage buildings on the 2.6 acre site.

In the meantime members of the Aurora Bingo Sponsors Association met with Klein and it was agreed the bingo hall would remain open until the lease expired September 30.

A search was also started to find someone to take over the bingo license and renew the lease so the hall could continue to operate.

Two potential buyers are now in the picture.

At Wednesday's meeting, town planning staff noted the proposed use was compatible with the surrounding area and other departments were generally in support

although concern was expressed about a request for reduced parking.

Sean Klady, vice-president of Willow Pond, told members of council that when the company heard Klein was giving up his lease, a search was made for other uses, as it was Klein, not Willow Pond, who held the license.

He said the company had no objection if Klein was able to sell the license to another bingo operator and keep the building open as a bingo hall, subject to a satisfactory lease agreement with Willow Pond.

But in the event the building became vacant in October, Willow Pond would like to proceed with its optional plan.

Klady asked council members to proceed with the rezoning, so the optional plan could proceed if necessary.

Please see page 15

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Coming Events in Aurora

CONTINUING

Farmers Market, Temperance Street parking lot, every Saturday through Thanksgiving weekend 8 a.m. until 12.30 p.m. Contact Nigel Kean at 905-841-6776.
* * * *

Registration now taking place for Kids On the Move summer camp to be held at Highview Public School during July and August. Grades 1 to 3 and 4 to 6. Further information 905-841-1638 or 905-841-7742
* * * *

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

During the month of June the Skylight Gallery in the Aurora Town Hall will feature the artworks of Mercury Dougherty. Regular viewing hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

JUNE 6

Aurora Grand Prix in Machell Park. Walk the course at 6 p.m. prior to competitions and meet the riders afterwards.

JUNE 7

Family evening barbecue at Machell Park as part of the Aurora Fair and Horse Show. Evening entertainment begins at 5.30 p.m.
* * * *

Aurora Optimists Recreational Hockey final registration for boys and girls born 1997 and 1998. Aurora Community Centre lobby #2. 9 to 11 a.m.
* * * *

For all 11 to 14-year-olds, enjoy a dinner and movie from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Aurora Community Centre. Cost is \$3 including pizza. Call 905-727-3123 extension 528 for further information.

JUNE 7-8

Aurora Fair and Horse Show in Machell Park. Tons of events and competitions.
* * * *

Aurora Youth Soccer Club festival to introduce the start of the summer 2003 soccer season at Sheppard's Bush.

JUNE 8

Aurora Lawn Bowling Club open house day. McMahon Park.

JUNE 9

Aurora Writers Group meets at 7:30 p.m. in the Holland Room at Aurora Town Hall. Everyone welcome, no charge.
* * * *

Aurora Seniors hold their annual General Meeting at the Seniors Centre at 10 a.m. A vote will be taken on the new seniors' proposal.

JUNE 12

Workshop to discuss demographics of Alzheimer Disease, Aurora Library Magna Room #1, 7 - 8.30 p.m. Register at the adult information desk or phone 905-727-9493. Seating limited.

JUNE 13

Last day for application to the Aurora Arts and Culture Fund. If you or your organization need financial assistance to promote cultural and/or artistic activities, apply for a grant from the fund. Send applications to the Arts and Cultural Fund at the Town Hall.

JUNE 14

Students of Dr. G. W. Williams Secondary School are organizing the first ever Rick Hansen Wheels in Motion event. They invite participants to wheel along a designated course on bicycles, wheelchairs, inline skates or scooters to raise funds to help others get off wheels, such as wheelchairs. It starts at 8:30 a.m. at the school.

JUNE 18

Merlin's Hollow Open Day, with David and Deirdre Tomlinson, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. \$5. More info call 905-727-8991.

JUNE 20-22

Polo for Heart, Gormley Polo Centre. Leslie Street, south of Bloomington. Game times each day noon and 1:30 p.m. Fields open from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

JUNE 20

Aurora Seniors' Annual Picnic in the Park as part of Seniors' Week. Rain date is June 27th. Picnic includes hamburger or hot hotdog, munchies, cold drink and dessert, plus games, fun prizes and entertainment. All for \$3 but tickets must be purchased in advance. Starts at 11:30 a.m. Call 905-727-2816 for further information.

JUNE 21

Let's Keep Aurora Beautiful Day. Garbage bags and gloves will be provided to those who participate. RSVP to Mary McCluskey, 905 727-3123 ext 260, or e-mail mmcccluskey@town.aurora.on.ca
* * * *

Fundraiser at Shoppers Drug Mart (Doane Hall) from 10.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. Proceeds to Southlake.



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Council defers Senior Centre building plan

A general committee meeting two weeks ago, committee members by a 5-4 vote, approved the demolition of the former library and seniors' centre to permit the investigation of a public/private five-storey, 30-unit apartment building with the seniors' centre occupying the bottom two floors.

Approval came following a report from the Director of Leisure Services that following several meetings with the seniors' steering committee and the seniors supported the proposal to redevelop the site.

This was confirmed by Charles Sequeira, chairman of the steering committee, who referred to the proposal as providing adequate space and future needs and a commitment for interim accommodation during the construction process.

He expressed concerns about parking and tenancy.

Between the general committee meeting and last week's council meeting, several seniors contacted members of council to com-

plain about not knowing anything about the proposal and wanting time to review it.

During the Open Forum portion of the meeting, Jean Anderson, a resident of Church Street across from the Church Street School, complained about the current crowded parking conditions around the library and invited members of council to visit the area and see for themselves.

Former Mayor Dick Illingworth inquired as to who authorized the spending of town funds to pay for a consultant to carry out soil tests around the two buildings and for an architect who prepared the detailed designs for the complex.

He also noted the expenditures had not been approved in open council.

As a result of Sequeira's request for a two-week deferral so that the steering committee could present the options to a general meeting of the seniors on June 9th and a similar request from Councillor John West, council agreed.

Hadley Grange to get modified apartments

When Hadley Grange, at the corner of Yonge Street and the St. John's Sideroad, was built in 1993 there was no plan for assisted community living (ACL) units.

These units have wider doorways, lower kitchen cabinets, handicapped accessible bathroom facilities and a number of other adaptations that enable residents with a wide range of physical challenges to live independently.

When Hadley Grange was constructed it had only six modified units.

In 1999, the ACL program was introduced to the Housing York building in response to the growing needs of the aging population in the building.

Currently, 20 of the 80 apartments are dedicated for use by the ACL program, but only six apartments are modified for persons with disabilities.

ACL program staff provide service on a 24-7 basis.

While ACL services are being provided at Hadley Grange for 20 or more households, it is difficult for many of the existing clients to cope with the normal aspects of everyday living due to the unmodified apartments.

In response to this need, the Ministry of

Health and Long Term Care has made available a grant of \$400,000 to properly modify 14 apartments over the next three years.

In return York Regional Council endorsed a recommendation that Housing York will provide 15 one-bedroom apartments and five two-room apartments for a minimum 10-year period.

As the province is providing the funding, there is no impact on Housing York's budget.



Adults and students alike joined forces last week to provide assistance to Marlene Lewis, the crossing guard who remains in hospital today after being hit by a car on Orchard Heights Drive recently. In addition to creating a huge "get well soon" card, the neighbourhood has rallied to provide food and money to help the well-liked woman and her family. Marlene, who was transferred from Sunnybrook to Newmarket Thursday is steadily improving and will begin rehab in the near future. She was riding a bike at the time of the mishap. Assigned to the corner of Orchard Heights Blvd. and Hill Drive, the Town of Aurora crossing guard made many friends as she helped children safely get to nearby Devins Drive Public School. Meanwhile, a fund that was set up last week at the Toronto Dominion/Canada Trust, Branch 506, remains in effect. If anyone wishes to donate, they should reference account number 6232227.

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**Poor
Richard**

Landmines lurk under surface of new promises

*A provincial election is coming,
Voters will soon have to decide.
Promises look good on the surface,
But don't get taken for a ride!*

-Poor Richard's Scrapbook

The Progressive Conservative election platform called "The Road Ahead" was announced in much the same theatrical manner as the budget.

This time the Tories used a go-kart track located in a warehouse and it was the latest installment of staged photo-op opportunities.

Many of the pledges contained in the document constitute an appeal to the self-interest of voters. On the surface they hit a responsive chord and are vote-grabbers, but there are landmines beneath the surface.

One is imposing the provincial Tax Protection Act on municipalities.

If enacted as is, it will effectively tie the hands of municipal councils in providing the programs and services demanded, as it requires them to hold a referendum before they can impose new or increase existing taxes.

Nobody likes to pay higher taxes, as Aurora citizens have had to do for the past few years.

The increases were primarily due to previous council commitments to fund significantly enhanced fire services, annualization of the operating costs for the new library, increased waste collection and disposal costs due to the closing of the Keele Valley landfill site.

If the election promise had been in effect at the time, none of these improvements would have been possible without the delay and the expense of holding a referendum.

Normally a municipal referendum would be held at the same time as the municipal election to save costs, but elections are only held every three years.

Projects would have to be delayed until after the election, or a vote held in mid-term at considerable expense.

Before rushing out to mark your ballot, stop for a moment and think about it. In a fast-growing area like York Region suffering from the effects of provincial downloading and unable to charge developers the full cost of growth, municipal councils will have to impose higher user fees or cut services.

With the rapid growth east of Bayview Avenue, Aurora urgently needs more recreational and other facilities, but they won't be available until after a vote of the people approves the expenditure and resultant increase in taxes.

It's quite possible that some of the services you are accustomed to, such as garbage collection, road maintenance, snow plowing and others, could be curtailed to prevent a tax increase and a vote of the people.

It's completely unworkable and may be short-term gain for the Tories, but it's long-term pain for the citizens.

Another election promise is the hiring of 1,000 police officers across the province, including 300 for the OPP and 700 for municipal police forces over the next five years.

There was a similar program back in 1998, which York Region took advantage of to hire more than 40 officers, originally subsidized by the province but when the provincial funding ran out the full cost of the additional new officers fell on the property taxpayer.

When and if the program is implemented and if the region takes advantage of it, the costs will eventually have to be assumed by the taxpayer, which could result in an increase of the regional portion of the tax bill, as happened this year, resulting in a vote of the people.

The region needs police officers as currently the ratio is one officer for every 833 citizens, much higher than most of the jurisdictions in the GTA, but the need has to be balanced with the taxpayers' ability to pay and also to vote for the tax increase.

For a government that promised greater autonomy for local government, this move on the part of the government is an insult.

Our communities and our way of life could be destroyed if municipalities are forced to hold a referendum before imposing a tax increase, even if it's for a service the public demands.

Before voting, read the fine print and consider the welfare of your community after the election is over.

Don't get conned by the promises.



Two things we don't know - the year this photograph was taken and the reason this handsome four-some looks so intent. We're guessing they're judges in the children's section of the July First celebrations, where youngsters entered decorated bikes, trikes and wagons prior to participating in the annual parade. If so, the photograph had to be taken after 1969, the year the event began. Bill and Sandra Dinsmore are flanked by then Aurora mayor Dick Illingworth and his daughter, Suzanne. Mr. Illingworth supplied the photograph, which could have been taken by Auroran editor Ron Wallace, but Wallace simply can't remember.

Letters to the Editor

Neighbours shine after fire

To the editor,

On February 16, we had a tragic house fire on Temperance Street caused by an outside electrical outlet.

Words are hard to find to express our thanks to all our neighbours in the Temperance Street area and the entire Aurora community.

Friends, family and unknowns dropped off, without hesitation, clothes, furniture and items so needed by our family. Our family is truly

overwhelmed by the kindness and support by too many people to mention.

A special thanks to the Wride family of Temperance Street who called 911 after noticing the fire on our back porch and ensured my daughter, dog, cat and I were safely out of the house.

They then took in our pets for a week or so until we could find alternate accommodations - they are true heroes!

I would also like to send a special thanks to Ralph

and Diane Gibson of Mapleview Farms who opened their home to my family in our time of need, while they were out of the country.

I had never met these people before and they generously invited us to stay as long as we needed to in their lovely and very comfortable home. I will remember these new friends forever.

Aurora is a wonderful community to be a part of and we will rebuild our lives back on Temperance Street.

I would also like to thank the Purple Pig restaurant and patrons for their kind support and generous efforts in helping us through these tough times.

Also all the staff and students at Aurora Senior Public School for supporting our entire family, with generous donations and gifts for our children.

Others include Tim Walkefield of Villari's Self Defense Centre for a gift certificate for our children to take part in their program; Omar Bayram and the staff of Athlete's World for their kind donation of a shopping spree; and Walter Karabin of Karabin Developments

Inc. for his patience and expertise in putting our house back together.

Thanks all for helping our family through this unfortunate situation. We are honoured to be part of an outstanding community.

From the bottom of our hearts.

**The Denotter Family
Aurora**

Chorus says thanks for Auroran coverage

To the editor,

On Saturday, May 24th, the York Regional Police Male Chorus held a fundraising event at Madsen's Greenhouse in Newmarket.

The event titled "A Breath of Spring" was held to raise money for bus transportation while the chorus travels in England and Wales next year on a "goodwill tour" to raise funds for social and non-profit organizations.

We would like to express our appreciation to the Auroran for providing information related to the event to the citizens in your coverage area.

The evening was a resounding success and by the response shown by the 230 who attended, it was enjoyed by all.

Again, thanks to your help, tickets sold out well in

advance of the event.

During the evening, the audience of 230 was treated to a musical presentation by the Male Chorus who sang traditional favourites and songs from the musical stage.

They also had an opportunity to bid on more than 80 articles which were part of the silent auction and treated to specialty cake and coffee served by the members of the chorus.

Again, thanks to the community as a whole for supporting the York Regional Police Male Chorus as they continue their work, not only in York Region and Ontario, but throughout the world.

**Lowell McClenny,
Superintendent (Retired)
Volunteer Supervisor
York Regional
Police Male Chorus
Aurora**

More
Letters
Pages
5 & 6

AURORAN
"Aurora's community newspaper"

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Mayor's Report
By Tim Jones

**It really does work;
just press 6 and see!**

A few months ago, I had calls from two residents who had "emergencies" outside the normal 8:30a.m. to 4:30 p.m. office work times Monday to Friday, and they were upset at calling the Town telephone number, 905-727-1375 and getting a recorded message.

In one instance, it was to express concern about having an inordinate amount of snow plowed up against the entrance to the driveway and in the other instance, it was to report a broken water main on the town portion of the resident's property.

One call was in the evening of the big snow storm we had during the first week of March and the other was over a weekend.

Our recorded greeting states: "Thank you for calling the Town of Aurora. Our office is now closed. Our regular business hours are 8:30 - 4:30 Monday to Friday. If this is an emergency and you require the police, fire or ambulance please hang up and dial 911. The fire department's operation staff is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week when not responding to an emergency. To reach the fire department operational staff, please hang up and dial 727-1109 extension 506. If you are calling about an urgent town matter and have a touch tone phone please press 6 now, rotary dial callers call 416-444-9040. To reach someone who may be in the office, please enter their extension number. For Leisure Services information press 7. If your call concerns a bylaw enforcement matter, press 8. To leave a general message please hold for further instructions".

At the point where you press 6 to report your emergency related to an urgent Town matter, you would get a secondary message that directs you to either Works, Municipal Facilities or Parks connections to report the emergency.

Upon leaving a message, it has been my experience that an on duty staff person will call you back within 10 to 15 minutes to offer assistance to you with your concern.

This is the process I use when receiving calls over the weekend or late at night from residents and I am pleased to say that it has worked every time!

Our Works, Parks and Municipal Facilities staff take pride in their ability to respond to the emergency needs of our residents, and I, for one, appreciate their commitment to this response.

At the request of one of the residents who called in their emergency, I asked that this message be reviewed so that the caller would be able to understand earlier in the message that they would be able to leave a message for a response.

When you read the script of the message above, it is understandable that someone in an emergency is usually upset and may not have the patience to wait through a long message to be told what they can do.

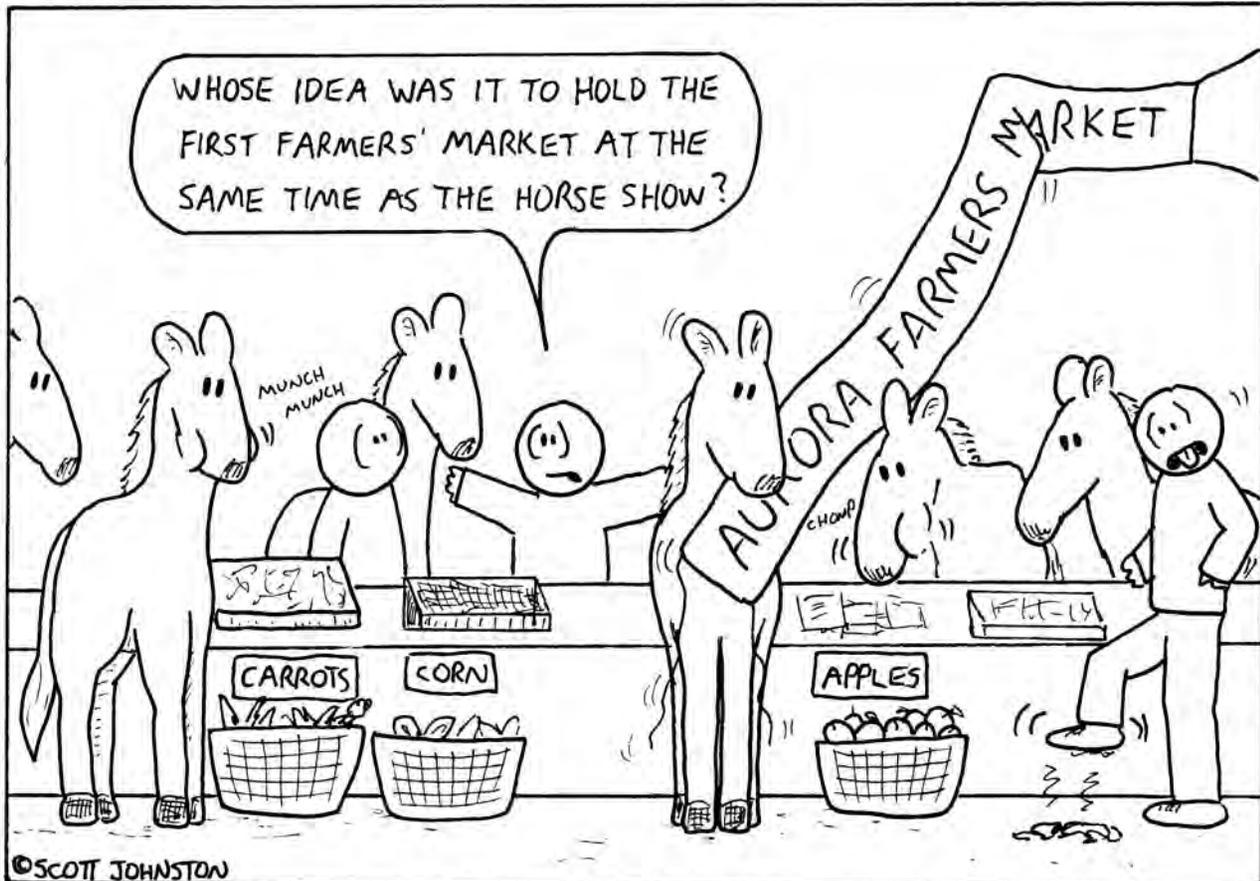
Our communications staff reviewed the message and have reworded it, maintaining a priority to 911 calls. It now reads:

"Thank you for calling the Town of Aurora. Our regular business hours are 8:30 - 4:30 Monday to Friday. If this is an emergency and you require the police, fire or ambulance please hang up and dial 911.

"If you have a touch tone phone and are calling about an urgent town matter relating to Public Works, Parks or Municipal Facilities, press 6 now, for leisure services information press 7, for by-law enforcement matters, press 8. Rotary dial callers please call 416-444-9040 for immediate assistance. To reach someone who may be in the office, please enter their extension number or press 4 for the corporate directory. To leave a general message please hold for further instructions. To repeat this message, press 9".

If you press 6 for your emergency, you will then have three options, one for Public Works (emergencies include water, sewage, roads, snow and ice control, street lights and signals), one for Municipal Facilities (municipal buildings and facilities and recreational issues) or one for Parks (parks and forestry concerns) and this will then allow you to leave a specific message for an on call staff who will call you back in a short period of time.

Hopefully this reworded draft is clearer and will be of assistance to anyone with a Town emergency.



Letters to the Editor

School play thrilled this avid spectator

To the editor,

Being the mother of four and grandmother of six, I have attended many school plays and assemblies over the years.

Recently, I had the pleasure of attending one of the best plays that I have ever seen, which prompts me to write this letter.

It was at Highview Public School on McClellan Way.

This school really seems to focus on the students and I believe is a credit to the wonderful staff.

I have been invited to the school approximately seven times as I have four grandchildren who attend Highview (Munslow and Schweinberger families).

The school has weekly assemblies and, over the course of the school year, they include all students and staff.

At this weekly assembly they honour a "student of the week" from each class.

The students' names are announced and then he/she receives a certificate stating a characteristic

they have displayed for this honour, i.e., "integrity, sharing, optimism, trying their best, being kind to others, respecting others", etc.

The students all clap when each name is announced. The certificates are highly prized.

They play I saw recently was "It's About Time".

It involved more than 100 students from Grades 5 to 8, I believe, and it was performed several times.

Everyone did a great job.

This musical production involved many hours of

practice for the students and teachers, before school, after school and weekends.

Highview has a great school spirit; their motto is: "It's real cool to walk to school".

Congratulations to all the teachers, staff and students - you are truly appreciated.

Note to Dick Illingworth - how about a huge bouquet for Highview?

Marilyn Munslow
Aurora

Festival impressed councillor

To the editor,

I would like to congratulate the Street Festival Committee and the Aurora Chamber of Commerce for the greatest Festival that has ever happened in Aurora.

Sunday's street festival

was a testament to the greatest Chamber of Commerce in Canada.

Thousands of people loved this year's festival due to the efforts of the many volunteers who worked so many hours behind the scenes to create the most wonderful street

event that could happen in any town.

From the vendors, to the Aurora Kids Area, to the musical talent, plus the many extras, the residents in Aurora were treated to an event that should put Aurora on the map.

From all those people who

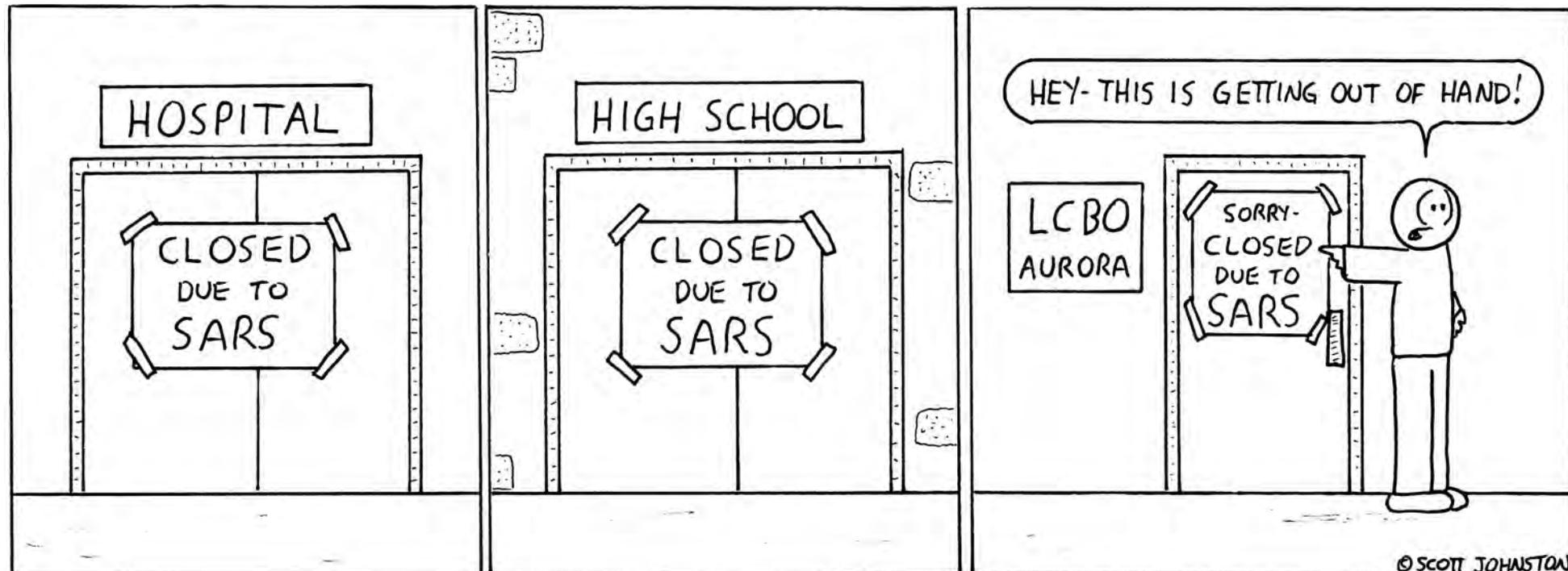
I spoke with Sunday, thank you all for this great event.

Please keep it going for many years to come.

Aurora needs more of these events.

Thanks for the great day.

Nigel Kean,
Aurora Councillor



Bouquets & Brickbats

By Dick Illingworth

BOUQUETS to Aurora's Alex Stein on being selected to work as assistant hockey coach for the EHC Visp Lions, a second-level professional team, and head coach for the affiliated Jr. Elite B team in Switzerland for the 2003/2004 hockey season. He's a graduate of St. Andrew's College and played hockey for school hockey team.

BRICKBATS to the uncaring people who litter the downtown area of Yonge Street in Aurora. Some of the flower planter boxes have become the depository for empty wine bottles, plastic coffee cups and even a soiled diaper. Where are the town staff and the recently approved anti-littering campaign?

BOUQUETS to Platoon Chief Don Bond, of the Central York Fire Services, on receiving his 30-year bar. Receiving their 20-year medals are Platoon Chief Dan Palmer, Capt. Garry Hobson, Capt. Doug Moses, Capt. Al Weddel and Firefighters Barry Abbott, Bill Burkholder, Jim Morrow, Ron Edwards and Murray Bright.

BRICKBATS to the Ministry of Transportation's frustrating automated phone system when trying to make an appointment to renew your driver's license. It takes longer to get through to a real live operator than it does to take the test. If Transportation Minister Frank Klees gets frustrated trying to get through to Highway 407, as he once said, he should try getting through to his own ministry.

BOUQUETS to the same minister for announcing consideration of a new plan of the senior driver licensing system by implementing an ability-based system, which would impose restrictions for some drivers rather than barring them from the roads entirely. Currently seniors who cannot drive safely at night lose their license, but under the new system would be limited to driving in certain times of the day and restrict some elderly drivers from travelling on the 400 series highways. It's a good move that should be implemented.

BRICKBATS to Liberal MP Dennis Mills, supported by other Toronto MPs, for even considered paying the Rolling Stones \$10 million to play for a free rock concert in Toronto to prove to the world that the city has survived the SARS crisis. It's a waste of taxpayers' money!

BOUQUETS to Tom Ntoulas on the opening of his restaurant "Oakland Hall" in the historic Red House on North Yonge Street in Aurora. Not only has he maintained the integrity of the exterior of one of the oldest houses in the region, he has recaptured the ambience of a family home inside and the food is excellent. Well worth a visit.

More **BOUQUETS** for including a piano bar in the Red House Studio Lounge, the only one in York Region. Aurora resident Roger Whitnall, a professional musician, came out of retirement to play the grand piano in the evenings from Tuesday to Saturday. From Thursday to Saturday vocalist Lisa Levy joins Roger to create musical magic. Only in Aurora!

BRICKBATS to federal competition commissioner Konrad Von Finckenstein who told a House of Commons committee that gas prices earlier this year were the result of external reasons not price fixing by fuel companies. How is it then that gas prices jump by the same amount at all stations at the same time?

BOUQUETS to the Magog Resort in Quebec for donating \$1,000 to the Aurora Seniors Centre for arranging a trip to the Inn for 46 Aurora Seniors who enjoyed the 4-day, 3-night trip. A repeat trip is being planned for next year.

BRICKBATS to those who are responsible for removing a dead raccoon from the town-owned boulevard on Cousins Drive. A call was made to the town's Work Department who denied responsibility and said to call a wildlife care facility, which was going out of business. York Regional Police said to call Aurora Animal Control. As it was on town property, they said it was the town's responsibility, but the work's department denied it. What a runaround! Meanwhile, the dead raccoon lay there for kids or dogs to play with. Finally a bylaw enforcement officer came to the rescue, but who is responsible?

Letters to the Editor

Original plan for school lacked detail, he believes

To the editor,

Our mayor's comments on town job tendering in your paper on May 6 covers the process in general.

The tendering process is not the important activity controlling the cost of a project from overruns.

The most important activi-

ty is writing the specifications over everything that goes into the job.

An architect will put together a book of specifications and set out what the client wants.

When there is an argument between the client and the architect, this is your bible.

This bible then goes for job

bids. You then select your contractor.

You review the job site on a regular basis with the architect and if you see something wrong you review the situation as per the specifications.

If you point out the error, it is corrected by the contractor, no cost.

Any changes to the specifications after the job begins by the client causes the contractor to write a work order.

Generally, a work order costs a lot of money and causes job overruns.

As an example, during the Church Street School renovation the council added \$50,000 in December, 2002, as a contingency.

Now they have added \$75,000 for surprises, for a total of \$125,000 on a project of \$674,500, or about 18.53 per cent.

There is usually a contingency on every job so I think there was a contingency in the original \$674,500 cost.

It would appear that the original look at what needed to be done lacked detail.

I would not expect the Director of Leisure Services to write specifications on any capital job.

You need an engineer in house and an architect; not a consultant, unless he is an architect.

Detail and specifications before you bid a job along with people who can oversee the progress of the job re your specifications will give a better chance of no overruns.

Community rallies with assistance for injured cyclist

To the editor,

The kind heart of our Aurora community never ceases to amaze me.

As you may recall, Marlene Lewis, a well-respected crossing guard at Hill Drive and Orchard Heights Boulevard, was struck down by a vehicle while riding her bike to work.

When the community found out about this tragedy, they went into action.

A trust fund for Marlene's family was set up at TD Canada Trust (acct. # 6232227), and local Remax York Group Inc. realtor Barb Blaser agreed to have a food bin set up at her own home to collect food for the Lewis family.

The people who supported this food drive were quite generous.

The Parent Council from Devins Drive Public School added to the food drive by kindly donating grocery gift certificates.

It was when I called Bill, the new owner of IGA St. Andrews, that I realized just how big hearts can be.

Bill had not heard the news about Marlene's accident, so I explained the circumstances to him and asked if he would contribute some boxes for packing and perhaps some fresh produce.

When I came in to pick up the bags of apples and oranges, Bill and his wife, Mandy, generously donated \$100 in IGA gift certificates for the Lewis family, too!

I was overwhelmed! With fresh baked muffins and a van full of collected food, Barb Blaser and I set out Saturday morning to deliver a giant get well card signed by many of the families who use Marlene's crosswalk, plus a few other goodies.

We realized when we met with Marlene's family that this family was missing the heart of their home

very much and that they were truly in need and appreciated the help.

Marlene's husband couldn't thank the community enough and their daughter, Sarah, gave us hugs and thanked us for helping too. It truly was our pleasure.

A big thank you to all of you who contributed to this community effort.

It's nice to know that many people still live by the "Golden Rule".

J. Siery
Aurora

R.W. Hanes
Aurora

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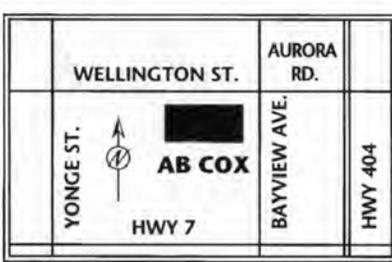
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"Perfect day" brings 35,000 to festival



Scenes from a very colourful festival include from the top clockwise, the Giant Sneaker that made its way up the street; one of the rock climbing walls; Klaus Wehrenberg entertaining; getting involved at the Creative Connections booth; Patty McLaughlin entertaining the crowd; one of GO Transit's two mini-trains; and a very popular bungee run. Photos by Ron Wallace and David Falconer



It took eight years, but the chairman of the annual Aurora Street Festival committee believes this year's event finally hit perfection.

Regina Brown said conditions were ideal for Sunday's huge event which organizers believe attracted between 30,000 and 35,000 people.

"It was a little breezy," Brown said, "but overall the weather was absolutely perfect."

Bright sunshine and moderate temperatures made it very comfortable for the afternoon strollers who walked the Yonge Street route between Wellington Street and Murray Drive and perused wares offered by more than 600 vendors.

Several vendors reported selling out before the afternoon ended, and one noted she had sold more than 400 dozen boxes of doughnuts. That's 4,800 doughnuts.

The event, planned to run only in 1996 to celebrate the 200th birthday of Yonge Street, was turned into an annual attraction by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Aurora, and it has grown steadily every year.

Funding requirements forced the committee to change the name from a "street sale" to a "street festival", and several attractions have been added to give the event a more festive atmosphere.

Visitors now attend the street party from Canada and the United States, and vendors are quick to grab booth space early.

This year, the function "officially" sold out earlier than ever before as more than 600 street spaces were snapped up by vendors.

This year's event also added an hour to the "shopping" time, and officials noted Yonge Street was jammed with people long before noon.

Crowds were heavy and steady right through to the 5 p.m. closing time.

Chairman Brown was quick to pay tribute to the three staffers of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce - Rosalyn Gonsalves, Mary Lynn Stephenson and Kathy Halbert - who do most of the behind the scenes work.

"They make the committee look good," she said. "I can't tell you how many people told me how well organized this event is."

This will be a tough act to follow for next year's committee.





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Eukanuba SUPERDOGS
sponsored by Lenard Lind and L. H. Lind Realty. These world-famous dogs are probably the most popular event at the Fair and put on a fast, fabulous, and funny show. Show Times on Saturday and Sunday 10:30, 12:30, 2:30, 4:30 with try outs on Friday evening.

THE BEN SHOW
with Ben Burland, the man of many talents and many surprises — juggler, stiltwalker, unicycle rider, etc. — Aurora's own Ben Burland. Show times: Saturday 11:00, 1:15, 4:30 and Sunday 11:00 1:30 and 3:30.

STAGE EVENTS Saturday
11:00 The Ben Show
11:30 A Safari of Fun
12:00 Doc Century's Magical Travelling Medicine Show
1:15 The Ben Show
1:45 A Safari of Fun
2:15 Doc Century's Magical Travelling Medicine Show
3:30 The Mutt Show
4:30 The Ben Show

STAGE EVENTS, Sunday
11:00 The Ben Show
11:30 Doc Century's Magical Travelling Medicine Show
12:00 A.M. Dance Force
1:30 The Ben Show
2:00 Doc Century's Magical Travelling Medicine Show
3:30 The Ben Show

A.M. DANCE FORCE
An exciting and colourful show of jazz, tap, and acrobatic dancing by the students of Newmarket's A.M. Dance Force. Show time: Sunday 12:00.

CHILDREN'S TRACTOR PULL
On the path Children test their strength by riding a miniature tractor and pulling a weight. Times for both Saturday and Sunday: 11:30 and 2:00

SUPERKIDS CHALLENGE
sponsored by Scholastic Canada For children aged 4 to 12 at the baseball diamond. Children visit four stations and test their skills and then receive a book compliments of Scholastic Canada. Times for both Saturday and Sunday: 10:15 to 11:15; 12:45 to 1:45

A SAFARI OF FUN with Paul Behnke A Safari of Fun is a dynamic, interactive concert that inspires and entertains children. Children join Paul on stage to play musical instruments, while audiences sing and groove to his upbeat songs. Show times: Saturday only 11:30, 1:45.

DOC CENTURY'S MAGICAL TRAVELLING MEDICINE SHOW with Steve Baker. Cure what ails you with magic and laughter, when old time Medicine Man, magician and con-artist, Doc Century, comes to town! Travelling in his turn-of-the-century wagon with its own stage, Doc invites the townfolk to test the power of his potions, lotions, and tonics. Through the power of magic and ESP, Doc proves beyond a doubt that he holds the secret cure of the century in his "Golden Medical Discovery." New this year. Show times: Saturday 12:00, 2:15, 5:30; Sunday 11:30, 2:00.

Admission: \$5
Children 10 years & under: \$2
Seniors: \$2
Infants in Strollers: Free

TORONTO POLICE DOGS DEMONSTRATION
In the north ring. The Toronto police put on this demonstration at no charge but do accept donations for Sick Children's Hospital in Toronto. Show times for both Saturday and Sunday: 11:30, 1:30, 3:30

BANDALONI THE ONE-MAN BAND
Bandaloni will be walking around the fairgrounds and putting on a full band performance by himself on both Saturday and Sunday. Wow!

MUTT SHOW
You don't have to be a mutt to enter! Any dog may participate. Prizes donated by Pet Valu, Eukanuba, and medallions by ReYork trophies. Every participant receives a treat! Saturday only. Registration in stage area from 3:00 to 3:30 p.m. with the show starting at 3:30. Judge: Mayor Tim Jones.

CAR SHOW
Back this year. The old and antique cars will be on display on Sunday.

PONY SHOW
If you like teeny, weeny horses, don't forget to watch the miniature horses on Saturday. The children perform some fun events on Sunday afternoon.

JUNIOR ARTS, CRAFTS AND PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION
On display Saturday and Sunday in the Festival of Arts tent. Visit the display of work by local children from Kindergarten to Grade 8.

AURORA GRAND PRIX
Friday evening. Enjoy an evening watching some of Canada's elite horses and riders compete. The public is invited to walk the course prior to the competition (about 6 p.m.) with course designer and Pan Am gold medallist, Danny Foster. After the event, adjourn to the big tent for wine and cheese and an opportunity to meet the riders.

CREATURES EXOTIC
Back again by popular demand, this is a fabulous display of snakes, reptiles, and other weird creatures.

BIRDS OF PREY
The popular birds of prey exhibit will be in the big tent near the stage. A talk on their habits, etc. will be given at the following times on both Saturday and Sunday: 10:30, 12:45, 3:00

MICHAEL MITCHELL
Michael Mitchell is a well-known recording star from western Canada who sings songs and tells stories about Canada. His songs and stories of Canada's people, places, and history show us why people around the globe think Canada is one of the best countries in the world in which to live. Performance (stage area) Saturday evening at about 6:15.



CELEBRITY RACING PIGS AND HILLBILLY SHOW
A new show by Ken of KenJen's Petting Zoo featuring pig and duck races and a talking parrot. Show times Saturday and Sunday: 12:00, 2:00 and 4:00 p.m.

FESTIVAL OF ARTS TENT
This tent provides a venue for local artists — including painters, woodcarvers, fabric artists, spinners, photographers, graphic artists, printmakers, potters, and soapmakers — to display their work. Also, artists and artisans from Aurora's Creative Connection guide children in "make and take" activities.

FAMILY EVENING OF ENTERTAINMENT WITH A BARBECUE
Saturday from 5:00 p.m. Featuring Canadian recording star, MICHAEL MITCHELL. This is a tremendous opportunity to hear this great performer. Michael Mitchell will be performing from 6:15 to 7:00. Prior to his performance will be a magic show with magician Steve Baker from 5:30 to 6:00. The evening will be emceed by the man of many talents, (juggler, funny man, unicycle rider, etc.) Ben Burland.

HEAVY HORSE SHOW
What a great show. The wonderful heavy horses on Saturday are a thing to behold. You can watch them in the ring or visit them by their trailers. Sunday is the Commercial and Roadster Classes. Again, this is a great event to watch.

The Aurora Agricultural Society is a non-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to putting on the Fair and Horse Show for Aurora and the surrounding communities.

ONGOING SATURDAY AND SUNDAY:
Petting zoo, midway rides and games, reptile and exotic creatures display, 4-H display, penny auction by Queen's York Rangers Cadet Corps, Festival of Arts tent, Junior Arts, Crafts, and Photography competition (in Festival of Arts tent), Bandaloni, the one-man band, milking demonstrations, and lots, lots more.

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Up and over

Aurora's Julia Baston competes in the high jump event during a track and field day held last week at Highview Public School. "You have to give it everything you've got," she said. "It's a lot higher than you think, but it doesn't matter whether I win, it's fun."

Photo by Rob Schuetze

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Diggers edged 4-3 in overtime contest

The Aurora Novice Diggers travelled to Markham for their second ball tournament of the year recently and met teams from Newmarket, Belleville and Chinguacousy.

In the opening game Aurora played Newmarket and defeated their rivals 8-3.

Kaylee McDonald pitched six innings allowing three hits, seven walks and striking out 13 batters.

Offensively she led the team with three hits along with Kathryn Cribbett.

Alyson Murphy, Jessica Suddes and Chelsae Lumley contributed singles to the winning cause.

It wasn't quite as much fun in Game Two, which was delayed by rain, as the locals fell 8-4 to Chinguacousy, after a strong comeback midway through the match.

Chelsae Lumley suffered the loss for Aurora but she kept the team in the game with five strikeouts and she gave up nine hits.

Although they trailed 5-1 in the fifth, Aurora bounced back to narrow the count to 5-4 before Chinguacousy salted the game away with three runs to secure the victory.

It got to be fun again in the third game as Aurora romped to a 15-0 win over Belleville.

Kaylee McDonald was the winning pitcher striking out eight and giving up only one hit. She also led the Aurora bats,

going two for three.

Larisa Weissberger, Alyson Murphy and Chelsae Lumley contributed hits to the winning effort.

With two wins and a loss, Aurora was second going into the elimination round where they met up with Whitby.

And the game went into overtime.

Tied 2-2 at the end of the time limit, the teams were forced into overtime, where Aurora scored once, but Whitby added two to win the exciting contest 4-3.

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Aurora Minor Hockey Association

The Aurora Minor Hockey Association is currently accepting applications for the Head Coach position of the following teams:

Tyke Select (1996)
Atom AE (1993)
Bantam AE (1989)

Novice Select (1995)
Minor Peewee AE (1992)

Minor Atom AE (1994)
Minor Bantam AE (1990)

Application packages are available by contacting the AMHA office. Interview dates to be determined.

House League Convenors are required for the following age groups:

Tyke (1996)
Minor Bantam (1990)

Novice (1995)

Peewee (1991)

These divisions will be unable to start in the fall without a Convenor in place. Please contact House League Vice President, Paula Cooke at the AMHA office for further information.

The AMHA will be hosting the following clinics starting in September:

Coach Level Re-cert. (Sept. 6)
Coach Level (Sept. 20, 21)
Trainer, Level 1 (Sept. 7)
Speak Out (Sept. 17)

Intermediate Coach (Sept. 10/11/13/14)
CHIP (Sept. 20)
Trainer, Level 1 (Oct. 18)
Speak Out (Oct. 15)

All AMHA Coaching Staff must meet minimum coaching certification standards as mandated by the OMHA. House League coaching staff must have a minimum of one certified Coach and one certified Trainer. AMHA members are eligible for 50 - 100% reimbursement on selected courses. Contact the AMHA office for further information or visit the web site to download a registration form.

The AMHA is currently looking for assistance from current and past members to supply photos relevant to AMHA activities past and present. Anyone with photos that they would be willing to LOAN the association for publication on the association website should contact the AMHA office. Photos of historical interest regarding the AMHA are of particular interest.

The AMHA annual Used Equipment Sale will be held on Saturday September 13, 2003. Watch the AMHA website for further information.

November 1st marks the return of the Parents' Auxiliary dance. This year's 70's/80's themed dance will be held at the Howard Johnson Hotel on Yonge Street. Tickets cost \$30 each and include a buffet dinner. Tables will be reserved upon request. Watch the AMHA web site for ticket availability.

AMHA contact information:

Phone 905-727-1480

Fax 905-727-3812

Email aurorahockey@on.aibn.com

Web Site www.aci.on.ca/amha

Town seeks applications for arts and cultural fund

Over the years since 1973 several local arts and cultural organizations and individuals have received grants from the Aurora Arts and Cultural Fund for a special project or something other than normal activities.

Nominations are now open for the 2003 awards, so if you or your organization need financial help to promote cultural and/or artistic activities, submit an application to the fund.

Deadline is June 13. Applications should be in the form of a letter outlining the nature and general activities of the individual or group, specific use to be made of the grant and any

other pertinent information.

Due to the large number of applications received each year, the amount of the grant may vary. The total amount distributed annually is approximately \$10,000.

The fund started when David Merkur, owner of the Aurora Shopping Centre, made a gift of \$10,000 payable to the community in 10 annual installments of \$1,000 designed to assist individuals or groups in support of their leisure time cultural and artistic activities.

Merkur told council members at the time that the merchants of the shopping centre appreciated the patronage of Aurora citi-

zens and the cooperation of the town council and wished to thank the citizens in a tangible way by making the gift.

Council of the day decided to name it the Aurora Arts and Cultural Fund and both the town and Merkur invited other corporations to contribute to the fund. The invitation is still open.

A committee consisting of the mayor, chief administrative officer and a representative of the sponsor review the applications received and decide as to how the fund will be disbursed. The awards are normally made at a September council meeting.

In 1983, Merkur increased

the grant to \$25,000 with \$2,500 to be paid annually. Although no other corporations had joined the program during the first 10 years, Merkur and the town were still hopeful.

The grant was increased to \$50,000 over a 10-year period or \$5,000 a year by Merkur in March, 1988.

By this time Joe Lebovic, of Lebovic Enterprises, a land developer joined the program with an annual contribution.

Send applications for the 2003 awards to the Aurora Arts and Cultural Fund, c/o Mayor Tim Jones, 100 John West Way, Box 1000, Aurora, L4G 6J1, prior to June 13.

Huge horse show opens here Friday

From page 1

is known as the "Galloping Grandfather", and will be aboard "Dutch Crown" in Friday's event.

Spectators are invited to walk the course prior to the competition, then meet the riders afterwards at a wine and cheese party.

Various horse competitions will take place throughout the weekend at

Machell Park, across the street from the Aurora Community Centre on Aurora Heights Drive.

One of the highlights of the weekend will be a family evening of entertainment with Canadian recording star Michael Mitchell.

That will take place Saturday from 5 p.m., with Mitchell entertaining from 6.15 to 7 p.m.

In addition organizers of the Aurora Agricultural Society three-day affair are bringing a new midway into town this weekend to add to the horse show entertainment activities.

For a complete list of events, please see Page 9.

Admission is \$5 for adults; \$ 2 for seniors and children 10 and under; and free for infants in strollers.



MICHAEL MITCHELL

Aurora Minor Baseball Standings

Rookie Baseball

May 21 - Casey Transport Aurora 18 Shoppers Drug Mart 17
May 26 - La Prairie 10 Casey Transport 6
May 26 - Clear Meadow Camp (N2) 14 Aurora Jays (A2) 7

Peewee

May 26 - Slessor Motors (N2) 14 Natures Emporium (A2) 1

Bantam

May 25 - Phil's Motors (K1) 9 Aurora Home Hardware 6

Midget/Juvenile

May 26 - Remax Omega Realty (N4) 8 Aurora Men's Slo-Pitch 4

Jaguar Gymnastics



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Rumours & Rumblings

Supermailboxes gave Canada Post headaches

When Canada Post stopped making home mail delivery to homes in new subdivisions in 1988, they created an assessment problem for Aurora and other councils.

Homeowners located close to the supermailboxes complained about increased traffic and littering from the junk mail thrown on the ground.

A Pickering resident launched an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board and the OMB ruled that a five per cent reduction in assessment would apply.

This started a chain reaction in other municipalities resulting in the Ontario Ministry of Revenue announcing a policy dealing with all properties in the province abutting supermailboxes, following an investigation by assessment officials.

In June, 1998, Aurora Council adopted a resolution opposing the ministry ruling and requested the Association of Municipalities to review the issue.

AMO petitioned the province for reimbursement of property tax losses as a result of the OMB decision.

In addition to the AMO petition, Aurora Council petitioned Canada Post for financial compensation, claiming it was unfair that other taxpayers be penalized.

BOMB THREAT CLOSES AURORA FIRMS

This was not part of the recent war in Iraq, but back in November, 1970, York Regional Police warned 27 York Region firms, including five in Aurora, that threats had been received that American firms located in Canada would be bombed if the Amchitka nuclear test was allowed to proceed.

The Aurora plants included Sterling Drug, Checkerboard Farms, Sisman's Shoes, Excel Metalcraft and OEN Electric.

All closed for the day as a result of the police warning but there were no reported bombing incidents and the Amchitka blast went off as scheduled at 5 p.m. on November 6, 1970.

A DICTIONARY FOR POOR SPELLERS

If you're a poor speller and have difficulty finding the correct spelling in a dictionary because you don't know how

to find it, take heart.

Back in June, 1986, a British lecturer published what he says was the world's first phonetic dictionary for poor spellers.

The user of the "Aurally Coded English Dictionary" simply said the word, listen to the sound it makes and spell the first syllable.

Using the index to locate a list of words beginning with the chosen first few letters, the user selects the word required.

WHEN THE AURORA LANDFILL LEAKED

It was back in the 1980s when it became known that the Aurora landfill site on Bayview Avenue was leaking cancer-linked chemicals to wells north of the dumpsite.

When first discovered the news was withheld from the general public and the media, at the request of the residents involved.

When discovered in October, 1983, Waste Management, operators of the landfill, supplied bottled spring water to the residents whose wells were affected.

The waste firm bought the Aurora dump in 1973 after most of the dangerous chemicals had been deposited without records in the 1960s and 1970s.

It was discovered that a proven plume was moving off the site, resulting in the corrective action.

In the spring of 1984, with a letter of credit for \$180,000 from the waste company, the town extended municipal water services to the homes located on the north side of the Vandorf Sideroad, just west of Bayview.

Liberal Leader David Peterson criticized the Progressive Conservative government for keeping the leakage quiet, claiming the Ministry of the Environment was doing a disservice to the public by holding meetings behind closed doors and not keeping the public informed.

AURORA WANTED TO SEPARATE FROM REGION

In a surprise move in April, 1995, Councillor Herb McKenzie received council support for staff to prepare a report on how much the municipality had paid into the region since 1971.

He also wanted to know the estimated value of the services received from the region during the same period and what steps were necessary to separate from the region.

McKenzie, a life-long resident of Aurora, said that if Quebec could separate from Canada, then Aurora should be able to separate from the region.

AURORA'S MILLENNIUM GARDEN

In November, 1999, Aurora Council announced its plans to mark the Millennium.

The primary project was a garden to be located in the Holland River Valley between Lambert Willson Park and the Town Hall.

The focal point of the garden was to be a gazebo and walkways connecting to the trail system.

Consideration was also given to the possibility of restoring remnants of an old farm windmill on the site.

The Millennium Park was seen not only as a focal point for the town, but a serene area where citizens could relax and reminisce of life in gentler times and to enhance the Aurora Community Arboretum program.

If you are uptight, visit the park this summer.

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- Road safety is in your hands. Keep both hands on the wheel and if you must talk on the phone use a hands-free unit or headset.

Also, use the speed-dial or voice-dial functions. But be aware: hands-free is not risk-free.

- Position your phone within each reach. Trying to retrieve a phone from a purse or brief case can be especially dangerous.
- Keep calls short and factual. Emotional or thought-provoking conversations are distracting. Research suggests that decisions made while driving and talking on a cell phone are not always good decisions.

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- Use your wireless phone to help others in emergencies. You could be saving a life. Did you know that more than three million 911 calls are made from cellular phones each year?
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- If you are reporting a crime in progress, do not intervene - wait for police to arrive.

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Big was the name of the game Saturday as Aurora's Holy Spirit Separate School on Stone Road held a spring fair on the school grounds and inside the building. Above, children enjoyed the giant slide, while others lined up to test their slapshot in the huge Toronto Maple Leafs inflatable goaltender that towered over the property. And speaking of that hockey team, former Leaf captain Wendel Clark was on hand to sign autographs. The four-hour fair was termed a huge success by organizers. Stone Road is located in the town's east end, off Bayview Avenue, south of Wellington Street. Auroran photos by Ron Wallace



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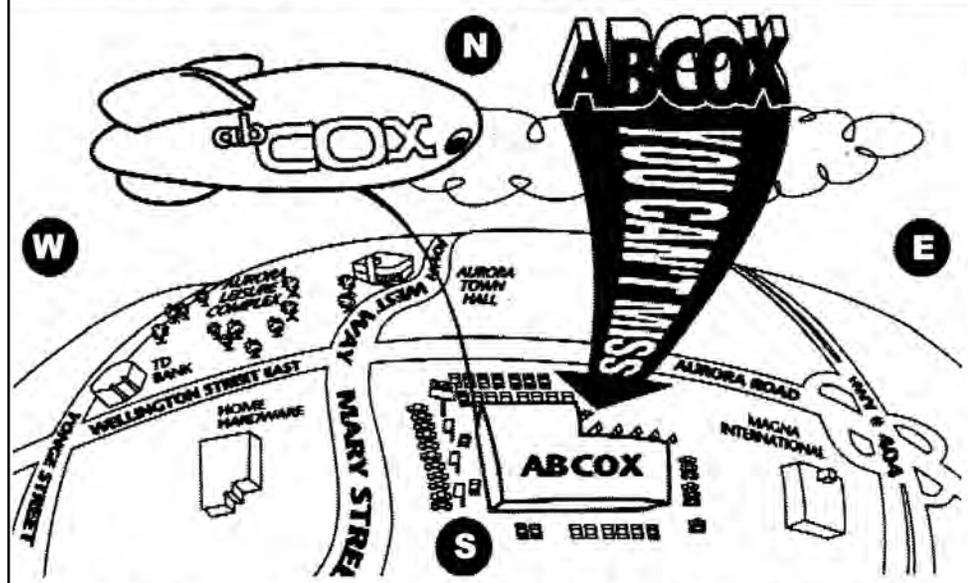
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Many residents make up town's hidden population

Back in the 1960s and 1970s most cities and towns, including Aurora, had hidden populations, a race of people who didn't vote, pay taxes or officially exist.

But they drank water, created garbage, drove on the streets and sent their children to school.

They were basement and attic apartment dwellers.

To their landlords, they often meant the financial difference between paying the mortgage and keeping or losing the house, but to their neighbours and the municipality, they could create problems.

In many areas zoned as single family dwellings, like Regency Acres, basements and attics had been converted into illegal apartments and by 1969 nobody knew how many families made up the hidden population.

The municipality could quite legally insist that an area zoned single family remain single family providing it could be proved an illegal apartment existed.

If one was found the question of relocating the evicted family reared its head as rental housing was in short supply.

In addition, without the rent coming in, the landlord may not be able to make his payments, resulting in the loss of the home and another family on the street, so council closed its eyes.

Although the hidden population had been known for some time, it didn't become a financial issue until the province introduced its tax rebate plan in 1968.

Under the plan, the province contributed more than \$100 million to some two million Ontario householders to help ease the burden of property taxation. The program was repeated in 1969.

In Aurora, council received applications from 10 families living in apartments who had not been previously listed or assessed.

Council agreed to grant the tax rebate to the 10 families but recommended the alteration of the owner's assessment to a two-family dwelling.

It was suspected that many landlords paid the rebate out of their pocket rather than risk the possibility of a higher assessment and taxation.

Council realized that some action had to be taken to control the hidden population and ensure that single family zoning was maintained.

Complaints were being received from residents about the number of cars

parked in the driveway or on the street for what was said to be a single family residence, resulting in a possible decrease in the property value of the neighbours' property.

In September, 1968, Aurora Council was determined once again to find the illegal apartments.

Efforts were made through the school board and Aurora Hydro to track down the illegal apartments without too much success on the basis of invasion of privacy.

Consideration was given to amending the single-family zoning bylaw to include the definition of a family to occupy a zoned single family residence as a family of five.

This failed to obtain council support on the basis that there were larger families, and half the homeowners would lose their homes, as they depended on the revenue from the basement apartment to pay their mortgage.

The problem was taken out of municipal hands in April, 1992, when the Bob Rae NDP government mandated basement apartments and other forms of housing intensification, and municipalities were not only required to amend zoning bylaws, but to encourage housing intensification in existing neighbourhoods.

On October 12, 1992, the town held a public meeting on intensification. It was pointed out that one of the aims of intensification was to control, to some extent, urban sprawl.

Citizens expressed concerns that using single family dwellings for multiple uses created parking problems, lowered property values of adjacent properties, helped cause overcrowding in local schools and could be potential firetraps.

The province and York Region hosted a public meeting on October 16, 1992, dealing with Shaping Growth in the GTA.

There was considerable criticism of the province for interfering with the rights of single family homeowners.

It was pointed out that neighbourhoods were planned for a set population and that municipal services were not in place to handle a major increase in basement apartments.

Ruth Grier, Environment Minister and Minister for the GTA, replied that legalizing basement apartments would increase safety for such housing by giving municipalities control over building and occupancy standards to prevent fire traps.

She added that many homes were not fully occupied and some owners, especially seniors, would like to rent out their

basements for extra income.

Many municipalities objected to the provincially mandated intensification program.

It was claimed that such apartments would change the nature of single-family residential areas, additional costs without the ability to collect taxes from two families living in one house.

On June 18, 1992, NDP Housing Minister Evelyn Gigantes announced the government planned to limit the power of municipalities to prevent the construction of these 'as of right' apartments.

The hidden population was no longer hidden but the problems remained and the municipality had little or no power to correct them.

Aurora still is unsure of how many people live in this "hidden population" but officials agree it's more than the 43,000 population signs state.



New Aurora Chamber President Brian North enjoys refreshments with Chamber Secretary Jane Thompson at a Chamber function held last week at Kingbridge Conference Centre in King City. Kingbridge will be the location of the Chamber's annual Business Achievement Awards evening, planned for later this year.

Auroran photo by Ron Wallace



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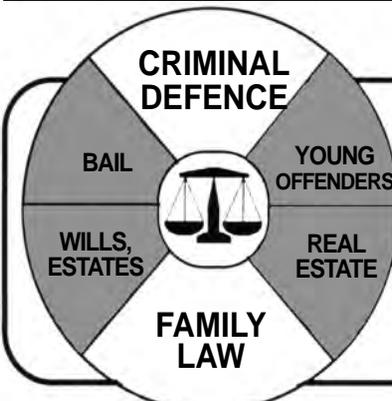
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Bingo hall could become storage spot

From page 1

plan agreement.

At the same public planning meeting council received an application from Hallgrove Estates to develop a 47 acre parcel of land running east from Leslie Street to Highway 404, south of Wellington Street and adjacent to town-owned property.

The application was for a subdivision consisting of 30 blocks for industrial/employment use, with larger blocks on Leslie Street and Highway 404 on 39.2 acres, plus a 0.9 acre designated park and a 1.9 acre stormwater management pond.

Planning staff advised that

the application met the requirements of the official plan but an amendment to the zoning bylaw was required.

Part of the lands are within the Oak Ridges Moraine, but because the application had been submitted prior to the provincial conservation plan for settlement area, regulations don't apply.

Issues to be resolved included a functional traffic study and tying the proposal and road system into the south, plus a potential land exchange to improve both properties. In addition regional comments had not yet been received.

Concern was expressed about the proposed small lot sizes as it was feared the small size would restrict larger industries from moving to the area.

David Farrow, representing Hallgrove Estates, said he did not have a problem with the proposed land exchange providing the land received from the town was clear from any Oak Ridges Moraine restrictions.

He pointed out the lots on Leslie Street and Highway 404 were of significant size for larger industries.

After further discussion council approved the application in principle and

referred it back to staff to resolve the outstanding issues.

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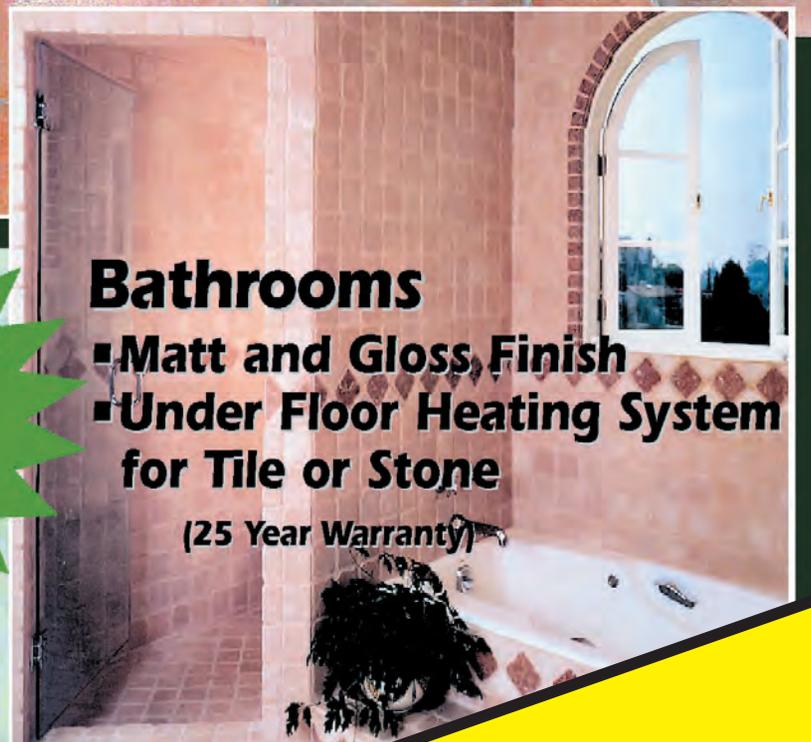
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