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THE AURORAN

Aurora's Independent Community Newspaper

Vol. 11 No. 22

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FREE

Week of March 29, 2011

Want to buy a school?

The York Region District School Board is going ahead with plans to put the Wells Street School site in downtown Aurora up for sale, while extending the Town's deadline to make an offer of "fair market value" until June as requested.

"In a letter dated March 10 to the Town, we said the Board is prepared to extend the deadline to June 1," said Ross Virgo, spokesperson for the York Region District School Board. "In the

interim, however, we are going to proceed to the next step in listing the property for sale.

"Any offers of interest that we might receive prior to June 1 will be shared with the Town. The Town would, of course, continue to retain the first right to purchase during this period."

The extension until June comes after an earlier deadline of March 15 had been requested by the previous council in November, which

was subsequently granted by the School Board, to allow for the Town to send in its own independent people to go in and evaluate the site to determine its "fair market value".

The Board formally declared the property surplus on August 26. When school sites are declared surplus, they must be offered to public agencies for a time.

The school board offered the
Please see page 12

Election date has been set

The next few weeks of early spring will be a sea of blues, reds, oranges, and greens as the public settles into yet another federal election, the fourth in seven years.

Stephen Harper's Conservative Government fell on a confidence motion in the House of Commons Friday afternoon where opposition parties adopted a report finding the

Conservative government in contempt of Parliament, the first time this has happened in a Commonwealth nation.

The following day, the Governor General dissolved Parliament after a meeting with the Prime Minister and an election date was set for May 2.

Federal candidates in this election for the riding of Newmarket-Aurora include incumbent MP Lois Brown for the Conservative Party of Canada; Kyle Peterson for the Liberal Party of Canada; Vanessa Long for the Green Party of Canada; and Dorian Baxter for the Progressive Canadian Party.

Attempts to reach the local New Democratic Party riding association to confirm the name of their candidate were unsuccessful at press time.



Six-year-old Mikala Stade of Aurora, was among a huge crowd at the Aurora Farmers' Market Saturday morning at the Aurora Cultural Centre (Church Street School). It was the last indoor Farmers' Market of the winter. The market is expected to return to its Town Park location in May, where it will operate outdoors every Saturday until October.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Briefly

Earth Hour

Of the nine municipalities served by PowerStream, Aurora was second in saving electricity during the annual Earth Hour Saturday night.

According to PowerStream's records, Aurora used 14.3 per cent less electricity, saving 7.4 megawatts of power during the 60-minute program Saturday night.

Only Essa (Thornton) was higher. They recorded an 18 per cent saving but saved only 0.2 megawatts of power. PowerStream's System Control reported a service territory-wide 8.9 per cent electricity consumption reduction between 8.30 p.m. and 9.30 p.m. Saturday.

This was slightly down from the 9.1 per cent reduction achieved collectively last year by customers in PowerStream's service territory during Earth Hour.

According to PowerStream, this year's results represented a saving of 86.7 megawatts in peak demand, or enough electricity to power 2,627 average-size homes over a 24-hour period.

Earth Hour saw thousands of PowerStream customers indicate their willingness to help fight climate change by turning off their lights for 60 minutes to reduce electricity consumption.

According to the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO), the Earth Hour results this year were somewhat muted across the province due to colder temperatures and the need for more electricity to heat some homes and businesses.

Clarification

For the article in last week's Auroran which was continued from the front page on page 14 under "No information from Morris, defence argues", the first two paragraphs of the third column should be attributed to Charles Sinclair.

Budget drops again

Aurora's projected 2011 budget increase now sits at 4.35 per cent, down from the 7.82 per cent projected increase from January following an additional cut of \$165,500 in salary gapping for Central York Fire Services, and a \$285,000 reduction in the Town's cash to capital reserves.

As things stood at press time, the 4.35 per cent budget increase in Aurora, combined with Regional taxes is projected to have a 2.31 per cent impact on your tax bill.

For an average Aurora property assessed at \$300,000, this will mean a \$0.13 daily increase in taxes, a monthly hike of

\$3.93, and an annual tax impact of \$47.19.

Councillors made the cuts at a budget meeting recently.

At the beginning of the meeting, the tax hike stood at 5.93 per cent.

"As your financial advisor, I think what you have before you

Please see page 12



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COMING EVENTS

APRIL 2-3

Lions Pancake Meal will be held Saturday and Sunday, inside at the Lions Hall, corner of Victoria and Mosley, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For further information, call 905-727-6079.

SATURDAY, APRIL 2

The Aurora Historical Society will hold an Opening Reception for the exhibit "Arresting Images: Mugshots from the OPP Museum" including lectures by documentary photographers, Johan Hallberg-Campbell and Cheol Joon Baek from 5 to 8 p.m. tonight at the Aurora Cultural Centre. The exhibit will continue until May 19th. The two lecturers will speak between 6 and 7 p.m. at the Reception only.

TUESDAY, APRIL 5

It's time to join the Tuesday Philosophy Club and learn things like: What is the meaning of life? In a friendly, informal atmosphere, the club will tackle this question at the Aurora Public Library. No prior experience in philosophy required-just an inquisitive mind. Event begins at 7 p.m. in the Lebovic Room. Pre-register at the Adult Information Desk, or call 905-727-9493, option 4.

New members who have not yet had the opportunity to attend an orientation session are invited to the Aurora Chamber of Commerce New Member Orientation Breakfast this morning. Held in the Chamber office, 14483 Yonge Street at the corner of Industrial Parkway South, from 7.30 a.m. to 8.45 a.m., this event will introduce new members to the benefits of membership with the Aurora Chamber. Cost is complimentary to new members.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6

The Aurora Public Library hosts the discussion, Investing in Today's Economy, with Aurora resident Roger Strong. Find out how to treat your RRSP and your debt, and balancing safety, responsibility and return. Discussion begins at 7 p.m. in the Magna Room and it's free. Pre-register at the Adult Information Desk, or call 905-727-9493, option 4.

THURSDAY, APRIL 7

The Resourceful Mother's Secrets to Healthy Kids Aurora Public Library hosts a free seminar with local author and pediatric nutritionist Meredith Deasley at 7 p.m. in the Lebovic Room. Pre-register at the Adult Information desk, 905-727-9493 option 4.

APRIL 9-10

Lions Pancake Meal will be held Saturday and Sunday, inside at the Lions Hall, corner of Victoria and Mosley, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For further information, call 905-727-6079.

APRIL 14-15

The Aurora United Church Spring annual rummage sale starts Friday at 1 p.m. and continues until 8 p.m. for the individual sale then resumes Saturday from 9 a.m. until noon for the bag sale. For further information call 905-727-1935.

SUNDAY, APRIL 17

The annual Rotary Club of Aurora Frog Race takes place today in Tannery Creek. Money raised is going to Easter Seals Camp Merrywood in support of a Family in Aurora with three disabled children. Tickets will be available at the Home Show or through any Rotarian.

Seedy Sunday happens today at the Aurora Legion from noon to 4 p.m. Seedy Saturday and Sundays are the days when the new gardening season begins in earnest. You can have an opportunity to learn more about gardening, hone and share your gardening skills, and buy or exchange vegetable and flower seeds. Details at <http://www.living-raw-foods.com>. For further information call 416-277-5432.

An eclectic cultural salon here in Aurora! Inspired by Margaret Webb's book "Apples to Oysters: A food lover's guide to Canadian farms", there will be a reading and book signing by the author, and food and drink served at intermission. Musical performances will include music from the films "Forrest Gump" and "The Mission" performed by a chamber orchestra, and conducted by a farmer. Michael Schmidt, biodynamic farmer will share his musical side with the audience. Handel's Harp Concerto and Mozart's Oboe quartet will usher in the Spring. There will be a guest appearance by local dancers Radley August and Emily Gould. Activity starts at 2.30 p.m. at the Aurora Cultural Centre.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20

Terry Kelly of Ontario Early Years returns to Aurora Public Library to discuss what the latest research is saying about boys and literacy and how best to support your boy's learning. Event begins at 7 p.m. in the Magna Room and it's free. Pre-register at the Adult

Information Desk, or call 905-727-9493 option 4.

APRIL 26-29

For the third consecutive year, the Dr. G.W. Williams Students' Council will hold a spring rummage sale and will accept donations of used or new books, toys, appliances, furniture, games, and more (excluding clothing) for the sale. Drop off time is 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, in the front foyer.

SATURDAY, APRIL 30

Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School Rummage Sale today from 9 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. in the school's cafeteria.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11

Join local resident Phillip Hodgson for an interactive seminar to learn about today's popular youth drugs, the impact on the individual, the family and the community, warning signs, and where to go for help. Phillip is a psychotherapist and counsellor who works and lectures in the field of addiction. Event begins at 7 p.m. in the Magna Room at the Aurora Library.

Wesley United Church, located at the intersection of the Aurora Road and Woodbine Avenue, will hold its annual roast beef dinner this evening. There will be two seatings at 5 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. It will cost adults \$15, while children between six and 12 will pay \$8. Children under six are free, but they must have a ticket. For tickets call Sherry at 905-853-4915.

SATURDAY, MAY 14

"I Love Rock & Roll" dinner dance takes place this evening at Dinardo's Mansion on Industrial Parkway South beginning at 6 p.m. Dance to the music of Freddie Vette and The Flames and meet and have your picture taken with Elvis Presley, who is really Kevin Mills from Richmond Hill. Tickets sell for \$60 a person, which includes a three-course meal and are available at Aurora Used Books, 95 Edward Street. Proceeds go to the Aurora-Newmarket District of Community Living.

TUESDAY, MAY 17

At 7.30 p.m. the Evergreen Choir, under the direction of Richard Heinzle, invites you to join them for their Spring concert at the Aurora Seniors Centre, 90 John West Way, when they present "We'll Sing you a Song". Admission is \$10 for adults, while children, 14 and under, are free. Tickets are available in advance at the Seniors' Centre and they'll also be on sale at the door. Refreshments will be served at intermission.

MAY 29-31

Another historic walk is planned on each of the evenings listed above beginning at 7 p.m. Brought to you by A Step In Time, the walks will present data about where ghosts used to hang out in Aurora. Advance tickets are \$20 and 100 per cent of the proceeds will go to the Heart and Stroke and Crohns and Colitis Foundations.

CONTINUING

Trinity Anglican Church "Clothes Closet", located at 44 Metcalfe St., Aurora, is the local source for gently used women's, children's and men's clothing. All monies raised are used to support the needy of Aurora, since it goes directly to the "Welcoming Arms" Ministry. Open weekday mornings, 9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. and Wednesday evenings 6.30 to 7.30 p.m. The Bag Sale happens the last Monday of each month.

The Evergreen Choir, under the direction of Richard Heinzle, meets every Wednesday afternoon in the West-McKenzie Hall of the Aurora Seniors' Centre. Members meet at 1.30 p.m. and rehearsals are from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. New members are always welcome. For more information call the desk at 905-726-4767.

The Aurora Probus Club meets every second Wednesday of the month at the Aurora Legion. Memberships consist of retired and semi-retired PROFESSIONAL and BUSINESS people, hence the name. New members are welcome. For more information, call Marilyn Munslow at 905-727-9344 or Bob Saunders at 905-841-3558.

GRANAurora, the local Grandmothers To Grandmothers group, meets monthly to raise awareness, generate funds and lobby on behalf of the grandmother care-givers in AIDS-ravaged Africa. For more information call Kay at 905-841-9318 or Joan at 905-727-5586.

Alateen meets every Sunday at 8 p.m. at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, corner of Victoria and Mosley Streets. Al-Anon meets every Tuesday at 8 p.m. at the Aurora United Church on Yonge Street. For

more information go to al-anon.alateen.on.ca.

The Aurora Garden & Horticultural Society meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 8 p.m. at the Royal Canadian Legion, 105 Industrial Parkway North. Visitors are welcome for only \$2. For more information call Ray at 905-727-6168.

York Highlands Chorus is an award-winning a capella Sweet Adelines chorus, a group of women who gather Tuesday evenings at the Old Fire Hall, Newmarket, to sing, share in the harmony of friendship and learn the barbershop art form. York Highlands is always looking for new women who share the love of a capella music. Call Karen at 905-726-2113 or e-mail Vikki at information@yorkhighlands.com.

The Upper Canada Chordsmen, Aurora-Newmarket's award winning chorus, is looking for male singers. The group meets every Wednesday from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Old Fire Hall, 140 Main Street South, in Newmarket.

The Optimist Club of Aurora meets the first Wednesday of each month at the Aurora Legion. New members are welcome. Call 905-727-5012 for more information.

The Aurora Lions Club meets the second and fourth Thursdays at the Aurora Lions Hall, corner of Mosley and Victoria Streets. Co-ed club welcomes new members. For further information, call 905-727-6079.

Martha's Table runs every Thursday in the hall of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, corner of Mosley and Victoria Streets. The volunteer-operated program is offered between 11.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. Lunch cost is minimal. Last year, more than \$6,000 was given to local charities.

The York Regional Police Male Chorus is looking for new members. You do not have to be a police officer nor are you required to read music to volunteer. The group rehearses Monday evenings between 7.30 and 9.30 p.m. For further information, contact the chorus supervisor at 905-727-9676 or the coordinator of volunteer services for YRP at 905-830-0303, extension 6717.

Aurora's Air Cadets meet every Tuesday night at Cardinal Carter School from 6.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m., and offer a program for 12 years and older boys and girls.

Queen's York Rangers Army cadet corps has openings for boys and girls aged 12 to 18. The group parades every Friday night between 7 and 9 p.m. There is no membership fee and those in high school can earn community service hours through the program. For further information, call 905-726-8600.

Aurora Opera Children's Chorus welcomes treble voices. It is a choir dedicated to nurturing and providing opportunities for children to express their musical abilities. The chorus is open to boys and girls ages 5-17. Contact the general director at keepinging@rogers.com

Community Home Assistance to Seniors (CHATS) is looking for volunteers to assist with the activities in its Adult Day Program. The positions call for a commitment of a few hours a week at its Aurora location. Various times are available. Call Christine at 905-713-3494.

Every Wednesday from 6.30 to 8 p.m. the Pioneer Club for boys and girls, age three to Grade 4 and the Junior High Club for boys and girls, Grades 5 to 8, will be held at the Aurora Cornerstone Church, 390 Industrial Parkway South. For more information call 905-841-8884.

A drop-in centre will operate every Wednesday at the Community Bible Church on Bathurst Street just south of Henderson from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information e-mail Judy Hoffmann at jhoffmann@sympatico.ca.

Scottish Country Dancing on Tuesday evenings at 8.15 p.m. at the Aurora Heights Public School and Friday mornings at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church beginning at 10.30 a.m. No partners are needed and beginners are welcome. For more information, call Helen at 905-713-3439 or Agnes at 905-841-2747.

Aurora Rotary Club meets every Monday at 6.30 p.m. at Gabriel's on Yonge Street. New members are welcome. For further information call 905-713-9356.

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.

Masonic 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. and lunch at noon. Call 905-727-3032 or 905-727-1080 for more information.

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

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

Canadian Federation of University Women holds monthly meetings at the Aurora Legion with a variety of speakers. Contact Beverley at 905-727-2151.

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Tickets Saturday: Adults \$28, Seniors \$23, Students \$12
Sunday: Adults \$30, Seniors \$25, Students \$15

E-mail from police is a hoax, they say

York Regional Police say it's a hoax.

They are advising the public that an e-mail circulating on the Internet titled Message from York Regional Police is a hoax.

The e-mail advises recipients to warn the women in their lives about a dangerous substance that is transferred from one person to another by way of a business card.

The e-mail names members of York Regional Police and Niagara Regional Police and contains the York Regional Police letterhead design.

The e-mail says that a stranger approaches women and hands them a business card.

The "victim" is then said to have trouble breathing as a result of a noxious substance on the card called burundanga.

What is burundanga?

Burundanga is the street version of a pharmaceutical drug called scopolamine, according to a Google report.

It is made from the extracts of plants in the nightshade family such as henbane and jimson weed. It's a deliriant, meaning it can induce symptoms of delirium such as dis-

orientation, loss of memory, hallucinations, and stupor.

In powdered form scopolamine can be easily mixed into food or drink, or blown directly into victims' faces, forcing them to inhale it.

A York Police spokesman assures the public the e-mail is not legitimate and the information is not true.

If you receive the e-mail, immediately delete it and do not forward it to anyone on your contact list.

For further information contact the York Regional Police Corporate Communications Bureau at 1-866-876-5423, ext. 7099 or 7977.



York Regional Police is celebrating 40 years as a unit in York, and displayed five of the cars used by police over the years at its new facility in Aurora Tuesday. They are, left to right, models from 1990, 1953, 2011, 1971 and 1996. In front of each, wearing the dress of the day, are, left to right, PC Mike Quirk, retired Glenn Phillips, Sergeant Gary Phillips (No relation to Glenn), PC Tim Skinner and PC Trevor Draves. Sergeant Phillips is standing in front of a current police car, which is equipped with a computer and a video camera. On Thursday, April 28, York Regional Police will hold their annual Police Appreciation Night Dinner and the 40th anniversary will be the theme of the evening. On hand for Tuesday's car display were the officer in charge of the fleet, Sergeant Lloyd Dow, and Traffic Bureau Staff Sergeant Brad Bulmer.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Councillors pull big-ticket items pending meeting with the public

Last week councillors voted to take a number of big ticket projects off the 2011 draft budget and refer them to a workshop later this spring after the receipt of the Town's new draft Strategic Plan for further public consultation and discussion.

Items taken off the budget for the future meeting

include renovations at Town Hall, the creation of a Joint Operations Centre, the creation of a dedicated youth space, and several projects related to the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, ranging from converting the existing lift to an elevator and retrofitting the ice plant.

The meeting, which will be held in public, is expect-

ed to be scheduled "as soon as is practical" but could take place as late as June.

"It is proposed that a workshop be scheduled to review in one sitting all of these projects," said Aurora Treasurer Dan Elliott in a report. "The workshop would be scheduled likely for June, following receipt by council of a draft report on the strategic plan allowing these discussions to be informed as such."

"There is no necessity to hold the workshop in closed session, although should the Committee decide, the legislation would permit the session to be closed to the public subject to the necessary procedural rules of such. Staff recommend that it be open to the public for observation, however, delegations and presentations from the public would not be entertained during the session."

Members of the public wanting to comment on the various items, were invited to contact the mayor and/or individual councillors prior to the meeting. If it is the wish of council to add these projects back into the budget by amendment they can do so "with no impact to the then approved tax rate," noted Mr. Elliott.

Although the meeting is expected to take place to June, it was suggested at a recent council meeting that staff move the date up to the earliest practical date.

Councillors were expected to continue their budget deliberations Monday.

Police seek suspect who stole credit card

Two months ago, at 11.26 a.m. the suspect shown in the photo below was in the Best Buy store located at 52 First Commerce Drive in the east end of Aurora.

At that location the suspect purchased almost \$1,200 worth of electronics with a credit card that was stolen from a parked vehicle earlier that same day in

Georgina.

Later the same day at 12.19 p.m. the suspect attended the Best Buy store located at 18151 Yonge Street in the Town of East Gwillimbury.

The suspect purchased just over \$1,600 worth of electronics using the same stolen credit card.

And then again at 12.45

p.m. the suspect attended the Future Shop located at 17890 Yonge Street in Newmarket.

The suspect attempted to purchase just over \$800 worth of electronics and pay for the purchase with the same stolen credit card, however the transaction was declined.

If you know the suspect responsible for this crime or have any knowledge of this or any other crime but wish to remain anonymous, call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS, leave an anonymous tip on-line at <http://www.1800222tips.com> or text message your tip to CRIMES (274637) starting with the word YORK.

If the information you provide helps solve the case you may be eligible for cash reward of up to \$2,000.

You never have to identify yourself or testify in court.



York Regional Police are seeking the public's help in identifying the person in this photo, who allegedly stole a credit card in Georgina and used it in several electronic stores, including Best Buy in Aurora.

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Poor Ronnie

By RON WALLACE

Don't ask me to throw a dart

Couple of weeks ago, I, and others, attended a media event at the Aurora Legion regarding the Legion's success in obtaining the Canadian dart championships later this year.

Darts?

So, I'm not a "dartist", couldn't hit the broad side of a barn door if I tried.

Which is probably why my hockey career is down the tubes. Couldn't score a goal to save my life.

But, it's a big deal for the Aurora Legion, and they're doing everything in their power to make it a successful event.

So, I'm sure it will be...as long as I'm not part of it.

The championships will take place May 13 to 15th and the public is invited to attend.

"One of the reasons Aurora decided to submit the application was because 2011 marks the 65th anniversary of the branch and we wanted to welcome the nation as well as the general public," said branch president Rick Preston.

Preston, by the way, is also chairman of the dart committee.

"We have tried to schedule events to encourage Aurora residents to participate in the town hosting a National Championships," he said.

So, here's how the weekend shapes up:

Friday, May 13: Wings and Frings Dinner from 5 to 7.30 p.m. That will cost you seven bucks.

At 8 p.m. the Blind Draw Doubles Dart Tournament will take place. This is where the public can play the competitors and, if that's your bag, it'll cost you five bucks to register. Entertainment will be available in the lounge.

Saturday, May 14: At 8.45 a.m. there will be a parade of participants and the Opening Ceremonies will take place. Singles competition happens at 9.30 a.m. Between 11.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m., there will be a barbeque lunch served. Doubles competition starts at 1 p.m. At 7 that evening, you can jump into (no, not literally) a spaghetti dinner for nine bucks. At 8 p.m., a games night, including a Canadian Trivia Competition, featuring the 10 provincial dart teams, will take place in the lounge. If you want to get involved, outside teams can jump in (no, not literally) for five bucks a person.

Sunday, May 15: The teams' competition will take place beginning at 9.30 a.m. That will be followed by a lunch buffet from 11 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. Seven bucks. The Awards Banquet and Closing Ceremonies happens at 7 p.m. that evening and for 20 bucks, you're invited to attend.

"We invite the general public to come and watch the competition and participate in the weekend's activities," said organizer Mike Kenny. "Shuttle vans will be available throughout the weekend to make sure everyone gets home safely."

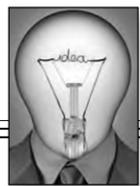
Speaking of shuttle vans, you'll be pleased to know that Aurora's McAlpine Motors is the main sponsor of the event.

"Not only are they providing vehicles to transport the competitors from the airport to Aurora," Mike said, "they have also agreed to sponsor the Tournament dart boards."

Molson Breweries has also agreed to be a main sponsor of the event.

Want more information? Call Mike at 289-221-9788 or send him an e-mail at mike.cosam@gmail.com.

So, I really don't know what to do on Saturday night... watch the darts or go to Dinardo's Mansion for the Rock and Roll dance.



100 Watts

By Christopher Watts

Time to re-use

Spring may have suffered from a false start, but spring cleaning is definitely underway.

With so many things to shed often the easiest of the 3 R's is the one that is least upheld: Re-use.

I have noticed when driving through Aurora's streets on garbage day there are often several items with much life left in them amongst the trash.

Items that are re-used save both the energy of recycling and reduce the energy needed to produce new items.

I'm eager to hear your suggestions as to how we can all work together to find new uses for our old stuff.



At one time cricket was played on the fields at St. Andrew's College in Aurora, but now you can only watch others play it near Seneca College in King Township. This picture shows the cricket fields at St. Andrew's, taken from a postcard in former councillor Bob McRoberts collection. For many years, the Toronto Argonaut football team used the field to select its players.

Letters to the Editor

Okay, I give up, where's Spring?

To the editor,

WARNING: The following could contain information not suitable for those with squeamish stomachs or those who have never been caretakers for a dog.

What's with this snow – it was supposed to be Spring?

I even hung out my sheets on the line this past weekend.

I was soooooo looking forward to putting the boots, scarves and hats away for a couple of months – I really am getting to hate Winter!

The only redeeming quality of Winter is that heavy clothing covers up a multitude of body imperfections!

Although with the coming of Spring comes the backyard cleanup.

Having two large dogs I try very hard to clean up the "poop" regularly so that I don't have the thawed mounds of doggy dodo to contend with once the ice and snow melt.

It is a very "shitty" job – and those of you who look after man's best friend know of what I speak.

I warned you that I would be providing sensitive information.

I look at forecasts, not only for driving conditions, like most people I know, but to determine when a new snowfall is coming so that I can shovel up the latest dog backyard presents before they are covered up!

Then there is the ice to contend with – once again I have visions of me trying to scoop up poop, one of my beasts running directly in my path, butting me and then me losing my balance and then taking a header landing, of course, right in a thawed pile of excrement.

Believe it or not it happened once and I don't intend to relive the experience.

Then there is the MUD! Every year I lay sod trying to offset the never-ending areas of mud that appear every Spring in my backyard.

Just imagine two very large dogs playing outside, in the mud, (like we all did when we were kids and actually played outside all year round) then they try to push their way into my kitchen, gingerly tiptoeing past the dreaded bucket at the back door.

Eight paws at least six times a day!

Think about it!

They want in – so they have become resigned to the fact that they have to have their feet washed. Actually they love to play in the mud but really don't like to be dirty for too long – at least one of them thinks she is a "princess".

The geese are back and I have seen lots of robins, chipmunks and I am sure it won't be long before the ducks, skunks and raccoons make their appearance.

I saw, until this latest snow, the small green shoots starting in my flowerbeds.

Now back to "the poop"

for a moment.

I always feed the geese and have had as many as 38 on my front lawn at a time.

Did you know that as long as you feed them they don't poo where they eat, at least not much?

You have to stop feeding them so they will fly south - then watch out for the "shit to hit the front porch".

So far I have determined that I dread November and February.

Now it looks like March is going to take third place.

Bonnie Tiffin
Oak Ridges

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Publisher Emeritus
Rosemary Schumaker

Editorial
Ron Wallace
ron@auroran.com

Brock Weir
brock@auroran.com

Advertising
Bob Ince
bob@auroran.com

Diane Buchanan
diane@auroran.com

Trish Miller-Kostin
trish@auroran.com

Administration
Patricia Wallace

Production
Cynthia Proctor
cynthia@auroran.com

Photography
David Falconer
dfalconer@sympatico.ca

Main Number
905-727-3300

Classifieds
905-727-7128
classifieds@auroran.com

Facsimile Machine
905-727-2620

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Town paid little for this solicitor

To the editor,

My father, Lorne Lee, after serving two or three years on Town Council in the thirties, took on the job of town solicitor for a further 30 years.

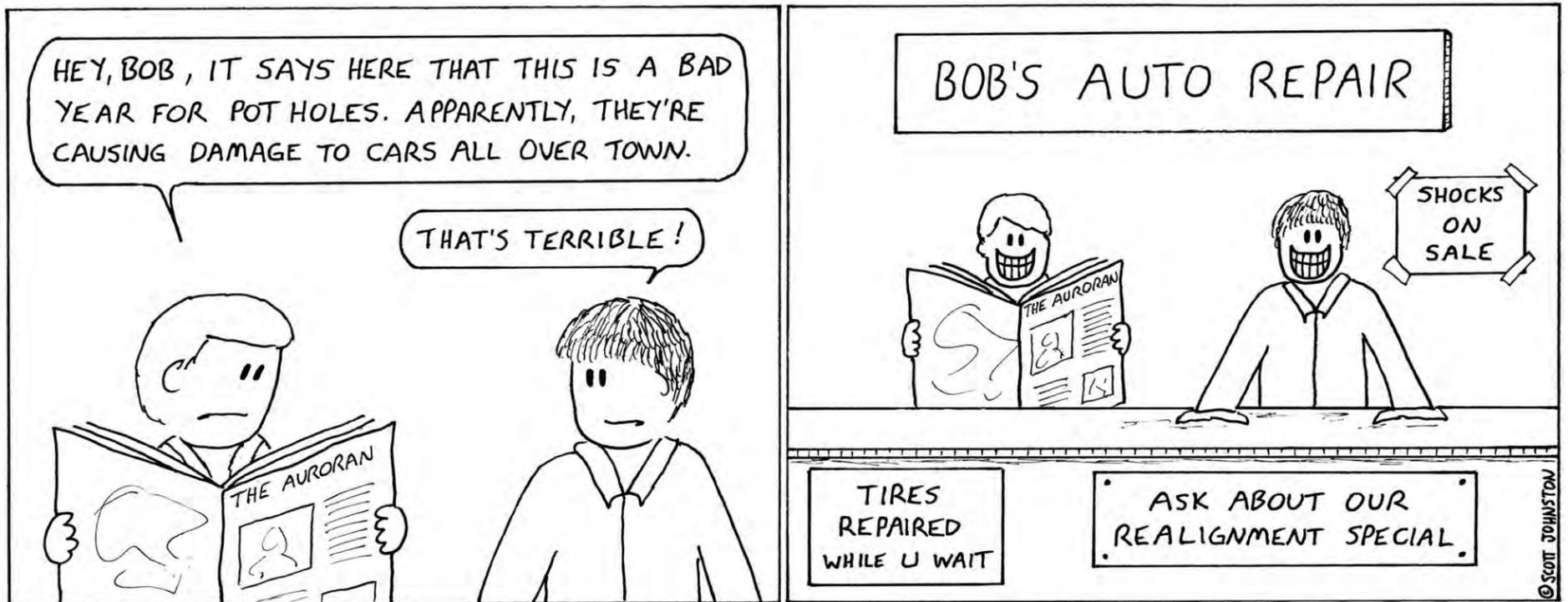
As far as I can find out, he did not invoice the town

for those 30 years.

He may have received the odd \$100 now and then.

Are the present town solicitor(s) giving of their services for next to nothing?

Gordon Lee
LaSalle, Quebec



Front Porch Perspective

By Stephen Somerville

Before this column returns next week to the local themes of people, politics and public affairs, below are some unconnected, stream-of-conscious and (most likely) incoherent musings and observations regarding my recent trip to Florida.

As my seven-year-old son gets to enrich the lives of his Grade 2 classmates by recounting - on his Leader day - about events in his life, it would only seem fitting that I get to do the same for my readers in Aurora.

The reflections from our just finished family vacation to Disney World can be broken down into a couple of areas: t-shirts, food, and my rather well known (and soundly ridiculed) prognosticating ability.

One of my favourite pastimes when I am in Florida is to read the t-shirts of people at the various Disney World theme parks.

T-shirts - like bumper stickers - say a lot about people.

They are a way for individuals to express their individuality and to make a particular statement.

Witness a couple of the slogans that I saw last year:

"You can either be: a) Gun Victim, or b) Gun Owner - You Decide".

This kind of caught my attention. The gentleman wearing this shirt was a slightly built, unassuming guy pushing a middle aged woman in a wheel chair. Made me wonder what his story was.

Or the eight-year-old boy wearing a shirt that read "I work at my optimum level in the early going - then I leave it to the second string to mop up". Hmmm?

I was not disappointed this year in my continuing quest to find interesting t-shirts.

I saw a 65-year-old man wearing a "Give Tiger a break Obama is

screwing the whole country" shirt. Although he was supposed to be in the self-proclaimed "Happiest Place on Earth", he did not look at all happy and I did not see a wife or any children with him.

I did get a chuckle out of the early twenties guy wearing a shirt that said "I am out of my mind - please leave a message".

Some people wear t-shirts that seem so out of character or are so age inappropriate.

One boy - probably about 12 - wore a shirt that read "I will be your private dancer". I am still trying to figure this one out.

One of my favourite shirts, and I saw two different people wearing them, said "I reserve the right to arm bears".

These shirts had a picture on the front of a huge grizzly bear holding a shotgun.

Although I did not see the following t-shirt on this particular trip, a number of years ago down in Florida I spotted a guy with my all time favourite: "Nixon and Agnew - Rested, Relaxed and Ready to Roll in 92".

You may be wondering what 'ole Somerville was wearing on this trip.

Good question and I am glad you asked.

I wore a golf shirt every day, topped off with my Toronto Maple Leafs baseball cap.

The Leafs cap did elicit a few responses.

A guy wearing an authentic Sidney Crosby Pittsburgh Penguins shirt shot me a rather disdainful look while in line at the Epcot theme park.

But while I was sitting on the curb trying to have a quick nap near

the Splash Mountain ride in the Magic Kingdom theme park a guy walks by and says "Go Leafs Go" and shoots me a big smile!

As we all know, the size of food portions in the U.S. is a tad on the large size.

My wife started sharing my son's meals as she was concerned about the quantity of food she was consuming.

That did not stop her or Ryan though from having their twice (or more) daily Mickey Mouse Ice Cream fix!

The last component to our trip was the NCAA men's basketball tournament - also commonly referred to as "March Madness".

Everyone in Florida was talking about the 68-team field and the preparation of their office pool brackets.

I am also a big college hoops fan and I made my office pool selections.

As many readers know, my track record at political races is rather abysmal.

My most inglorious pick was that then Prime Minister Kim Campbell would win 100 seats for the Federal Tories back in 1993! She only fell 98 seats short!

With the first three rounds of the tournament completed, I will go way out on a limb and predict that the number one ranked college team in the United States, the Ohio State Buckeyes will be victorious at the Final Four next week.

And, before I forget, the Leafs will just sneak into the playoffs.

Stephen can be contacted at:
stephengsomerville@yahoo.com



Frankly Speaking

By Frank Klees
MPP Newmarket-Aurora

You are a newly elected school board trustee.

A group of parents want to meet with you to discuss a controversial issue.

This is why you wanted to be a trustee - to help resolve issues and be a voice for parents and students and ensure that the more than \$1.25 billion school board budget is properly managed.

Before you can schedule the meeting, you're told that you can't meet in private with parents and that if there are to be any meetings, school board staff have to be present.

How would you react?

Not possible, you say.

After all, what does a school board trustee do, if not represent the people who elected them?

Good question, and it's precisely that question that I took up with the Minister of Education this past week.

My question to the Minister as recorded by Hansard:

"Trustees elected to the York Region District School Board have been told that it's inappropriate for them to meet in private with parents who want to discuss issues related to school board policy. Parents, and the trustees elected to represent them want to know whether this directive has come from the minister. If so, how can the minister so blatantly undermine the role of an elected trustee?"

The Minister's response had nothing to do with my question, so I tried again:

"These are parents from York Region who simply want to meet with their trustees to talk about public school board

issues.

"The Director of Education has, in fact, told trustees that they are not allowed to meet with parents in private to discuss these issues.

"They're being told that a staff member must attend every meeting that trustees have with parents.

"I would like to know...since when is it appropriate for trustees, duly elected, not to be allowed by the Director of Education to meet with parents in private?"

"Will the minister stand in her place and tell us whether she believes it is appropriate and, if so, will she send a directive to this Director and every other Director who would undermine the role of trustees in this province?"

The Minister's response:

"I very much appreciate the question. It is an important one.

"Certainly, trustees are accountable to the people who have elected them.

"They are not accountable to the school board administration when it comes to dealing with the people who elected them.

"I would say that trustees do have a responsibility to the people who elected them; that there is nothing in the Education Act that would say that a trustee should not meet with their constituents. That is very clear. Nothing has changed with this government.

"In fact, we believe that locally-elected boards are accountable to their communities and the best way to do that

Who's in charge?

is to meet with the people who elected them."

Now we were making progress.

The minister confirmed what I had told the trustee who brought this issue to my attention.

Not only CAN trustees meet with parents in private, but they have a RESPONSIBILITY to be responsive to the people who elected them to oversee the administration of education in their community.

Unelected staff in control

Good for this trustee for coming forward with his concerns. Hopefully, the exposure of this overt attempt to undermine the role of elected trustees has clarified who is accountable to whom.

And hopefully, it will embolden our trustees to assume their legislated authority to represent the parents who elected them and to hold the Director of Education and his administration accountable for their actions.

My observation has been that all too often, trustees have been expected to simply rubber stamp decisions made by the administration.

It's time that they took back control of the decision-making for which they were elected.

As always, I welcome your comments and advice concerning this or any other issue by contacting me through my website at www.frankklees.ca or by calling me at 905-750-0019.

Letters to the Editor

Governments should work for people, they say

To the editor,

re: "Mayor doesn't understand", they say (week of March 15)

We are sure we are not the only ones who believe governments are meant to work for the people not just decide how to spend our tax dollars and force feed us a corporate agenda or lobby group's desires.

Call us idealists, dreamers, revolutionists whatever, but we want change and we act (not just write) because we long for a time we've never experienced.

We have a nostalgic intrinsic longing for increased citizen validation and participation in all our community affairs and relationships.

We long for a time, where mayor and council actually reach out to the people, go into our neighbourhoods, onto our streets and engage in dialogue with the average 'Joe or Joette', asking what our concerns are, what we feel needs attention and solutions we may have.

In a country which touts

such amazing human rights and claims that the "individual is respected and the government accountable to the people", it is not right for any politician, any mayor or council to defer people to "staff" and certainly not to ignore them.

We want action from those elected not those hired.

How did it happen that mayor and councils have become a facade, an elected group of 'noddors' and 'signers' throughout Canada in most of our little towns, big cities?

We want to open participation, not close it down.

One can see when it began hanging on the walls in Town Hall, in the pictures of past mayors, the year mayoral chains came into place and the people lost their value.

Social activist Saul Alinsky asserts, "There can be no darker or more devastating tragedy than the death of man's faith in himself and in his power to direct his future".

Should our leaders' main

goal not be to ensure within the people the "idea of importance and worth of the individual?"

From our experiences to date since 2002, we are disillusioned with our system because it is unfair and allows for mistreatment.

The people, Mother Earth, the animals and children's future have been defenceless to severe Corporate Bullyism nationwide.

Projects forced onto opposing people at the whim of "We don't care what you say, we are doing it anyway." It has been another version of dictatorship.

We need a system which allows all members of our community to express their concerns and have these concerns validated.

We need a system which ensures our community receives all sides of a project before it goes to works.

We need to strive for a system whose goal is to achieve consensus on all issues of importance best achieved through a neighbourhood vote, then to

a community vote.

For example, Aurora, if we want to stimulate our local economy, create massive employment, encourage industry and individual business, we suggest a vote to determine if we want to endorse hemp and cannabis.

We suggest that all Aurora's remaining land be bought for farmland, creating greenhouses and growing hemp and cannabis.

We are entering a global food shortage whether we wish to face this grim reality or not. More than half our planet is one already.

Hemp can feed us, replace oil, make paint, houses, clothing and Henry Ford made a car out of hemp which re-formed after being hit with a sledge hammer.

Cannabis is a medicine, not a drug, and is no worse than alcohol domestic assaults statistics prove and many police will attest to this.

It becomes addictive on the streets when other chemicals are added to it, police will attest to this, too.

It can relieve many a person's pain and research

shows it can cure cancer.

Can you imagine, Aurora, we could be global leaders of innovation.

The underground profits in Canada of cannabis are \$22 billion and with this the word "budget" could be discarded forever because profits would be everywhere.

We seek moral communities rather mass societies. We seek to simplify and beautify our community rather than purely make things bigger and faster.

We seek to slow down our consuming development because if we don't act to do this now, Aurora will not have any green space in the future for her children.

To end, Aurora doesn't exist in a bubble and to date the people's will in our country has been denied.

We got much to think

about to create a better future. We hope this brings on a serious discussion for change.

P.S. The destruction of the construction in the McKenzie Marsh is worse than we thought. Why? Why? Why? Why was this trail so important?

We really want to know and would like to hear from councillors past and present why you supported this tragic demise of the animals' homes?

It is truly unreal what is happening in the McKenzie Marsh for a trail. It's a mess!

Looks to us like this land is up to be expropriated. Can we see the plans printed in our paper for this project?

Heidi G. A. Stoecklin
David Philp
Aurorans for World peace

Staff should be commended for building the boardwalk

To the editor,

Re: Boardwalk through McKenzie Marsh. Mayor doesn't understand, they say: Letter, The Auroran, March 15

I thought that this issue was long since resolved.

Folks, let's not get away from reality, the

area was and remains a swamp and is protected as a significant wetlands.

Boardwalks are an accepted worldwide means of accessing/bisecting wetlands and provide excellent opportunities to view wildlife.

As for the "destruction underway", winter is the best time to work and offers the least amount of

negative impact to the ecosystem.

Reptiles and amphibians are happily buried in the mud and migratory birds are not on the scene.

What you forget is that, in general, wildlife are extremely adaptable to short-term disruptions.

The question then becomes "can some humans adapt and accept

change?"

In my view, the boardwalk will provide great teaching and viewing opportunities for the community.

As for the so-called "footprint", last week I counted 10 pairs of Canada Geese and several mallards and many more birds could be heard in the treed areas.

The pond was 60 per cent ice covered at the time.

This week, the planking is being laid.

The whole project and staff should be commended for a superlative job.

And finally, please stop whining like spoiled children who don't get their own way.

Your views were heard and rejected.

Aurora needs this link with the Nokiidaa Trail.

When will they repair Trillium Drive, he asks

To the editor,

Caught your article about "street face lifts".

Where does one start?

I travel a lot down Tyler, there has been a sign "advertising" poor surface for almost or more than two years...when will it be repaired?

I am very fortunate to own three "olde" British sport cars...2 Austin Healey's and a Jag E-Type.

First of all, do you know how LOW to the ground these cars ride, plus the suspension is not the greatest, no shocks on the AH!

So, I am having to plot my way around town not only for those roads which are in dire need of resurfacing, but also those damn speed bumps.

I live on Trillium, have for 24 years, never seen road work done on it, plus the two roads to get to

Trillium, Golf Links and Kennedy have speed bumps!

Is it the Region's way of reducing a cars speed, by keeping the roads in such poor state?

Ian Allison
Aurora

P.C. Smith
Aurora

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Purple Day makes Epilepsy message very clear in York

To the editor,

Everyone at the EYR (Epilepsy York Region) office has been tremendously busy with Epilepsy March Awareness and Purple Day.

We have reached many people with our message and the municipalities in York Region have proclaimed March 26th as Purple Day in their municipalities.

Next week we will be sending you a summary of all our Purple Day activities.

Below is a poem that came across my desk written by Joshua Danoff in honor of Purple Day 2011 that I would like to share with you.

This poem was inspired by Lewis Carroll, the famous writer with epilepsy. "Sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast", from Carroll's book "Alice in Wonderland", was the basis of a writing contest and was won by 14-year-old Joshua Danoff for his poem "Six Impossible Things". I hope you enjoy it.

Six Impossible Things By JOSHUA DANOFF

I have sometimes believed in six impossible things before breakfast. Things like being equal, accepted, and not only accepted,

but welcomed. Things like a lack of social stigma and more education for society, because Epilepsy comes in many shapes and many sizes. Things like more research about Epilepsy and the brain because more research means more treatments. Things like a lack of stereotypes, just because I have Epilepsy doesn't mean I drop every time I have a seizure or can give you my Epilepsy. Things like support. Social stigmas and stereotypes turn a lot of people away. Things like a lack of discrimination. Epilepsy does not change my work ethic or ability to excel in whatever I decide to do. Six impossible things do not have to be impossible. Help from me and you means we can make it possible. Six impossible things might not be possible before breakfast or lunch or dinner. But six impossible things could be possible eventually.

Pat Ashby
Chairperson
Aurora

This retired parks man upset over truck colour

To the editor,

About 50 years ago, in the old Council Chamber on Yonge Street, my application was accepted to set up the first Parks Department for our town.

Being a dream position, I never slept that night wondering where to start!

Rising early the next morning, forgetting breakfast, I toured every park in town and set my agenda for the years to come. I wanted and needed to do more than just cut grass!

My theme...GREEN!
Green would be my total focus for trees and grass for the

next few years.

Fertilizer and tender loving care brought the colour to fruition.

In the 1960's, the town received a grant of \$27,000 for parks.

I submitted a plan for Fleury Park to council and received the go ahead to GREEN Fleury Park.

It is still the best and the most heavily used park in our Town.

It is with joy and many happy memories that this park is my view as I sit on my condo balcony.

Go GREEN was my trademark for the high standards in

your parks.

After going it alone for many years, I struck it lucky to hire Jim Tree from a local golf club.

Jim had the same visions as I, and would get upset that we could not go ahead with all the projects we dreamed of.

In those days at budget time a letter came from council giving us a paltry two per cent increase. This meant no new projects.

We carried forward, worked well together without too many arguments to give the residents of Aurora what I think is the best parks system for a town our size. The GREEN TEAM broke

up when I retired and it was only natural for Jim to take over from me.

He soon found that he wouldn't be alone as I continued to look over his shoulder and talk parks with him.

The purpose of this letter is someone at the Town Hall is in the process of getting rid of the GREEN trademark by turning our GREEN trucks to WHITE (say it isn't so!).

If you think that your Parks Department should be able to keep their trademark green trucks, e-mail your Mayor, at gdawe@e-aurora.ca.

Let him know that GREEN trucks = Parks Department.

You could also send the same letter to the editor of The Auroran and give him the same reasons for wanting to keep GREEN in the forefront.

He's at RWall9999@aol.com.

It would mean very much to Jim and I to see that our GREEN vision will not fade to white....

Norm Weller
Aurora

Protect the few mature trees left in Aurora, twosome says

An Open Letter to Aurora's mayor and members of council

Are we ready to consolidate our efforts to protect the few mature trees left in our Town?

We do have a unique opportunity now, before it's too late to take action and to preserve the trees in Aurora!

We strongly encourage you to bring to the table for discussion the property owner from Daniels LR Corporation and to come up to a mutual agreement to convert the area to a Community park in the Bayview-St. John's Sideroad area, which will benefit the entire community including the new residential site of Daniels.

Mr. Paul DeMelo, Legal representative of Daniels LR Corporation and Mr. Reno Augustino, Project Manager for the subject property development, need also to be brought back to the Town discussion for protecting of the trees.

We do not agree with the statement from the Kuntz Forestry Consulting Inc. that the trees are not of a significant value.

As citizens of Aurora we request that a re-evaluation of the trees on this property is completed by Kuntz Forestry Consulting Inc Company or another Certified Arborist Company working with the Town of Aurora.

We want to see a new, recent evaluation of the trees on this property based on their current market value and strongly believe that we as citizens of Aurora have the rights to further inquire about the value of these trees.

The Memorandum of Mr. Ramuro presents the summary of this case, however we want to see it expanded with an action plan for protecting the trees by rezoning the area accordingly.

We are requesting your immediate action for preserving the trees in the Bayview Avenue-St. John's Sideroad area.

Svetoslava and George
Topouzovi
Aurora



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If we wouldn't take it home why would we sell it to you?



Eight-year-old Aurora artist Angel Antonio-Waskul is pictured with one of his paintings which will soon go on display at the Aurora Cultural Centre. This painting will be joined by two more of Angel's works in an effort to raise funds for the Canadian Red Cross for victims of the recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan.
Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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Jagermeister

Town refutes the numbers of animals killed by OSPCA

The Town should look at alternative animal control providers and methods over the OSPCA when their contract with the group comes up for review, say animal welfare activists.

The comments were made about the suitability of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals at a recent general committee meeting where four concerned parties - including a former volunteer at the Newmarket shelter - came forward to express their concerns.

One of those appearing was Liz White, who spoke on behalf of the Animal Alliance of Canada.

Her primary concern, she said, was the "very high" level of euthanasia at the Newmarket shelter.

Of the 160 cats brought into the shelter in 2009, 43 per cent were euthanized for various reasons, she noted.

"Of all the reasons given, time and space was the second largest, so it wasn't that the cats were ill or injured or in any other way compromised, it was that they didn't have any time or space for these animals," she said.

The ability of the York Region branch of the OSPCA to handle wildlife situations was also called into question with Ms. White noting that while 39 per cent of the OSPCA's intake was comprised of wildlife but 65 to 85 per cent were euthanized.

"Only two were released back into the wild and only three were transferred to other facilities so it is a pretty grim picture," she said. "It doesn't have to be this way. If you look at the Town of Clarington, not dissimilar in size or geography, they run their own shelter. Of all the animals that come, only eight per cent are euthanized."

Continuing the discussion of wildlife and the shelter was Nathalie Karvonen, executive director of the Toronto Wildlife Centre which, she said, regularly gets calls from Aurora pertaining to wildlife issues. Wildlife issues need to be handled by people with proper training and experience that have the facilities and equipment to respond to issues that crop up, which are by nature very different from domestic animal situations, she said.

"You can have swans flash frozen into ice, coyotes with broken legs, falcons that are trapped in enormous warehouses,

beavers that fall into pits...or something as simple as a child disturbing a nest of baby rabbits and bringing it home to present it to the parents," she said. "All these situations need to be handled by someone with wildlife expertise."

"When this happens [they] need emergency care and they need it fast. Unfortunately this situation in Aurora right now is not a good one. You have contracted with the SPCA to provide wildlife services but they are not a wildlife rehabilitation facility, nor do they specialize in wildlife issues."

In her remarks, Ms. Karvonen encouraged the Town of Aurora to examine all alternatives available, including making animal rescue a Town-run service.

She questioned the Town's money going towards euthanizing wild animals that come into the shelter and wondered if that is what the residents of Aurora want.

"We would be thrilled if the OSPCA could provide those services because we and other rehabilitators are really, really busy but the OSPCA has not proven themselves of being able to deliver those services," she said.

Leanne Tucker, who also appeared before general committee, has experienced the Newmarket OSPCA first hand having been a volunteer from January 2002 to May 2010, until the ringworm outbreak caused her to look at other animal shelters around the world, she said.

Ms. Tucker had high praise for shelters in Australia, New Zealand, and in communities in the United States including Nevada, and even closer to home in Calgary, that have "reformed their local animal controls" and saving "90 per cent" of the companion animals taken in by implementing No Kill policies. Having these policies as part of Aurora's contract would be beneficial, she added.

"If you consider renewing your contract with the OSPCA you [should] also contractually obligate the OSPCA to implement the 11 lifesaving programs of the No Kill Equation [compassion, foster care, pet retention, low-cost spay/neutering, etc.]"

At the last council meeting, Techa Van Leeuwen, Aurora's Director of Building and Bylaw Services, presented new statistics regarding the local OSPCA, which refuted some of the

claims made by the delegation the previous week.

In the 2008 program, the OSPCA took in 22 dogs, including four pit bulls, 30 cats, 89 animals deemed "wildlife" and 11 categorized as "other".

Of the dogs, one was adopted, 18 were claimed by the owner, three (including two pit bulls)

were euthanized for temperament, and two were euthanized under quality of life (age, health, and space).

For cats, three were adopted, one was transferred to a rescue group, eight were claimed by the owner, 10 were DOA (dead on arrival, or within 24 hours of their arrival),

one was euthanized for temperament, and seven were housed.

The wildlife statistics, however, were not as promising.

Of the 89 animals that were brought in, 82 were euthanized under "quality" of life, six were DOA, and just one was returned to the wild.

According to Ms. Van Leeuwen, the Town's contract with the OSPCA lasts until the end of this year, but it will soon be up for review looking forward.

"We have committed to coming to council with a report on options by June before the summer break," she said.



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Aurora man writes book about deaths in Valcartier

In the summer of 1974, 18-year-old Gerry Fostaty, a five-year Cadet in the Canadian Forces, was invited to become an instructor at the Cadets' Training Centre at Quebec's CFB Valcartier.

Promoted to the rank of Platoon Sergeant, Mr. Fostaty was among the leaders of a group of cadets, mostly between the ages of 14 and 16, for training.

Mr. Fostaty said the work, and the training, was a lot of fun, but also very serious.

"It is training, not just a weekend camp for suburbanites," he said.

But one of their training courses was to forever alter the lives of those in this group.

"It is the moment in my life that everything changed," says Mr. Fostaty, now a resident of Aurora.

The group was taking part in an explosives training course where the cadets were shown dummies that are built to look like explosives in order to be able to identify the objects if they came across them in the field.

"In this box of training aids, these dummies, somehow a live grenade got mixed up in there," he said. "It was circulated among the cadets, a pin was pulled, and it exploded and killed six kids and sent 100 to emergency. There were 138 kids in that lecture that day.

"I was walking into the room at that time so at that moment my whole world changed. I, and about nine or 10 others had to get those boys outside to safety, into ambulances, and to the hospital, and we had to do it very quickly because we didn't

know what happened.

"We were sure at any moment that another explosion was going to take place."

Mr. Fostaty said the group was told to get back to "business as usual" right afterwards.

"We did, because we were commissioned to do what we were told to do by those in a position of authority," he said. "We went back as much as we could to normal. We were missing a few guys but three weeks later when we were sent home we certainly had no comfort, no counselling and not even a debrief on the incident. We were told to get on with our lives. When I came home I wrote everything down because I was afraid that if I didn't, I would forget.

"I didn't realize at the time that, of course, I would never forget and it would stay with me forever."

Mr. Fostaty left the military a year later. While he said the incident influenced his departure, he "drifted" between jobs between the ages of 18 and 19 before spending 20 years as an actor. He settled in Aurora to raise a family almost 25 years ago and eventually changed paths into a marketing career. But he rarely spoke about the 1974 incident...until receiving an e-mail out of the blue in 2008.

"I sat down at my computer one day and opened an e-mail from my old boss, my Company Sergeant Major," he says. "I had not communicated with him at all in 34 years and somehow he found me, e-mailed me, and he was checking to see if it was me."

The e-mail from his superior

set him on a journey to find out more about the incident and set his story to paper.

The result is "As You Were: The Tragedy at Valcartier", Mr. Fostaty's new book about the incident which will be launched April 6, at Ben McNally Books in Toronto.

"It was more than 30 years later when this all began when I got this e-mail," he said. "I finally met with him and said, 'You need to get help.' I said, 'No, this is 30 years later. This doesn't affect me anymore and it is all done.' He said, 'No, you're in crisis, you need help.'

"I didn't realize it at the time but I was and I had been suffering for years. I didn't realize the little things about me that I just attributed to being character flaws were symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). I very cavalierly thought PTSD is silly, not real, and I understand now that it is and very, very serious."

Mr. Fostaty said that he sought help and the writing process helped him compress everything down to a few hundred pages, so when he did go in for help everything was fresh in his mind. In the process, several people involved met at the base in 2009 for a memorial and just about everyone he spoke to has suffered from the same thing.

"There is more to it than just being involved in a car crash," he said. "You're watching your friends die in front of you and the injured are rescuing the injured. One of the reasons I wrote the book was, of course, to tell my family, to let them know what happened to me because

nobody was aware."

While he said his wife knew "a bit" about the incident, his parents never knew and those involved were told to tell no one.

"I wanted to let them know because it was very difficult to tell the story in one go," he said. "I thought as I wrote that it wasn't only for me, I really needed to do this for the other guys because they are also suffering.

The need to know this is normal, their feelings are normal in respect to what they have been through and help is certainly available for them if they need to and if they choose to.

"I thought too that it should also be for their families because we don't suffer PTSD alone. Our families also share our sleepless nights and our nightmares and our flashbacks

and our environmental triggers and our hyper-vigilance and our hyper-awareness. It is really debilitating. What families just think of that Dad's a flake when you walk into the room unannounced he hits the ceiling, it is because of that. I wanted to write it for them too."

Mr. Fostaty's book, "As You Were" will be launched at 6 p.m. The event is open to the public.



A first for Theatre Aurora, and in use for the opening of its next production "Noises Off" will be this specially designed and constructed rotating stage. Working on its construction are Steve Lallier and Tracey Woods. To watch the stage turn from front to back on 36 casters is worth the price of admission alone, says show producer Mary MacDonald Rival. "Noises Off", which opens April 1 and plays for nine performances, is supposed to be one of the funniest farces ever, however, the theme is slightly mature with strong language, so it's not recommended for children.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Youth fees may increase

Young Aurorans wanting to use the track at Club Aurora during prime hours will soon have to pay a fee if additional fees to a number of recreational programs are approved by council this week.

The addition of a fee for casual track users between the ages of 12 and 14 will see kids handing over \$2.75 per use or \$21.60 for 10 visits.

"We are introducing some new opportunities to increase our revenue projections for 2011," said Aurora Treasurer Dan Elliott in explaining the new fees, which include new fees for the use of meeting rooms in the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, a 25 cent hike in public skating, and the availability of personal training to non-members of Club Aurora at a cost of anywhere between \$64 and \$971. But it was the track fees for youth that caught the eye of some councillors.

"This may be something that council wants to look at in conjunction when we're talking about our youth centre or youth fees," said Councillor Wendy Gaertner. "I would really like to try and keep these kids active and I don't agree with charging the track fee, especially maybe in an off-hour, just after school or something. I would like to see that taken off."

The Town is having difficulty with track membership in that there is no fee during the off hours for youth, but they are finding youth also want to use the track during prime hours, said Al Downey, Aurora's Director of Leisure Services.

"If they want to use them during prime hours they need to pay for it," he said. "This is a fee that

is associated with the use during prime hours but we would certainly encourage them to use them during the non-prime hours as we have in the past."

A discussion of the Youth Needs Analysis next month will entail a new policy for youth fees particularly with access to Town facilities, he noted.

Councillor Evelyn Buck also wondered about the services for youth, particularly if any of the Town's offered services overlapped with those offered within high schools, as well as the availability of programs for younger Aurorans who may no longer be in school.

"We have done our best to extend an invitation to the youth of the community to come into Club Aurora and participate," said Mr. Downey. "I can't say that it is an overall booming success, but at least we are attempting to engage as many youth as we can into physical activity and trying to deal with childhood obesity issues.

"We may be duplicating to a

degree what is happening in high schools but we don't feel that we are competing with them."

Looking at the overall picture, however, Councillor Michael Thompson wondered if the new set of fees might have a negative impact on revenue, with the new fees resulting in decreasing use. Pricing these Town programs out of the market has always been a concern of the Leisure Services Department, said Mr. Downey.

"We feel that we are comparable to our neighbouring municipalities," he said. "We also feel there are also some pressures, particularly with some of the challenges we are facing in meeting our revenue projections that we need to at least address some of those areas in which we can and this is one of the areas we felt could be looked at."

The fees were passed at general committee last week and were up for final approval Tuesday.

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HOUSE LEAGUE

108 Timbits Grey 3 - Nicholas Pisapia 3G. **102 Timbits Gold 1** - Jake McMillan 1G. **104 Timbits Blue 3** - Macisaac Eveleigh 2G 1A, Jake Worthman 1G, Emmett Ross 1A, Lucinda Eveleigh 1A, Gavin Loria 1A. **106 Timbits Powder Blue 2** - Christian Troubitsin 1G, Michael More 1G, Lucas De Palma 1A. **103 Timbits White 1** - Matteo Rossi 1G, Blake Iezzi 1A, Marco Djordjevic 1A, Jack MacFarland, shutout. **107 Timbits Kelly Green 0**. **101 Timbits Red 6** - David Iacovetta 5G, Ayden Whilby 1G, Zoe Carson 2A, Mathew Lamanna 1A, Dylan Vasilevski 1A, Ethan Solilo 1A, John Stojcevski 1A, Bryan Cook 1A, Matthew Ryan 1A. **105 Timbits Black 1** - Ryan Weeks 1G, Jacob Smith 1A. **107 Timbits Kelly Green 3** - Adrian Baggetta 1G, Daniel Iwai 1G, Hunor Kristoff 1G. **106 Timbits Powder Blue 1** - Michael More 1G. **204 Caravan Kids Blue 5** - Logan Kidder 4G 1A, Liam Graham 1G. **205 Caravan Kids Black 2** - Matthew Cowl 1G, Cole Spragg 1G. **206 Caravan Kids Powder Blue 6** - Ian Hilgendorff 2G 1A, Ethan Edwards 1G, Corson Haywood 1G, Alexander Ko 1A, Matthew Pelan 1G, Griffin Charnley 1G. **205 Caravan Kids Black 1** - Jackson Galbraith 1G. **202 Caravan Kids Gold 6** - Ryan Fowler 3G, Thomas Raeburn 1G, Jonathan Avgousti 1G, Liam Vivian 1G, Quinn Spicer. **201 Caravan Kids Red 4** - Evan Winter 1G, Peter Simsir 1G 1A, Ethan Belisle 1G 2A, Luke Pignatelli 1G 1A. **205 Caravan Kids Black 7** - Jackson Galbraith 2G, Stefan Fazari 2G, Gianluca Rotondi 2A, Ethan Joiner 3G, Cole Spragg 1A. **204 Caravan Kids Blue 4** - Logan Kidder 2G, Mitchell Weatherall 1G 1A, Loukas Jeries 1A, Liam Graham 1G, Andrew Scott 1A. **407 H.J. Pfaff Audi Kelly Green 6**. **403 Optimist Club Of Aurora White 1**. **409 Pfaff VW Teal 8**. **410 HS Financial Orange 1**. **408 Crabby Joe's Grey 9**. **403 Optimist Club Of Aurora White 2**. **405 Novintro Black 9** - Wayne Freeman 1G 1A, Matthew Winters 3G, Alexander Mueller 1G 3A, Matthew Bolger 1G 1A, Nicholas Huxley 2G 1A, Andrew Pignatelli 1A, David Doroschenko 1G, Dan Rheeder 1A. **407 H.J. Pfaff Audi Kelly Green 5** - Nicholas Robinson 2G, Jack Viney 2G, Mathew Hastings 1G 1A, Sebastian Negalescu 2A. **402 Omar's Shoes Gold 6**. **410 HS Financial Orange 0**. **409 Pfaff VW Teal 5** - Riley Jackson 3G, Evan Bryan 1G, Liam Patterson 1G. **403 Optimist Club Of Aurora White 3** - Chris Sands 1G, Dylan Clark 1G 1A, Jack Hosmer 1G. **401 Chouinard Bros. Red 5** - Ben Pitre 3G, Dylan McFee 1G, Nicholas Vamvakaris 1G 1A, Colin Windle 1A. **406 Mastermind Toys Powder Blue 2** - Carter Wilmsmeyer 1G, Nicholias Sever 1G, Kyle Gillies 1A, Stetson Colicchio 1A. **404 Tilemaster Blue 9** - Aaron Preiano 2G, William Reid 2A, Dillon Varone 1G 1A, Ethan Cohen 1G 1A, Adam Wochenmarkt 2G, Claudio Basso 1G, Giuliano Iervasi 1A, John Li 1A, Benjamin Godber 2G. **408 Crabby Joe's Grey 4** - Callum Gorrell 3G, Ryan Ruuskanen 1G, Mateo Gisonni 1A, Wade Dane 1A. **603 Diamond Groundskeeping Services**

White 7 - J Camplin 3G, L Bulmer 2G, A Skelhorn 1G 1A, C Dyer 1G, R Callaghan 1A. **606 Aurora Chrysler Powder Blue 0**. **602 Wedi Corp.Com Waterproof Tile Solutions Gold 5**. **607 Envirocar Kelly Green 0**. **609 IOOF Aurora Lodge #148 7** - Santino Denuzzo 3G 1A, Evan Lambert 2G 1A, Nicklaus Reid 1G 2A, Joshua Fallavollita 1G, Michael Montesanti 1A, Jack Hughes 1A. **611 Gmarkets Inc. - Purple 4** - Alex Louie 1G 1A, Elias Pasani 1G, Sam Speranini 1G, Matthew Carney 1G, William Morin 1A. **601 Municipal Engineering Solutions Red 3** - Nicolas Pearce 3G, Christian Pearce 1A. **608 Crabby Joe's Grey 1** - Jack Dion 1G, Connor Tripp 1A. **604 Orr & Associates Insurance Brks Ltd. Blue 10**. **605 Lakeshore Valu Mart 4**. **803 Rotary Club Of Aurora White 3** - Chris Sanita 2G, Zac Landry 1G, David Gonder 1A, Stewart Reid 1A, Nick Scougall 1A. **804 Frontline Fire & Safety Blue 2** - Lucas Brutto 1G, Adam Ashraf 1G 1A, Jerryd Jensen 1A, Chris End 1A. **809 AHPA Teal 4** - Bradley Snoulten 3G 1A, Chris Grossi 1G 1A, Russell Johnson 1A. **801 Rogers Red 2** - Brett Bond 1G, Alex Harrison 1G, Bryn Burbank 1A, Randy Sutton 1A, Erick Bortolotti 1A. **810 Pizza Pizza Orange 4** - Robert Ruscica 2G, Scott Taylor 1G, Carson Elliott 1G, Joshua Lye 1A, Michael Liscio 1A, Michael Boorn 1A, Jesse Joynt 1A, Ryan Owroules 1A. **808 Crabby Joe's Grey 3** - Cody Child 2G, Nathan Dinatale 1G, Morgan Walker 1A, Grant Kavanaugh 1A, Tyler Futterer 1A. **805 Aurora Home Hardware Black 3** - Sam Mason, shutout, Harris Riopelle 1G, Thomas Mason 1G, Lucas Marek 1G 1A, Austin Waite 1A, Joseph Veneziano 1A, Yosif Kakush 1A. **802 Manhattan Trophies Gold 0**. **807 Danny & Scotties Boys Kelly Green 4** - Greg Rutherford 1G 1A, Joseph Hodgson 1G 1A, Matthew Hall 1G, Alex Negri 1G, Brendon McDonald 1A, Declan Johnston 1A, Ben Black 1A. **811 Caruso & Company Purple 2** - Victor Chadarov 1G, Riley O'Brien 1G. **812 Municipal Engineering Solutions Burgandy 5** - John Sherwood 2G 1A, Josh Bell 1G, Derek Capone 2G, Luc Martineau 1A, Nick Armour 1A, Ryan MacMillan 1A. **806 Laurion Law Office Power Blue 2** - Zac Kroll 1G, Mitchell Lamantia 1G, Chris Sutherland 1A, Christopher Ottman 1A. **902 Boston Gold 3** - Trevor Rice 1G, Connor Flynn 1G, William Allen 1G, Graham Joiner 1A. **910 Philly Orange 1** - Daniel LaFlamme 1G, Stefan Richardson 1A. **901 Graystones Restaurant Red 2** - Mathew Hart 2G, Mark Presacco 1A, Andrew Staples 1A, Ethan Cullen 1A. **906 Ruff-N-Redi Powder Blue 3** - Nick Theodoropolous 2G, Zachary Seto 1G, Josh Lawlor 1A, Chris Falfalios 1A, Alexander Seto 1A, Will Miller 1A. **908 Crabby Joe's Grey 2**. **904 St. Louis Blue 1**. **905 ATS Healthcare Black 4** - Peter Teti 1G, Austin Megit 1G, Vince Duggan 2G, Christopher Cariou 1A, Will Brogan 1A. **907 Wooder Food Safety Consulting Kelly Green 1** - Gabriel Bauset 1G, Franco Porano 1A. **903 Optimist Club of Aurora White 1** - Quinn McGowan 1G, Trevor Stephens 1A, Scott Cosentino 1A. **909 North York Plumbing & Heating Teal 1** - Justin Stevens 1G, Matthew Roach 1A, Tanner Thiessen 1A. **1007 CAA South Central Ontario Kelly Green 3**. **1005 Aurora Home Hardware Black 1**. **1008 McAlpine Ford Grey 3**. **1006 BMO Bank of Montreal Powder Blue 2**. **1005 Aurora Home Hardware Black 4**. **1009 Backyard Pool & Spa Teal 4**. **1004 Global Caffe Blue 4**. **1001 Pizzaville Aurora Red 3**. **1003 A.D.C. Aluminum White 4**. **1002 CW Coop's Aurora Gold 4**. **1004 Global Caffe Blue 3**. **1003 A.D.C. Aluminum White 3**. **1006 BMO Bank of Montreal Powder Blue 5**. **1001 Pizzaville Aurora Red 3**. **1009 Backyard Pool & Spa Teal 6**. **1007 CAA South Central Ontario Kelly Green 4**. **1005 Aurora Home Hardware Black 3**. **1002 CW Coop's Aurora Gold 2**.

REP LEAGUE

Tyke Select - Aurora 3 - Ryan Bryden 1G 1A, Jack Bray 1G, Jacob Hoffrogge 2A, Todd Cook 1G, Thomas Hollett 1A. **Stouffville 3**. **Novice A - East Gwillimbury 1**. **Aurora 1** - Jonathan Gagnon 1G. **Minor Atom AA - Newmarket 4**. **Aurora 1** - Ben Liotta 1G, Anthony Iacovetta 1A. **Minor Atom AA - Newmarket 3**. **Aurora 1** - Luke Jarvis 1G, Andrew Wolanski 1A. **Peewee AA - Aurora 5** - Patrick Servideo 3G, Tyler Williams 1G, Keegan Matthew 1G, Austin Kiraly 1A, Jared Brown 1A, James Wyndham West 1A. **Ajax 2**. **Peewee AA - Aurora 3**. **Ajax 1**. **Peewee AA - Aurora 3**. **Willowdale 2**. **Peewee AA - Newmarket 2**. **Aurora 1** - Cameron Morrison 1G, Patrick Servideo 1A, Jack Pecora 1A. **Peewee AA - Newmarket 2**. **Aurora 0**. **Peewee AA - Newmarket 5**. **Aurora 2** - Patrick Servideo 1G, Cameron Morrison 1G. **Peewee A - East Gwillimbury 4**. **Aurora 3** - Cameron Zinner 1G, Alistair Johnston 1G, Mathew Tyndall 1G, Michael DaCosta 1A, Shaun Broad 1A, Eric Shennan 1A, Evan Cherubini 1A. **Peewee A - Bradford 4**. **Aurora 2** - Jack Bryant 1G, Tristan Kuchar 1G, Colin Kostin 1A. **Peewee A - Aurora 2** - Bryan Manweiler 1G, Tristan Kuchar 1G, Eric Shennan 1A, Evan Cherubini 1A. **Bradford 1**. **Peewee A - Bradford 4**. **Aurora 0**. **Minor Bantam AE - Newmarket 6**. **Aurora 3**. **Minor Bantam AE - Newmarket 3**. **Aurora 2**. **Bantam AA - Aurora 3** - Lucas Pozzebon 2G, Quentin Campbell 1G, Konner McMillan 1A, Matt Iwai 1A, Spencer Green 2A, John MacDonald 1A, Jake McKee 1A. **Stoney Creek 1**. **Bantam AA - Aurora 4** - Lucas Pozzebon 1G, 1A, Konner McMillan 1G, John MacDonald 1G, Brett Thiessen 1G, Quentin Campbell 1A, Tait Snedden 1A, Austin Lane 1A. **Stoney Creek 1**. **Bantam AE - Aurora 1** - Kyle Nice 1G, Nathan Nealon 1A, Johnathan Read, shutout. **Caledon 0**. **Bantam AE - Aurora 3**. **Caledon 1**. **Minor Midget AA - Markham 8**. **Aurora 3**. **Minor Midget AA - Markham 3**. **Aurora 0**. **Minor Midget A - Welland 3**. **Aurora 1**. **Minor Midget A - Aurora 4**. **Welland 0**.



Aurora Minor Hockey Association

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING 2011/2012 REGISTRATION

On-Line Registration begins:
April 1, 2011

In-House Registration dates:
April 6, 13, 20, 27 and May 4, 11, 18, 25
AMHA Office at ACC1
7:00 – 9:00 pm

Please refer to our website www.auroraminorhockey.net for further information.

REGISTRATION fees for the 2011/2012 season are:

\$500.00	Players born 1997 through 2005*
\$535.00	Players born 1991 through 1996
\$ 50.00	Late fee effective June 1 – 30, 2011
\$100.00	Late fee effective July 1, 2011
\$ 50.00	Non-Resident Fee (if applicable)

*Tyke players born in 2004 and 2005 must submit a copy of a birth certificate. It is recommended that 2005 players have either taken skating lessons or completed one year of Opti Hockey.

A 10% discount applies to families with 3 or more players.

Late fees do not apply to new registrants.

Fees may be paid in 3 instalments of 1/3 each, dated April 15, 2011, June 15, 2011 and August 15, 2011.

Full refunds will be issued to anyone withdrawing prior to September 1, 2011.

Players MUST be registered PRIOR to any try-outs for AAA or any AMHA rep team. AMHA tryouts begin April 30, 2011.

PLEASE REGISTER EARLY!

Guaranteed spots are available ONLY to players registered on or before June 30, 2011. We will not add teams in September to accommodate late registrants.

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On Friday night, the Aurora Bantam AE team, shown here, won the OMHA final against the Caledon Hawks with a 2-0 victory. In addition, on Thursday night, the Bantam AA won their OMHA series against Stoney Creek after the series went right to the wire and Aurora won it by an 8-3 score. Both games were played at the Aurora Stronach Recreation Centre on Wellington Street East. It was standing room only for both games.

Monday night hockey results

Second Round of Playoffs

Copper Creek	3	Rec Sports	0
Tom & Jerrys	3	Priestly Demolition	3
Masterclean	6	Baldwins	4
FPL Aggregates	3	Highlands Chev	2

Aurora close to agreement with school over facility use

A final agreement between the Town of Aurora and the York Catholic District School Board to build and share an artificial turf field at St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School is expected to near fruition this week if council gives the go-ahead for Mayor Geoffrey Dawe sign off on it.

The recommendation was carried at last week's general committee meeting with councillors adding in the proviso that the final agreement come back to council for review before handing over final approval.

The ball was put in

motion by the previous council last September to agree in principle to the partnership for the field which, among other conditions, called for the Town to be able use the field for its own programs during non-school hours, and over the summer break.

"Since [September], staff have been working with representatives of the YCDSB in the preparation and development of a shared use and maintenance agreement for the usage and ongoing maintenance of an artificial turf field at St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School," said Al

Downey, Aurora's Director of Leisure Services in a report to Council.

Parameters in the agreement are for the Town to be able to access the field from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. on school days and from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. on non-school days.

The agreement is for the 20-year life of the turf (although Mr. Downey said the agreement shall continue if the turf lasts longer than anticipated), and will task staff with handling maintenance and hydro, leaving the board responsible for maintaining parking lot lights and walkways.

"The draft agreement is presently being reviewed by the respective solicitors for the Town and the YCDSB," he said in his report. "The construction of the turf field is presently being considered by council as part of the 2011 Capital Budget process."

During last Tuesday's general committee meeting, Mr. Downey added that staff believe they are "very close" to meeting all the requirements previously identified by council but added a full agreement would not be

coming back to council before Mayor Dawe and Town Clerk John Leach signed the agreement.

This caused some concern from councillors, including John Gallo who said he was concerned that after that evening councillors would not see it again until after the fact.

"We will not have an opportunity in the public to discuss this again," he said. "It would be in staff's hands and that was my concern."

Councillor Wendy Gaertner agreed, adding that this was "a precedent setting agreement".

Similar concerns were expressed by Councillor Michael Thompson who said the responsible thing to do was to "have a better look at this" before signing off on the final approval.

But Councillor Sandra Humfries said she wanted the agreement to come back for a different reason.

"I think this is a huge success story so it is an opportunity to bring it back to receive for information once it is complete to showcase it, the residents get to hear about it," she said.

Swimmers perform well at Ottawa championship

Ducks Swimming, an Aurora group, won six gold and four silver medals and placed 20th out of 75 of the top clubs in Ontario, at the Ontario age group championships in Ottawa recently.

The swimmers have climbed from 30th place last year and are quickly moving up the Provincial ladder.

More than 600 swimmers were in attendance which included eight swimmers from the Ducks: Noah Clarke, 11; Erica Savage, 12; Sam Kaczor, 12; Ted Pispidikis, 13; Evan Friend, 16; Paul Wong, 16; Eric Lane, 17; and Summer Mortimer, 17, plus Coaches Reg Chappell and Craig Mortimer.

Ms. Mortimer dominated her swims, setting five Para World Records with five gold

medals in the 50 free; 100 free; 100 Back; Individual Medley; and the 100 fly.

This makes 19 Para World Records for Summer as she sets her sights on the Para Olympic Games in London, England, in August, 2012.

Erica and Sam each picked up silver medals, Erica in the 50 free and Sam in the 100 back.

Coach Reg Chappell was pleased with the performance of the swimmers and especially the exciting finish of a number of races.

Kim came from behind in the 100 free with one of the gutsiest finishes he has seen to win the gold medal and Sam's 100 back finish with four swimmers in a dead heat and finishing second by one hundredth of a second.

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Budget increase now sits at 4.35 per cent

From page 1

is a fairly solid budget that is defensible," said Aurora Treasurer Dan Elliott at Monday's meeting. "It is saleable, but, again, I am not a politician and I have to take your direction on the budget."

Of the previous 5.93 per cent increase, 3.35 per cent was attributable to the increase in the Fire Services budget.

Following presentations by Mr. Elliott on where things stood, councillors each had an opportunity to voice their concerns on the budget, and few of them were satisfied with the 5.93 per cent increase.

"We never had a discussion about the [Library budget] and I'm definitely not interested in giving the library such a high increase," said Councillor Wendy Gaertner. "I think it comes close to 7.75 per

cent and we're trying to do our work to keep the tax increase down and I can't agree that the Library is not in that position as well."

While Councillor Paul Pirri said he was pleased that a number of issues he had with the budget were moved to the upcoming budget workshop in June, Councillor Sandra Humfries said "a good job has been done to reduce the budget thus far" and would welcome "another kick" at some of the high ticket items before them.

For Councillor Michael Thompson, it was a matter of looking at putting the 2011 budget in context with the projected 2012 increase.

"I am concerned that in 2012 the increase that was presented to us at the very beginning was 8.5 per cent and I still don't understand why it is 8.5 per cent in 2012," he said.

"I do need some additional context to help wrap my head around that before we look at gapping and deferring or analyzing because I don't want to make the situation worse."

But residents have not been kicking up a fuss about the projected tax hike, claimed Councillor John Abel, who said nobody seemed "too floored about a 5.9 or even a seven per cent increase."

"I haven't had people whipping me, saying, 'You guys haven't been doing your job,' and 'How dare you?' and things like that, so I think there is an understanding among residents that there is going to be an increase," he said.

Councillor John Gallo said he was looking for a budget with a lot of fat this year, but what was presented was pretty lean.

He added that he

shared concerns expressed by Councillor Thompson about Aurora being near the top of the tax hike list compared to other York municipalities, but noted that areas such as fire are "very specific contributions" to that number.

On the other hand, Councillor Chris Ballard said he was not that concerned with where Aurora sat on such a list "provided our increase is defensible".

"No one likes to be at the top, but if it is defensible and necessary that is where we need to be," he said, pointing out he had concerns about the gapping and the cash to capital.

For Councillor Evelyn Buck, one of her commitments is bring a museum back to Aurora.

Noting that the Aurora Historical Society has asked for additional funds

for a curator, she said that she was intent on that being met.

That being said, she said putting off some major projects to the workshop was the right thing to do.

"We did the right thing tonight putting these major projects to a workshop to study and discuss," she said. "I believe that if we had the figure of what was spent on legal costs last year we would have a better understanding of how much should not have been spent last year."

Mayor Geoffrey Dawe, who spoke last, concurred that it would be a good idea to look at the impact of gapping the fire services, questioned the hiring of a new bylaw enforcement officer, but he also agreed with Councillor Abel.

"I don't think anyone here is keen on raising taxes a whole bunch but I will agree with Councillor Abel that I haven't had a lot of people beating me up over a projected budget increase," said Mayor

Dawe. "I think it is probably reasonable to task staff to go back and look [at where departments can do a little trimming]."

Following Monday's meeting which saw more than 1.5 per cent shaved off the budget, Councillor Buck told The Auroran that the only acceptable tax increase would be a zero tax increase.

But a few more things needed to be looked at when council continued the budget meeting this week, said Councillor Ballard.

"I want to look at new bodies and make sure we absolutely need the staff that staff tell us we need and I need to look at some budgets that are out there," he said. "I am a little concerned about the size of the library budget and I think if the Town has managed to reduce its budget so far down to 4.35, the Library maybe could look at their budget and try to match or come in at what the Town has managed to reduce its budget by."

Bloomington sidewalks, bike paths, will be built

Plans for sidewalks and bike paths along Bloomington Road between Yonge Street and Bathurst will continue into phase two this year after councillors opted to keep the project in the 2011 budget rather than deferring it to a budget workshop on big ticket items planned for later this spring.

Councillors made their decision at last Monday's budget meeting, whether they looked at holding off on a number of projects for further input and discussion.

The project has been on the books for at least four years, according to Ilmar Simanovskis, Aurora's Director of Infrastructure.

"The Region modified their design last year based [on the last council's decision to proceed with the project from Bathurst to Yonge] and now are ready to proceed with tendering," said Mr. Simanovskis.

"Essentially at this stage of the game, the Region is anticipating that based on last year's recommendation to proceed with that design direction that they will be tendering it."

Mr. Simanovskis added that this is a project funded by development charges and will have minimal impact on the Town's tax levy.

"Last year we authorized the design of this section only, to go ahead with York Region on the anticipation that it be constructed this year, so this is the budget for that construction," said Aurora Treasurer Dan Elliott. "The design has already been done. It is essentially a phased two-part project, designed last year and built this year."

When the first part of the project came up for consideration by the previous council, it was approved as part of the York Region Pedestrian Cycling Master Plan (PCMP) which

was formally adopted in April, 2008.

One of the recommendations in the plan designated Bloomington Road "an important cycling link."

"This section of Bloomington Road from Bathurst Street to Yonge Street is recommended to include illumination, a bike path and sidewalks primarily due to the number of schools located in this area and the expected high volume of pedestrian traffic," said Mr. Simanovskis in a report.

The Town had the option of giving the thumbs-up to an on-road bike path, the tab for which would be picked up by the Region.

Town Staff, however, concluded that an off-road bikeway was the more "family friendly" option that will "promote more local and leisure use of this route."

The previous council underscored the safety element of

the project, with some noting that on-road bikeways were generally too narrow to give the average cyclist a feeling of safety.

"[On-road paths] are so narrow I can't imagine any cyclist can feel safe," said Councillor Evelyn Buck. "As far as talking about family bicycling, you would never accommodate more than one cyclist. If we're going to be providing cycle paths I think there should be sufficient width and separation that gives the cyclist complete security, and the car drivers also."

At the end of the previous council's discussion, Councillor Wendy Gaertner was persuaded to vote in favour of the plan.

Speaking specifically to the off-road path, separate from the connected sidewalk construction and area illumination, she said, "If we're looking at safety, I guess \$215,000 is a very small price for our taxpayers to pay."

Wells St. School now up for sale

From page 1

Wells Street School to the Town at "a fair market value" in a letter dated the same day.

The original deadline to express an interest in purchasing the property was initially set for December 15, but considering the new council would have only been on the job for little more than a week, the deadline was extended at outgoing council's request until March.

After the deadline, it reverts to the school board to dispose of, said Aurora CAO Neil Garbe at the time.

"The Town respects the Board's process and its decision to put the site on the open market, while noting it doesn't

change the fact the Town still has right of first refusal," said Jason Ballantyne, Aurora's Manager of Corporate Communications in a statement to The Auroran Friday.

When asked what has attributed to the delay in not being able to meet the March deadline in sending an independent appraiser and/or inspector into the site, Mr. Ballantyne said the Town "was waiting for the Board's reports on the building before proceeding with an inspection/appraisal."

"The Town just received those reports last Friday and is in the process of reviewing them."

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Aurora group invited to attend reburial

An invitation to attend the reburial ceremony of an unknown First World War Canadian soldier was a once-in-a life-time opportunity, and trip highlight, for a group of 20 Aurora St. Andrew's College cadet students travelling on an annual tour of war battlefields in France and Belgium during March Break.

The unexpected honour occurred on the last day of the 11-day trip when a Canadian Forces contingent in France to conduct the high-profile service witnessed the boys' participation at the nightly Menin Gate remembrance service in the town of Ypres, site of a long period of fighting during the First World War.

When the St. Andrew's contingent inquired about attending the service, they were invited to participate with dignitaries from the Canadian Army, Navy and Air Force, as well as the Canadian Embassy at a recent military ceremony at the Pozieres British Military Cemetery.

The cadets and staff fol-

lowed the casket into the cemetery, stood front and centre during the service, and laid a wreath to honour the soldier from the Loyal Edmonton Regiment who was reburied with full military honours after his remains were discovered in 2009 in the Somme region where he had died nearly 100 years earlier.

The mayor of Pozieres was in attendance at the closed ceremony and thanked the boys for their commitment to remembering the fallen.

It was a surreal finish to an extraordinary trip for the Aurora group that started with a trip to Normandy's Juno Beach, where Canadians landed on D-Day, and went on to include site tours of battle-scarred fields in Passchendaele, Ypres and Beaumont Hamel, visits to monuments to honour the fallen, and tours of military cemeteries that are the final resting place for thousands of Canadian, allied, and German soldiers lost in both World Wars.

For Grade 10 student Graeme Allison, it was an



Grade 10 student Graeme Allison holds a sketch of his great-great uncle, W. E. Neil, below his name on the Vimy Memorial monument in France. Graeme said the names are carved in alphabetical order so he was easily able to locate his relative's name among 11,285 listed names.

emotional trip that became even more so when he was able to locate the name of his great great uncle, William Ernst Neil, engraved on the Vimy Memorial monument.

The soldier from Exeter, Ontario, was 23 years old when he lost his life during battle in 1918.

His name is carved along with 11,285 other Canadian soldiers who

were killed in France and whose final resting place was unknown.

"It was very moving to realize my relative was among all those people who gave up their lives, their futures, so we could have a future," says Allison, who had only found out about his uncle's existence a few days before the trip when his mother, Donna, gave him a

sketched drawing of him she'd obtained from her mother, and a copy of his actual enlistment papers she'd found online.

Accompanying the boys on SAC's ninth annual battlefield tour were Major Brian McCue, Commanding Officer of the School's Cadet Corps, Captain Vic Goldman, a retired school teacher, 48th Highlander and expert on World War 1 history, and Jim McGillivray, Director of St. Andrew's College Piping Program.

Mr. McGillivray, who is a world-class piper, lived out a dream by playing the lament at the Menin Gate service, while the boys stood as the Honour Guard in front of several hundred spectators.

The St. Andrew's group had been part of this ceremony in past trips, but

never with such distinction. "The whole tour was an eye-opener for all involved regarding the horrific history of two world wars," said Mr. McGillivray. "But to also be able to participate at the famous Menin Gate service, which has taken place every evening since November 11, 1919, and to participate in the funeral of a soldier of the Great War were moving and irreplaceable experiences for our students. Our boys are only a couple of years younger than many of the soldiers who lost their lives in that war."

Among other activities during the trip, the St. Andrew's students found graves of some of the 113 former St. Andrew's students who died in the First World War, paying tribute by leaving flags, poppies and cards of tribute.



Brian was discharged on Monday, feeling well, except lacking energy and interest in most things. He will probably wait until Monday when he returns to the hospital to commence rehabilitation exercises.

He misses his visits to Tim Hortons, but he hopes that with each new day, his energy level will get back to normal so he can commence writing his weekly column.

Stella, his wife, is providing him strong support which will enable him to get back on his feet sooner. We all wish Brian a speedy recovery from all his friends.

If you are looking for another new activity or a new interest, try Pickle Ball played every Tuesday and Friday from 1.30 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Seniors' Centre in the West-McKenzie hall.

Pickle ball is a new sport in Ontario and although men and woman of all ages can play, it is most suited for seniors.

The sport is played on a preferred indoor court and is a cross between table tennis and tennis.

If you are interested come and watch at the days and time mentioned at the Aurora Seniors' Centre.

Nominations for the 2011 ASA Board of Directors - We remind you again that the nomination process will close Thursday, April 21.

Nomination forms are available at Reception desk at the Seniors' Centre.

Taking part in the nomi-

nation process allows you to help determine your Board of Directors.

For further details including voting dates, take a copy of the March monthly newsletter at our Reception desk.

All Nominators and Nominees must be active ASA members.

The ASA Board Directors met Monday, March 21st, at 1 p.m. at the Seniors' Centre.

The minutes and financial statements of the March 21st meeting are posted on our bulletin board. Our Annual General Meeting has been set for Monday, June 6th from 4 p.m. at the Seniors' Centre, followed by a barbeque. A nominal fee will apply.

We celebrate Volunteer week from Monday April 18 to Thursday April 21st. During this week in honour of all our valuable Senior Centre Volunteers, free coffee will be made available.

Also the Town of Aurora Parks & Recreation department in coordination with our staff, Karie and Michelle, is planning a 'Volunteer Appreciation Evening Experience' Wednesday April 20th, at 7 p.m. If you are an active Volunteer member here at our seniors' centre sign up at the reception desk, beginning April 1st.

Note the Seniors' Centre will be closed Friday, April 22nd (Good Friday) and will reopen on Monday, April 25th.

On Saturday, April 30th,

Pickle Ball

By CHARLES SEQUEIRA

at the mayor's Anti-Litter Day clean up takes place from 9 a.m to noon.

A barbecue will follow between noon and 2 p.m. at the Town Park.

Anyone wishing to participate is asked to contact Info Aurora at 905-727-8214 or infoaurora@aurora.ca

The 2011 York Region Senior 55+ Summer games will take place at different locations from May 3rd to June 15th.

Application forms are now available at the Centre.

Registration deadline is April 22nd.

On behalf of the Seniors' Centre, we attended last Wednesday, the 9th annual Community Tribute Dinner Honouring Excellence in Community Service, this year honouring former York Region Police Chief (Retired) Armand La Barge, O.O.M., for his long time community volunteerism, who continues to offer his time to a wide range of charitable and community causes.

Thank you, Armand La Barge, for giving so generously of your time and skills.

Aurora Seniors duplicate bridge results

Monday, March 14 - North-South: Medhat Fawzy and Izhar Haque; Jean Bongard and Gayle Connor; Lucille Sequeira and Dave Legallais, East-West: Priscilla Hull and Inger Kamel; Ev Dickie and Audrey Robertson; Melody Irving and Jeannine Mackie.

Monday, March 21 - North-South: Frank Lablans and Dennis McFadden; Rose White and Gloria Smith; Barbara Wittmer and Anne White. East-West: Judy Salmon and Greta Ogden; Ev Dickie and Audrey Robertson; Paula Stafford and Mitzi Brown.

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