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THE AURORAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

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FREE

Week of May 3, 2011

Brown retains seat in Federal Election

As The Auroran went to press on Monday night, a majority government for Stephen Harper's Conservative government was a definite possibility, but it was a far clearer picture closer to home – Newmarket-Aurora has once again placed their confidence in Conservative Lois Brown.

When The Auroran spoke to Ms. Brown from her campaign celebration, it was difficult to hear her over the jubilation of her supporters, but the immediate feelings of Ms. Brown were clear.

"Outstanding! Outstanding!" she said. "What a great night!"

At press time, Ms. Brown was leading in the polls with 7,498 votes with 70 polls reported.

Liberal candidate Kyle Peterson was in second place with 3,035, followed by the NDP's Cassandra Bidarian with 2,039, and the Green Party's Vanessa Long with 581.

"I want to say thank you to the people of Newmarket-Aurora who have once again entrusted me to be their voice in Ottawa," she said, noting that she is looking forward to getting back to work.

Auroran is sold

The Auroran, an independent newspaper for almost 11 years, has been obtained by London Publishing Corp.

The final deal was signed Friday, but negotiations have been going on for several months.

Previous owner of The Auroran, Ron Wallace, was clearly pleased with the deal but would not disclose terms of the agree-

Please see page 15

"We're going to re-present the budget that we put in place on March 22 and I believe there is going to be a lot of work to do once we get back to Ottawa."

One issue that resonated with voters this time around was the economy, she said.

"[Voters] are concerned that we are still in a fragile recovery and we know that we need a

strong, stable hand on the wheel," she said.

But Monday night her primary focus was getting to thank her campaign team.

"They have been an out-

standing team through this whole campaign. I can't say thank you enough to this great group of people who have come in day by day to get this job done."



Bethaney Cooper and her daughter Grayce joined several other volunteers and residents in the mayor's annual clean-up in Aurora Saturday. Here, they clean the area in the district of River Ridge Drive and Bayview Avenue.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Farmers' Market opens Saturday

Children and their parents will be invited to "take ownership" of the upcoming season of the Aurora Farmers' Market and Artisan Fair, which kicks off this Saturday at 8 a.m. at Aurora Town Park, according to organizer Anna Kroeplin.

Ms. Kroeplin made her comments at last Tuesday's council meeting, where it was also announced Councillor Sandra Humfries had taken the reins of council liaison for the Farmers' Market, a position that was vacated by former councillor Stephen Granger.

"We're really excited this

year because we're going to be holding a logo contest that will be open to the public," said Ms. Kroeplin. "I have already contacted the schools, we will be sending flyers out into the schools to really encourage the kids and their parents to get involved and get ownership of this Farmer's Market as well."

The Aurora Farmers' Market and Artisan Fair will run Saturdays through October 29 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., and showcase the produce and products of local farmers, bakers, and craftsman, as well as fresh snacks and preserves.

Aurora's budget doesn't impress Buck

Although the ink is barely dry on the Town's final 2011 budget, a budget that will see an increase to the Town's tax rate of 3.79 per cent, Town Staff have already begun to look at how to lower the hit on 2012, which is forecasted to be upwards of seven per cent.

After presenting the final budget to Council, Aurora Treasurer Dan Elliott said it is important to look ahead.

"Next year, we have just over seven per cent and we're already looking at ways of trying to mitigate that for you," he told council-

ors. "Then it drops off to 3.6 per cent [in 2013] and 2.19 [in 2014]. With that big spike, there are different ways of dealing with it, looking inside, and perhaps deferring some items or perhaps reserve draws are appropriate for those."

"We'll be taking a look at all of those items in the coming year."

But what was before Councillor Evelyn Buck this year left her "disappointed" with her fellow councillors.

"I know why I'm here," she said. "I have been elected so many

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COMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4

New Bereavement Group "Finding your way" after the death of a spouse/life partner runs seven weeks after today at Hospice King-Aurora. For additional information and to register contact Karen Simmonds at 905-773-0155 extension 26 or at k.simmonds@hospicekingaurora.ca

Mother's Day Lunch and fashion show at the Aurora Seniors' Centre today. Doors open at 11.45 a.m. Cost is \$7 for members and \$8 for non-members. Lunch will be served at noon with the fashion show starting at 1 p.m. Tickets are available at the Seniors' Centre.

THURSDAY, MAY 5

Aurora Chamber of Commerce Business After Five meeting takes place today at Cupid and Psyche Jewellery and Accessories, 2 Orchard Heights Blvd., Unit 3, Aurora, from 5.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. Cost is complimentary to Chamber members.

MAY 5-7

The Pine Tree Potters' Spring Pottery Sale will be held on the above days at the Aurora Cultural Centre, 22 Church Street, formerly Church Street School. May 5 and May 6 the sale will begin at 10 a.m. and continue to 9 p.m. and on May 7 it will open at 10 a.m. and close at 5 p.m. There is free admission and a door prize. Call 905-727-1278 for further information or visit <http://www.pinetreepotters.ca>

FRIDAY, MAY 6

Jesus Christ Superstar auditions will be held at Trinity Anglican Church from 5 to 7 this evening with Sheryl Thomas of Marquee Theatrical Productions and John Clements (reserve pianist for the London production). The lead parts have been filled, but 25 roles are still required. Bring an instrumental CD if needed. Performances will take place at the end of October. To book your 10-minute audition contact Sheryl Thomas at sheryl@marqueeproductions.ca.

Tonight, there is a dance at the Aurora Seniors' Centre, 90 John West Way. At 7.30 p.m. there will be a Line Dancing practice and at 8 p.m. the regular dance starts. If you like to Rock and Roll, Tango, Waltz, Quick Step Cha-Cha, or Line Dance why not join in. At 9.30 p.m. sandwiches, sweets, tea and coffee are served. Members pay \$4.50 admission while non-members pay \$5. Singles are always welcome. For more information call the Seniors Centre at 905-726-4767.

SATURDAY, MAY 7

Wycliffe Gardens will hold a community garage sale from 8 a.m. to noon this morning. The Board of Directors' have authorized the community to hold a garage sale this year, held on each participant's individual driveway. The gates will be open from 7.45 a.m. for public access. Each resident, should they decide to participate, will be responsible for their own items. Wycliffe Gardens is an adult community of manor homes situated on the Oak Ridges Moraine in Aurora. The community is situated on the south side of the Vandorf Sideroad between Bayview and Yonge Streets, adjacent to the Timberlane Athletic Club. Access is via gate control onto Britton Trail.

MAY 7-8

Aurora's annual Art Show and Sale takes place at the Aurora Town Hall this weekend. For all art enthusiasts this is an event that

features more than 200 pieces of artwork. On Saturday, the show runs from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sunday it is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For further information, call 905-726-4762 or send an e-mail to sware@e-aurora.ca.

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, there are still a few available, 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.

The Aurora Historical Society is looking for volunteers to join their Hillary House Outdoor Spring Clean Up, today from 9.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. This is a chance to enjoy the outdoors while working on the grounds of a 150-year-old home and is an opportunity for students to complete community hours. A barbecue lunch will be provided. For more information or to register contact Sandy at 905-841-4035 or ssbundy@sympatico.ca.

Children's Trunk show, 9.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Kids and Company, 236 Wellington Street East. Admission is \$5 at the door, a portion of which goes to The Haddan Ebby Foundation. Grandmas get in free.

MONDAY, MAY 16

The 16th Annual Big Brothers Big Sisters charity golf tournament will be held this year at Station Creek Golf Club on Woodbine Avenue in Gormley. The \$200 per golfer fee includes a four-person scramble format, lunch, golf, cart, dinner and prizes. For further information contact Rhonda at 905-726-2149, extension 316.

TUESDAY, MAY 17

At 7.30 p.m. the Evergreen Choir, under the direction of Richard Heinze, 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.

Hospice King-Aurora presents Dr. Alan Wolfelt, "The Wilderness of Grief: Finding Your Way". this evening from 7 to 9 p.m. at

the Country Day School. For additional information and to register call 905-773-0155 or <http://www.hospicekingaurora.ca>.

FRIDAY, MAY 20

Tonight, there is a dance at the Aurora Seniors' Centre, 90 John West Way. At 7.30 p.m. there will be a Line Dancing practice and at 8 p.m. the regular dance starts. If you like to Rock and Roll, Tango, Waltz, Quick Step Cha-Cha, or Line Dance why not join in. At 9.30 p.m. sandwiches, sweets, tea and coffee are served. Members pay \$4.50 admission while non-members pay \$5. Singles are always welcome. For more information call the Seniors' Centre at 905-726-4767.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25

The Aurora Cultural Centre and the Aurora Historical Society present the second of two heritage lectures with local historian John McIntyre. Tonight's feature is "Aurora's Heritage of Artifacts and Documents: Treasures from the Aurora Historical Society's Collections." The lecture begins at 7 p.m. at the Aurora Cultural Centre. Complimentary admission and refreshments, no registration is required. Wheelchair accessible at north entrance. For additional information call 905-713-1818 or info@auroraculturalcentre.ca.

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.

SATURDAY, JUNE 4

Wesley United Church, at the corner of Woodbine and Aurora Sideroad is participating in Doors Open Whitchurch-Stouffville today from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tours of this historical 130-year-old Gothic church sanctuary will be conducted by three pioneer members of the church. Artifacts will be on display. For those interested in visiting the old cemetery behind the church which dates back to the mid-1800s, a tour will also be available. Light refreshments will be served.

SUNDAY, JUNE 5

Annual Aurora Street Festival begins at 11 a.m. and runs to 5 p.m. on Yonge Street from Wellington St. to Murray Drive.

MONDAY, JUNE 6

The Aurora Cultural Centre, 22 Church Street, presents "We'll Meet Again: Songs of the 1930s and 40s Community Sing-Along". Join the Silver Stars Drama Club in singing old favourites including The White Cliffs of Dover, Roll Out the Barrel, As Time Goes By - and more. Complimentary admission and refreshments. Event begins at 2 p.m. No registration is required. Wheelchair accessible at north entrance. For more information call 905-713-1818 or info@auroraculturalcentre.ca.

SATURDAY, JUNE 18

Aurora Heights Public School will hold an open house today, to celebrate the school's 50th birthday. Included in the event, which starts at 11 a.m. and continues until 2 p.m. will be a barbecue, a ceremony, historic displays, activities for younger kids and special raffles.

Jim Edwards family reunion concert, featuring seven top local singers. tonight at 7 p.m. at Cornerstone Church, 390 Industrial Parkway South. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children. For tickets, call Jim at 905-713-1665.

SUNDAY, JUNE 26

The annual Aurora Garden & Horticultural Society invites you to attend its Aurora Garden Tour today. Eight gardens are available for touring where the owners and creators will be present to chat with you. The tour is from noon to 4.30 p.m., rain or shine. Refreshments will be available. Tickets are \$10 and are available in Aurora at Art of the Matter, 2 Orchard Heights Boulevard; Caruso & Co., 15210 Yonge Street; Flowers by Terry, 14799 Yonge Street; Aurora Used Books, 95 Edward Street and at our booth at the Aurora Farmers' Market June 11th, 18th, and 25th. For more information call Madge at 905-727-5926 or visit <http://www.gardenontario.org/site.php/aurora/news/details/6118>.

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Once again this year, the Big Bike for Heart and Stroke commenced its trip down Yonge Street from the St. Andrews Shopping Centre. Above, this group of cyclers is from St. Andrew's College and Foodland.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Aurora will release \$5,000 to Festival

Councillors gave the go-ahead last Tuesday to release the \$5,000 in sponsorship money to the Aurora Festival of the Arts, overseers of the 2011 Aurora Jazz Festival, despite claims that the organizing group had been "adversarial" and had "shown nothing but contempt" for the Town in the sponsorship negotiations.

When the matter came up for discussion last week, Councillor Evelyn Buck underscored the course of events that eventually led to Aurora CAO Neil Garbe to recommend the release of the funds.

She reminded council that the Town of Aurora's logo had not appeared in previously printed promotional material related to the 2011 Jazz Festival, with the claim that the AFA was not sure they would actually get the municipal money.

"But they had, in fact, sent a media release to the Rotary Club referring to the good news that they had received the \$25,000 Trillium Grant and sponsorship from the Town of Aurora," said Councillor Buck.

"They used the sponsorship from the Town of Aurora to obtain the Trillium Grant, which I think Councillor Ballard argued was why we should sponsor them. They were making a pretty good assumption that they were going to get the money and still they didn't include the Town's name and logo in their media promotion."

When it came down to whether the Town should release the funds or not, Councillor Buck said she would only support the fund-

ing with the provision that the Jazz Festival scrap their admission fee and plans for a fence around Town Park.

This proposed amendment was defeated when it was pointed out fencing was required for events where alcohol was sold and served - in this case, a beer garden - but there was mixed feeling regarding admission fees.

"I think if you take away admission to this event, you are dooming the event to failure and it will not take place," said Councillor Chris Ballard, who has been a vocal proponent of the Aurora Festival of the Arts since they made their initial 2011 funding request to council.

"Councillors who vote for that should do so knowing that they are putting the kibosh on the Jazz Festival."

Although Councillor Michael Thompson said he would like to see the Jazz Festival go towards being a free admission event, and one without a fence, he indicated it was not the right time to go forward with that.

"I think it takes time for a festival to grow and get into that position," he said. "There certainly have been lots of comments and concerns from residents that they would like to see addressed, the fence and the location are paramount and I would like to see us work with the organization to address some of them down the road. I think at this late stage it is not fair to the organization to change the rules."

But Councillor Buck claimed the organizers had

shown "nothing but contempt" for the Town, while Councillor Paul Pirri jumped in and said he would not be in support of the motion because he thought throughout the negotiations the Town's dealings with the Aurora Festival of the arts had been "extremely adversarial".

"I would want to do business with somebody who wants to do business with us and I truly think that if someone has been wary from the beginning of doing business with us, they don't trust us, and I have a hard time trusting someone who doesn't trust me from the beginning," he said.

While Councillor Ballard admitted things had "gone off the rails", at least part of the blame should be shouldered by council, he said.

"I suspect that has as much to do with repeated attacks on the organizers at each of our council meetings that have spooked them into thinking perhaps they are not going to get funding, and perhaps it has led them to not wanting to spend thousands of dollars printing materials with our logos that they in fact might not be able to use," he said. "There has been miscommunication."

Golf course approved

The Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) has found in favour of Lebovic Enterprises and the Westhill Redevelopment Company's long-standing plans for a golf course and residential development in south Aurora over the Municipality.

It is the latest development in the saga surrounding the proposed Westhill Development, which started in 1988.

It is slated to be completed in the south end of Aurora near Leslie Street and Bloomington Road, consisting of an 18-hole championship golf course, surrounded by homes and condominium development.

The Development was in the awkward position of finding support from the Region of York, but facing vocal opposition from the Town of Aurora.

Neighbouring residents, landowners, stakeholders, and environmentalists also joined in the chorus opposing the plan and they raised a number of issue pertaining to the site, including: the effect the golf course and housing development would have to the local water table and surrounding quality of drinking water; whether environmental assessment requirements, as well as those required by provincial policies had been met; density issues; and the accommodation of a trails system in the development.

"The final matter before me, and dealt with as the final issue is whether to allow appeals from two decisions made by the Committee of Adjustment on February 12, 2009 which: first, denied an application to permit the conversion from estate residential to golf course use for a triangular piece of land associated with the Bovair Trail subdivision; and second, denied an application to permit a new single family dwelling on an existing lot within the Bovair Trail subdivision," said the OMB's Jan Seaborn in her decision.

In her decision, Ms. Seaborn concluded there was ample evidence provided by Westhill to indicate the development would not have an adverse affect on "the Regional water supply, the supply to the Town or on individual wells adjacent to the development."

"The amount of water that is required to service the develop-

ment is not significant when compared to the Regional water taking and can be sustained with no adverse impact on quality or quantity either at the provincial, regional, or local level," she said.

Irrigation on the golf course, she noted, would rely on collected runoff from the property and treated waste water from on site facilities.

The developers also conformed to Environmental Assessment procedure, she said, as well as with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP).

"In considering whether overall planning conformity is achieved, I find that the applications before me are consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, have regard to matters of provincial interest and conform to the relevant municipal official plan policies," said Ms. Seaborn in her decision.

"Most importantly, they conform to the requirements of the ORMCP, the requirements of which form part of the Town's

[Official Plan]."

At the end of the day the OMB found in favour of the developers.

"Based on all the evidence, I find that the planning instruments under appeal are consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement and conform to all applicable provincial plans," said Ms. Seaborn. "I had regard to matters of provincial interest under Section 2 of the Planning Act and decisions taken by the Town and the Region. "The development conforms to the Region's Official Plan and the policies contained in the Town's Official Plan, including policies that require conformity with the ORMCP, subject to the site specific re-designations set out in the proposed OPA."

Ms. Seaborn called on the Town's bylaw to be amended in accordance with the zoning bylaw but has withheld her order until the Town and Developers hammer out the wording of the zoning bylaw amendment.

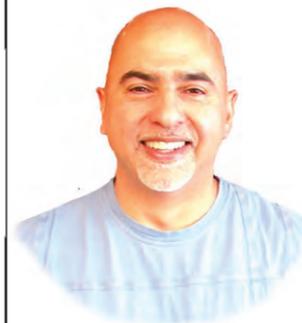
She has set a three month limit for the two parties to do so.



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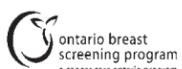
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Poor Ronnie

By RON WALLACE

Let's get apologies out of the way first

Lots to apologize for this week, some of it my fault, some not.

Let's start with last week's story on the young skaters from the Aurora Skating Club.

Seems a couple of names were lost.

So, here they are:

From the Thornhill results, Jadyn Keeler was second in the Intro A group, while Marni Galin was fourth in the Pre-Prelim A.

A couple of weeks ago, I ran a group of pictures from the Aurora Home Show and identified one of the people as Brian Ellis. Well, everyone knows it was Brian North and his business is called Ellis Studio Ltd., so my apologies to Brian.

Then last week, I went on in my Poor Ronnie column, about the huge 50s dance being held May 14, but I failed to tell anyone where it was being held.

When I suggested to the owner of Dinardo's The Mansion that I had made the mistake, he was quick to respond:

"Yeah, but that's not our name," Joe Dinardo said.

"Huh" I replied, knowing full well that the event was being held at Dinardo's.

Marketters, he said, had convinced him the place should be called simply, "The Mansion" and get rid of the Dinardo bit.

So, even though the dance will be at Dinardo's, The Mansion, it won't.

It will be at the same spot, on Industrial Parkway South, but the sign outside will be simply "The Mansion".

Now all Joe has to do is get rid of the mat inside the front door which says "DiNardo's". With a capital N, even though the phone book says it is lower case.

Meanwhile, there is another similar dance coming up this weekend at the Aurora Legion.

Featuring the band, Straight Shooter, this classic rock of the 60's, 70's and 80's night is scheduled for Saturday, May 7, and billed as a dinner and dance evening.

Tickets are \$20 per person and the meal consists of a rib dinner.

If you're interested and want tickets you should call 905-727-9932.

The evening gets underway at 7 p.m.

Here's something else that just crossed my desk:

If you're a member of the Jim Edwards family, you're invited to a reunion Saturday, June 18, at the Cornerstone Church, near the the Mansion, on Industrial Parkway South.

Tickets are \$10 and Jim assures me that any profits from the admission price will be donated back to the church.

Children are \$5 each, and if you're a member of the family, you should call Jim at 905-713-1665.

By now you know the story that The Auroran has been sold, but, thanks to the new owner, I am staying on as editor for up to a year.

I'm looking forward to retiring, and maybe I'll even finish the Great Canadian Novel, which is currently in the computer taking up space.

If I ever get it finished, you'll know about it.



100 Watts

By Christopher Watts

Passing the test

Whoever said "if the only tool you have is a hammer, you treat everything like a thumb" obviously had their own share of sore thumbs.

I can sympathize as it takes a handful of sore thumbs to recognize that true problem solving; the kind that increases the prospects for innovation doesn't lie inside or outside some prepackaged notion of a box.

It has been my experience that the elusive Eureka moment occurs the moment an unexpected connection occurs.

Crossing the streams and recognizing the overlap, regardless of how inconsequential, is the ultimate test.

Passing that test is a true challenge.



At one time, between 1902 and 1927, there was a rail line that was known as the Aurora - Schomberg Railway, (that's one of the engines that ran on the line in the top photo). However, the line, while it ended in Schomberg, didn't start in Aurora. Where then would you have to go to get on the train to go to Schomberg back then? It's worth lunch for two at the Aurora Legion if you're the first caller with the correct answer after noon Friday, May 6th. The bottom photo shows the final trip of the stagecoach that ran between Aurora and Lloydtown in 1902. It did come to Aurora. These photos were taken from the book called "Early Settlements of King Township", written by Elizabeth Gillham and published in 1975.

Letter to the Editor

She got phone call to watch wedding

To the editor,

Okay! I'll admit it. I received a wake-up call through a newspaper (not this one) to get up to watch "the Royal Wedding".

The recorded message was a hoot - "Pip Pip (in a British accent), this is your requested wake-up call to watch the Royal Wedding.

"So get up, brush your teeth, get the wrinkles out and put on something nice to watch the Wedding of the Century".

I was already awake at 4 a.m., had made myself a cuppa coffee, and proceeded back to bed to watch TV - much to the dismay of my two Sheepdogs but being English Sheepdogs they quickly understood the significance of this divergence from normal routine.

Now you may ask "Was it worth the early morning

rise?"

Most definitely!

I have no idea why a British Royal Wedding is important to Canadians, generally speaking, but who could not be happy watching all of those people (thousands) smiling, cheering at this lovely and obviously in love couples' wedding.

Of course, it was a Bank Holiday in Britain and that may have had something to do with the mood. All in all I thoroughly enjoyed my TV watching, all the pomp, ceremony, the dress, the hats and, of course, the kiss!

Remind me of this at 9 p.m. tonight when I can't keep my eyes open anymore - but hey it's Friday night and like most of you, I don't have to get up at 4 a.m. tomorrow.

Bonnie Tiffin
Oak Ridges

THE AURORAN

"Aurora's Independent Community Newspaper"

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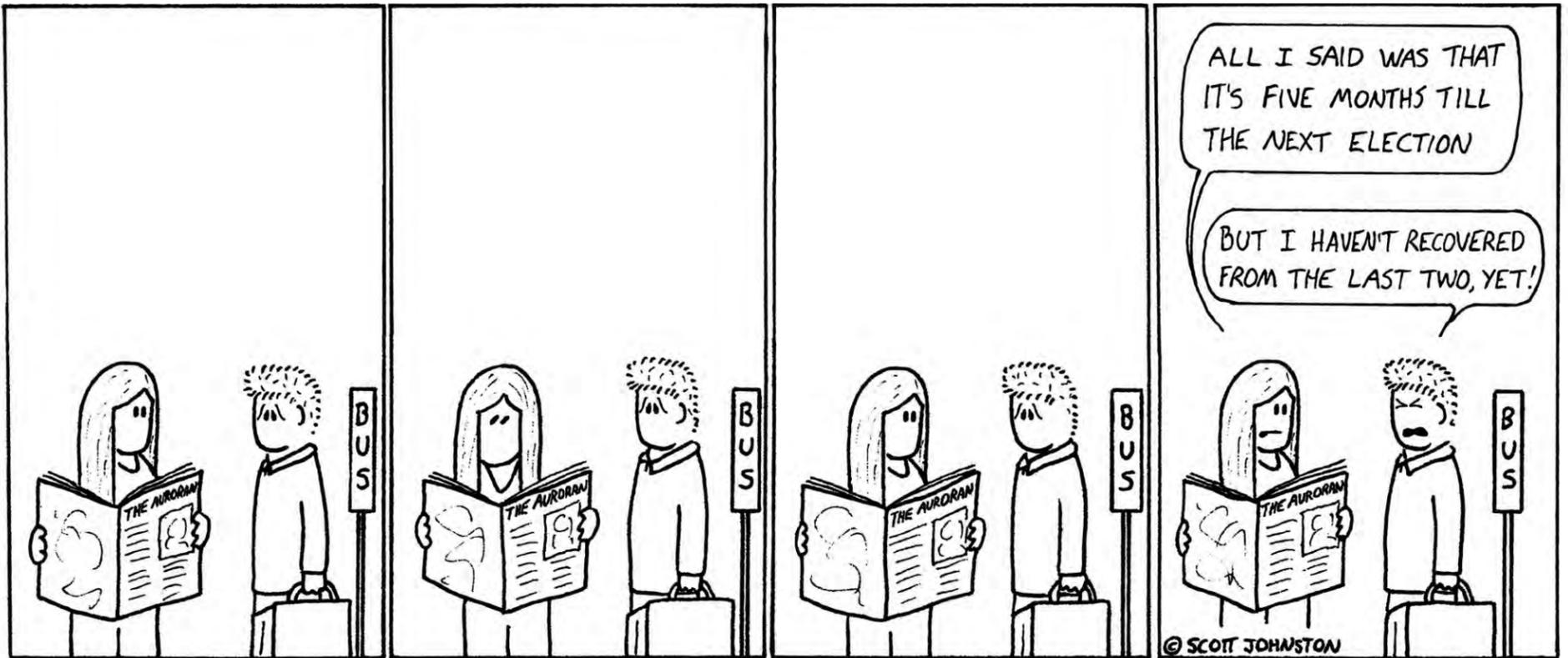
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Front Porch Perspective

By Stephen Somerville

Election 2011 notebook & prediction

As has been said many times, actual campaigns are important; it doesn't matter where you sit in the polls once the writ is dropped but it is where you sit come election day that counts.

The events of the last two weeks of this campaign back this up; and depending on the actual results Monday evening, we could see a tectonic shift in our electoral landscape.

Some musings and observations from the federal election trail.

In the 2004 federal election, 51,435 people cast their vote in Newmarket-Aurora.

This increased to 58,799 in the 2006 election but declined to 53,227 in the 2008 election.

That is a drop of 5,572 votes from the 2006 election, which was a little more than the 4,673 national average.

Considering that the populations of both Newmarket and Aurora grew at a rapid pace over this time, this drop off in votes is quite astonishing.

Over this same period the Conservative vote in the riding went from 21,818 in 2004 to 22,371 in 2006 and to 24,873 in the last election.

The New Democrats received 5,111 votes in 2004, 5,639 in 2006 and 4,508 in the last election.

The decline in their vote - on a relative basis - was not that large.

It is the Liberals where the majority of votes was lost. They received 21,129 votes in 2004, 27,176 in 2006, but then fell to 18,250 in the last election.

That is a decline of 8,926.

In other words, the Liberal share of the vote fell from 46.22 per cent in 2006 to 34.29 per cent in 2008.

It will be interesting to see how many people actually vote this time.

If the Liberals have any hope of regaining this seat, they will need three things; to regain past Liberal voters, to eat into "soft" Conservative voters and they need to attract a large majority of new voters.

A tall order!

The other thing I noticed was the decrease in the number of volunteers.

There is always going to be a core group of individuals to assist, but the numbers of volunteers - among all parties - seems to have decreased.

People are extremely busy and don't have the time or the inclination to devote to civic causes as they once did.

This means that more pressure is put on the existing workers to do more.

My hat's off to the volunteers for all the candidates.

You make democracy thrive in our community by offering the most important commodity to the voter - a choice.

I know you are all waiting for my fearless prediction of

the electoral results in this riding.

Before I provide you with this, a little history is in order regarding my predictive powers.

I thought that Frank Klees and the Progressive Conservatives would win the 2007 provincial election contest in Newmarket-Aurora by between 2,500 to 3,000 votes, not the 1,347 votes that it actually turned out to be.

But then again, just keep in mind that I confidently predicted that Kim Campbell would win one hundred seats in 1993 and that then incumbent Mayor Tim Jones would retain the mayor's chain by about 350 votes over Ms. Morris and Nigel Kean in November, 2006!

I won't be headed to Las Vegas or Casino Rama, for that matter, any time soon!

I predict that Conservative incumbent MP Lois Brown will retain her seat by about a 6,000 vote plurality.

I also - quite hesitantly - forecast that the Tories will win a couple of more seats, but still fall just agonizingly short of a majority, due to the rise of the NDP in Quebec and in BC.

You heard it here first (okay, last).

And by the way, the Leafs will win the Cup next June!

Stephen can be contacted at:
stephengsomerville@yahoo.com



Inside Aurora

By Scott Johnston

Poll position

I'm writing this a few days before the election, so I don't know the results as yet.

But if my experience at the advance poll is any indication, out of the tens of thousands of potential votes cast in Newmarket-Aurora, the winning candidate probably only received a few hundred.

That's because the speed with which people were being processed when I was there was glacial, and if that standard was maintained on Monday, I can't imagine many people having been able to cast their ballots.

I should have been tipped off when the parking lot at the library was completely full when we got there, even though the library wasn't open that day.

Inside, the line-up snaked out of the Magna Room and wound around the lobby.

This wouldn't have been an issue, if the line was moving, but it was several minutes before we could take our first tentative step forward.

Eventually, shuffling slowly forward like sleep-walking penguins, we made it into the Magna Room, where we found there were only three tables for people to be processed.

And of course, three more lines.

With lots of time on our hands to rubber-neck, it was easy to familiarize ourselves with the procedure; you pre-

sented your voter card, they checked your ID, your name was crossed off the list, they wrote out your name and address on another sheet, which you signed, then you were given your ballot, you completed it, handed it back, they tore it in half, and gave you your bit to put in the box. Then the next person could move forward.

It may not have been quite as slow a process as continental drift, but it seemed to take forever.

One reason for this is the amount of time some people took to actually vote.

Maybe I'm naïve, but I would have figured that people would have an idea who they're voting for by the time they get behind that little screen.

That's certainly not how it seemed.

I half expected to see coins being flipped over the top of the screen to assist in the decision process.

Or maybe they were enjoying the quiet moment of privacy to do a crossword, or have nap before the re-emerged, fully refreshed.

In any case, when I finally made it to the counter, I enquired about the time-consuming requirement to copy out all the information again, which I didn't remember from previous non-advance poll voting experiences.

"That's to ensure you don't vote twice," I was told.

By that stage, I felt that if anyone voluntarily came back

and went through that procedure more than once, they deserved to be able to cast another vote, if they wanted.

Then, because the system couldn't handle two people simultaneously, even ones with the same last name and address, I had to wait for my wife to vote.

By the time she re-appeared, I'd gotten to know most of the people in the lobby, slowly gathering cobwebs, as they waited for the line to inch forward.

Now, I don't for one minute blame the delays on the good folks who were actually working there that day.

They were certainly pleasant, and I would guess, long-suffering.

But there has to be a better system for the advance polls.

More people to handle the crowds? Additional locations? Electronic voter lists? Opening earlier than noon?

Or surely, once they got your ID confirmed, and sent you back to vote, they could start processing the next person.

I only hope that things went more rapidly on Monday.

If not, they may need to consider opening the advance polls a little earlier for the upcoming fall provincial election.

Doing so this month might be about right.

Feel free to e-mail Scott at:
machellscorners@gmail.com

Letters to the Editor



Whoever dumped garbage should clean parks for week, this reader maintains

To the editor,

I took this photo with my phone Thursday, April 21, when I went to Sheppard's Bush to walk my dog. I cannot even find words to

express my outrage and disgust over the selfish act of dumping your trash in the parking lot of a conservation area.

Whoever did this, if caught, should be forced to

clean all our parks for a week or so to make up for this despicable act.

In Aurora we are blessed with many beautiful green spaces, and to see someone do this is disappointing to say

the least.

Most of that stuff would have been picked up by our regular trash service, so what is the point of dragging it out there?

Just to get rid of it all at once?

This person may have saved a few bucks in dumping fees; but has cost us taxpayers for having the Parks Department come out and clean it up, which they were happy to do after I called them.

They do an amazing job on our parks when you consider how reckless some people are with their trash these days. I guess the point to this is that we should all be vigilant and report things like this to the Parks Department if we see them, and report anyone we see doing it, because those of us who use these parks are the ones who can make a difference.

putting Aurora first.

I know that the paper will still be here and that Ron will be the editor, but it will not be the same.

Ron, always remember that Aurora residents do care for your love, The Auroran and for the man who started and ran the paper.

I hope that you will get some rest and enjoy your life with your wonderful wife, Patricia.

Your friend and admirer,

**Nigel Kean
Aurora**

**Mike Dickie
Aurora**

stayed friends.

Ron helped me in so many ways when he and I decided to help various charities, whether it was our Aurora Pantry Food collection, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Rotary Club golf tournaments or others. Ron never ever asked for anything in return and thrived on working together.

He also helped many people with careers including many politicians, including that Frank Who guy who is now our fantastic MPP.

He also helped many municipal politicians, myself included.

Ron would run Farmers' Market ads when I started the Aurora Market.

Without that, the market would have failed.

Ron has had ups and downs in his life but he always made sure that the paper got out on time. So many hours dedicated to what he started and loved.

He sleeps, drinks and lives Aurora.

There is no one else that I know who has come close to

To the editor,

I was shocked and surprised when I heard a rumour this weekend that The Auroran was sold.

I immediately called my buddy Ron Wallace and he confirmed that he had sold the paper.

As a good friend of Ron's, I was taken back that the era was over.

Ron, Mr. Aurora, had dedicated so many years not only to The Auroran but also to R & R Bookstore. He started the paper 10 years ago and put Aurora first in everything that he did.

He printed all letters that were sent and even got sued over a couple, but that is Ron Wallace.

He, with the help of the one and only late Dick Illingworth put out a paper every week that so many Aurorans couldn't wait to read.

I, for one, always read the paper from cover to cover.

I learned about the Aurora of the past, and also what was happening today.

I did disagree at times with Ron but we always

Councillor's use of word sounds like a racial slur

To the editor,

I love words. It's the writer in me.

I love big ones, tiny ones, archaic ones.

I love to learn new words. I'm decent at Scrabble.

I understand the power of words to bring laughter, to inspire... and to hurt.

Sticks and stones may break bones, but words can crush the soul.

That's why I cringed when I turned on the TV and heard Councillor Ballard use the word "spooked" at Tuesday's council meeting.

I should have immediately Tweeted my objection.

I apologize that I did not.

I suspect the councillor, who considers himself something of a wordsmith, will argue that "spooked" is a perfectly good word to use.

And it was at one time, especially if you spoke Middle Dutch, the language from whence the word is derived.

But it is not a good word to use today.

It sounds too much like a racial slur.

The councillor should have known better.

Let's hope we never hear the word again.

**H. Grimset
Aurora**

He has some questions about Rogers' turf story

To the editor,

In your April 26 issue of The Auroran, there is an article re the present Rogers Centre Turf being purchased the by the Aurora Minor Ball Association.

It's interesting that no mention is made as to why Rogers is replacing this turf at the Centre, someone should ask the baseball, football and soccer players about this.

The other interesting thing is that there are thousands of residents in the Aurora area, who

pay Rogers Communications hundreds of thousands of dollars every year since taking over from Aurora Cable. What has Rogers ever given back to Aurora?

When both these questions have been answered to everyone's satisfaction, it may well be that our young ball players can survive without the Rogers Centre turf.

Have a nice day.

**John Cronin
Aurora**

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For a town that started out without any trees, Aurora has taken giant steps, and none more noticeable than in the last couple of weeks. In the top photo, Lisa Duff and her son, Charlie, 6, who is with the 2nd Aurora Beavers, plant a tree in the Aurora Community Arboretum near Birkshire Drive, in Aurora's east end. In the centre photo, Aurora's Citizen of the Year, Gordon Barnes, signs up Jessica Georgiou, left, and Renee Scarth as volunteers for the tree planting at the Aurora Community Arboretum near Birkshire. In the bottom photo, the two volunteers plant trees at the Aurora Arboretum.

Auroran photos by David Falconer

Train whistle complainer has moved, Pirri says

Councillors considered a motion last Tuesday to scrap Aurora's ongoing anti-train whistling project, after concerns of its necessity were raised at the table, but safety measures contained in the project remain on track.

"Looking over the history of this matter, I saw that there was one individual who brought this forward and... this individual has since left town," said Councillor Paul Pirri. "To go forward with spending \$750,000 on an initiative that was brought forward by one individual when the individual isn't here anymore, I don't think that is necessarily appropriate."

But Aurora's anti-whistle initiatives go hand-in-hand with measures to step up pedestrian safety at various railway crossings around Town and councillors were less willing to see this part of the project go, especially considering the time that has been invested in the project thus far.

"If it is safety related, I would like to see this going forward," said Councillor Sandra Humfries. "Six years is a long time. I don't know if that is why this is still going on, and I don't want to waste time if it has been six years on the table."

Discussions stemmed from council's consideration of a status update on the anti-whistle policies for trains and the associated projects related to pedestrian crossings, presented to them in a report by Ilmar Simanovskis, Aurora's Director of Infrastructure.

Art show, sale opens in Aurora Thursday

This Thursday, May 6, at 6.30 p.m., the 2nd Annual Fine Photographic Art Show and Sale will take place in Aurora.

Known as "Rooms with a View", the show will be held at the Aurora Cultural Centre, and will be opened by Sharon Green and Benjamin Moore.

The Cultural Centre is located in the former Church Street School.

Ten photographers will exhibit their work in Brevik Hall (second floor of the Centre) until Saturday, May 7.

For more information on the exhibit and sale, contact Karen Merk at Merk Photography, 416-420-3748 or sent an e-mail to karenmerk@merkphotography.com.

A percentage of sales and donations made to the raffle prize "Field of Blue" will go to support the Literacy Council York-Simcoe.

According to Mr. Simanovskis' report, work to carry out upgrades to crossings and to design, prepare, and install pedestrian gates at certain crossings is ongoing.

"A step in implementing an anti-whistling policy includes ensuring that the safety features of crossings meet Transport Canada (pavement markings, traffic and rail signs, and sightline distances) and Region of York (pedestrian gates) requirements," noted Mr. Simanovskis in his report.

"York Region requires pedestrian gates at their Regional road crossings at the St. John's Sideroad and Wellington Street East locations. The Town of Aurora has made the decision to install pedestrian gates at its crossings at the Engelhard Drive and Centre Street location and a pedestrian crossing at Cousins Drive in order to provide identical pedestrian treatment regardless of which crossing is being used by the public."

Talks between the Town and various groups like Transport Canada and Metrolinx have continued and it was decided in March to test the performance of a pedestrian gate at the Wellington Street railway crossing for up to 18 months.

"If the performance of the gates proves to be beneficial, Metrolinx will install gates at the remaining crossings," said Mr. Simanovskis in his report. "The Wellington Street East crossing was chosen to be the best location for the pilot project as this crossing experiences high vehicular traffic and pedestrian movements."

Design work and installation of traditional pedestrian gates will continue for the Cousins Drive crossing, and this is something Mr. Simanovskis told councillors they should be especially cognizant about.

"Ironically, as we moved through the process, the Cousins Drive pedestrian crossing is actually moving along faster than the road crossing so we are proceeding with that work as best we can because it is a separate issue with regards to the agencies," he said. "It is an easier issue to resolve so this issue is actually moving ahead of the road crossings."

"If council chose, for whatever reason, to change our current progress, Cousins Drive is moving along. We do have funding for it and that can proceed and that doesn't impact the train whistles."

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Council rejects Buck motion

Town will train its staff

The Town of Aurora will soon roll out further corporate training programs to assist staff with new workplace safety legislation.

The new measures come under changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and provide a number of new provisions for both employers and employees of nearly all sectors.

"The Act now complements the Ontario Human Rights Code and makes clear the responsibilities of all employers to their duties to provide a safe work space or work, now extended to clearly include the risk of verbal, physical, and psychological assaults and harassment and discriminatory actions which may occur in the workplace," said Aurora Treasurer Dan Elliott in a report to Council.

"As required of the legislation, training has been provided to all staff with regards to workplace harassment during 2010, however, a revised program to include the new policies, programs, including the violence in the workplace element will be provided to all staff within the coming several weeks. The policies require formal adoption by Council prior to that widespread training being delivered."

When the matter came up for consideration at a general committee meeting recently, Councillor Evelyn Buck, however, suggested it would be beneficial to defer the recommendations to council's June workshop on capital projects in order for it to be discussed further in-depth.

"If this is going to be part of our policy then we can take the time," said Councillor Buck. "There are a lot of problems I have with the policy, but if it is going to be council's policy then we need to take the time to ensure that we have reviewed it."

Mr. Elliott, however, said the Municipality had come to a stage where staff now need to develop and roll out corporate training on the new legislation.

"We are nine months behind on doing this," he said. "If there are any specific concerns with regards to policies it is our intent to go through the training, go through the policy and perhaps during the course of training there will have to be matters that will need to be modified and we can have that discussion in the fall cycle."

"It is fairly urgent that

we get moving on this so we can get our training."

Councillor Buck's concerns were not supported by her fellow councillors.

"I would not support the motion to defer," said Mayor Geoffrey Dawe. "I believe it should be implemented right away. I think it is extremely important and critical to the proper functioning of our organization."

Councillors were in receipt of training sessions with respect to the new legislation earlier this month, including a workshop April 12 which was attended by all members.

During the seminar, they were walked through a number of highlights and changes contained in the policy including the evolving scope of workplace harassment.

"When we were going along in this matter people realized we were missing something. What about bullying and psychological harassment?" said Barbara Benoliel, who led the April 12 training presentation. "That has now been picked up by the Ontario Public Safety Act which came into effect in July and adds an additional form of harassment as psychological harassment."

"As the board of directors, and managers and senior executive of the Town of Aurora, employees are looking for a harassment free work environment and that is a requirement of the legislation of every employer."

Examples of workplace harassment include verbally abusive behaviour; offensive, demeaning, humiliating, and/or intimidating jokes; workplace pranks and hazing; gossiping and spreading malicious rumours; excluding or ignoring an individual; sabotaging someone's work; bullying; and patronizing behaviour.

"Workplace harassment should not be confused with legitimate, reasonable management actions that are part of the normal work function and does not include: measures to correct performance deficiencies; imposing discipline for workplace infractions; or requesting medical documents in support of an absence of work," noted the recommendation.

"Workplace harassment also does not include normal workplace conflict that may occur between individuals or differences of opinion between co-workers."

Domestic violence is also covered in the policies in that if an employee

is experiencing domestic violence or has reason to believe a co-worker is experiencing "domestic violence that could expose that employee or another employee to physical injury in the workplace, the employee should seek immediate assistance."

But with this legislation comes increased liability

not only for what you do, but what you fail to do.

"It means as managers and directors you are responsible and have the responsibility to ensure that there is a program, there is a policy which you've now approved, there are training opportunities for every employee and that everyone is informed of both the

harassment and the workplace violence," said Ms. Benoliel.

"There is a responsibility to do something if you are aware. You cannot be held responsible for something that you do not know. If you don't know something is happening and it is not reasonable for you to know it you cannot be held in responsibility.

However, if you are made aware, if someone does come and tell you, even if it is not one of your employees, even if they are working for somebody else, by virtue of knowing it you must take responsibility."

The program and policies were formally approved at last Tuesday's Council meeting.



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	8:00 pm - Midnight	Entertainment
Saturday	7:00 am – 8:30 am	Breakfast
	8:45 am	Parade of Participants
		Opening Ceremonies
	9:30 am	Singles Play Commences
	11:00 am - 1:30 pm	Barbeque
	1:00 pm	Doubles Play Commences
	7:00 pm	Dinner
8:00 pm - Midnight	Games Night	
Sunday	7:30 am - 9:00 am	Breakfast Buffet
	9:30 am	Team Play Commences
	11:00 am - 1:30 pm	Lunch Buffet
	6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Social Hour
	7:00 pm	Closing Ceremonies, Banquet & Awards

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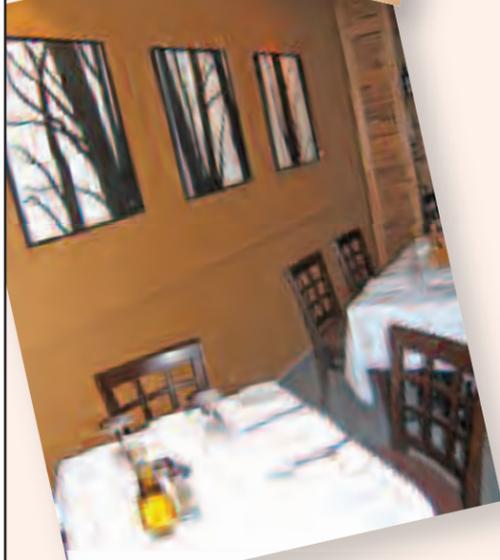
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Trail plan advances

Aurora's Trails Master Plan took another step forward this week, as councillors voted to receive the plan and sent it out for a 45-day review period by stakeholders for further input into the program, one which could make future planning easier for both the Town and trail activists.

Final approval of the next step came at last Tuesday's council meeting without comment, following presentations and discussion at general committee the previous week.

"We feel that we have very excellent value for a very well done plan," said Jim Tree, Aurora's Manager of Parks, at the general committee meeting. "It is a long-term, 50-year plan which we thought was very important because we need to tie up new lands and we could look at trail routes for the future and evaluate those trail routes when development applications and site plan applications [come up]."

"[We'd] be a little bit on the cutting edge as opposed to coming from behind and trying to build trails in people's back yards after they have moved in. I think we're way ahead of the curve in terms of our planning for this venture and I'm pretty pleased to say Aurora is one of the very few municipalities I believe in the province that has taken trail planning to this level."

Mr. Tree was accompanied in his presentation by Jay Cranston of Marshall Macklin Monaghan who helped develop the plan.

He said proper implementation of the plan was important so trail planning could be linked with other capital works projects in the pipeline.

Missed opportunities could come up when putting in a new water line or sewer line and this could help close that gap.

"It is a great opportunity and it is cost-effective to put a trail in at the same time," said Mr. Cranston. "It also positions the Town to take advantage of outside funding opportunities. There are a number of opportunities out there and will surely be more to come and often those with grant applications, having an approved master plan is one of those checkboxes on the application. Having that plan in place is a good stepping stone to having access to those other opportunities for funding."

Recommendations in the Aurora Trails Master Plan include the formal acknowledgement by council that the trails network has the dual function "as community infrastructure for non-motorized and self-propelled traffic" as well as for recreational use, that guidelines contained in the document be the standard or baseline for future municipal trail designs, and that "area specific design solutions" be considered where appropriate.

The document also sets forth minimum design standards for multi-use trails and urban integration, design criteria for integrating trails with underpasses, tunnels, and culverts, and how to tackle crossovers with roadways and railways.

Potential costs for grade-separated and at-grade trail crossings in various locations were not included in the \$13.5 million price tag for the 50-year plan, and this, however, caused some concern at the council table.

According to Tuesday's presentation new at-grade crossings can cost up to \$100,000 per location, while grade-separated crossings can range between \$500,000 and \$2 million each.

"I was just doing the math and potentially this trail will cost us \$73.3 million if all the

cross grade crossings come up to the \$2 million as opposed to the \$500,000 for crossings," said Councillor Paul Pirri, when asking Mr. Cranston if he had an estimated average cost for the crossings.

Mr. Cranston said he could not answer that question, but Mr. Tree said estimates had been received from the Region of York.

"We asked the Region to include a grade separation at their St. John's Sideroad and Leslie Street reconstruction process and the Region came back to us and it was between \$500,000 and \$1 million per crossing," said Mr. Tree.

"The determination was made that it was too expensive and was not going to happen at this time. While we have identified a number of those crossings, each and every one of them needs to be explored and we need to explore all the funding mechanisms that are in this plan."

Tuesday's presentation was preceded in the agenda by an appearance of delegate Klaus Wehrenberg, a local trails activist who was heralded by councillors as being instrumental to this plan.

Mr. Wehrenberg said the plan as presented could be improved by a session with "top bureaucrats" including Mayor Dawe, councillors, and members of the public to discuss pros and cons of the plan. Items for consideration should include introducing a definitions section to spell out the meaning of phrases such as "off-road", and "set the standards against which the implementation of a master plan is tested."

"This is also to educate the people that are really interested and are the ones who are maybe quite opposed to this, although the evidence isn't there that there are too many of them," said Mr. Wehrenberg.

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AURORA FARMERS' MARKET

OPENING DAY: MAY 7

TIME: 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

DATES: Runs every Saturday until October 29th

LOCATION: - Wells Street, between Mosley and Metcalfe Streets in Aurora.

We have a great variety of Vendors who offer fresh local veggies and fruit, honey, jams and preserves, meats, baked goods, delicious hot food and interesting Artisan items.

LOGO CONTEST— We are announcing a logo contest open to the public. Submissions will be accepted from May 28 until June 11. You are welcome to drop it off in person on any Saturday at our "Brooks Farms" Vendor, or submit it electronically to annasmosaics@gmail.com. Voting will be held from June 11 to 15 on our Face Book page at: www.facebook.com/pages/Aurora-Farmers-market-Artisan-Fair/209326642420203

SPECIAL EVENTS - We are holding 9 special events this season! We hope to bring you more children's programs, musical guests and a variety of entertainment.

Enter a draw to Win a filled Market Bag to be raffled off on a Special Event Day! Ballots are available at the Market or bring the one in this ad with you to get started:



Aurora Farmers' Market

- May 28 - Grand Opening
- June 25 - Strawberry Festival
- July 9 - Doors Open Event
- July 16 - Art in the Park / Kerry's Place
- July 30 - Jazz Fest
- Aug. 13 - Senior's Day / Cultural Centre Day
- Aug. 27 - Council Corn Roast
- Sept. 10 - Apples & Honey Fest
- Oct. 8 - Thanksgiving at the Market
- Oct. 29 - Customer Appreciation / Last Market Day

AURORA FARMERS' MARKET

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SAT. MAY 7	1:00 – 3:30
SUN. MAY 8	1:00 – 3:30

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please read the following:

http://www.yukonminers.ca/Libraries/Documents/03-16_Ross_River_Fundraiser_5x7.sflb.ashx

<http://www.yukon-news.com/news/22169/>



Aurora Minor Hockey Association

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING 2011/2012 REGISTRATION

**In-House Registration dates:
April 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 tryouts 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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Relay for Life group gets \$650 waiver from Town of Aurora

Organizers for the annual Relay for Life cancer fundraiser left Aurora Council Chambers Tuesday with a \$650 waiver of fees in hand for Town equipment, despite the municipal staff recommendation that councillors should reject their request as it did not fit into the Town's grant policy.

The motion to reject the recommendations of staff and grant Relay for Life's request to waive fees for the delivery and pickup of Town chairs and picnic tables came at the hands of Councillor Paul Pirri, against the strenuous objections of Councillor Evelyn Buck.

The recommendation to reject Relay for Life's grant request came April 21, when it was determined it did not meet the 80 per cent residency requirement of the Town's Community Grant Policy, according to a report from Al Downey, the Town's Director of Parks and Recreation Services.

This requirement was not met, according to Mr. Downey, but his report indicated Relay for Life did meet the criteria of being an Aurora-based not-for-profit organization.

"There are other factors that come up with this that supersede what our policy is, and I would say the fact that this is a project, an event that is going to save lives, and is a nationally recognized project can do nothing but good," said Councillor Pirri last Tuesday, who recommended the waiver of fees be taken out of council's discretionary fund.

While the recommendation found favour with the majority of councillors, Councillor Buck took exception with rejecting the recommendation of municipal staff.

"There is no argument that the event is for a good cause, but I think that everyone here had the answer to the question last week about how much is raised by this event, how much is anticipated to be raised by this event," she said. "Last year it was \$80,000. They're anticipating more this year. What possible difference could it make if they paid the overhead of \$650, which is the fee we have established for the service we are providing?"

"The community is supporting this event wholeheartedly to the tune of \$80,000 every

year. That surely is a long contribution to the battle against cancer."

Councillor Buck said she did not understand the logic of her fellow councillors, not just considering the money Relay for Life is forecasted to bring to the Canadian Cancer Society, but also that it goes against the Town's own policies.

Since the taxpayers are already supporting the event through their individual sponsorship and participation, Councillor Buck said she felt this was "double dipping" as well, a decision that would not leave taxpayers "well served".

"Unlike my esteemed colleague, I see a lot of logic and a lot of merit in a \$650 waiver of fees," said Councillor Chris Ballard. "This group isn't asking for a cash donation, it is simply asking us to waive those fees."

"Any time I have been involved in this event, it has been well attended by Aurora residents and I know that they too would join with us and say that waiving the \$650 charge is a good thing. This isn't about how much an organization makes; this is simply about doing the right thing and helping this organization with an additional \$650 that they don't have to pay. There is lots of logic and merit in that for me."

For Councillor Pirri, waiving the fees was also a matter of the appropriate money finding its way to the appropriate place.

"As an individual, I'm donating money to somebody staying up all night to walk, to run," he said. "I'm donating money to the cause they are acting for, so for that money to go anywhere else than the cause to which I am donating, I don't think it is appropriate."

The matter of Relay for Life was on the council table last week after Lynn Pearson, 2011 Committee Chair for the relay, appeared before the previous week's general committee meeting requesting the waiver of the fees for several items

which would be supplied and delivered to the site, Magna International, in advance of the June 10 event.

"The success of last year's relay is due to the participation of the community, including local businesses and, of course, the Town of Aurora," Ms. Pearson said at the April 19 meeting. "Tonight we are here to request the same items as in the last four years, including a noise bylaw exemption for the night."

"Last year you granted us a noise bylaw exemption, plus use of some Town materials including stage risers, picnic tables, and field marking tools and paints at no cost and we are once again looking for your support for these things."

Council had no objection in granting the noise bylaw exemption.

Other individuals and organizations have been recent recipients of community grant funding by the Town.

Approvals include \$3,957.50 in community grant funding to individuals and groups ranging from the 140 Aurora Air Cadets (\$924), the Aurora Garden and Horticultural Society (\$1,000), Special Olympics Ontario-Aurora (\$1,000) to \$208.50 to the Aurora Seniors Association.

Concert is geared to high school, university students

On May 7, a concert geared to high school and university students will be held at Theatre Aurora. The Aurora New Music Festival will showcase four local bands: The Bloody Five, YORK, We Outspoken, and The Wet Bandits.

The bands consist mainly of members who have attended Aurora high schools, and most have released albums and done extensive touring.

Additional background on each band is available on Theatre Aurora's website: www.theatreaurora.com.



Residents turned out in full force over the weekend as the Run for Southlake happened in Aurora. An exciting and eagerly anticipated community event, the A&B Courier Run For Southlake typically attracts about 800 participants to raise much needed funds for Southlake Regional Health Centre and to celebrate the spirit and life of the late Bob Hartwell, a former Aurora councillor. Photos show runners and walkers leaving the starting gate at the Aurora Community Centre. More than 1,100 participants took part. This year entrants

had several choices of runs or walks to enter: the five kilometre, the 10 kilometre, the half marathon Walk, or the half marathon.

Auroran photos by David Falconer

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Citizen participation on committees cut

Councillors finalized and signed off on the terms of reference for a number of recreated advisory committees recently.

The terms of reference proposed by Town Staff affected the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC), the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC), the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (formerly the Leisure Services Advisory Committee), the Heritage Advisory Committee, and the Trails Sub-committee.

The majority of these changes proposed a reduction in each committee's citizen member complement, but discussion at the table when debated by Council primarily focused on the first three committees.

"Staff believe that the reduced number of citizen appointees would facilitate meeting efficiency while still maintaining effective citizen participation as citizen mem-

Newspaper is sold

From page 1

ment. "It's a good thing for the residents and businesses in Aurora to continue to have an independent newspaper," Wallace said. "That has always been very important to me."

He said The Auroran, which was born in the year 2000, will continue to publish each week and the name will remain the same.

"It will be status quo for everything connected to running the businesses, at least for the time being," a London Publishing spokesman stated. "All employees will be retained and the newspaper will continue to operate out of Aurora.

Wallace has been hired as editor on a one-year contract with an option to stay on longer if he so wishes.

Wallace said he is in his 67th year, and although he is in good health, it is time to start to slow down. He, and his wife, Patricia, would like to travel and concentrate on selling books.

The Auroran employs six people, all of whom live in Aurora.

There are other stringers and casuals who work for the paper.

London Publishing has recently completed a deal to purchase several newspapers in and around King Township.

The company, in addition to owning an English newspaper in Quebec, also owns the Innisfil Scope, New Tecumseth Times, the King Township Sentinel, and the Caledon Citizen.

The company also purchased two quarterly magazines, known as Tapestry and Footprints.

bers would still compromise a majority of the committee," said Town Clerk John Leach in a report to Council earlier this month.

The originally proposed terms of reference called for the Environmental Advisory Committee to have its citizen member complement reduced from seven to five, and removing its mandate to encourage the acquisition of environmentally sensitive areas.

This, argued Town Staff, was the purview of Council.

The rebranded Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee originally saw its overall membership down to five from nine, with two members of Council rather than the previous three, and two citizen members down from five.

In addition to those two citizen members, one citizen member would be appointed from Sport Aurora. The proposed terms of reference removed their responsibility to review parks and recreation service fees and charges.

When discussion resumed at the council table, the number of citizen members on EAC was restored to seven, and they also restored their task to recommend green initiatives to council.

At the meeting, however, Councillor Wendy Gaertner argued in favour of giving them back the task of looking at environmentally sensitive areas for recommendation to council.

"I don't think it hurts us to have an extra set of eyes looking out for environmentally sensitive areas," she said.

The majority of her fellow councillors - along with Town staff - were unmoved, however, and the motion was defeated.

"I believe that the decision to acquire land is strictly in the realm of council," said Aurora CAO Neil Garbe. "I don't feel it is appropriate to deal with sensitive land issues with people who are not elected. I think that is strictly in the purview of this council."

Ensuring that the community is actively engaged through its citizen members dominated much of the discussion, as they debated

the merits of restoring EAC's complement, which was ultimately passed.

"I think these committees are an integral part of what we do at the town and I think it is important that we engage the community, we engage the extraordinary volunteers that we have in this community, and we have enough on the table to participate in the discussion and help us through various programs that we have," said Councillor John Gallo. "To me it is vital."

Councillor Sandra Humfries shared similar sentiments and said citizen involvement was beneficial to both council and the Town as a whole.

"It keeps us in touch with the community and to understand what is going on out there," she said, speaking against a recommendation to have committees meet quarterly rather than monthly, a recommendation which was ultimately rejected.

Some councillors, however, were in favour of the proposed changes, arguing that a change would result in greater efficiency and restore advisory committees to their original purpose.

"The real function of an advisory committee is to discuss policy, make recommendations in policy," said Councillor Evelyn Buck. "They should not be involved in the day to day direction of staff in the operation of the department and that is what has been happening and that is what has been a problem.

"An advisory committee advises, considers policy, discusses it, they can take a lot of time to come up with policy on a particular matter, and recommend a policy to council. The committees have been overstepping their mark since I have been back on council and the size of the committees is a problem."

The terms of reference were carried at council, with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee sitting at four citizen members and one member from Sport Aurora, and with the advisory committees beginning their meetings on a monthly basis.



75th

Once a resident of Aurora, Ted McClenny, seated, with his great granddaughter Mikala Stade, 6, of Aurora, on his lap, is surrounded by grandchildren Sunday when he was honoured during a brunch at Aurora's Jonathan's Restaurant to celebrate his 75th birthday. Ted was part of the now defunct Aurora Police Department, as was his brother, Lowell.

Auroran photo by Ron Wallace



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Many hits on Facebook impresses him

The Town of Aurora's recent efforts to take advantage of social media to reach a broader and more engaged audience could save the Town money in the long run, said Jason Ballantyne, Aurora's Manager of Corporate Communications, and if recent Earth Hour activities are any indication, they seem to be on the right track.

Mr. Ballantyne made his remarks at a general committee earlier this month when he spoke about the success of the Earth Hour campaign which concluded at the end of March.

During the campaign, the Town encouraged residents to visit their

Facebook page and post how they planned to spend Earth Hour and have a tree planted in their honour - or win an iPad - in the process.

"This is a very small example of what we want to replicate on a larger scale," said Mr. Ballantyne. "We told [partners such as Trees Ontario] that we have a goal to engage residents...and we came up with the Earth Hour campaign. It is a multi-channel campaign that used our new social media channel. We were highly cognoscente that not everybody is online so we used traditional print media channels as well.

"This multichannel resi-

dent engagement is what we would like to do. The first time we tried it, I thought maybe we would hit 500 residents. You know what? About 120 residents took part. We had more than 1,500 Facebook impressions. There were 1,500 people on Facebook that clicked on our link and actually went into our site to see what is going on."

Their message was re-tweeted to an audience of 3,500, he added, noting that the campaign resulted in increased traffic to the Town's environmental page, which helped to achieve the department's goal of getting more people to talk about local environmental issues.

"I think we managed to

make some small steps towards some bigger things," he said.

Aurora is one of many municipalities taking advantage of social media, and Mr. Ballantyne said the use results in increased exposure, building new audiences, and reaching audiences that may not see Town advertisements but might hop on a website or happen upon a Twitter feed, and it provides instant communication.

One example he cited was communication from Central York Fire Services which went out on Twitter.

"Previously we would have to send out a news release and play catch-up for a week," he said. "This

way we can get information out quickly and in real time. It is meeting the residents' needs because we have to allow the residents more choices when it comes to how they receive their information.

"It is cost effective. While we have traditionally spent money on ads and other forms of advertising we're hoping that as these social media channels mature that we will be able to reduce the need to use traditional media channels which tend to cost a little bit more."

From Councillor Sandra Humfryes' perspective, what has been utilized so far is just the "tip of the iceberg", and she added to become truly engaged, a highly interactive webpage is necessary.

In response, Mr. Ballantyne said there are just over half a million unique visitors on the website so the demand is evident, but there is definite room to increase interaction on the site.

"Studies have shown over and over that while people do tend to retain information differently, a dynamic website is always preferable," he said.

Future developments on this front could include live-streaming council and committee meetings online through the Town's website, once improvements to the Town's bandwidth have been completed, and possibly creating a Town of Aurora app for iPads, iPhones, and similar devices.

No ghosts in Aurora, Heard tells council

Aurora's popular Spirit Walk, a special offering from A Step In Time, will get its moment in the spotlight when it is featured in an upcoming episode of the Canadian-produced and internationally distributed television show *Rescue Mediums*.

The episode will hold its "premiere" at Aurora's Filly & Firkin Pub Sunday, May 29, following a walk

through Aurora's Downtown Core, according to organizer David Heard.

"In October, I [accepted] an invitation to go to an Aurora business called the Filly & Firkin and it allowed them to contact a well-known television program called *Rescue Mediums*," said Mr. Heard at last Tuesday's council meeting. "They came to our Town in January and

filmed an episode here in our community.

"On May 29, after our Spirit Walk, we will be welcoming people to come to this event, back to the Filly & Firkin and they will be able to enjoy refreshments, a silent auction, door prizes, and live entertainment. They will be able to... be the first people in the world to see [the episode]."

The Aurora Spirit Walk

and the Filly & Firkin will give 100 per cent of the proceeds raised by the event to the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada.

"This is going to be like live theatre," said Mr. Heard. "It's well worth the price."

Tickets are \$20 each and available through A Step In Time, or through the Filly & Firkin.

Mr. Heard, a newly-minted member of Aurora's Heritage Advisory Committee, said he founded his historic walking tour group, A Step In Time, to share his experiences in finding his roots in Aurora, which stretch back to the early 19th century.

"We built a company to share Aurora and help local causes at the same time," he said. "In that same period, I also created something called the Aurora Spirit Walk by interviewing citizens of Aurora and letting them tell me about their family and strange events that happened.

"Let me make you aware that Aurora is not full of ghosts; Aurora is full of incredible spirit and that is why we called it the Aurora Spirit Walk."

Town to raise funds

Aurorans will be "living it up" for literacy through June 1, taking up the challenge of the Literacy Council of York Region to raise funds for adult literacy in Aurora and throughout the region.

A number of local organizations are on board in the endeavour, including the Aurora Cultural Centre, to raise awareness and funds in the Literacy Council's (LCYS) campaign.

Aurora's Town Council could soon get in on the act after finding itself on the receiving end of a direct challenge from an LCYS board member recently.

"I ask you to consider how you would be able to do your jobs as councillors if you struggle with reading and writing," said Nadia DeFreitas, volunteer member of the LCYS Board of Directors, who appeared before councillors recently.

"Imagine not being able to read important e-mails from your constituents or the agenda for this evening."

The Live It Up for Literacy campaign was launched April 1 to coincide with International Adult Learners' Week, which ran from April 2 to April 9.

"We are asking individuals, community groups, and local businesses to host fundraising events to benefit LCYS while challenge their counterparts

to do the same," said Ms. DeFreitas. "We have introduced a challenge at Newmarket Town Hall and asked them to have a dress-down council meeting to raise funds for LCYS and so I am here to perhaps offer the suggestion of Aurora Town Council challenging them."

There was interest at the table as to just what councillors could do to raise money, with ideas lobbed around ranging from a hockey jersey night or Hawaiian shirt night to "one-up your neighbour to the north" from Town Treasurer Dan Elliott, to a pyjama night suggestion from Councillor Wendy Gaertner.

"I'm not sure how I can respond to that, but I'm sure we can come up with something!" replied Mayor Geoffrey Dawe jokingly to Councillor Gaertner's suggestion.

The Aurora Cultural Centre is slated to hold a photography sale this month, with proceeds going to LCYS.

The LCYS program has been in place in the community for almost 30 years.

It provides English-speaking adults over the age of 19 an opportunity to receive literacy training and improve their literacy, computer, and math skills.

According to Ms. DeFreitas, 42 per cent of adult Canadians were found in a

recent survey not to have the literacy skills to function in today's society. The organization served more than 300 adults in their area, she added.

"In short, what LCYS does is improve lives," she said. "We help people get jobs, we help people improve their skills set, and we help them achieve their goals such as helping them receive their high school diplomas. I have seen firsthand how so many of the adults in our community require our services."

LCYS receives funding from the Province of Ontario, through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the Region of York, organizations such as the United Way, and also through their own fundraising efforts.

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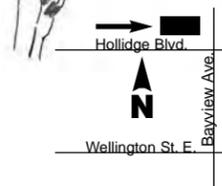
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Three Aurora residents may get their own reality show

Frequent visits to the Bahamas could land three Aurora residents on TV if a proposed reality TV series documenting their adventures gets off the ground.

Filming of the pilot episode of *The Boys of Paradise*, featuring Craig Collins, Darren Giroux, and Andrew Goss, has wrapped and the DVD is in hand, ready to be pitched to cable networks, according to producer Barb Whitnell, who is also mother to Mr. Giroux.

The idea to document their lives on Paradise Island and in Nassau first came about last year while on March Break, when Ms. Whitnell and "the boys" were sitting around their hotel on a rainy day watching the ample line-up of reality television Bahamian TV, and they were not impressed with what they saw.

"We couldn't get over how boring most of it was and never gave a thought about it," she said. "Then the guys would go out during the day for their adventures and stuff and every time they came back they had some story to relay to me about something that had happened while they were out."

"As they were telling me this stuff, I started joking with them, saying, 'Your stories are more entertaining than what we're watching on TV' and it just sort of snowballed from that."

Back at home, the idea percolated in Ms. Whitnell's head and soon she registered a treatment for the story.

After contacting acquaintances in the film industry for advice, Ms. Whitnell ended up hiring somebody with their own film company and crew, flew them down to The Bahamas for the best production values possible, and the DVD was ready "a few weeks ago."

Film clips and trailers taken from the pilot have already



The Boys of Paradise, as seen in a promotional still from their TV pilot. The Aurora residents are, left to right, Darren Giroux, Craig Collins, and Andrew Goss.

found their way to YouTube and social media websites.

"The story is about three best friends, Canadian friends, who have decided to go down to Paradise Island, Bahamas, to live the life of a March Breaker, and it is going to be an indefinite March Break," said Ms. Whitnell. "They are going to show the audience the fun that the friends have and also the drama between the relationships that evolve with them."

It will also serve to give viewers a behind-the-scenes look at the more "touristy" areas Paradise Island has to offer.

If pressed to make a comparison with the spate of other reality programming on Canadian and international airwaves at the moment, Ms. Whitnell said the closest comparison would have to be *Jersey Shore* in structure, but that is where the comparisons end.

"[The Boys] are not strangers, they are best friends," she said. "They have been best friends for years, so

they have got that great friendship behind them as they come into the house, but it doesn't mean you're not going to see the same kind of drama within the friendship.

"Another difference is also the locale, the scenery, it's a beautiful locale so the scenery alone, there will be a lot of outside shots and...I'm told it has more of a film documentary look to it more so than most reality TV shows, the way it has been filmed and edited and I give that credit to the team at Open Concept films because I think they did an amazing job."

With an eye to pitch her "cutting-edge" (read: "for mature audiences") show to networks such as MTV, E!, and HBO, Ms. Whitnell has two interests in the property - as producer and mother.

As such, she is aware of some of the pitfalls and exposure being involved in reality TV can bring for its "personalities".

"My number one concern is I don't want anything to happen to any of the boys, to hurt

them, whether it be physically or emotionally, so that is where the parent part of me comes out, where I feel like I want to protect them," she said.

"There are some things that happened when we filmed that did upset me, as the parent, but as I took a step back and as the camera man explained to me that what we just filmed was good for the show, that it made good TV. I kind of had to take myself out of the parent hat and put the producer hat on, and say, 'Okay, I can see what you're saying'. It's a very fine line for sure."



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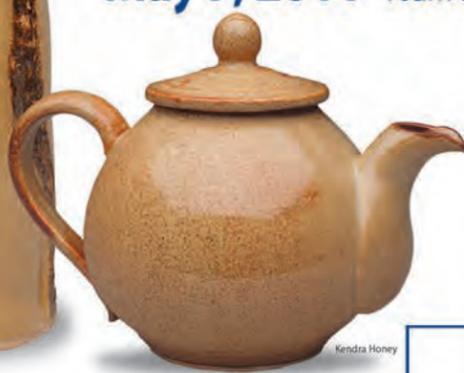
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Senior Scape



Brian will return!!

By CHARLES SEQUEIRA

We are pleased to inform all our Senior Scape readers that next week Brian Warburton will be writing his usual column and continue to keep you updated on all the events taking place at the

Seniors' Centre.

I have enjoyed writing this column and found the weeks go by fast before it's time to write the next column.

We welcome Brian back!

Many of the seniors showed interest in walking the trails around Aurora.

Here is the schedule:
Walks planned for May: (all locations subject to change depending on weather etc.)

May 4: Willow Farm, Lakeview Trail, north from Aurora Heights to Tom's Park;

May 11: York Region Forest, Clarke Tract – McCowan Road and Aurora Road;

May 18: Holland River Valley Trail, south from the Seniors' Centre;

May 25: York Region Forest, Dainty Tract – McCowan Road and Aurora Road

Plans are underway, again this year as Neighbourhood Network (NN) will again sponsor a barbecue fund raising event for the Aurora Seniors' Centre on Thursday, June 30th, from 11.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. at the Seniors' Centre.

Everyone, including the business community, is invited to the event to enjoy good food, entertainment and cash bar as we celebrate Canada Day.

Our Computer Club is offering some courses in May.

For members and seniors who may wish to join the Aurora Seniors' Centre, note the following:

A word processing course to be taught by Brian Warburton.

The course will run for four weeks on Wednesday mornings beginning May 4th through May 25th. Each session will be two hours from 9.30 to 11.30 a.m. and will cost \$20.

Computer room drop-in sessions are scheduled

Tuesday afternoons from 1.30 to 3.30 p.m.

These sessions are run weekly, every Tuesday, with the intent that any member who is looking for any kind of technical help can come by and organizers will try their best to assist. The only cost is the one dollar daily activity fee.

Aurora Seniors' Centre will again partner with the Town of Aurora to continue with the Aurora's Borealis for the 2011-2012 season with some additional enhancements. The Aurora's Borealis last year comprised of 12 trees lit in the Aurora Town Park adjacent to the onsite outdoor ice rink.

The Senior Centre's Silver Stars Drama Club are proud to bring you a Murder Mystery Party on Friday, June 10th at 5 p.m. at the Aurora Seniors' Centre.

They need your help. There will be a murder in the play and you will have to solve the mystery by helping to catch the culprit.

Tickets are \$10 per person and are available at the reception desk.

The pancake Tuesday event held recently at the Seniors' Centre was a huge success, with nearly 1,000 attending. Thanks to all the parents, their children, members and guests for participating. Special thanks to the Aurora Optimist Club and the Aurora Seniors' Centre volunteers who did an excellent job in making sure everyone was served with pancakes.

REMINDERS

Following are some events taking place at the Aurora Seniors' Centre:

Wednesday, May 4 - Mother's Day luncheon and Fashion Show, 11.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m.

Friday, May 6th and May 20th - Social dances beginning at 8 p.m.

Thursday, May 12th - Real Estate Seminar from 2 p.m.

Tuesday, May 17th - ASA Evergreen Choir presents Spring Concert from 7.30 p.m. Tickets are \$10 per person.

Now until Friday, May 27th - Elections to vote for three directors to the ASA Board Directors-2011-2012

For more details or further information on any of our events, programs or activities please pick up a copy of our May newsletter or go to our website: www.aurora-seniors.ca or phone us at 905-726-4767.

On behalf of our ASA membership and our volunteers I thank all of you for your cooperation in providing me with all the information to enable me to write these columns.

I hope it was of interest to all our readers and most of all special thanks to editor of the Auroran, Ron Wallace, for providing us (Aurora Seniors' Association and the Seniors' Centre) the space in the Auroran so we can keep all our present and future members informed on all the happenings at the Aurora Seniors' Centre.

Town budget fails to impress Buck

From page 1

times there is no doubt in my mind. I am very confident with what they expect from me and I can't support this budget and I'm sorry I can't support the first budget of this council because everything stems from the budget.

"Nothing that happens for the rest of this year happens outside of the budget and every budget we approve from here on in is built on this budget. I did my best, but obviously I failed to impress that. One of the reasons many of you are here is because of the spending of the last [Council] and I think maybe you haven't understood that."

Among Councillor Buck's objections was the money spent towards the Aurora Cultural Centre. That being axed could have showed the public that council "understood the message", she said.

"The procedural bylaw requires that I do not criticize another councillor and I don't criticize you, but I am profoundly disappointed in the first budget of this council."

While Mayor Geoffrey Dawe said this year's budget process was "challenging" it has paved the way for a bet-

Trees Ontario CEO is next guest speaker

Rob Keen, chief executive officer of Trees Ontario and President of the Ontario Forestry Association, will be the guest speaker at the next meeting of the Probus Club of Aurora.

Mr. Keen has served as Vice-President of the Association, was Director and Chair of the Algonquin Forestry Authority and Director of Maple Leaves Forever.

He has been a planner, Director of Operations and Program Manager for Trees Ontario, before becoming CEO of the agency, which has 65 planting partnerships.

The regular Probus Club meeting will be held at the Aurora Legion, and the next one is scheduled for May 11 at 10 a.m.

For further information, call Bob Staley at 905-727-5017.

ter process in the future.

"I believe now we can probably tackle the budget much more effectively and I believe that we will be more efficient in moving into a more sensible planning process," he said. "I will support the budget as submitted by Mr. Elliott."

But despite what Councillor Buck said, there were times council did say "no" to groups asking for a piece of the pie, said Councillor Michael Thompson.

"Are there still questions on the table?" he asked. "Are there still some concerns? Absolutely. We're all anxious to reduce that tax rate as well and I think that for a first council we have done a good job and I look forward to the process at the end of this year for 2012."

For Councillor Sandra Humfries, having the word "disappointment" thrown about was "disappointing".

From her perspective, council went through the budget process "vigorously", although she said she wished council could have done more.

"We're going to [get the 2012 budget] started early I think it will be a lot smoother and we'll accomplish a lot."

Another councillor who shared the view that more could have been done was Chris Ballard who said he had been struggling with the final number contained in the budget document for some time, and he had lingering concerns.

"We started this budget with a \$750,000 surplus," he said. "We have significant budget pressures in the amount of about \$665,000 for our new firefighters and I am really concerned about how we're going to start next year off. I guess at the end of the day and, of course, hindsight gives us 20/20 vision, at the end of the day we would have appreciated one more kick at it to drop it down a bit more to reflect the pressure we're going to feel next year with the firefighters and the fact that we won't have that \$750,000 we began this year with."

"I truly hope that a year from now you can point the finger at me and say that I was wrong, but I would have liked to have seen this

budget down by another quarter per cent if that is possible."

As for the criticisms levelled at the Aurora Cultural Centre, Councillor Ballard said the organization was "damned if they do and damned if they don't."

"[They had an] \$85,000 surplus last year and they are raked over the coals for it [for] not giving it back to council," he said. "This year they plan for a growth deficit and they are raked over the coals for that as well, so I just don't see the logic in that."

The 3.79 per cent tax increase, reduced from the proposed 7.82 per cent hike floated in late January, combined with the Regional tax rate, means Aurorans will see a 2.13 per cent impact on their overall tax rate.

For taxes on an average property assessed at \$300,000, the combined annual impact will come to \$68.70.

A workshop to examine large capital items in greater detail has been set for Monday, June 27.



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