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THE AURORORAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 16 No. 10 905-727-3300 theauroran.com FREE Week of December 24, 2015 CMCA AUDITED



CALM WITHIN THE CHAOS – Artist Roxana Farrell and Philip Hamilton, Associate Minister of Trinity Anglican Church, stand with their new spin on the traditional Nativity Scene, which they designed and built outside the building on Victoria Street, in a bit of a “subversive” take on the tradition. Peppered with concrete blocks, fencing, and representation of barbed wire, the duo were clear in their vision, but they are more interested in what you see.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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Christmas story goes back to basics with a bit of “shock value”

By Brock Weir

There's nothing like a bit of shock value to get people to sit up and take notice.

A good shock could be the thing to get a person out of their comfort zone and take a look at the familiar in a new light or from a different perspective. And when you've got some nice, “subversive”, source material to work with, why not start with something at the very heart of Christian values,

particularly around the Christmas season?

Over the next few days, take a stroll past Trinity Anglican Church on Victoria Street and take a good look at their nativity scene. Do you see a traditional crèche, or do you see something more? Is it your everyday representation of Mary, Joseph and Jesus, or is there something missing? If there is, what is it?

If you've already done so, and any of these questions crossed your mind,

then the efforts of Associate Minister Philip Hamilton and artist (and Trinity Parishioner) Roxana Farrell have already paid off.

“We were going for shock value,” says Mr. Hamilton, 28, who joined the Trinity community in August. “So often when you can go to Walmart and just pick up these little Christmas balls with Nativity sets and snowflakes all over them, I think we have domesticated a story that is, at its core, subversive

Continued on page 17

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AN ENDURING RELATIONSHIP

Joe Gorman, left, former pastor at Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church (OLG), was welcomed by restaurant owner Tim Brochu of King Richard's English Pub this month for a reunion with the OLG community and the community at large, while collecting gift and grocery cards for Rose of Sharon Service for Young Mothers. It was a renewal of strong community links they hope to maintain in the years ahead. For more, please see Page 8.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

After 132 years of Sundays, Aurora's Baptists get ready to say goodbye

By Brock Weir

Dianne Harrison doesn't like to sit in the background.

When she takes her place at First Baptist Church at the corner of Wellington Street East and Victoria Street, she and her husband Brian secure a place in one of the first three pews. She wants to see what's going on and be on hand to greet people.

But, as the years have gone by, the number of people she has been

Continued on page 7

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Accessible formats
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accessibility@aurora.ca

COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Wednesday, January 6	7 p.m.	Leksand Room	Accessibility Advisory Committee
Tuesday, January 12	9:30 a.m.	Newmarket	Joint Council Committee
Tuesday, January 12	3 p.m.	Tannery Room	Community Recognition Review Advisory Committee
Tuesday, January 12	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Special Council
Wednesday, January 13	7 p.m.	Aurora Cultural Centre	Aurora Cultural Centre Board
Thursday, January 14	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Committee of Adjustment
Thursday, January 14	7 p.m.	Leksand Room	Economic Development Advisory Committee

Council meetings are open to the public and can be seen on Rogers TV, channel 10. For a full list of upcoming meetings, please visit www.aurora.ca

*Meetings can be viewed online by visiting www.aurora.ca/gcstream



WHAT'S HAPPENING

Town of Aurora offers new recreation programs

Learn to Draw – Step-by-step instructions to teach you the technical and creative skills for drawing. Winter 2016 Session runs January to March for ages 12+.

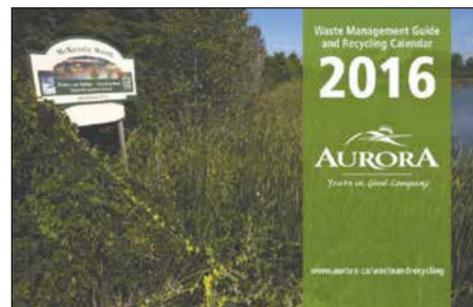
Intro to Guitar – Learn how to play simple tunes and favourite melodies. Winter 2016 Session runs January to April 2016 for ages 8+.

For all class information and course codes, visit www.aurora.ca/recguide

NEW! 2016 Waste Management Guide and Recycling Calendar

Look for your copy of the 2016 Waste Management Guide and Recycling Calendar in your mailbox early January.

For more information on waste and recycling, please visit www.aurora.ca/wasteandrecycling



The Town of Aurora proclaimed 2015 as the Year of Sport in Aurora. Stay tuned for upcoming sporting events from various sports organizations in Aurora to celebrate the importance of healthy sport and activities in our community.

For more information, please visit www.aurora.ca

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Aurora's Salvation Army Kettle Drive. Help someone in need today!

The Town of Aurora, Salvation Army and Neighbourhood Network have launched the annual Aurora Salvation Army Kettle Drive which runs until Thursday, December 24.

Contributions to this campaign will provide practical assistance to vulnerable members of our community at Christmas and throughout the year.

Kettles are located at the following locations in Aurora:

- The Real Canadian Superstore
- Metro
- Three LCBO outlets in Aurora

For more information on how to volunteer for the Salvation Army Kettle Drive, please call Neighbourhood Network at 905-726-3737 to book your preferred date, time and location.

For more information on the Salvation Army Kettle Drive, please contact Glennanne Phillips at 905-895-6276.



WHAT'S HAPPENING

The Aurora Museum & Archives wants to hear from you!

Do you have a special story, memory or object related to a site within Library Square and the surrounding area known as the Aurora Cultural Precinct? If so, the Aurora Museum & Archives wants to hear from you! Your submissions will be used to develop a future exhibition featuring the Aurora Cultural Precinct, the area bound by Mosley Street, Larmont Street, Metcalfe/Church Street and Yonge Street. To submit your story, memory or object to the Aurora Museum & Archives, please contact Michelle Johnson at mjohnson@aurora.ca

For a complete list of historic sites and to learn more about the Aurora Museum & Archives, please visit www.aurora.ca/museum



Holiday Service Schedule

www.aurora.ca • 905-727-1375



MUNICIPAL OFFICE • 100 John West Way

Aurora Town Hall's holiday service schedule is as follows:

Monday, December 21	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Tuesday, December 22	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Wednesday, December 23	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Thursday, December 24	8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Friday, December 25	CLOSED
Monday, December 28	CLOSED
Tuesday, December 29	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Wednesday, December 30	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Thursday, December 31	8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Friday, January 1	CLOSED

Regular business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. resume on Monday, January 4.

If you would like to pay a water or tax bill, payments can be placed in the drop-off box 24 hours a day outside of Town Hall. Please do not place cash payments in the drop-off box and remember to include your payment stub along with your payment. Alternatively, you may pay your bills through your ATM or through your bank's online banking service. Parking tickets can be paid online at www.paytickets.ca. Please note, payments must reach the Town of Aurora by close of business on the due date to avoid interest charges being applied.



AURORA PUBLIC LIBRARY • 15145 Yonge Street

Aurora Public Library's holiday service schedule is as follows:

Thursday, December 24	9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Friday, December 25	CLOSED
Saturday, December 26	CLOSED
Thursday, December 31	9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Friday, January 1	CLOSED

Regular business hours resume on Saturday, January 2. For more information, please visit www.aurorapl.ca or call 905-727-9494.



WASTE COLLECTION

Changes to regularly-scheduled waste collection are as follows:

Friday, December 25	Rescheduled to Saturday, December 26
Friday, January 1	Rescheduled to Saturday, January 2

Christmas Tree Collection takes place from Tuesday, January 26 to Friday, January 29. For more information, please consult your Waste Management Guide and Recycling Calendar or visit www.aurora.ca/wasteandrecycling



RECREATION CENTRES

Recreation centres including the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex and the Aurora Seniors' Centre will be operating with modified hours. For a full list of hours of operation and program opportunities including fitness classes, pool, gymnasium, rock wall and The Loft hours, please visit www.aurora.ca/holidayrecreation

Friday, December 25 All facilities CLOSED
Friday, January 1 All facilities CLOSED



Check out our renovated Aurora Family Leisure Complex!

135 Industrial Parkway North

EMERGENCY SERVICES

For Town-related emergency situations such as flooding, watermain breaks or downed trees, please call 905-727-1375 or 905-727-3123 and follow the voice prompts.

FOR ALL OTHER EMERGENCIES, CALL 9-1-1

The Town of Aurora wishes you a safe and happy holiday season!

Aurora's Borealis

Don't miss Aurora's Borealis!

Visit Aurora Town Park every evening from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. until Monday, February 15, 2016 and enjoy the beautifully lit trees and festive atmosphere. Aurora Town Park is located at 49 Wells Street.

For more information, please call 905-726-4762 or visit www.aurora.ca

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Aurora's Family First Night

A New Year's Eve Family Celebration

Thursday, December 31, 2015 • 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Aurora Family Leisure Complex, 135 Industrial Parkway North

- Free skating and swimming*
*Please note, space is limited.
- Children's activities – crafts, face painting, inflatable bouncers, rock climbing wall and mad science activities
- Magic shows at 6:30 p.m. and 7:45 p.m.
- Reptile shows at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m.

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Please note, we reserve the right to cancel, amend or change activities. #AuroraFirstNight

New CAO comes to Aurora after contentious time in Sudbury

By Brock Weir

Doug Nadorozny will serve as Aurora's new Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) effective January 11.

Mayor Geoff Dawe announced the appointment on Thursday afternoon and lauded Mr. Nadorozny's experience in the public sector.

"Doug Nadorozny has a wealth of experience both in the private sector and as CAO," said Mayor Dawe. "He brings a business perspective to delivery of public services and we look forward to his leadership of our talented staff in delivering on the programs and policies of Council."

He comes to Aurora after several years with the City of Sudbury, including serving as General Manager for Planning, Building, Environment, Transit, Culture and Bylaw Enforcement, before taking the helm as CAO in 2008.

"I look forward to the challenges this reasonably small town is going

to face with growth that is, no doubt, going to show up on our doorstep," Mr. Nadorozny tells The Auroran. "The largest part of my career in the public sector was in the growth and development section in terms of working with the development community and looking to market the community as well to other businesses, and dealing with the stresses and strains that come from development within the community."

"When I see the relatively small size of Aurora and the demands that are going to be placed on it, I really looking forward to rolling up my sleeves and bringing the CAO's office into that picture in helping to make sure growth comes the right way and is done in a way that is complementary to what the people of Aurora want to see."

His time as Sudbury's CAO, however, came with its own stresses and strains. He left the position this past April amid contention between Sudbury's City Council, the bulk of whom who

had been elected the previous October, including Mayor Brian Biggar, formerly Sudbury's Auditor General.

"We came into our respective offices within a month of each other," says Mr. Nadorozny. "We, staff, had a pretty rough relationship with the Auditor General, as did the previous Council. It was most definitely a difficult four years. It ended with the Council taking some of their own actions in terms of their concern about the activities of this auditor general but before anything got pushed to a head, the Auditor General took a leave of absence, ran for mayor and became Mayor. He ended up sitting in the big seat about two months after he took his leave of absence."

"The reality is after about four years of me defending staff and working with Council, and certainly at times seeming to be resisting some of the work of the Auditor General, I guess you could say the relationship was doomed to be a stressful one with him going into the Mayor's role and me being his employee. We went at it for a year, did okay, but had a difference of opinion on some of the way savings could be achieved. In the end, we all

thought it was better for someone to lead that didn't have the baggage of the relationship."

These concerns were addressed during the extensive interview process, according to Aurora's interim CAO Pat Moyle and, in the end, Mr. Nadorozny ticked all the right boxes.

"He has an outstanding set of references and an interesting background," says Mr. Moyle. "His background was an interesting blend of private sector experience and some very solid experience with the City of Sudbury. His time at the City of Sudbury was challenging, given some of the political machinations of that place, but based on his references he was very well liked by staff and the community."

Adds Councillor John Abel: "He is definitely going to be an asset to Aurora. He has great credentials and he is very strong in economics and organization. He understands municipal business, so he understands how the organization runs, he understands his relationship to Council, and he demonstrated strong economic development in Sudbury. With our 2C Lands east of Leslie, it was a perfect fit."

Gulf still remains between Highland developers and Ratepayers

By Brock Weir

It has been over a week since Council turned down Highland Gate Developments' offer to sell the former golf course lands to the Municipality for \$98.1 million, but a gulf still remains in ongoing discussions between the developers and area residents.

Following Council's decision on December 8, talks between Highland Gate Developments (HGDI), a partnership between Geranium Homes and landowner ClubLink, and the Ratepayers are ongoing. While their positions remain far apart, so too are the pages they are reading from.

Last week, the concerns of neighbours surrounding the defunct golf course, which HGDI plans to transform into an 180+ unit housing development and 10-storey condo complex pending a review at the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), over

encroachment issues were voiced by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Chris Ballard, but Cheryl Shindruk, Vice President for HGDI, says her group welcomes continued dialogue with anyone willing to do so.

"Anyone who wants to contact us wanting to continue discussions, we are more than willing and happy to carry on those discussions," said Ms. Shindruk last week. "We are preparing for the OMB process and having the pre-hearing, which will be held sometime in the New Year in late February or early March. In the meantime, where there is an interest and a desire by either individual community members of the Ratepayers' Association, those discussions will continue."

According to Ms. Shindruk, an opportunity presented itself last week for the Ratepayers' to present their counterproposal for the site

Continued on page 18

Briefly

CADETS CAN BENEFIT FROM YOUR FESTIVE CHEER

Let's face facts - chances are you're going to have a few empty bottles kicking around after this season's festive cheer. So, why not gather them up and put them to good use? The Queen's York Rangers Army Cadets are asking you to donate your bottles and cans from the season to support their trip to France in 2017 for the 100th anniversary of Canada's Battle at Vimy Ridge. Bottles and cans can be dropped off Saturday, January 2, from 12 noon to 6 p.m., and Sunday, January 3, from 12 noon to 4 p.m. at the John Graves Simcoe Armoury (215 Industrial Parkway South). Pickups can also be arranged by calling 905-726-8600. For more about the trip, or to make a direct donation to the cause, visit www.vimybound.ca.

DO FISH FART?

Don't think it's trying to answer to a question no one asked, but the latest partnership between Aurora's STORM (Save the Oak Ridges Moraine) Coalition and the Ontario Water Centre could be a great conversation. STORM, which is based at Sheppard's Bush Conservation Area, has partnered with the Centre to bring you "Do Fish Fart?" a book for 7 - 12 year olds authored by former editors from OWL Magazine to answer questions collected face-to-face from schoolkids living in the Lake Simcoe watershed, where Aurora lies. For more information, visit www.dofishfart.net. By entering the promo code STORM in your order, 25 per cent of proceeds will come to Save the Oak Ridges Moraine.

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AN EARLY HOLIDAY TREAT

Residents on Aurora's east side got an early holiday treat this past weekend and they're already lovin' it. McDonald's at the corner of Bayview Avenue and Pedersen Drive opened up with great fanfare with a weekend of community celebrations. (Top) Presiding over the opening were Councillors Tom Mrakas and Harold Kim, McDonald's Brand Manager Mae Law-Moore, Mayor Geoff Dawe, Major Brian Bishop of the Salvation Army of Central York Region, Javed Khan, Chair of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, McDonald's owner Peter Miller and Ronald McDonald. Mr. Millar presented the Salvation Army with a \$2,500 donation to mark the occasion. (Middle and Bottom) The celebrations included a number of festive activities for the whole family, including a visit from Santa Claus and his helpers, who kept the crowds enthralled.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger



Tanya, Karen, Joanne, Anne, Carolyn and Damir
Wish You A Safe and Happy Holiday Season



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

LAV opposition is not an “us vs. them” issue

No matter which side of this issue anyone takes, I appreciate the fact that people care enough to voice their views out of respect for the men and women that cenotaphs are intended to honour.

It also does not escape me that the same type of hawk vs. dove arguments have been made before every war, which makes perfect sense.

Monuments take many forms as an expression of appreciation and remembrance, but I think it is worth considering that weapons of various kinds have always been a part of cenotaphs across our country.

Our national cenotaph in Ottawa depicts an incredibly powerful bronze statue of men pulling a canon, with rifles slung over their arms.

Armed soldiers stand at attention before the Unknown Soldier as well as countless small town and big city cenotaphs. Canons, tanks and planes are found in small parks across the country as an act of remembrance that our rights and freedoms have been paid for at a great price.

At the 2011 Mount Pleasant Cemetery re-dedication to one of the Commonwealth’s most decorated armed servicemen, William Barker, VC, DSO & bar (among many other honours) there was a fly-by of both modern and world war one era planes as well as an honorary guard who gave a 21 gun salute.

The newly unveiled monument to Barker has a prop from a World War One plane as its focal point, which is strikingly powerful. As a student of history, I look with a degree of wonderment at anything that can bring history alive and the more context that can be given the better.

To go to the National War Museum in Ottawa and see the tangible evidence of what men and women have done on our collective behalf is something that I think every Canadian should do and to bring even a little piece of our history to be located beside a Cenotaph designed to make us remember is both fitting and appropriate from my perspective.

War is ugly which makes the sacrifices made even more meaningful, but any attempt to separate the loss from the history strikes me as missing the point.

Richard Johnson
Aurora

Aurora can gain in transportation talks

The shortened Environmental Assessment process makes early submissions very necessary.

There is a lot in this for Aurora. Premier Wynne talks about “decarbonizing” transportation and that is commendable, but that can only happen if we are given inviting alternatives: to get our butts out of the cars.

Highland Gate represents one of those huge opportunities that is still in limbo; the rail line widening is yet another one. Just like with the Leslie Street and St John’s Sideroad widenings, these major projects are the low-cost chances to make real progress - on the ground!

And we are fortunate to have the formal planning in place, in the Aurora Trails Master Plan.

So with Premier Wynne solidly advocating from the upper level of government, and Aurora from the lower level, how can Metrolinx say no?

Klaus Wehrenberg
Aurora

To submit a letter to the editor,
please send your email to letters@auroran.com
Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

Machell’s Corners



The Shop Around the Corner



BROCK’S BANTER
Brock Weir

After Aurora United Church burnt down in April 2013 just before Palm Sunday, we heard time and time again that a church is not a building but rather the community that has formed within it.

In the months since then, we have seen this continually demonstrated, whether it was the immediate efforts of the surrounding churches to come to Aurora United’s aid well before the flames burst through its weathered roof, or seeing the community remain united under the welcoming beams of Trinity Anglican just down the street.

In recent weeks, we have seen this ably demonstrated once again as these two faith groups – still working together under one roof, settled in nicely to the realities and struggles that come with any blended family – taking on one more partner in the Newmarket Islamic Centre to settle a Syrian refugee family in Aurora.

For me, this first demonstration was underscored once again earlier this month at a special gathering held at King Richard’s English Pub when one former parishioner of the now-former Father Joe Gorman relayed his admiration for Mr. Gorman’s effort, while still able to tend his flock at Our Lady of Grace, to offer any resources at his disposal to help Aurora United find its feet – again, before the flames broke through to the dull spring sun.

I left the pub buoyed by this memory. After all, I too had been on the scene that day and had seen this intense and immediate outpouring from all directions firsthand.

Despite the tragic circumstances it was, in a strange way, a nice memory to relive as it provided my perception of humanity a great shot in the arm and I was ready to take the holidays on full force with a renewed sense of merry and good will toward man.

Inevitably, with the commercialization of the season, these feelings – however warm and fuzzy – were pushed to the back as I tackled the task at hand: finishing that dreadful ordeal of ticking the last few boxes off the dastardly Christmas shopping list.

This year, our family finally instituted a new, overdue rule in that each adult picks the name of their giftee out of a hat with a budget established well in advance. As luck would have it, this year I drew my younger cousin and he seems to have his heart set on a ukulele.

Not only a ukulele, but a good quality ukulele. I can’t blame the guy. Go big or go home.

It would be a challenge to get a decent one within the budget provided (it should be noted at this point that we younger family members did not have a say in establishing the gift giving budget, but that is really neither here nor there... but it feels like it needs to be said), but this particular cousin is a budding chef and is in charge of cooking the Christmas dinner, so the reasonable thing to do was consider the ukulele purchase an investment in after-dinner entertainment.

Hell, I might even throw in a few additional instruction books to better our chances of a great floorshow at Fam Jam ’16.

By Thursday morning, I finally tracked down a place that seemed to have just what was required, within budget, and an ample selection of music and tutorials available to leaf through.

Glad to have one last thing to worry about, I finished my lunch and headed a few doors down from our office to Aurora’s First Baptist Church, where I was warmly greeted by a long-time parishioner who you will read more about in this week’s issue if you have not done so already.

It was an emotional meeting as she shared her thoughts on this being the last Christmas service she will attend within the confines of what has become an integral part of an alarmingly dwindling group of Aurorans.

“I’m church shopping,” she said, with a distinct crack in her voice, her eyes welling up visibly, all the while maintaining a warm yet determined smile.

It was clear this was a veneer of adventure, but the sorrow of all but being cast adrift could not be ignored.

Although Aurora United Church is currently without a home to call their own, their core remains strong, their church remains as one, and they have lived up to the adage that a church is not a building. Unfortunately for long-time congregants of Aurora’s First Baptist Church, they have had to face up to the cold fact that, sadly, they are now an exception to the rule.

The people were the church but

when their numbers dwindled they were able to take solace in having a spiritual home to call their own. Now, come December 27, that spiritual home will be lost and the remains of the congregation as a whole will join this one particular parishioner in “church shopping.”

I have never been a religious person. I’ve never been drawn to one religion over another. In my experience, each one has something incredibly valuable to offer the individual and the world around it and, when you get down to the basics, all operate on a remarkably similar set of core values and principles.

Although I might take comfort by hedging my bets as an agnostic, I do admire those who have the strength of conviction to make that firm commitment.

Considering those who have made that firm commitment are now being tasked with going out “church shopping” is a moving prospect.

It is certainly going to be a more daunting and difficult task than tracking down that damn ukulele.

But, for those in our community preparing to embark on this spiritual quest, perhaps a thing or two can be learned from the consumerist side of Christmas:

You’re under no time constraints to find that perfect fit before a certain day.

If one particular church, church leader or church community doesn’t fit, you don’t have to battle through the Boxing Week lineups to make an exchange.

If you find your new church just isn’t right for you in six to 12 months, you don’t have to hunt around for that elusive gift receipt to find something that better suits your spiritual décor.

Do some window shopping, have fun in the process, and try something new!

If, by this time next year, you’re still browsing, come together again and hold a post-Christmas potluck. If this ukulele thing really takes off, chances are I will have a bounty of Hawaiian-inspired leftovers to bring. Don’t get your taste buds ready for Spam though; even I have my limits.

We here at The Auroran are taking next week off to mark the Holiday Season. We wish you and yours the very best at this special time of year and will reconvene the week of January 7. Have a very Happy New Year!

THE AURORAN
Aurora’s Community Newspaper

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MP's Report

Kyle Peterson, MP
Newmarket-Aurora

At this special time of year, we all look forward to spending time with family and friends, to taking a break from the hustle and bustle of our daily lives, and to reset for the upcoming year.

It is not unusual to spend some time looking back on the year that was. For me, I would like to take this opportunity to look back on the first few days of the 42nd Parliament of Canada.

The first order of business for the House of Commons was to elect a Speaker. A number of worthy candidates came forward. I was happy to support the Member of Parliament from Halifax West, Geoff Regan. I got to know Geoff when I was a student at Dalhousie Law School in the early 2000s, and he is a fellow alumnus of that school.

He is the first Speaker from Atlantic Canada in nearly a century. I have no doubt he will fulfill his duties admirably.

On December 4, the Governor General read the Speech from the Throne in the Senate. The ceremony and pageantry around the Throne Speech was really quite remarkable.

All Members of Parliament, who at the time were assembled in the House of Commons, were requested to attend the Senate to hear the Speech from the Throne. All 338 MPs made the walk from the House to the Senate, yet only a few could actually fit inside the Senate. The remainder of MPs, including me, gathered just outside the Senate, watching the Speech on a closed circuit television.

The contents of the Throne Speech would come as no surprise to anyone who followed the October Election.

The agenda laid out showed the government is committed to making real change happen by doing different things and by doing things differently. The Speech reiterated the priorities of the campaign: growth for the middle class; an open and transparent government, a clean environment and strong economy, strength in diversity, and preserving security and opportunity for Canadians.

Immediately following the Speech from the Throne, we returned to the House, and debate on the Speech began.

On the second week of the House sitting, the very first motion that was passed enabled the middle-class tax cut. I was proud to vote in favour of this motion as I believe we all benefit when middle class Canadians have more money in their pockets.

After a busy first few days in Ottawa, all Members were anxious to get back to their ridings in time for local Christmas and Holiday events.

It was a whirlwind first sitting, and I was impressed by the quality of my colleagues, on both sides of the House. I look forward to working with all of them to get things done for Canadians.

We have been working hard locally, too, and are about to open our Constituency Office. Stay tuned for the details.

Let me take a moment to wish everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a Joyous New Year. Please take some time to think of those less fortunate, who may find this time of the year a struggle, and help out if you are able.

Please also think of those who cannot be at home this year, especially those in the Canadian Forces. And spend time with your family and loved ones. Soon the break will be over and our busy lives will once again be underway.

From Andrea, Kolton, Kash and me, all our best for 2016.

This is our final issue of 2015 – and what a year it has been! We here at The Auroran – including the latest member of our Auroran family, Carly Shoub, who was born to our sales representative Zach Shoub and his wife Cynthia in the early hours of Monday morning – wish you a very Happy Holiday and a safe and prosperous New Year. We will see you back here on the week of January 7. Merry Christmas!



A Safe and Happy Holiday

2015 is coming to an end but we are lucky to have a chance for a fresh new start in 2016!

I hope that all of you have the opportunity to spend some time with your family and friends celebrating the holiday season.

If you're looking for something to do to ring in the New Year, don't miss Aurora's Family First Night on Wednesday, December 31 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex. This event is sure to be great family fun with games, free activities and community togetherness! Visit www.aurora.ca for more details.

I'm happy to share the good news that Aurora Town Council approved the 2016 operating budget at \$58.2 Million on December 8. The capital budget was previously approved at \$12.4 Million at the Council meeting on October 27.

I was very pleased with the budget process this year – Council had many tools and processes in place to make effective and efficient decisions with minimal impact on residents. Council and staff worked collaboratively to achieve a budget target of a 1.8 per cent increase. This amounts to an additional Town share tax of \$31 per year on a home with an assessed value of \$500,000.

We often refer to the strong health of the Town's finances and it's important that our residents understand the foundation behind this statement. I will address this in more detail next month, but suffice it to say our balance sheet is quite strong!

I have always believed that you cannot run a government like a business – but



IN GOOD COMPANY

Mayor Geoffrey Dawe

you can be "business-like". Over the last five years, I have championed the refinement of the Town's financial planning processes. We have a detailed Asset Management and Ten-Year Capital Investment and Funding Plan that evaluate our individual assets and helps us to decide rehabilitation and replacement needs.

The Town, coupled with other municipalities and associations, continue to lobby the federal and provincial governments for additional revenue sources and more infrastructure funding. The Town must make tough decisions to continue to address our infrastructure funding challenges and ensure that our assets are replaced in time.

The Town continues to ensure optimal and efficient use of tax funds in our daily operations by eliminating duplication, waste and improving our services where possible. I encourage you to learn more about our 2016 budget by visiting www.aurora.ca/budget.

On another note, Aurora Town Council recently approved a Parking Permit Program to address parking concerns in Aurora. Staff developed a program that addresses permit parking

around Town Park, ad-hoc overnight parking and special consideration parking for RVs. The parking program is still in development and is set to start in early 2016.

Also, the Town has received a \$21,615 RBC Learn-to-Play Project grant. Aurora is one of 199 organizations from across the country to receive this grant. The Town is working collaboratively with Sport Aurora, through the Activate Aurora Working Group, to support the projects associated with this grant. These funds help our community to build and deliver quality sport and recreation programs to increase physical activity and participation in sports programs amongst our youth. We are excited about the possibilities that this grant will help us realize.

I also would like to welcome our new CAO, Doug Nadorozny, who will be starting on January 11, 2016. More information on Doug's background can be found on our website and I won't repeat that here. However, I do think it should be pointed out that there were over 120 applicants for this position! A clear indicator that Aurora is considered a desirable place to work.

In closing, during this holiday season I encourage everyone to think about the less fortunate members of our community. Even a "Loonie" or a "Twoonie" can make a difference, so please support our local charities and food bank. Providing support and goodwill is truly the best gift you can give over the holidays.

All the best, please have a safe and happy holiday!

2015: The Year in Review

While there are still several days left in the year, and anything can and will happen in this Town, let's take a look back at 2015 so far in Aurora.

Jan 22 – Even though the pool, rink and fitness facility are closed, the Aurora Family Leisure Complex renovation project manages to keep residents' heart rates up through a series of increasingly ballooning budget cost overruns.

Jan 29 – Sales were obviously not on Target as, after a short period in Town, that retail chain announces it is closing.

Feb 12 – It is not clear whether it's because of the Latin inscription, Royal crown, depiction of Egyptian pyramids or something else, but Council reinstates the Town's original flag because they say it is relevant to today's residents.

Feb 27 - Electronic voting proposed for 2018 is guaranteed to improve the ease of casting a ballot, but not necessarily the quality of the candidates.

Mar 12 – Just how many people asking for the same thing is enough to be noticed by Aurora Council? Obviously a lot more than we think, as despite over 3,000 Aurora residents voting in the recent municipal referendum to reduce Council by two members, Council quickly decides not to even discuss it.

Mar 19 – Those working to keep Aurora beautiful rejoice when Council rejects the proposed clear bag program for curbside garbage pickup.

Apr 2 - Venues in Paris, Rome and



INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

Hawaii brace for the potential revenue loss when it is announced that weddings will be allowed at Aurora Town Hall.

Apr 29 - The province commits to all day GO service, while the Town refuses to commit to any parking being available after the 4th train of the day.

May 21 – When Magna announces it is leaving Aurora for King in two years, the Town's reaction is such that it's excellent timing that Council recently rejected plans to audio record its closed door sessions.

Jun 18 – Cell towers continue to be residents' most hated proposed infrastructure, narrowly beating out super mailboxes and speed humps.

Jul 16 – Aurorans get a hint that the costs may be higher than expected for the Town's proposed new radio station when it is revealed the call letters will be "CHR\$".

Aug 6 - Hotel chains eager to establish themselves in Aurora balk at financial conditions imposed by Council, including

extremely high municipal development charges, and a cut of mini-bar proceeds.

Sep 9 – Queen Elizabeth's reign of over 63 years is longer than the number of years of active Aurora Council-based lawsuits, although both are still going strong.

Sep 17 – The City of Hamilton is successful in winning its suit against Canada Post over placement of super mailboxes, thereby saving Aurora \$10,000, but is unsuccessful in convincing our Town to part with any of those savings to help defer Hamilton's legal costs.

Oct 19 - New riding boundaries may have resulted in Aurora being split, but voters are not, with the Liberals easily winning both local ridings.

Nov 21 – Council gets serious about moving forward on making a decision on the Cultural Precinct by commissioning a study of all the previous studies on moving forward that have been completed to date on this topic.

Dec 8 – After Council refuses to consider purchasing the property, Highland Gate residents hope to encourage a change of heart by renaming the area "Mavrinac West".

Dec 17 – Council's newly accelerated budget process kindly lets residents know how much more they'll be paying in taxes next year, so they can factor that into their Christmas shopping budget.

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

NEW AURORAN POLL

How long do you keep your New Year's Resolutions?

A) One Week
B) One Month
C) Full Year
D) Still going!
E) January 1, 12:05 a.m.

Go to www.theauroran.com to vote!

Previous Poll Results

Was Council right to turn down Highland Gate Developments Inc.'s \$98.1 million offer to sell the former golf course lands?

RESULTS TO DATE	YES	NO	UNSURE
December 21, 2015	67%	25%	8%

Students and teachers at St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School take the lesson of "Service to Others" to heart. From Left: Mme Raposa, Natalie, Sydney, Julia, Mme Midiema, Michael, Phillip, Mme Varone, Thea and Hayley.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir



St. Joseph students turn down the heat and turn up the giving

By Brock Weir

School's out for the winter break, but as kids from St. Joseph Elementary School were getting ready to wrap up the first half of their year, the cheers ringing out as the last bell pealed were probably coupled with the sound of a few chattering teeth.

But it was all for a good cause as the school turned down their heat by two degrees for Toonies for Warmth. In the student-led initiative, the students this year braved the cold and put their toonies forward for the right to wear their favourite sweaters to school – ugly Christmas sweaters or otherwise – to raise money for St. Vincent de Paul.

"We dropped the temperature for two reasons: one, it is an eco-initiative with energy conservation and we are not abusing the energy we have been provided and, two, it gives kids a sense of what it feels like to be cold," explains teacher Luisa Raposo. "They are lucky enough to have a warm sweater to keep them warm, but a lot of homeless or needy families don't have warm food or warm clothes, so the \$2 is kind of symbolic. We're a dress code school, so we get to wear our civvies, and the money goes to our neighbours in Oak Ridges and Aurora to clothe the needy with warm clothes, and feed the hungry with warm food."

The Toonies for Warmth campaign is just the latest Ms. Raposo and fellow teacher Josie Varone have been spearheading with their students since September. Calling themselves the Luke 4:18 Club after the Bible passage highlighting service to others, their efforts have included a good representation in the Terry Fox Run in September, a Thanksgiving Food Drive dubbed the "Turkey Run" and, this holiday season, the "Elf Run."

"This was a toiletry drive where a child was able to bring in an item and we gave each class points to keep the kids motivated and excited," says Ms. Varone. "They got a point for each item they brought in and the high need items [such as] laundry detergent, diapers, and packages of men's and women's socks – were five points. The kids brought in items for about a week and a half and the group actually got to go with teachers as they organized to help put the hampers together."

These young students are old hands at putting packages together for people in need. Operation Christmas Child, which tasks students putting together shoeboxes of gifts for needy kids abroad, is a particularly popular initiative within the St. Joseph Community. Normally the school takes on the challenge every other year: 2015 was slated to be an off-year, but the students would hear none of that.

But they have heard plenty about the Syrian Refugee Crisis. With this humanitarian issue receiving such widespread attention, it captured the imagination of students at St. Joseph. They began to feel a personal connection with those affected, says the teacher, and spurred them into action to learn more and do what they could to help, hosting a fundraising sock hop and snack bar for Hallowe'en to benefit Project Hope.

"At each of our meetings, we start with a prayer and in that prayer we try to raise with the students awareness of how each individual person can make a difference as a whole," says Ms. Varone. "Each person can make a difference if we work together as a whole and the whole idea of working together really resonates with them. Alone, we can't do very much, but together collectively we can do a lot to help others in need. That is our focus; to share our talents with others and be of service to others."

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AND
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ENTREE
Please Choose One - Vegetarian option available, please inquire.

Mixed seafood platter, Baked lobster tail, sea scallops, black cod with potato gratin, vanilla saffron sauce & Aspiration
OR
 Duck Confit with a creamy mushroom risotto, poached shallot & brussel sprout leaves
OR
 Two 4oz filet mignon, caramelized onion tart, truffled fingerling potatoes, King Oyster mushroom, fresh asparagus & demi-glace.

DESSERT
Cherry Whiskey infused cheesecake atop a chocolate cookie graham base

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Name _____ Meal Time _____

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First Baptist Church prepares for last ever Sunday service December 27

From page 1

able to greet from her prime position has dwindled and this Sunday, December 27, Ms. Harrison will be welcoming church members for the very last time as First Baptist Church holds its final service after 132 years of serving the Aurora community.

Ms. Harrison looks around the building with pride, pointing out decorations prepared for Christmas services, as well as dusty old framed photos that have been salvaged. Everything that is not nailed in or screwed down is destined for a new home, whether it is the Aurora Museum and Archives or other area churches.

But, as she sits down in her regular pew, this pride is tempered with emotion.

“Our church is small and it is like a family,” she says. “We are hoping we can all go to another church that would have the same beliefs that we do, and that will be able to inspire what we have in our church and increase the congregation, but even if we don’t go to the same churches, I know we will stay together as a family because we are a family.”

This family has its earliest roots in King Township. As Aurora’s population grew, so too did the need for a Baptist church to call its own. There has been a church on the site since 1883 and the cornerstone for the present building was laid in 1964.

At one time, the congregation of First Baptist Church topped 200, but with a core group now sitting in the neighbourhood of just 20, the church made the tough decision to sell up this summer, with the sale to land developers closing this past Tuesday, December 15.

“It is a hard decision because we weren’t being good stewards of our money,” says Ms. Harrison. “When you’re spending more money than you’re taking in, it is just not a good move. The money that we have could do a lot of good in the community. We put the church up for sale and it was sold, but we were all hoping and praying it could go on. We came to a reality check about a month ago and said, ‘We did make the right decision’ because of the finances.

“We didn’t have enough to keep going. We have a beautiful pastor in Pamela Fitkin who has been with us since September and I think if she came in maybe five years ago we would have been able to rejuvenate and bring back the congregation, but in a short time of a few months,

there is no way we can bring the congregation back to have enough people to keep it going.”

This struggle for renewal and rejuvenation, says Ms. Harrison, was at the core of the church’s issue. Having become a member in 1981, there was a noticeable drop-off in youth participation to the extent she and her husband looked to a church in King to keep their own kids engaged in their faith. By the time they went out in the world, the parents returned to the home parish, but the struggle to draw in the youth remained.

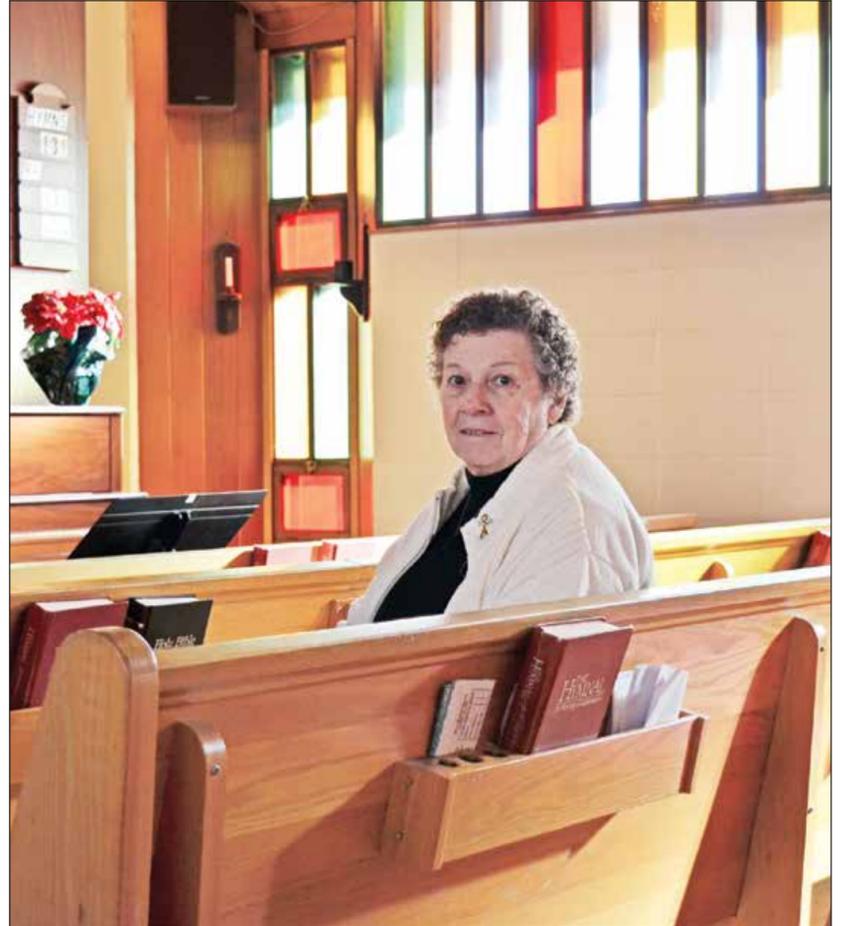
“The church dies if you can’t get your youth to come out,” says Ms. Harrison, noting most of the congregation is now in their 70s and 80s. “There was a time when everyone would know the beige school bus that went around Town that would bring the kids in. We had a strong Sunday school here. But, then there was a difference of opinion here in the late 1980s. It split the church and a lot of people found other churches to go to. Since that time, the congregation has become less and less.

“I don’t think we kept up with the times. You have to change your music, you have to have something to draw in the kids. You have to have their interest and make sure they know that they are not afraid God is a person who is going to have a wrath on you, not be a Bible thumper, but that God is a caring person. As long as you have faith and hope you can have a future. Sometimes with the kids, it is very hard to stand up. I think peer pressure makes it very hard for kids to stand up and say, ‘this is what I believe.’ Sometimes right now we have too many followers and not enough leaders.”

The First Baptist Church, however, has had its leaders. Perhaps one of its lasting and most immediate legacies is the creation of the Aurora Food Pantry which was founded by late parishioner Lorna Rummenie in the church basement and continues to serve the community on Industrial Parkway South.

As the congregation gets ready to mark its final Christmas in their church and its last ever service on December 27 at 11 a.m., Ms. Harrison says she hopes those who have left the church, those with fond memories, will come out one last time to say goodbye to an old friend.

“I would love to see people come out who have good memories to say farewell and wish the best to the people who are here in finding a new home,” she says.



Dianne Harrison, long-time parishioner at Aurora’s First Baptist Church, sits in the church’s chapel, which is decorated for the Christmas season. As the congregation prepares to go their separate ways on December 27 after 132 years of worship, Ms. Harrison hopes those with happy memories of the church will come out one last time to say farewell.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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Gorman's power for communication benefits patients at Toronto hospital

By Brock Weir

As she sat in the pews of Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church, Barb Collins says she saw something special in the man leading the service.

The Chief Operating Officer of Toronto's Humber River Regional Hospital was struck by the way Father Joe Gorman attracted people. It's a skill, she says, that not everybody had, and he

had it in spades.

But Gorman's time at the helm of Our Lady of Grace (OLG) was cut short earlier this year after Cardinal Thomas Collins asked Gorman to step away from the church for a time citing "financial irregularities" and "involvement in marriages not sanctioned by the Catholic Church."

According to the Archdiocese of Toronto, the marriage in question

involved Gorman presiding over a ceremony where one of the individuals had been previously married and had not received the required annulment within the Catholic Church – and in an Anglican chapel.

The "financial irregularities" involved a special collection for a local charity, the Rose of Sharon Services for Young Mothers, which did not follow the guidelines of the Archdiocese.

After a couple of months of consideration, and considerable prayer, Gorman announced his decision to leave the Priesthood.

While many parishioners expressed anger over the Archdiocese's treatment of Gorman, for Ms. Collins, this eventually gave way to a sense of opportunity.

Gorman now serves at Humber River Regional Health Centre as the Director of Bioethics, Ethics and Spiritual Care.

"Healthcare is all about communication: families communicating with our staff, communicating with our physicians, and I really believe that is a real strength of his," says Ms. Collins. "He cares about people, he wants them to be happy, and he communicates beautifully."

Ms. Collins was on hand at King Richard's English Pub recently, along with hundreds of OLG parishioners and members of the Aurora and Newmarket communities at large, for a reunion with Gorman and to collect much needed grocery cards, gift cards, and cash for Rose of Sharon and Southlake Regional Health Centre.

Restaurant owner Tim Brochu, a 10-year parishioner at OLG, had no hesitation in turning over the entire pub to Mr. Gorman for the event.

It was a way to foster the continued links between Mr. Gorman and the community but, in Mr. Brochu's view, these links have never been broken.

"I was an altar boy at the age of five and there was always this weird connection with the church as far as I had to go and my parents making me go," said Mr. Brochu. "When we moved here from Quebec, we went to church and I helped out Father Tim and everyone else, but I always felt like I had to go to church because of who I was."

"When Joe came on board, it wasn't a chore anymore. As an usher, we had to set up chairs outside for people. We had to talk about putting TVs in the lobby and stuff like that. It was so different than I have ever experienced. Joe is still very viable in Town and involved here in Aurora and Newmarket. The turnout of people is just unreal. We are at capacity, the box is beyond full, and we hope it is an annual thing."

These were sentiments echoed throughout the bar as the evening progressed.

In addition to representatives from Humber River, the event also had healthy representation from Southlake Regional Health Centre, Microsoft, and the Rice Group, in addition to Councillor John Abel, former MPP Frank Klees, and former councillor Don Constable.

Like Mr. Brochu, Mr. Constable's interest in Our Lady of Grace was also reinvigorated by Mr. Gorman.

"He has a way of cutting not only through the red tape, but the bull," said Mr. Constable. "He never judges people, he's caring, and my closest link to Joe is I have a niece who lives in Newmarket and she lives next to Joe's parents. Seven or eight years ago, she was diagnosed with osteosarcoma and they wanted to take her leg off. Fortunately, she didn't lose her leg, she got through the cancer, and Joe is still picking her up on Friday and taking her to her swimming therapy."

"Joe has no more time to do that than anybody else, but he does it. He even takes Cameron, her little brother, and that is the thing I love about Joe. I didn't know enough about Fr. Joe the Priest because I have been in the church off and on for years. The last time I had been there, Fr. Don was there, who I liked because he was a no bullshit kind of guy. That's what I liked about Joe. He is still spiritual, but he had love and compassion and brought people together."

Around the Christmas season, there is no greater cause than to ensure people in the community have what many of us take for granted, said M. Klees, and social issues are an area Mr. Gorman has shown "tremendous leadership" over the years.

"He expresses what many people would like to express but can't," says Mr. Klees. "That is a love of community, a love of people, and he embodies that. I believe his influence in the community is going to continue for many, many years because he has established credibility, he has established the trust, and people are here for two reasons; Joe and the cause he represents tonight."

Added Mary Rice: "The priest we have now is a wonderful man, don't get me wrong, but I think Joe has a place in all of our hearts."



POTENTIAL STOCKING STUFFERS? This week, those neat little items you find in your stocking just might happen to fall under the banner of "Buy Local." As always, local churches and organizations in the lead-up to the holiday season stepped up their game bringing together a wide array of crafts, baked goods, and gently used items to brighten the season. (Left) Volunteers at Our Lady of Grace offered a selection of tempting treats at their Christmas Bazaar while over at Trinity Anglican Church, Mayor Geoff Dawe caught up with Welcoming Arms volunteer – and former Citizen of the Year – Beverley Wood, as shoppers did the rounds.

Auroran photos by Brock Weir

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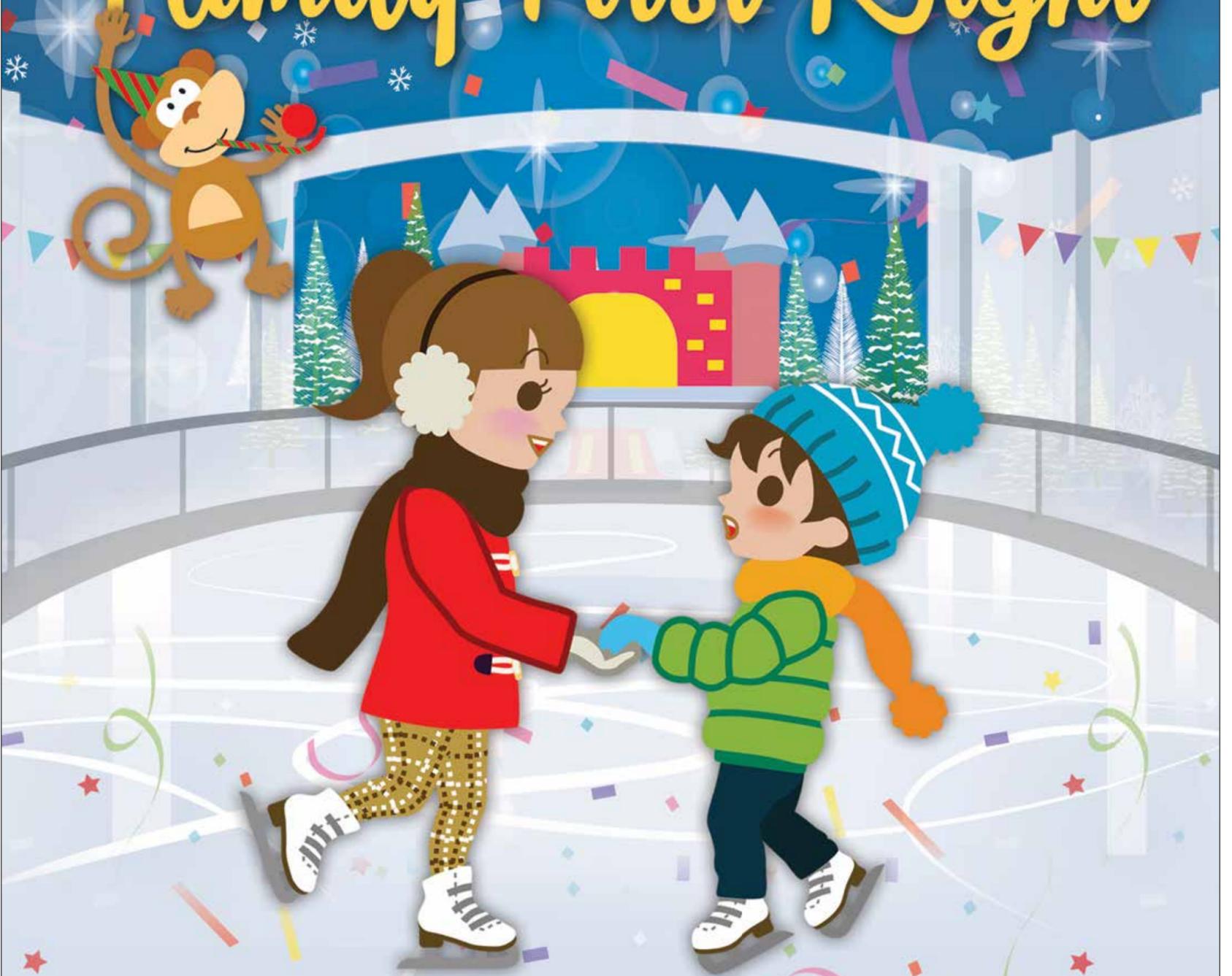


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— THE AURORAN — Arts & Culture

Get into some monkey business on New Year's Eve

By Brock Weir

As we count down to the end of 2015, some of us are looking forward for a legitimate excuse to get down to some Monkey Business – and you

can get a head start on New Year's Eve this year at the Town of Aurora's Family First Night.

2016, according to the Chinese Zodiac, is the Year of the Monkey and, as such, this brought about a brainstorm of endless possibilities for Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora, on how to make this a New Year's Eve to remember for the entire family.

"I want people to enjoy the rest of the year because this is going to be the Year of the Monkey and the monkey will be swinging in soon enough," says Ms. Ware. "When you look at the monkey, according to the Chinese Zodiac, their attributes are happy, flexible, enthusiastic, confident, skillful, inventive and clever. If those attributes are really true about this year coming up, I think the Town as a whole, as well as the individual departments, are in for a really exciting year!"

To get in on the excitement from the ground floor, head over to the Aurora Family Leisure Complex on Industrial Parkway North next Thursday, December 31, beginning at 6 p.m. for a series of fun activities for the whole family, including free skating and swimming from 6 – 8 p.m. monkey-themed children's

activities, including crafts, face painting, inflatables, skills games, reptile shows, magic shows, a Mad Science Demonstration, and a chance to check out Monkeytastix, a fun program for physical literacy that takes the humble jungle gym to the next level.

In addition to 2016 being the Year of the Monkey, fresh inspiration also came from Family First Night's newly improved venue. Last year, the event was held at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex as the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC) was under renovation.

The change in scenery presented a few logistical challenges but, for Ms. Ware, it was well worth the wait getting back to the AFLC.

"We're going to be able to offer some exciting activities that the previous space just couldn't accommodate," she says. "We're going to have two much larger bouncy castles, have the space for Mad Science with dry ice bringing in the winter theme, and we are very fortunate to have a local jazz ensemble coming in to perform in the open upper hallways. The entire building will be filled with their music, which is a really new addition.

I have always wanted to have some form of music at this event, but space has always been tight. This is great for us.

"We aren't cramped anymore. We're not limited to having some mini-golf in a random hallway. Now we have a complete room set aside for the reptile shows, which is fully encased in windows so everyone will be able to see, we have a room now completely dedicated to magic shows which we didn't have before, and we're thrilled in this space the public will be able to relax, spread their wings, and not be in such cramped quarters."

As she looks ahead to next week's celebrations, Ms. Ware says she always enjoys the element of surprise – watching people coming in "with their own agenda to do a certain game" and having that all go by the wayside when they unexpectedly run into a friend or neighbour who then go about Family First Night together.

"There is always laughter and that is always cool to see."

Family First Night takes over the AFLC (135 Industrial Parkway North) from 6 – 9 p.m. on New Year's Eve. For more information, call 905-726-4762.

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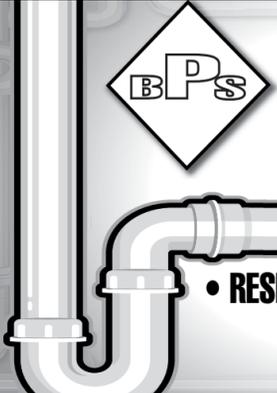
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A CHRISTMAS CLASSIC

Kids gather at the Aurora Cultural Centre this month for a performance of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, brought to life by members of the Humber River Shakespeare Company in Brevik Hall. The performance, which has become an annual tradition at the Centre's A Victorian Christmas Afternoon, took its final bow this season after a long-running tour. The Company promises a return to the Centre next year with a new seasonal offering – but they remain mum on what treats they have in store for the Aurora community. Watch this space!

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger



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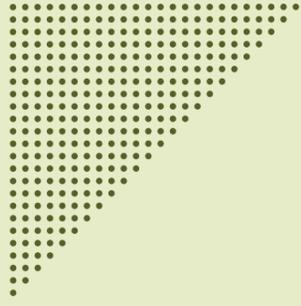
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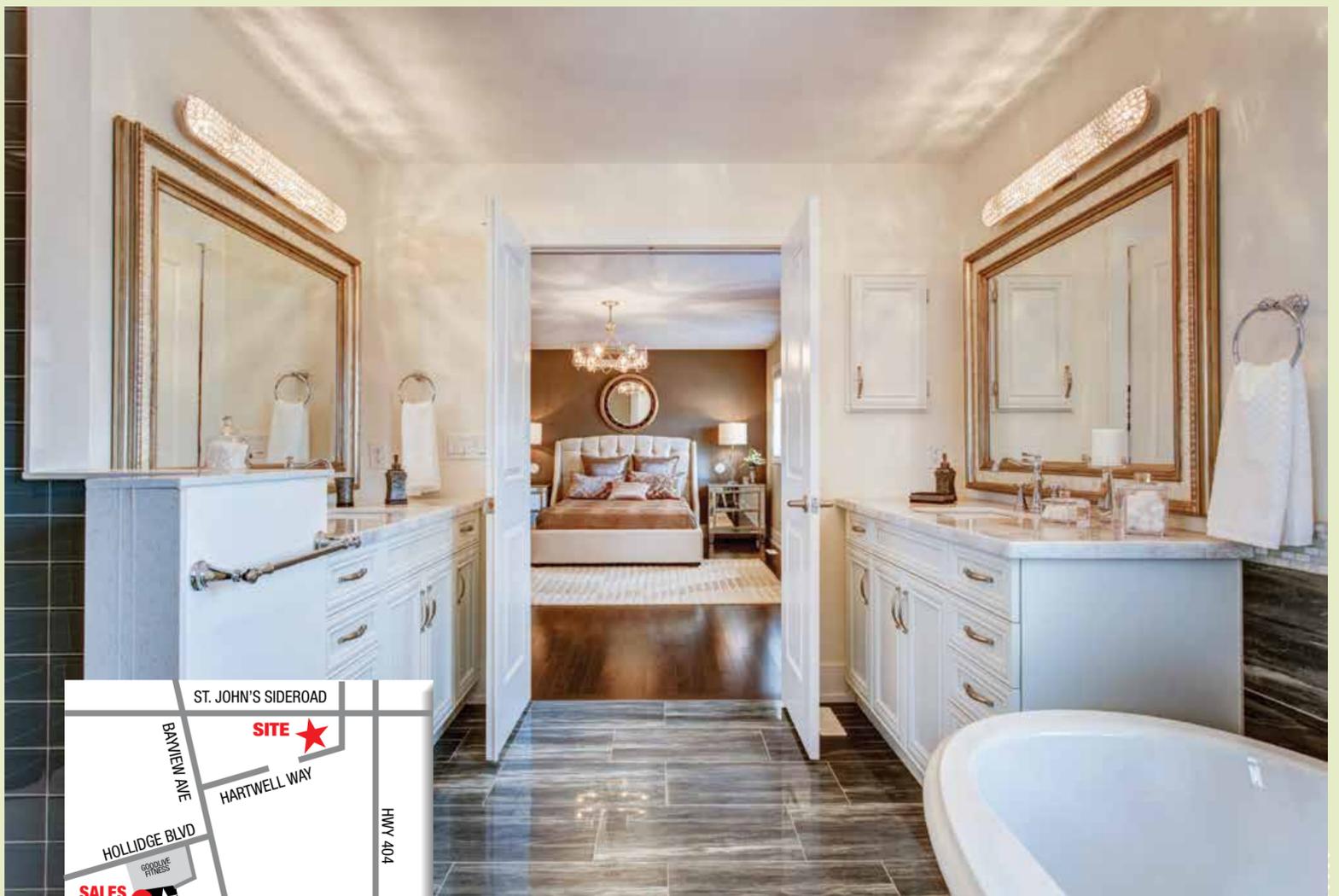
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Williams students prepare to unleash the power of art

By Brock Weir

Abigail Kearney is ready for battle. As the co-chair of Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School's Arts Council, she knows that artists like to procrastinate just a little bit.

But it's crunch time. Many students use this time of year to relax and regroup before heading back to the schoolroom grind in January, but these young artists have just a couple of weeks to finish their striking art pieces before their art exhibition opens at the Aurora Cultural Centre on January 6.

As they put the last touches on their art, they're not just creating feasts for the eyes, they are also looking to make a statement as they prepare to take on the world after graduating this June.

"Art is something I think has a huge impact, whether it is visual arts, music, culinary arts, dramatics, or anything like that," says Abbey. "I think a lot can be said through art and what is really exciting about our show is we're just trying to show art is something through which you can change the world and you can express yourself in so many different ways. It is one of those things where your emotion can be expressed so clearly through and people can have such different interpretations.

"Our show is just about demonstrating how art can change somebody's life and how it can be used



Abbey Kearney, co-president of the Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School Arts Council, left, gets some pre-holiday pointers from Aurora Cultural Centre curator Stephanie Nicolo ahead of the Grade 12 student art show, which opens at the Centre in the New Year. The dual exhibitions from Williams and St. Max grads opens to the public on Wednesday, January 6. Auroran photo by Brock Weir

to show creative purpose."

As projects are completed and she and Kylie, her co-president, get a sneak peek at the art to come, they are seeing this social activism component of the show quickly take shape. There is a bounty of pieces on world hunger, a significant number of pieces on violence against women, the LGBTQ community, and "bringing a light to issues" that might not be popular, but are certainly prevalent.

While Abbey might be co-president of her school's Arts Council, her artistic

interests lie firmly in the musical realm, with a passion for dance. The talent for visual arts – photography – is Kylie's passion. That being said, helping curate a show like this has provided Abbey with a unique learning opportunity.

"Looking at the artwork that has been created I have learned so much about the world," she says. "Just the amount of energy people have put into their pieces is incredible. As someone who stands by and watches them do it, it is crazy. The amount of passion and thought that goes into a single project is incredible and in terms of coordinating the event, I have definitely learned that it takes a lot more than you think it does.

"I have always expressed myself in other ways. I dance about 12 hours a week and have found it is something that helps me release emotion and stuff like that. It is amazing to see people express it in different ways. Seeing it is just so inspiring. When I see the artwork, I feel the same way I do when I am dancing. It is the same level of inspiration, the same level of emotion, the same level of awe."

This is the second year Williams' outgoing crop of art grads are taking over the Cultural Centre galleries, this time sharing the space with their fellow east-of-Yonge high school, St. Maximilian Kolbe. Stephanie Nicolo of the Aurora Cultural Centre is providing the students with a curatorial helping hand and she too has found inspiration in the pieces she has seen so far.

"What we are seeing is an organic growth of this high school program and more and more elements beyond visual arts being involved," says Ms. Nicolo. "At the Cultural Centre, we're not just about the visual arts; we're about all the arts. What is so intriguing for the future is there are going to be more components, more spoken word, more musical elements, more poetry, and even more dance in music. These elements are going to find their way into the high school program come January."

In our next issue, The Auroran will catch up with Grade 12 art students from St. Max, who are looking to go out with a splash.

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Last remaining horse barn to be preserved at Hillary House

By Brock Weir

It's Christmas and at this time of year you probably need no reminder that some interesting things can happen in a barn, and one of Aurora's last horse barns – well, theoretically, a garage – is set to be shaken up in the year ahead.

But this isn't your grandmother's garage. Maybe your great-grandmother's.

Chances are you pass it every day on Yonge Street taking little notice of the green-timbered barn, but this unimposing structure is, in reality, Aurora's oldest surviving garage – built specifically for a buggy and the single horse to power it.

Lying behind the historic Horton Place house at the corner of Yonge Street and Irwin Avenue, which is currently undergoing extensive interior renovations, the little barn is set to be dismantled from its current site and reconstructed just a couple of doors north at Hillary House National Historic Site.

"Our mission is to try and save the building from obliteration and restore it to its original splendour," says John Green of the Aurora Historical Society, who are spearheading fundraising efforts to make the move possible. "It is a coach house and the only remaining example in Aurora of a small barn or shed that was used to house a horse and buggy for use by the family.

"The lower area had a horse stall for the horse and storage for a buggy or sleigh. The upper loft was used to store feed for the horse. It has excellent proportions and represents a fine example of its type, built in 1876."

The coach house is currently located behind Horton Place, which was sold by local historian John McIntyre earlier this summer. The interior is currently gutted and being overhauled to office use by its new owners. They have given the AHS permission to dismantle the

barn and move it as quickly as possible to its new abode to allow for more parking behind the house.

"The AHS wants to take advantage of this opportunity and in doing so, preserve and make use of the only remaining example of a coach house built in the late 1800s," says Mr. Green. "Our progress to date has been to organize a pre-planning meeting with representatives of the Ontario Heritage Trust to gain their approval to re-erect the coach house on the Hillary House property. Our goal is to be able to show the public an example of a car garage from the 1800s and also to be able to use the coach house for the storage of artefacts which we urgently need to free up space within Hillary House to allow the public to view rooms that are currently unavailable for public access as they are being used for storage."

Mr. Green brought his appeal to Aurora's Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) last week, which enthusiastically embraced the project – after assurances the \$14,500 bill to restore and reconstruct the building would be shouldered by the AHS and overseen by Peter Van Nosterand, an expert in the field with a family connection to Hillary House, who restored and reconstructed Petch House, one of Aurora's oldest surviving dwellings, behind the Aurora Seniors' Centre."

"I think it is wonderful you have salvaged this building," said Councillor – and HAC Chair – Jeff Thom. "It wouldn't have happened without the Aurora Historical Society coming forward. Everyone who loves heritage in this Town knows you do a great job."

Added Councillor Wendy Gaertner: "It is fantastic you want to do this."

Following HAC's approval of the project last week, their recommendations are slated to be before Council for final ratification at the first Council meeting of the New Year, currently scheduled for January 26.

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Precinct Plan calls for changes to Town Park, Armoury

By Brock Weir

The Aurora Farmers' Market has called Wells Street home for nearly a decade, but if the plan for Aurora's proposed Cultural Precinct is embraced, it might be able to find longer-lasting success within Town Park itself.

This was the long-term vision charted at the last Council meeting by planners Sarah Millar and Michael Stott of FOTENN, consultants tasked with charting a vision for Aurora's Downtown Core starting in Town Park and radiating out to Yonge Street in the west and the GO Tracks in the east.

"It is a beautiful site and quite a unique little gem for the Town of Aurora, but the question really was how do we program to maximise that space?" said Ms. Millar of Town Park. "You already have a lot of great things happening there, but the question is: is it in the right place, and is it actually capturing the right audience and the key people in the precinct for as long as possible?"

At this point, it's probably safe to assume that answer is no.

In their vision, the consultants suggest eliminating the current baseball diamond in the southwest corner of the park, relocating the existing band shell to this corner and creating a "great lawn" spreading eastward to the edge of Town Park.

"This is to encourage everyone to have a space to sit down, have a picnic, throw a Frisbee, so it is not tied to structured recreational space," she said.

The space currently occupied by the band shell, she added, would be the perfect place for a permanent outdoor Farmers' Market.

"This Central Plaza is where we see the Aurora Farmers' Market relocating longer-term," said Ms. Millar. "Currently, they operate on Wells Street and while we think that is wonderful, we think the opportunity to put them back into the park would offer

a long-term solution to maintaining space for them in the heart of Aurora."

Instrumental in the success of their vision for the north half of the park are radical changes to the historic Aurora Armoury, which was purchased by the Town of Aurora from the Department of National Defence last year.

In Ms. Millar's view, the Armoury will prove to be a "fantastic asset" to Town Park as a whole, if used in the right way – specifically, opening up the west wall of the building to the rest of the park.

"Rather than just having a front door along Mosley Street, the idea would be to open that building to the park and create an indoor-outdoor space," she said. "We see the space immediately adjacent to the Armoury being a skating rink in the winter, possibly a roller skating rink or splash pad in the summer. The Armoury would be the place where you could rent skates, there could be a little café in there, and it would encourage parents to sit and give people reasons to stay."

Town Park is the third of three sections of the Downtown Core tackled within the Cultural Precinct Plan. In addition to the wide-ranging possibilities in Block One, which includes the block bordered by Mosley Street and Church Street in the north and south, and Yonge and Victoria in the west and east, land occupied by Trinity Anglican Church is the lynchpin connecting this area to Town Park.

"It is obviously a beautiful site with a stunning church, some heritage trees and beautiful frontage, but we do see there are opportunities to re-organize that surface parking so you're not actually losing space, but will allow for pedestrian movement through that middle walk," said Ms. Millar. "It is in the interest of producing a pedestrian connection, a mid-block pedestrian connection from Yonge Street all the way to Town Park."

The Cultural Precinct Draft Plan is expected to be debated by Council members beginning January 19.



FESTIVAL OF LIGHT – Hanukkah was marked in Aurora earlier this month with a special Menorah Lighting Ceremony hosted by the York Regional Police. Dignitaries from across York Region at the Municipal and Regional levels were joined by representatives from Chabad Flamingo and youth choirs to mark the observance. The Menorah Lighting Ceremony is a yearly tradition from the YRP and is now regularly held at their Don Hillock Drive headquarters. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

Interfaith group's Syrian refugee application accepted

By Brock Weir

It is news that has been a long time coming, but the Interfaith Refugee Resettlers will know more about the Syrian refugee family they are sponsoring before the end of the year.

The Interfaith Refugee Resettlers (IRR) is, as the name suggests, an interfaith collective of members from Aurora United Church, the Newmarket Islamic Centre, and Trinity Anglican Church, that will sponsor at least one refugee family from Syria.

Founded earlier this year, the group has struck committees, completed their required paperwork, and raised enough funds for this first family while working with AURA to make their pledge a reality. Since mid-fall, however, there has been something of a waiting game to learn of the next steps, but now that individuals and families are being processed at refugee camps there is light at the end of the tunnel.

"We are committed to sponsoring at least one refugee family and hopefully more families in the future," says Karen Kines, a member of Aurora United Church, on behalf of the IRR. "We have been supported in our efforts by AURA, a charitable organization

assisting in the sponsorship and resettlement of refugees. Our team has now completed our training with AURA and the exciting news is our sponsorship application has been accepted! Before the New Year we will know who our family will be and they will arrive in Canada in the late winter or early spring."

In the meantime, however, there are still ways for the community at large to get involved. The IRR is asking the community to consider a financial donation to the cause.

"Sponsoring a family means we commit to providing all financial and practical support for one full year after they arrive in Canada," says Ms. Kines. "We are grateful to our compassionate and generous community for their support and commitment to this project."

Donations will be accepted through the mail, with cheques payable to the faith group of their choice, with "Refugee Fund" noted. They can be reached at Interfaith Refugee Resettlers, c/o Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria Street, Aurora ON L4G 1R3.

For more information, email irrctee@gmail.com or follow them on Facebook at Interfaith Refugee Resettlers.



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Christmas Decorating 101

"How can I decorate for the season without overwhelming my small-ish space?"

I am often asked about decorating small spaces, not just at the holidays.

With beautiful new buildings popping up all over the city, many people are making the move to condo and townhome living. Because the average new condo in the GTA is under 800 square feet, furniture companies are now manufacturing more and more "apartment sized" styles of furniture and décor items.

The first thing to be mindful of is scale: it's important to make sure your pieces are the correct size so that they don't overwhelm your space. The same goes for your Christmas and holiday décor. Companies are now starting to make condo-sized Christmas trees. When choosing ornaments for the tree, be mindful of their size. Buying oversized ornaments can make your pint-sized tree look small and cheesy. Simplicity is key in tight spaces. Keep your ornaments simple and elegant.

If fitting a tree into your space just isn't an option try one of these 'outside the box' ideas: Put some evergreen branches in vases and hang some ornaments off of them or, hang ornaments from a wall in the shape of a Christmas tree. Hang some ornaments from the ceiling or even from an existing chandelier! Done right, this will look fabulous.

Another great way to pack punch into a small home is by creating a beautifully decorated mantelpiece to star as the focal point of the room. Start by switching out your regular art that you have hanging above the fireplace for a wreath or a beautiful family photograph. Putting a mirror over the fireplace will help to reflect light making your space feel larger. It will also reflect the colour of any decorations you add to your fireplace making it feel even more festive!

Drape a garland across the mantel, and anchor the ends of it with clusters of red carnations or poinsettias. Why

not add a grouping of hurricane vases with red or white candles? This will create an elegant and comfortable feel. Are you having kids over for the holiday festivities? If you're looking for a more funky and colourful holiday look, fill mason jars with brightly coloured ornaments, candy canes, string lights and gift bows for a fresh take on mantel décor.

Entertaining at the holidays always highlights the fact that we never have enough seating in our homes – especially if we've just downsized. One way to downplay this problem is to use an eclectic mix of dining chairs. By having various styles of seating you can easily get away with pulling some chairs away from the table and adding them to your living space while your guests are visiting.

To conserve space, especially when adding additional pieces of holiday décor, try to include multifunctional furniture in your design scheme. A bench by the front door or at the foot of your bed can be pulled out into the den for additional seating at the holidays. Don't forget hidden storage! You can hide a multitude of household items in a storage bench or ottoman. Tuck your everyday throw cushions, accessories and tchotchkes away to make room for your holiday items!

The last thing I'll mention is that there is a lot to be said for ambience. Decorate the front door to set the holiday inspired tone for your guests as soon as they arrive. You can create atmosphere without taking up any space at all. Light some pine or gingerbread scented candles – whatever scent makes you feel 'home for the holidays'. Throw on some Christmas tunes and you're good to go!

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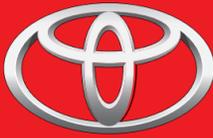






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FREE Week of December 24, 2015

Midget Tigers hang on to first in York-Simcoe standings

By Jake Courtepatte

The highest-tiered team in Aurora Minor Hockey can take their holiday break in high spirits sitting atop the York-Simcoe League pyramid.

Entering December, the Midget AA Tigers rode a five-game winning streak into their final tournament of the season in Kingston earlier this month.

There they continued to dominate opponents, reaching the final without a loss in five tournament games.

Ultimately, a 3 - 2 loss to the Cumberland Grads brought the Tigers back down to earth.

It has been a short-but-rough go since, claiming one win in three games of league play, coming last Wednesday in a 4 - 0 drubbing of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Clippers. Most recently, the Tigers allowed three-straight goals from the Newmarket Redmen at Magna Centre, after Brendin Ramsay put the Tigers ahead 1 - 0 early on a



Brendin Ramsay scores on a wraparound in the first few minutes of the Midget AA Aurora Tigers' 3 - 1 loss to the Newmarket Redmen on Thursday.

Auroran photo
by Jake Courtepatte

nice wraparound goal.

The 3 - 1 loss, however, still leaves the Tigers sitting pretty, heading into a two-week break before the finale of the season. At 14-5-2, they remain seven points up on the TNT Tornados for first in league standings, and have ten more goals on the scoresheet than any other opponent.

A boost to that record could come

when they return to the ice on January 3, hosting the last-place Georgina Blaze. Two tough opponents close out the season for the Tigers, facing both the Tornados and Markham Waxers in mid-January, perhaps the only two teams that could catch Aurora this late in the game.

For schedules and standings, visit www.auroraminorhockey.com.

Barbarians name annual award winners

By Jake Courtepatte

The Aurora Barbarians Rugby Club honoured some familiar faces, along with some new ones, with the organization's annual bevy of awards last weekend.

Longtime Barbarian Tim Brochu took home the Bob Martin President's Award, given annually to a member that has made great contributions to the club outside of a playing capacity. Brochu has been involved with the organization since 2009, with three children who have worn the Barbarian kit. He now serves as vice president of the Barbarians.

A name synonymous with experience within the club is Marco Di Girolamo, named the 2015 Men's Most Valuable Player. A legend in Canadian Sevens rugby, Di Girolamo has served as captain of the Canadian Men's Sevens team, capping at the provincial and national level many times while remaining faithful to his club team of Aurora throughout his career.

Inducted into the first class of the club's Hall of Fame in 2014, Di Girolamo is no stranger to his club's awards ceremony. He also took home MVP honours in 2013, the President's Award in 2012, and the James Green Award

for perseverance and sportsmanship in 2010.

This year's James Green Award went to Peter Busciglio.

On the women's side, Mackenzie Higgs was honoured as the club's Most Valuable Player, having represented the Barbs as both a member of the senior national 15s team and Rugby Ontario this year. She was one of six Barbs to lead the Ontario Storm to the National Women's League Cup in Ottawa.

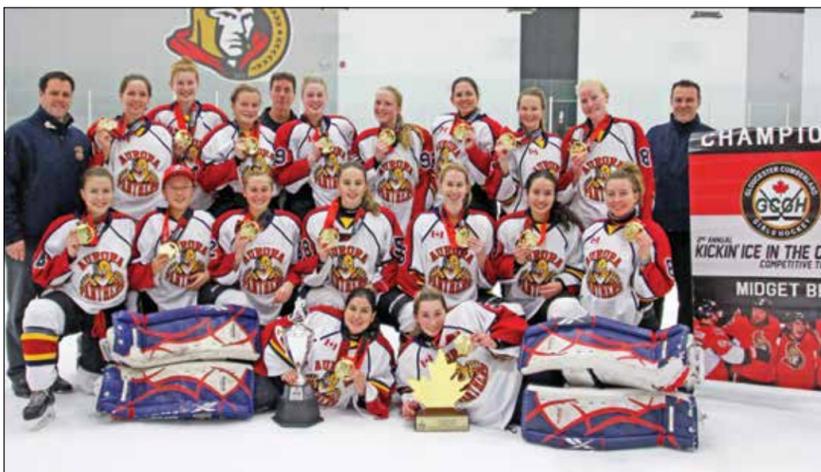
Hooker/flanker Andrew Quattrin was a force to be reckoned with in his first year suiting up for the Aurora men's squad, winning rookie honours. Joining the Barbs after a stellar youth career, he has been named an OUA all-star in both seasons as a Wilfrid Laurier Golden Hawk, and represented Canada internationally in Romania at the U-18 level.

Loren Baldwin was Rookie of the Year on the women's side, having joined Higgs, captain Tyson Beukeboom, and a handful of other Barbs on the Ontario Storm in only her first year of senior rugby.

For his valuable contributions to the club, Ryan Stickle was awarded the Doug Heaton award for 2015. As coach of the U-18 men's team, the senior men's team, as well as experience as the St.

Maximilian Kolbe junior coach, Stickle has had his hands in rugby for over 20 years. In 2013, he led the U-18 squad to their first Ontario championship since 2002.

A number of junior-level awards have also been announced. For a full list, visit www.aurorabarbarians.com.



The Aurora Panthers Midget BB team continued their winning streak bringing home their third medal of the season by winning gold at the Kickin' Ice in the Capital in Ottawa over the week-end. Way to go girls!
Photo by Cynthia Walters



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WISHES COME TRUE - Newmarket Honda helped to make the season bright after filling a car with hundreds of new, unwrapped Christmas toys to benefit the CP24 CHUM Christmas Wish campaign. In addition to the toys collected, they raised a further \$800 to purchase even more! Newmarket Honda sends out special thanks to York Region, York University and DS+P for making the campaign such a success. Collected toys were delivered to the Christmas Wish warehouse on Thursday.



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YRAA football All-Stars ripe with Mustangs talent

By Jake Courtepatte

The season may not have ended the way he would have dreamed, but St. Maximilian Kolbe quarterback Ben Langlois was still happy to play in the YRAA championship game under the big lights in front of the biggest crowd he's seen.

"I think this year was the best team

this franchise has ever seen," he said. "It was amazing to be a part of, we had a lot of adversity we went through and it all came through."

Clearly the organizing body had the same idea, naming eight Mustangs players to the YRAA All-Star lineup.

Defensively, the Mustangs had three backs picked for honours. Defensive back Tristan Kuchar had 19 solo



Top Row, Left to Right: Mike Buttazzoni, Ben Langlois, Tristan Kuchar, Giorgio Venosa, Jacob Fenchak. Bottom Row, Left to Right: Jordan Torres, Jack Camplin, Matthew Vassos.

Auroran photo by Jake Courtepatte

Happy Holidays

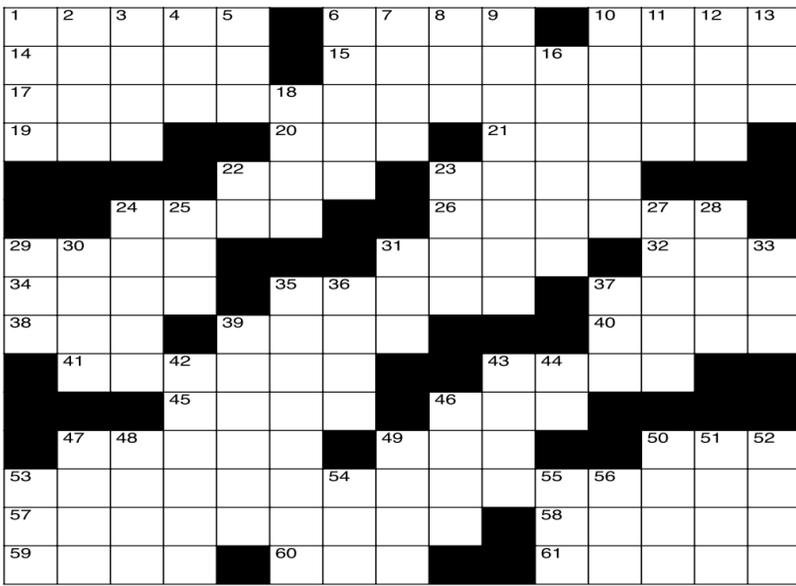


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CROSSWORD PUZZLE



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Elephant's name
- 6. Support
- 10. Mures River city
- 14. Bastard wing
- 15. One was named Desire
- 17. PGA Tournament prize
- 19. A way to leave unchanged
- 20. Unchangeable computer memory
- 21. Harangues
- 22. 6th Hebrew letter
- 23. Well informed
- 24. Turfs
- 26. In a way, obeyed
- 29. Lawyers group
- 31. Increases motor speed
- 32. Political action committee
- 34. Light pokes
- 35. Struck down
- 37. Central Philippine Island
- 38. Japanese sash
- 39. Afresh
- 40. Bluish green
- 41. Inspire with love
- 43. Without (French)
- 45. Counterbalance container to obtain net weight
- 46. Express pleasure
- 47. Cheap wine (Br.)
- 49. Signing
- 50. ___ compilation, compiling computer language
- 53. Have surgery
- 57. Being trompe-l'oeil
- 58. Extremely mad
- 59. Day
- 60. Small coin (French)
- 61. Snatched

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Cry
- 2. Wings
- 3. Baseball play
- 4. Flower petals
- 5. Drive against
- 6. Velikaya River city
- 7. A single unit in a collection
- 8. Stray
- 9. Bring back
- 10. Repented
- 11. Receipt (abbr.)
- 12. Expresses pleasure
- 13. Not wet
- 16. In a way, takes off
- 18. Macaws genus
- 22. "Fast Five" star's initials
- 23. Sharpen a knife
- 24. Oral polio vaccine developer
- 25. Former CIA
- 27. Fencing swords
- 28. ABA ___ Honeymoon
- 29. Bustle
- 30. Minor
- 31. Propel a boat
- 33. Passage with access only at one end
- 35. Underwater airways
- 36. Small, slight
- 37. Box (abbr.)
- 39. ___ Blake, actress
- 42. Repents
- 43. Merchandising
- 44. Exclamation of surprise
- 46. With fireplace residue
- 47. A small lake
- 48. Bait
- 49. Tip of Aleutian Islands
- 50. K___: watercraft (alt. sp.)
- 51. Norse variant of "often"
- 52. Adolescent
- 53. Visual metaphor (Computers)
- 54. River in Spanish
- 55. Cowboy Carson
- 56. Powerful gun lobby

tackles with two interceptions this season, while Matt Vassos contributed with 15 solo tackles of his own. Linebacker Mike Buttazzoni rounded out the list, boasting 30 solo tackles while recovering a fumble on the year.

On offence, Giorgio Venosa's ability to hold the line earned him All-Star honours. Wide receivers Jordan Torres and Jacob Fenchak put up a ton of yardage for the Mustangs all year, Torres gaining seven touchdowns on almost 700 yards and Fenchak putting up over 300 yards of his own.

Kicker Jack Camplin was named to the special teams lineup as a kicker, after a perfect season kicking 5/5 field goals supplemented by a 100% PAT conversion. He also doubled as a wide receiver, catching 18 balls for 323 yards and two TDs.

Langlois rounds out the Mustang All-Stars. Only in his junior year at St. Max, Langlois established himself as the school's starting quarterback after transferring from positions as a linebacker and tight end.

"I came to St. Max and I kind of filled in the role, and I've felt good about it ever since," said Langlois, whose favourite NFL player is Steelers QB Ben Roethlisberger. "I love throwing the ball, and so does my dad, so I kind of got it from him."

As for his plans for his senior year of high school eligibility, Langlois has one plan: "win it."

"It's been our goal for the past two years," he said of his Mustangs squad, who lost the Tier II final in 2014. "We want to win one. We have about half of our starters coming back, so we have a good core to go all the way again."

Aurora sides added to Ontario semi-pro league roster

By Jake Courtepatte

Aurora's soccer community reached a major milestone last week by being named one of two teams involved in an expansion into the semi-professional League 1 Ontario next season.

Operated by Aurora Youth Soccer Club (AYSC), Aurora United FC will field both a men's and women's squad, with the core group of players under the age of 23. Along with the addition of U-21 teams, AYSC executive director Jim Brennan said the league "can allow players to stay with the club in Aurora before finding the next step."

Joining Aurora as newcomers on the men's side are FC London, North Toronto Nitros, and Toronto Skillz FC. In the women's division, the league has also added FC London, Darby FC, and Kingston Clippers.

"It is a pleasure to welcome these new teams into League1 Ontario," said League1 Ontario Commissioner Dino Rossi in a statement. "This continued growth speaks to the strong reputation the league has built over the past two years, and its importance as a part of this province's High Performance player pathway."

League1 Ontario operates as a "pathway" for players on the

provincial spectrum to take the next step in professional soccer, a sort of stepping stone to bridge the gap between youth and amateur status and the professional level.

"From a technical perspective, it is crucial that the province's best players have accessible, domestically-based opportunities to properly finish their development years," said Ontario Soccer Association Technical Director, Gary Miller.

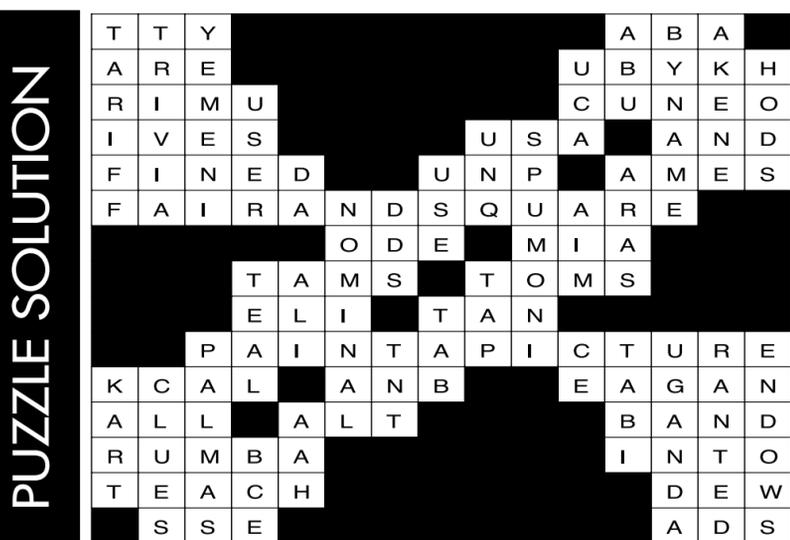
"The standards-based approach of League1 Ontario ensures players will have the appropriate 'finishing-school' environment, giving them the best preparation possible to take further steps in the game."

Sanctioned by the Ontario Soccer Association, the budding league has grown in leaps and bounds in its few years of existence. Beginning with a 10-team men's division in 2014, the league will now operate as a 12-team men's division and a 7-team women's division.

From a tiered perspective, the league is on par with the United Soccer League in North America, one step below the North American Soccer League and two steps below Major League Soccer.

Running from May to October, fans can expect to see home games played out at Sheppard's Bush.

Last Week's Puzzle Solution



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Trinity's unique spin on the traditional crèche is designed to make a dramatic impression at night.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

“It is through authenticity we can change the world”

From page 1

and challenges systems of empire and consumerism. Yet, so often they have been co-opted and used to sell crap. Our hope is that we could show this is still a subversive story, even 2,000 years later. It is the story of welcoming refugees where there is no room. I think it is still a powerful story and it speaks for itself.”

Their efforts, he says, are not intended to reflect specifically on the situation in Syria but the plight of millions around the world waiting for asylum. They didn't want to be “too on the nose”, he says, but at the end of the day, they are working with a story centred on a refugee family.

“The beginning of Christ's journey into the world is that of having to leave one's own country and having to find refuge somewhere else, not being accepted in his homeland, and having to sort of fight for their own freedom,” says Ms. Farrell. “This crèche reflects that journey, that uncertainty.”

Perhaps this new take on the traditional Nativity was meant to be. As Trinity began planning for the Christmas season, they found their mainstay crèche was somehow misplaced. Knowing Ms. Farrell's background as an artist and architect, Mr. Hamilton approached her for a creative partnership based on doing something just a little bit different.

“I was batting around the idea of making more of a political statement with it rather than just putting out a typical Baby Jesus with two figures,” he says.

Responding to questions on the brainstorming process on how they settled on this political statement, both laugh, with an “Oh, Lord!” cutting through the Minister's chuckle.

Indeed.

“Philip always had the idea of barbed wire, so that is one thing we kept,” says Ms. Farrell. “Everything just evolved and the materials were key to the project, not having to have refined materials, keeping it rough, reflecting what the refugees have now. We wanted raw materials to create the sun of Christ. The brightness of Christ still comes through these rough conditions

and these rough materials.”

Adds Mr. Hamilton: “It was kind of fun in a chaotic kind of way.”

The crèche went up in phases, and the duo found that perception from parishioners and passers-by alike varied depending on which stage in the artistic journey they happened to be at the time. The first phase was probably the “prettiest”, concedes Ms. Farrell, as everything was nicely painted, the boards were cut just so, but then it was time to add the nitty and the very gritty with representations of barbed wire, and the star above the manger that is quite open to interpretation. Along the way, a woman stopped Ms. Farrell and asked if she was still working on it. When the artist explained the project further, she says there was a click in the viewer that the “incompleteness” was part of the art.

“A lot of times you can't present it to the congregation first because what the vision is is very hard to describe in words,” she says. “But, once they see it up, they can have comments and a relationship with it, ask questions, and go, ‘aha!’ If you went to the congregation and said, ‘We're going to put this up,’ there would instantly be objection, I think. Once it is up, then it is something we can interact with and have a discussion.”

Adds Mr. Hamilton: “It is something that jars people out of that sense of comfort and a version of the story where of babies, no crying did they make, silent night, and things are just peaceful and lovely. I don't think Christmas is like that. I do think a big part of why Roxana was important for this is the arts have a way of engaging people and good art has a way of engaging people that you can't with words. It makes you feel something, hopefully. Even not liking it is as important as if you do.

“I am a storyteller and I just like to see people get really passionate about the narrative that can change their lives and their own narrative that can change other people's lives. I am all about getting people to tell their own stories, to be authentic, and I think it is through authenticity that we change the world and we see real progress, politically, spiritually.”

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Saturday, December 26	Closed	Closed
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Monday, December 28	9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
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Ratepayers to chart next steps in late January

From page 3

development, something originally slated for the beginning of December until the scheduled meeting was cancelled when HGDI took their development application to the OMB.

While she this counter proposal was presented, it was done so without prejudice and she was not at liberty to elaborate on any of the details.

Not so fast, said Dave Newton, President of the Highland Gate Ratepayers' Association. A meeting, he said, had taken place, but what was discussed is simply in "embryonic" stages.

"It was without prejudice and anything we would be presenting that would be accepted would have to be ratified by our membership and it hasn't even reached that stage yet," said Mr. Newton. "I hope to continue these discussions. The next step is a meeting we have tentatively scheduled towards the end of January to discuss with the members what they are really comfortable with in terms of a counteroffer.

"There is a pretty wide delta from what they are asking for and what we're ready to offer, but that being said, we still needed to have everything ratified

by the community and the members of the Ratepayers Association, which we didn't even have that opportunity to do. Whatever offer we were preparing really was in embryonic stages. It was really just trying to see if there was some sort of common ground where we could meet the developers at and then subsequently take that back to the membership for their ratification."

Council voted to reject the offer on a 5 - 3 vote. Councillor Wendy Gaertner was absent from the meeting. In discussions, Councillor Tom Mrakas characterised the offer as "insulting" to the Town and residents alike.

"I don't know where his thoughts were coming from," said Ms. Shindruk. "Our reaction would be it is a reflection of the fair market value, the market value being the price where we could accept someone would pay us for the land today given where it is, the policy framework that pertains to the land and the likelihood of approval.

"We continue to believe in the plan and the policy basis for the plan is, in our view, strong. We are very confident as we head to the OMB with this plan, but remain committed to discussing it with the Town, the Ratepayers, and the individual residents."



POLITICS AS USUAL

Alison Collins-Mrakas

Dreaming of a white Christmas?

Well, all the trappings of the holiday season are firmly affixed to every light standard, storefront and awning.

Christmas trees adorn every front parlour. A few of us have our Leg Lamps lit in our windows ("You'll shoot yer eye out", It's a "Christmas Story" reference. If you haven't watched this movie yet, you must. It's a holiday tradition you'll love).

Things look suitably festive, except there is one thing missing - one very important thing - SNOW!

It is positively balmy out there, and according to Environment Canada, we should expect temperatures in the double digits for Christmas Eve. Bah humbug!

Forgive me, but in my humble opinion, Christmas isn't Christmas unless there's at least a dusting of snow on the ground. Right now it's green and warm, not even one sad little flake. And I hate it. (I am sure I will hear howls of protest but I say "pffft!" to that!)

I take my Christmas scene very seriously. I want it to look like a postcard and get bitterly disappointed when it doesn't. It's not particularly rational, but it is what it is. I love snow and cold weather. Always have. Big fat flakes. Mounds of snow. Huge snowbanks. Love it!

No, I don't drive, so of course I love snow and ice. I don't have to navigate treacherous roadways (and frankly, me not driving is best for the safety of everyone). I walk everywhere and I love walking through our trail system when it's all covered in snow. It looks beautiful. Right now it's a muddy, brown mess. I say it again - bah humbug.

Of course, just two short years ago we suffered through the Christmas of the Ice Storm, so I should be grateful we don't have that again. I don't think anyone would like a repeat of days and days with no heat or power, but the temperature swing to Bahama-like weather is really no better.

We will have a warm, green, rainy Christmas and, truth be told, that will be just fine.

In all seriousness, we are indeed very lucky.

We have a tremendous amount to be thankful for.

We will share our holidays with friends, family and loved ones when some will be alone. We will have a few presents under the tree to open when some will have none. We will enjoy home-made cookies and a lovely turkey dinner, when some will have nothing to eat at all. We are very, very blessed.

I appreciate what I have - my family, my friends, my home, my job. I am truly very fortunate.

I try to give back through support of both local charities and the Scott Mission. It holds a special place in my heart and I support them every year. Making a donation, regardless of size, isn't much, really, but it is something.

Part of my New Year's resolution is to do substantially more.

With that being said, I will sign off for this year by saying I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, a happy holiday and a happy, healthy New Year.

Until next time, stay informed, stay involved because this is - after all - Our Town.



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SHE ASKS A GOOD QUESTION: At Hadley Grange's recent Holiday Bazaar, Eileen Barish posed the following question to shoppers: "I know you could make it yourself, but will you?" If your answer was no, she was more than prepared to pick up the slack, happy to keep her hands busy in creating these great knitted stuffed animals and figures. If you find one under your tree, chances are it was made by these hands.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir



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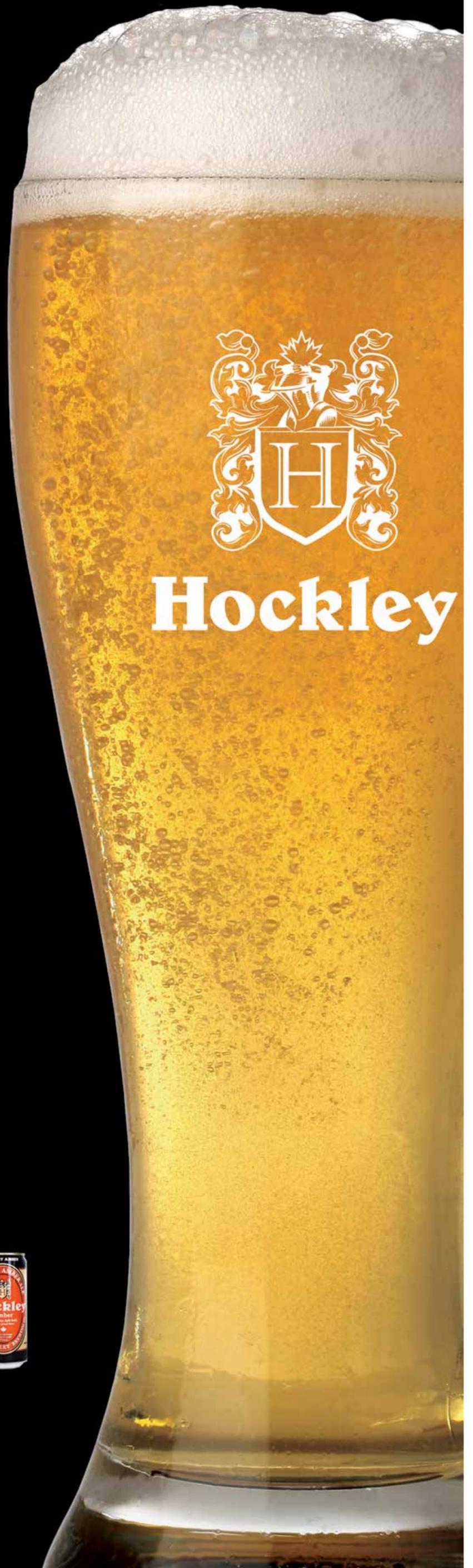
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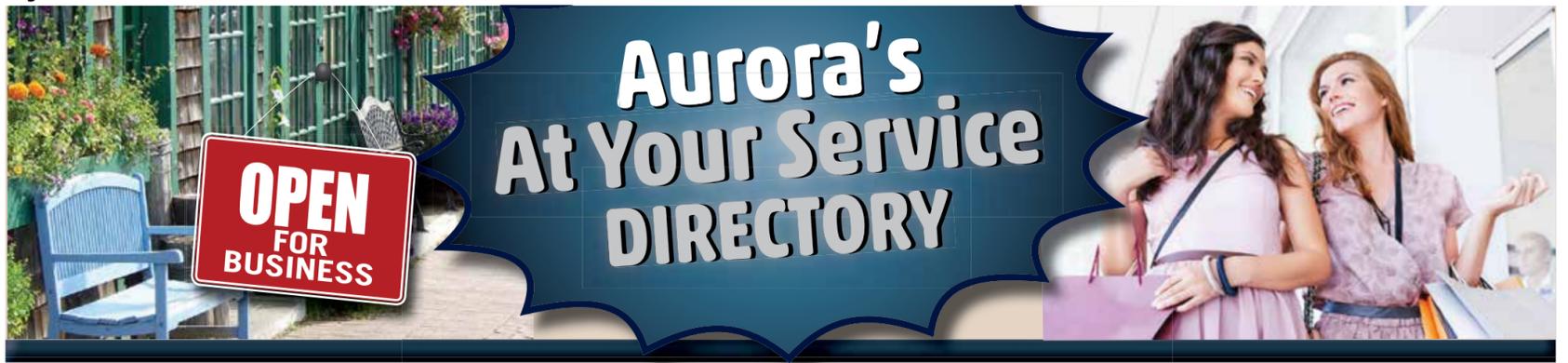
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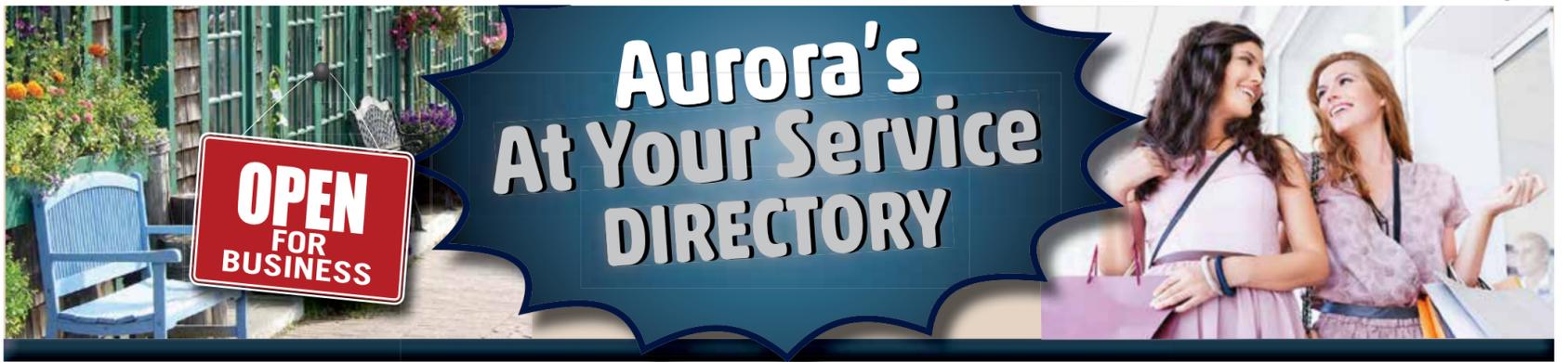
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AT YOUR SERVICE DIRECTORY

Call: 905-727-3300 ext. 102

COMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 14 – FEBRUARY 15

The Town of Aurora presents its very own Borealis to residents and visitors at Town Park. Through February 15, coloured LED lights will illuminate Town Park trees every evening from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24

Wrap it up Red this month with a special blood donor clinic held during the day of Christmas Eve. Canadian Blood Services needs to collect every drop of blood possible to ensure there is enough for the hospital patients who need it over the holidays. You have the power to give life this holiday. Remember to hydrate well and have something to eat before you donate. At the Aurora Legion, 105 Industrial Parkway North, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31

Ring in the New Year the Aurora way at the Town's annual Family First Night. Running from 6 – 9 p.m. at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, enjoy swimming, skating, games, children's activities, magician shows, reptile shows, and so much more, all with your family and friends.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6

MONEY TALKS: The monthly Money Talk\$ Series continues tonight at 7 p.m. with Investing: Implementing Risk Management at the Aurora Public Library (Magna Room). This free informal discussion/education group shares unbiased knowledge in economics and financial planning. Presentation followed by group discussion. No financial products or services will be offered or sold (directly or indirectly). People employed in the financial services industry are welcome to attend and contribute,

but not engage in the promotion of any products, companies or services. Pre-register by calling the Adult Information Desk at 905-727-9494 x275.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 10

PARTAGEZ LE FRANÇAIS: This free French language conversation group meets today at Country Style Deli and Bistro (14980 Yonge Street) from 3 – 5 p.m. The group welcomes adults – from Francophones to beginners – looking to put their French language conversation skills into action. Francophones and stronger speakers are encouraged to share their French language skills with less strong speakers. For more information, visit bit.ly/partagez_coversation or email Partagez.York@yahoo.ca.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13

The PROBUS Club of Aurora holds their monthly meeting today from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the Royal Canadian Legion, 105 Industrial Parkway North. This month's speaker is David Phillips, weatherologist. For more information, call Program Chair Cliff White at 905-841-2421. New members are welcome. Call Gary Gilbert at 905-895-2849 for more information.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15

The Aurora Cultural Centre, 22 Church Street, presents Postcard Comets Travelling Companions schoolhouse concert. David Partridge celebrates a decade of making music with a variety of musical guests and engaging stories. Coffeehouse style setting; concert at 8 p.m. Tickets \$20 plus HST. For information, or to purchase tickets, call 905-713-1818, or visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22

The Aurora Cultural Centre, 22 Church Street,

presents Stewart Goodyear, Piano with the first of three concerts in the Great Artist Music Series. Tonight's presentation: An Homage to Glenn Gould. Tickets \$34 Adult, or \$28 Senior/Student, plus HST. Concert at 8 p.m. For information, or to purchase tickets, call 905-713-1818, or visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 23

The White Heather Pipes and Drums present their annual Robbie Burns Dinner tonight starting at 5 p.m. An evening of bagpipes, Scottish music and dancing. Enjoy haggis, roast beef, tatties and neeps, and Yorkshire pudding. Silent auction. Performance from the White Heather Pipes and Drums and Delayne Drive, Aurora's own classic rock band. Royal Canadian Legion, 105 Industrial Parkway North. \$50 per person.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 29

The Aurora Cultural Centre, 22 Church Street, is pleased to announce John Sheard Presents the Great Reunion – A Night of Beatles Classics. Take a walk down Penny Lane, revisit Yesterday and wander through Strawberry Fields. You'll know every song! Cash bar – concert at 8 p.m. Tickets \$25 advance, or \$30 day of concert, plus HST. For information, or to purchase tickets, call 905-713-1818, or visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 24

PARTAGEZ LE FRANÇAIS: This free French language conversation group meets today at Country Style Deli and Bistro (14980 Yonge Street) today from 3 – 5 p.m. The group welcomes adults – from Francophones to beginners – looking to put their French language conversation skills into action. Francophones and stronger speakers are encouraged to share their French language skills with less strong speakers. For more

information, visit bit.ly/partagez_coversation or email Partagez.York@yahoo.ca.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7

PARTAGEZ LE FRANÇAIS: This free French language conversation group meets today at Country Style Deli and Bistro (14980 Yonge Street) today from 3 – 5 p.m. The group welcomes adults – from Francophones to beginners – looking to put their French language conversation skills into action. Francophones and stronger speakers are encouraged to share their French language skills with less strong speakers. For more information, visit bit.ly/partagez_coversation or email Partagez.York@yahoo.ca.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12

The Aurora Cultural Centre, 22 Church Street, presents Drew Jurecka & the Hot Jazz String Quartet. Grappelli & Django, and the best of Gypsy-Jazz. A great kick-off to Valentine's Day! Cash bar – concert at 8 p.m. Tickets \$25 advance, or \$30 day of concert, plus HST. For information, or to purchase tickets, call 905-713-1818, or visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27

The Aurora Cultural Centre, 22 Church Street presents 3-time Juno Award winner David Francey in concert with his quartet. Enjoy the best in Canadian folk & roots. Cash bar – concert at 8 p.m. Tickets \$28 advance, or \$32 day of concert, plus HST. For information, or to purchase tickets, call 905-713-1818, or visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

To submit your event send details in 100 words or less to letters@auroran.com with the subject line "Coming Events".

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DEATH NOTICE

Davidson, Ronald John

1941-2015

Peacefully passed away with his loved ones by his side on Friday, December 11th, 2015 at the Brampton Civic Hospital.

Loving husband of Leona for 23years. Cherished father of Michael (Lindsay), and Tara (William). Cherished Papa of Cole. Beloved brother of William (Louise). Dear uncle to Tamara (Travis), and Katie (Ryan).

Predeceased by his first wife Dianne Monkhouse.

Family and friends will be received at the Ward Funeral Home "Brampton Chapel", 52 Main Street South (Hwy 10), Brampton on Tuesday, December 22nd from 6-9pm.

A Celebration of Ronald's life will be held on Sunday, January 24th from 3:30-6:30pm at the Rex Hotel and Jazz Bar, 194 Queen Street WW, Toronto.

As expressions of sympathy, donations may be made to the Canadian Cancer Society, or to a charity of your choice.

Please visit the Book of Memories at www.wardfuneralhome.com

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BOXING WEEK

at

AURORA  TOYOTA

STARTS

DECEMBER 26TH

ENDS

JANUARY 2ND



YEAR END COUNTDOWN



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at

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