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THE AURORAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 17 No. 7 905-727-3300 theauroran.com FREE Week of December 1, 2016 CMCA AUDITED

THE MAN OF THE HOUR – Santa Claus greets thousands of his adoring fans as he makes his way down Yonge Street on Saturday night for the annual Santa Under the Stars Parade. Rain did not mar the spirit of the season as hundreds took part in the procession from Orchard Heights in the north to Murray Drive in the south including (inset) members of the Aurora Youth Soccer Club, who offered the crowds some diet tips on behalf of the elves! For full coverage of the parade, please see Pages 18 and 19.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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A new high school shouldn't spell the end of Williams: Council

By Brock Weir

A new high school should be built on Aurora's east side, but a new school in the Town's fastest growing neighbourhood shouldn't mean the end of Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School.

That was the message Council members drove home last week when they unanimously approved a motion from Councillor John Abel that formalized Council's support for a new high school off Bayview Avenue just north of Wellington Street East on land that has already been secured by the York Region District School Board

for that purpose.

Council hoped delaying their decision until last Tuesday would give school trustee Peter Adams-Luchowski, or a representative of the Board, a chance to provide further input on the matter but, when that didn't pan out, local lawmakers forged ahead.

In supporting Councillor Abel's motion, Councillors rejected an amendment proposed by Councillor Michael Thompson, which said Council would support the new school's construction as a "third" high school in the area.

"I think there is agreement around the table, and the residents have amply demonstrated that there is a need for the area," said Councillor Michael Thompson to his amendment. "It allows us to continue to advocate on behalf of the residents with York Region to try and make some progress on that property without any concerns of there being an impact to anything else."

The amendment, however, set off alarm bells with other Councillors who said it would indeed have an impact.

Continued on page 8

Plenty of Reindeer Games at Wednesday's Tree Lighting

By Brock Weir

Santa's reindeer are in a competition right now on just who will be joining him in Aurora next Wednesday as he helps turn on the lights of Aurora's Official Christmas Tree.

After a rollicking Santa Under the Stars on Saturday night, Santa and at least five of his celebrated reindeer are set to make another trip to Aurora from the North Pole on Wednesday, December 7 for a night of family fun

Continued on page 10

A NEW GIG – For nearly two decades, Harry Vowles, pictured above with Lori Hood, brought smiles to kids' faces as one of Santa's helpers at Yorkdale Mall. Chances are that, over the weekend, the 91-year-old Chartwell Aurora resident brought a smile to your face as he broke in his new gig, with a little help from his residence, the Town, and a local business. For more, please see Page 10.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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Email info@aurora.ca • Website www.aurora.ca

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accessibility@aurora.ca

COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Thursday, December 1	4 p.m.	Leksand Room	Accessibility Advisory Committee
Monday, December 5	2:30 p.m.	Tannery Room	Community Recognition Review Advisory Committee
Monday, December 5	6 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council Workshop
Tuesday, December 6	6 p.m.	Council Chambers	Special Council
Tuesday, December 6	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	General Committee
Thursday, December 8	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Committee of Adjustment
Thursday, December 8	7 p.m.	Leksand Room	Economic Development Advisory Committee
Monday, December 12	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Heritage Advisory Committee
Tuesday, December 13	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council
Wednesday, December 14	7 p.m.	Aurora Public Library	Aurora Public Library Board
Wednesday, December 14	7 p.m.	Aurora Cultural Centre	Aurora Cultural Centre Board
Thursday, December 15	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Public Planning

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 aurora.ca

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





2017 Budget

Schedule of Meetings

Budget meetings are held at Aurora Town Hall, located at 100 John West Way. Public input is welcome at the beginning of each meeting.

Complete	Tuesday, September 27 • 7 p.m. Capital Budget Kick-off
Complete	Saturday, October 15 • 9 a.m. Capital Budget Review
Complete	Tuesday, November 8 • 7 p.m. Capital Budget Approval Operating Budget Kick-off
Complete	Monday, November 14 • 9 a.m. Operating Budget
Complete	Monday, November 21 • 7 p.m. Aurora Public Library, Aurora Cultural Centre Aurora Historical Society
Complete	Monday, November 28 • 7 p.m. Operating Budget
Complete	Tuesday, November 29 • 7 p.m. Operating Budget
Upcoming	Tuesday, December 13 • 7 p.m. Operating Budget Approval

! Please note, this schedule is subject to change.
For up-to-date information, please visit aurora.ca/budget

At this regularly-scheduled Council meeting, Aurora Town Council will have the opportunity to review and approve the Operating Budget.

Not able to attend the meetings?
There are many other ways to get involved.

 Budget presentations will be posted regularly on our website at aurora.ca/2017budget

 Share your thoughts on Facebook and Twitter #aurorabudget2017

 Call us at 905-727-1375

 Send your feedback to ourtownbudget@aurora.ca

 Selected meetings will be broadcast on Rogers Television, channel 10 and streamed live at rogers.tv.com



ANNUAL TREE Lighting CEREMONY

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Aurora Town Hall
Aurora Seniors' Centre
(100 John West Way)

905-726-4762 • aurora.ca/TreeLighting 

PUBLIC NOTICES

Recreation Program Credits

In August 2016, the Town of Aurora's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department updated the Town's recreation program registration system.

If you have a credit on your account from a previous program or rental, please contact us at 905-726-4770 or rleisure@aurora.ca to confirm your credit and to make refund arrangements.

Please note, credits must be claimed by Thursday, December 22, 2016. After this date, credits with a transaction date on or before December 31, 2014 will no longer be valid or refundable.

Notice of Service Disruption – Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex

There will be a scheduled service disruption at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex (SARC).

These disruptions include:

On Saturday, December 3, all swims will be cancelled at the SARC for a National Synchro competition.

All regularly scheduled aquatics programs and swim schedules will resume on Sunday, December 4.

On behalf of the Town of Aurora we would like to thank you for your patience and we apologize for any inconvenience.

For more information, please contact 905-727-3123 ext. 3126.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Seniors Trip to Niagara Fallsview Casino

Join the Aurora Seniors' Centre trip to Niagara Fallsview Casino on Wednesday, January 25, 2017. This trip includes return transportation via deluxe coach, visit to the Niagara Fallsview Casino and \$10 slot voucher to be used at the casino. For more information, please call 905-727-4767.

Municipal Tree Pruning

The Town of Aurora will be pruning municipal trees on the following streets from November 2016 to January 2017:

- Bonny Meadows Drive
- Buttonwood Trail
- Carlyle Crescent
- Catherine Avenue
- Chiswick Crescent
- Closs Square
- Corner Ridge Road
- Cossar Avenue
- Devins Drive
- Devlin Place
- McClenny Drive
- McNally Way
- Murray Drive
- Tree Grove Circle
- Walton Drive
- Willis Drive

For more information, please contact the Town's Parks division at 905-727-3123, ext. 3233.

Congratulations Marc J.

2017 Citizen Budget Survey Draw Winner

Congratulations to Marc J. for winning our 2016 Citizen Budget Survey prize draw! The Town randomly selected Marc to win \$250 in appreciation for submitting his feedback on our 2017 budget through our online survey.

Thank you to Marc and all our residents who participated in the survey.

For more information, please call 905-727-1375 or visit aurora.ca/budget



Winter Overnight Parking Program 2016/2017

Our winter overnight parking pilot program will allow for parking on residential streets overnight, provided the Town has not called a snow event.

For more information about this program and parking enforcement, please visit aurora.ca/snow or call Access Aurora at 905-727-1375.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Register for Winter 2017 Programs & Activities

Registration is now open for winter programs and activities. Aquatics registration starts on Monday, December 5.

Please check out the Winter 2017 Program Guide for details at aurora.ca/recguide.

Events at the Aurora Public Library (APL)

Holiday Open House

Don't miss the holiday open house on Saturday, December 3 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

Enjoy hot chocolate, cookies and holiday fun! Pose for a fun holiday picture, enjoy a festive storytime with carols, seasonal books and more!

International Human Rights Day

Celebrate our human rights with APL and Amnesty International on Saturday, December 10 from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Family Storytime and community art are all part of the festivities. Meet your local Amnesty International Chapter, write a letter, pick-up some information and enjoy our displays.



December Skylight Gallery – Joanne (Giovanna) Epworth

Come and experience the bold, authentic and passionate artwork of Giovanna Epworth in the Skylight Gallery.

Giovanna's art on display will feature acrylic ink and mixed medias.

For more information on the artwork from Giovanna Epworth, please visit www.giovannaart.ca.

Regular viewing times are from Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Aurora Town Hall, 3rd floor.

The artist's reception is on Friday, December 2 at 7 p.m.

TOYS FOR Tickets

Pay your parking ticket with a toy!

In the spirit of the holiday season, the Town of Aurora is pleased to announce the return of the Toys for Tickets program!

For every person who receives a parking ticket in Aurora*, the fine can be paid by donating a new unwrapped children's toy.

All toys will be donated to local toy drives.

The program is valid on tickets issued between Tuesday, November 15 and Thursday, December 1.

Toy donations will only be accepted at Aurora Town Hall, Access Aurora (1st Floor) at 100 John West Way until Wednesday, December 7 at 5 p.m.

Thank you for helping us make a positive difference in a child's life this holiday season.

* Please note, the program excludes "Park in a fire route," "Park in a disabled persons parking space" and "Obstruct a disabled persons parking space" offences.

THANK YOU

The 2016 Aurora Santa Claus parade was a great success. Thank you to our Corporate Sponsors: Aurora Home Hardware, Pfaff Newmarket, PowerStream and TD Bank Group.

Extended thanks for the exceptional marshalling job done by the Optimist Club of Aurora, the crowd control done by the Don Valley REACT and great traffic control assistance from York Regional Police and York Regional Police Auxiliary Units.

A big thank you to all those who donated time, equipment, services and goodwill:

- Aurora Community Volunteers
- Canadian Tire Aurora
- Casey Transportation
- Highland Chev Olds
- St. Andrew's Shopping Centre
- St. Andrew's Valley Golf Club
- Town of Aurora – Parks
- Town of Aurora – IES

The float winners from the 2016 parade were:

Best Commercial – A2Y Dance Inc.
Best Non Commercial – Aurora Winter Blues Festival
Best Service Club – The Optimist Club of Aurora
Best Decorated – Miller Waste Systems Inc.
Most Original – The Salvation Army
Mayor's Choice – Pace Credit Union

Thank you to the many residents and visitors who attended this parade and who have made this annual event a success.

The parade will be aired on Rogers at the following times:

- December 10 at 2 p.m.
- December 11 at 2 p.m.
- December 13 at 2 p.m.
- December 14 at 11 p.m.
- December 15 at 5 p.m.

Pilot Yonge and Wellington turning ban gets final greenlight

By Brock Weir

A three-month pilot project, which will see a ban on left turns made on Yonge Street at Wellington starting in April got the final green light at Council last week.

The pilot project, which will conclude on June 30, 2017, is intended to improve traffic flow at Aurora’s busiest intersection and was the result of months of talks both around the Council table and at the Region of York.

Starting April 1, left turns onto Wellington Street from northbound and southbound Yonge Street traffic will be banned Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m., and again from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., with exceptions in place for York Region Transit.

The pilot project was approved at the Regional Level on October 6 and received final approval by Aurora Council in a 6 – 2 vote. Voting against the plan were Mayor Geoff Dawe and Councillor Wendy Gaertner. Councillor Paul Pirri was absent from the meeting.

While Council members said they remained concerned over the impact a left turn ban would have on surrounding residential neighbourhoods, they said ongoing traffic monitoring will provide them with clear data on whether the pilot proves successful.

“We have all been to that intersection and we have all seen what goes on,” said Councillor Tom Mrakas, getting the ball rolling on last week’s discussion. “It is not the be all and end all solution, but I think it could be one thing in combination with many others [including] do we look at removing parking restrictions? I think that is something we need to look at down the road, but I think this is just something that we’re going to try, the Region supports it [and] their staff think it is a worthwhile exercise to get that data.”

The Councillors were responding to ongoing issues outlined to Council by a resident in open forum. Councillor Humfries said he made “excellent” points, but pointed out many suggestions had been made over the years and nothing had been done.

“If this is going to fail, we will quickly pull it,” she said. “I think we can build on something that will function nicely in the times during rush hour and slower times and I think it will make a big difference. I am looking forward to getting this launched and we can turn it off pretty quickly if it fails miserably. If it does show some relief, maybe we can keep it

going from there.”

Indeed, according to Mayor Dawe, Aurora’s representative at the Regional Council table, mechanisms are in place for Regional Staff to pull the plug on the pilot project if they, or Council members start to see any negative impacts.

This was welcome news to Councillor Gaertner, but she said she still couldn’t support the pilot.

“I have heard from a lot of residents that do not want this pilot project to happen and I am going to be voting against it to respect those residents’ wishes, but I really hope it works out because we really need something to work.”

But others said they were willing to give it a try.

“Like a lot of us who travel in Aurora, we get to know certain spots very well and the residents there would know as well as anyone the contributing factors,” said Councillor John Abel. “I am willing to try the pilot and I am hoping it works.”

Added Councillor Harold Kim: “When you hear the experiences of those who travel the intersection on a regular basis, it does hit home in terms of the gravity of the decision you will be making. I have heard from just as many for the left turn restriction as against. We have had this issue for many, many years in Aurora and I think the delegate made a great point that there may be very little difference or a mildly better experience, and we shouldn’t use that as a scorecard to make that permanent.”

For Councillor Kim, and Councillor Abel, it was very important to get that hard data back. The numbers, Councillor Kim said, have to be very “convincing” for Council to make this pilot project permanent.

“If the data is not convincing to keep it this way, I am willing to go back to the way it was.”

A similar view was offered by Councillor Michael Thompson.

“We’re going to look at some data that is going to be measured both before and after on the project to look at what is currently happening in terms of traffic patterns and infiltration into that intersection,” he said. “We’ll look at the repercussions and impacts of the left turn restrictions and then we will make a decision based on that information when this comes back. I think this is a way...to make some real headway on the traffic issues that have been plaguing the Town of Aurora for many years.”

Run for Southlake heads north

By Brock Weir

It has been a long-standing Aurora tradition for over a decade, founded in honour of the late Aurora councillor Bob Hartwell, but now the annual Run for Southlake is moving to Newmarket.

The Run, formally dubbed the Hartwell Challenge in memory of the avid runner who died doing what he loved to do best, will unfold next year on Davis Drive, giving Southlake Regional Health Centre – and its staff, patients and volunteers – a front row seat to the action.

According to Steve Hinder, a member of the Southlake Regional Health Centre Foundation, there have recently been challenges in Aurora. Past events have taken place each spring at the Aurora Community Centre but made the move two years ago to the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex with the run taking place on Wellington Street East and north on Leslie Street.

“We have struggled with routes in Aurora because we have had to constantly change,” says Mr. Hinder. “Now, Leslie Street was going to be under construction for a period of time and now that [Davis Drive] construction is done...we wanted there to be a permanent route.

“Once the hospital became the beneficiary of the run, which has been over the last eight or nine years, the long-term goal has always been to incorporate the hospital. We have tried all kinds of different options in terms

of half-marathon, the 10K, and it and it has turned out that the 5K is, in fact, the most popular. The 5k is an event that not only allows families to participate – and it is a fundraiser we’re providing for the hospital. To allow the participants to run in front of the hospital a couple of times and have patients out on the bridge over Davis Drive. The fact Davis Drive has been under construction for a number of years is the reason we didn’t do it sooner.”

Last year, the number of participants enrolled for the Run for Southlake was lower than at previous events, says Mr. Hinder. The weather worked against them, there was construction along the route, and there were other “Challenges” that had to be addressed.

“It was difficult for them to even get to the site,” says Mr. Hinder. “It wasn’t through lack of effort from any of the planning group, it is because the community is changing – and Davis Drive is not changing. Once you do it once, you have a route established. If you look at any of the big races and runs anywhere else, they have the same route every year, people know what to expect, and it does help grow the event and increase the numbers. It is a fundraiser and that is the goal.”

As a colleague of Mr. Hartwell at Council, Mr. Hinder says Bob would be “thrilled” to see the event move to Southlake because it “benefits the greater population that supports the hospital and...its patients on an ongoing sustainable basis.”



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TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PASSING OF HERITAGE DESIGNATION BY-LAW

TAKE NOTICE THAT the Council of The Corporation of the Town of Aurora passed the following By-law to designate the following property to be of cultural heritage value or interest:

By-law Number 5918-16, passed on November 8, 2016, to designate the
“The Edward Coltham Farm House” located at 15 William Graham Drive, Part of Block 164,
Plan 65M-4424, designated as Part 1 on Plan 65R-36588, Town of Aurora, Regional
Municipality of York

DATED at Aurora this 1st day of December, 2016.
Lisa Lyons, Town Clerk, Town of Aurora, 100 John West Way, Box 1000, Aurora, ON, L4G 6J1

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Media “controlled” election message, says reader

This is in response to Stephen Somerville’s “Front Porch Perspective” on President Elect Trump on November 24.

It was refreshing to read a different perspective than what has been provided in much of the media coverage of this campaign.

The media is biased in its reporting of Trump.

A 2014 survey showed that 93 per cent of journalists in the U.S. are Democrats. WikiLeaks emails showed the unethical connection between the New York Times, ABC, NBC, CNN, MSNBC and others as they operated as an extension of the Clinton campaign.

Their perspectives were parroted in our Canadian media.

Dr. Alveda King, Dr. Martin Luther King’s niece, endorsed Trump, as did Obama’s half- brother. When Trump was a Democrat, he was praised by Rev. Jesse Jackson for being a role model for diversity in hiring in New York as well as being a friend.

Despite having no proof of racism, the media and others labelled Trump a racist.

After eight years, Obama has added \$9.6 trillion in debt, and will be the only President not to have a year of 3 per cent GDP growth. Obama’s legacy includes the lowest labor participation rate since the 1970s, the worst economic recovery since the 1940s, and the lowest home ownership rate in 51 years. Obamacare is imploding with insurers running for the hills, and costs skyrocketing for the foreseeable future.

Clinton represented a continuation of Obama’s failed policies including failed foreign policy.

Unlike Clinton, Trump was not supported by Wall St., the Washington elite, the media, lobby groups or the billionaire anarchist George Soros.

No wonder so many Americans voted for a non-politician with a proven track record as a builder and a businessman even if he occasionally makes insensitive remarks.

Shelley Wister
Aurora

Peace on Earth?

Annihilation of the innocents: Armageddon is getting closer (than anticipated) for, the world’s abandoned children in the city of Aleppo.

Russia continues, unashamed, its murderous killings and destruction of hospitals and schools, with impunity.

Canada utters a whisper of objection and condemnation; the Office of the United Nations proves its state of obsolescence.

December is coming...Peace on Earth...for whom? Not for the battered people on the other side of the world.

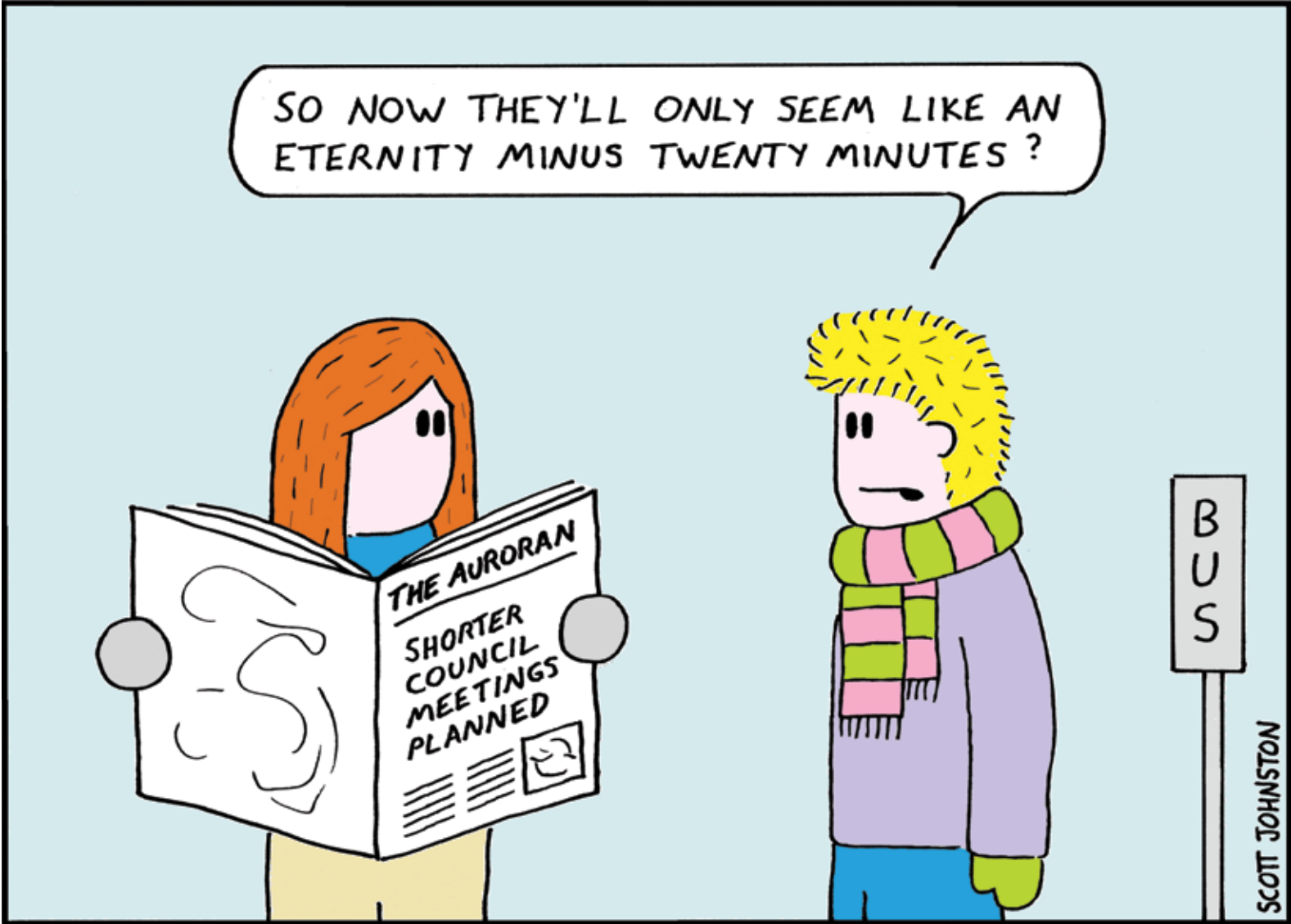
Alex Vander Veen
Aurora

CLARIFICATION

In last week’s story, “Business Excellence Awards to return in 2017 after five year hiatus”, Aurora Chamber of Commerce Board President Javed Khan was quoted as saying the awards would be held next November 17 at the Royal Canadian Legion. Since then, he has sent in a point of clarification stating he misspoke. “The Legion is one of three Aurora-based locations we are looking at for our Business Excellence Awards Gala,” he said. “The vision is to have it within the Aurora community.”

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 Power of Knowledge

Nobody wants to be a captive audience, but sometimes it is just easier – and more fruitful – to simply go with the flow.

Last Wednesday night I had the pleasure of sitting through the final dress rehearsal of the musical Spring Awakening, now on stage at Theatre Aurora.

Brought to life by director Sergio Calderon and a cast of 13, it is a potent and evocative mix of teen angst, sex, and the exploration of sexuality, sexual identity, intolerance, abortion, and rape.

You’re right; this is no Sound of Music. Despite the iconic Rodgers & Hammerstein musical being set in Austria, and this period musical by Steven Slater and Duncan Sheik set next door in Germany, it is there the similarities end.

There are no happy-go-lucky nuns or lonely goatherds here in this unusually gritty tale.

That is not to say taking in Spring Awakening is not a fun and indulgent way to spend an evening, because it certainly is, but it provides plenty of food for thought.

One of the plot threads that particularly caught my attention was the relationship between the enlightened leading man Melchior and his naïve, sheltered leading lady Wendla.

Although his knowledge of the sex is largely limited to knowledge gleaned from books – and trial and error – Melchior, by comparison to his peers, is a “man of the world.” The same can’t be said for Wendla, who can’t even root out from her mother how and why her married sister is popping out kids faster than the Kaiser is popping out machines of war.

The teens eventually give into their base desires, Melchior knowing full well what the outcome could be, but Wendla having no inkling whatsoever that a quick roll in the hay could result in something tangible nine months down the road.

It raises the question of whether Wendla, with such a deficit of knowledge could possibly be in a position to give consent to Melchior; a very modern question posed in material going back 125 years.

It certainly piqued my own curiosity and arriving home after the show I headed over to my bookshelf and pulled a volume I hadn’t picked up in quite a while – “Purity & Truth: What A Young Man Ought To Know” by Sylvanus Stall.

Dating from 1897, it is something I picked up as a voracious collector of the weird and wonderful, rather than as how-to manual foisted upon me by my parents. Nevertheless, it provides some interesting reading and a synopsis of future volumes in the “Self & Sex Series” including what young boys and girls “ought to know.”

The difference between the sexes is quite revealing.

According to the synopses, young boys ought to be aware of the “reproductive



BROCK’S BANTER

Brock Weir

power” God has bestowed in him, “the difference between creating and making”, “the mama and papa nature” in a stalk of corn, an oyster; a flower; schools of fish, nesting birds, and in the Garden of Eden.

Moving onto the spicier stuff, the book touches upon “the manner in which the reproductive organs are injured in boys by abuse” compared to other animals, “the consequences in boys of the abuse [of said organs], need for proper information, how to preserve their bodies in purity and strength,” and so on.

As for the girls?

Well, it’s quite simple: “the origin of life” (as illustrated by the relationship between seed and soil, and the birds and the bees), “fishes and their young – the parent fishes and the baby fishes, the seeds of plants and eggs of fishes, how fishes never know their baby offspring, lessons from birds, the relationship between parent and child, the body being a temple to keep holy” and the importance of receiving “their instruction from their mother.”

From that, I think it is safe to surmise that the boys were slightly better equipped to enter the 20th Century compared to their female counterparts. If knowledge is power; the girls, undoubtedly by design, were in a distinct disadvantage.

But is knowledge really power? Recent events have certainly called that into question.

Almost all of us were raised in the belief that knowledge is indeed power: If we were lucky enough to grow up in a family where the resources were available to support a university or college education, or any part thereof, this was held as the standard to shoot for.

Alarming, however, it seems that knowledge and education in and of itself are acquiring something of a stigma, being a breeding ground for “elitism” and those against the public at large.

The fact that aspiring to higher education is being seen as elitist is alarming in itself, but so are the consequences.

The examples in the United States are self-evident, with men and women with some sort of post-secondary education overwhelmingly choosing one presidential candidate over another; those in the other camp railing against the “elites” and

the characteristics ascribed to them, yet themselves being unable to discern between real and fake news.

Now, for better or worse, we know what that potent cocktail can lead to.

But what of Canada?

While some of those aspiring to succeed Justin Trudeau in 2019 are railing against this “other”, seeming to be defined loosely as (a) those with resources, (b) those with education, or (c) all of the above, there is a common pattern when push comes to shove in a school budget.

The first items invariably to hit the chopping block are arts-related subjects, often the only outlet students have for creative and intellectual self-expression, followed by the always beleaguered Civics, the very lessons of which teach students the rights they have and how to fight for the issues they hold dear.

Together, both subjects are integral in ensuring the up-and-coming generation have the wherewithal to be critical thinkers, but they are somehow seen as expendable.

Recently, however, I was heartened to see a swift response to a November article in Macleans which

suggested the Province is “is quietly floating the idea of removing the... mandatory civics course” as a requirement of education.

The thankfully overwhelming backlash to that trial balloon promoted the Ministry to issue a statement to allay fears that this is not the case.

“The passionate outcry to protect the Civics course over the past few days was inspiring to me as a Minister of Education, but also as a member of the elected assembly whose main job is to serve the people who gave me this responsibility by casting a vote,” responded the Minister. “Students have contacted my office and told me about how Civics inspired them to get involved in public service, to consider roles that enhance our freedoms and rights as Canadians, and for some very ambitious young leaders out there, I have heard about how this course has piqued their interest in one day having my job as a Minister of the Crown.

“It is a right and a freedom to be engaged in this very democratic discussion about education in our province, and keeping Civics in our schools is integral in shaping young people to become Canada’s next generation of engaged citizens.”

But it is also important to ensure young people realise that education, regardless of the path taken, is integral for them to be fully equipped in life, something to be celebrated, and it is not an aspiration for which they will be mocked when anger and dissatisfaction in other quarters bubble to the surface.

Civics teachers of tomorrow might have quite a task ahead of them.

THE AURORAN

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Founder
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Publisher Emeritus
Rosemary Schumaker

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email: administration@auroran.com

<p>EDITOR Brock Weir brock@auroran.com</p> <p>ADVERTISING Diane Buchanan diane@auroran.com</p> <p>ADVERTISING Zach Shoub zach@auroran.com</p> <p>TODAYS NEW HOMES Zach Shoub zach@tpcmedia.ca</p>	<p>PRODUCTION MANAGER Cynthia Proctor cynthia@auroran.com</p> <p>CLASSIFIEDS 905-727-3300 ex.102 cynthia@auroran.com</p> <p>To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to letters@auroran.com.</p> <p>Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.</p>	<p>MOTING Heather Irwin heather@caledoncitizen.com</p> <p>PHOTOGRAPHY Glenn Rodger grodger@rogers.com</p>	<p>EDITORIAL POLICY Opinions expressed by columnists, contributors and letter writers are not necessarily those of The Auroran. Letters must include name and phone number, although number will not be published, and be limited to 600 words. Letters may be edited or refused. All contents protected by copyright.</p> <p>ADVERTISING POLICY Publisher is not liable for slight changes or typographical errors that do not lessen the value of an advertisement. Disputes must be brought to the attention of the publisher prior to the following edition.</p>
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The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating:

Roof Over Your Head Day
(Saturday, December 3)

32 Wellington Street East was once the home of David Wilson Doan, son of Aurora's first post-master Charles Doan. Built around 1865, the last vestiges of this "roof" were sadly demolished in November.



MP's Report

Kyle Peterson, MP
Newmarket-Aurora

A Month to Honour and Remember

This month, as always, has been busy both in Aurora and on Parliament Hill. This past weekend, I was proud to take part in the Santa Under the Stars Parade. This is always one of my favorite events of the holiday season; I love seeing the community come together to enjoy these events. It is a fantastic way to kick-off the Christmas season! I would also like to extend my congratulations to the event planners and everyone whose hard work went into this year's parade.

This month, I also attended the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame grand re-opening at the SARC. An exciting event! I was impressed with the look and feel of the Hall's new home. The Hall is a celebration of sport history and excellence in the Town of Aurora, and works to recognize the important role sports has played in Aurora's development. This year saw the inductions of Karen Stemmler, Michael "Mike" Murphy, Sheldon W. Galbraith, and Mike "Kitch" Kitchen. Congratulations to the inductees, and thank you for the important role you have played in athletics in our community. If you haven't yet had a chance to, I encourage you to visit the new Hall when you can.

I was also proud to take part in Remembrance services. The dinner my wife Andrea and I attended at the Legion was a moving evening. There were many memorable moments, but the highlight for me was getting to meet the veterans in attendance. We owe them so much. I was also honoured to march in the parade and lay a wreath on behalf of Canada. It was great to see the crowd at the cenotaph, and having the chance to chat with so many people afterwards back at the Legion. Congratulations to the Legion for organizing these events.

Along with other MPs from York Region, I was happy to participate in our pre-budget 2017 consultations with stakeholders from the Region.

The feedback we get from these types of events is always important as we undergo our budget process. Thanks to all who participated.

We are working hard on Parliament Hill to help Canadians get ahead. I was happy to speak on the Budget 2016 implementation bill and on the C.P.P. Enhancement Bill. I'm very proud of the work we have done so far, and I am really looking forward to the work ahead of us. I'd like to wish everyone a safe, happy, and festive holiday season. I am looking forward to seeing you around Town once I am back for Christmas. All my best to you and your family for the holidays and I wish you a healthy and prosperous 2017. As a reminder, you can reach out to my office and my staff at any time. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you need any information or help. We are located at 16600 Bayview Avenue, Suite 202. You can reach us at 905-953- 7515 or by email at Kyle.Peterson@parl.gc.ca

THIS WEEK'S POLL

Will the three-month left turn ban at Yonge and Wellington improve traffic?

Yes No Unsure

Go to www.theauroran.com to vote!

Previous Poll Results

Should sugary drinks be banned from vending machines in municipal buildings?
Yes No Unsure

RESULTS TO DATE	YES	NO	UNSURE
	56%	37%	7%

Troller-in-Chief

As the world prepares for a Trump Presidency, there are fraught and fevered conversations in the punditocracy about what to call him.

Some, of course, unprintable but some we are pretty familiar with.

There are many new titles that President-elect (sorry, I still find that ridiculous to write) will inherit when he takes office in January. (As an aside, I am aware that there is a very small possibility that he may not take office given the two million plus more votes that Clinton has and the multiple recounts that may be underway. But that's next week's topic, so I will stick with the premise that he will be president).

Trump will be the President, Commander in Chief, POTUS, Leader of the Free World. These are all titles that every President assumes when he (or hopefully she, one day) walks into the Oval Office. But Trump, in his inimitable style, will bring one title that no one else has ever, and hopefully will never again, bring to the Office of the President – and that is, "Troller in Chief."

For those that don't know what a "troll" is, the handy dandy folks at Wikipedia describe a troll as someone who "...sows discord on the internet by starting arguments, upsetting people, by posting inflammatory comments with the intent of provoking readers into an emotional response."

In other words, someone who posts nasty stuff online for the sole purpose of trying to cause problems for people. Or to just be a jerk. Sounds like a pretty good description, doesn't it?

Trump is a Twitter Troll. On a massive scale. This has nothing to do with his campaign for the presidency. He's always been a twitter Troll. Since he spat out his first tweet years ago,



POLITICS AS USUAL

Alison Collins-Mrakas

he has been waging a non-stop war of teeny tiny words against all manner of foes. Newspaper columnists, fellow billionaires, TV personalities and on and on it goes. And he ratcheted up the invective when he began his run for the White House. As he sought to be the "commander in chief" he fast became the "bully in chief."

He is a pervasive, ugly presence in the twittersphere. Tweeting out snappy, snippy comments multiple times a day, at all hours – and most often in the wee hours of the morning.

A friend sent me an apt quote about twitter, "Twitter is where fools go to make their quota."

How very true. It appeals to folks with limited vocabulary, limited attention span and limited patience.

Twitter is the perfect medium for Trump and his followers. A man with little or no impulse control with the vocabulary of a six year old and the school-yard taunts that go with it.

Leaving aside the fact that he is now the President-elect and thus would assume at least some measure of respectability, he is a grown man – a 70 year old man, actually. So, why is he spending his days sending out nasty tweets? Shouldn't he be getting boned up on what the job of President entails? Because it was pretty evident during the campaign that he has no

clue just what it is the President does. One would think that he'd be taking a crash course in civics so that he'd know at least the basics of the job when he walks into that Office on January 20th.

But no. He has spent the last two weeks sending out crazy tweets about the New York times, Clinton, Jill Stein, illegal voters, cabinet positions as if they're game show prizes and on and on. This man is going to be the President of the United States and he is acting like a high school mean girl. It's insanity.

He has reverted back to the nasty name calling that he employed throughout the campaign. Who can forget, "Crooked Hillary", "Lyin' Ted", "little Marco". Are we to expect the same kind of thing about world leaders? Mopey Merkel? Dopey Justin? Frumpy Francois? It sounds ridiculous, but I fear, unfortunately, pretty accurate.

During the last two weeks of the campaign, it is alleged that Trump's team took away his phone, to prevent him from tweeting out anything incendiary lest the public be reminded of how prone he could be to popping off. It worked. The public and pundits alike commented on how "in control" he now seemed to be; congratulating him as it were for reining in his baser impulses. Bravo.

I hope for the sake of both the legacy and future of the Office of the Presidency and all that that embodies, that of the myriad important tasks his new Chief of Staff takes on, Twitter policeman will be his paramount concern.

That, or just take the bloody thing away from him. Trump should have – and frankly does have - better things to do than engage in a tweet storm with Rosie O'Donnell. Sheesh.

Christmas Spirit



INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

balloon proportions.

And recent talk of high hydro rates does not seem to have stopped people from hanging lights on every available tree, eaves trough, porch and fence on their properties.

Few of these illuminations will match those at Town Park when the switch is flipped in a couple of weeks on the annual Aurora's Borealis, with festive lights adorning the trees each evening.

Apart from decorations, there are other visual reminders of the holidays throughout Town in the form of Salvation Army kettles, Christmas tree lots and people fighting over parking spots at our local retail outlets.

The seasonal barrage is not restricted to the outdoors. There are no end of activities inside, if you prefer warmer temperatures and less wind.

Parents and grandparents will be aware that their kids' and grandkids' festive concerts and plays are coming.

There will be other opportunities to hear seasonal music than at your local school. A quick scan of the ads in The

Auroran will reveal a variety of choirs, concerts and other live music to choose from.

Theatre Aurora is even getting into the act with a couple of Christmas themed evenings in December.

Another indoor activity that really ramps up this time of year are the various bazaar and craft sales. Wandering through the pervasive seasonal smell of cinnamon, you can pick up just the right holiday wreath, or handmade gift.

Just make sure you get exactly what you need, as it may be challenging returning them on Boxing Day.

Even when we're penalized this time of year, it's for a good cause. The bylaw folks have even gotten into the spirit of the season by allowing overnight parking on nights that it doesn't snow. And if you do get a parking ticket, you can pay for it with a toy that will be donated to a child in need.

Or, if you want to dispense with that pesky ticket thing, just drop off a new toy at your favourite charity, or some non-perishables at the local food bank.

If that doesn't get you in the Christmas spirit, nothing will.

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

**(Editor's note: Mr. Johnston's crystal ball is back in working order; as the Tree Lighting Ceremony will take place on the evening of Wednesday, December 7, in the forecourt of Town Hall. Scott knows you'll have a good time!)*

Completed budget targeted for this week

By Brock Weir

As Aurora awaits a final number crunch on the Town’s 2017 Budget, the projected residential tax increase stood at 2.8 per cent as the final round of talks started this week.

This projected increase on Aurora’s portion of the tax bill was initially floated at 2.9 per cent – a 1.9 per cent increase plus a further one per cent to boost cash flow into municipal reserves – but was knocked down by .1 per cent by a number of adjustments since the last Budget session on November 21.

“We have moved a Facilities Supervisor position to the options list, taking that off,” said Dan Elliott, Treasurer for the Town of Aurora, when talks resumed Monday night. “We have increased the Council Administration Conference Budget up to \$20,000, and we recently became aware that the Run for Southlake will be taking place in Newmarket, so there will not be any requirement for the internal costs of \$7,500.”

Since the last session, he added, there has been no further input received on the budget from members of the public.

Council convened Monday night for the first of two evening meetings intended to go through the final items of the Operating Budget before the overall budget, but operating and capital, which has already been approved, come up for ratification at the next Council meeting.

As The Auroran went to press this week, a number of items that could impact the final figure were still up for discussion, including increased funding for the Town’s cultural partners – the Aurora Cultural Centre, Aurora Museum & Archives, and the Aurora Historical Society – and potential boosts to the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame and Sport Aurora.

Representatives from the latter two organizations were at Town Hall on Monday night to make their

respective cases, including Sport Aurora which requested they be recognized as a “valued partner” by the Town of Aurora. This, according to Sport Aurora president Stephen Kimmerer, means “responsible levels of funding be provided that will allow Sport Aurora not only to continue its work, but advance objectives of the Aurora Sport Plan in successive years.”

Earlier this year, Sport Aurora was contracted by the Town for the development and delivery of the municipality’s new Sports Plan, work which continues. Recommendations resulting from their work are being prepared and reviewed, and future reports will focus on a three year budget, the creation of a grant program, a volunteer development strategy, the creation of performance metrics for sports delivery, training for cultural diversity, facilitating opportunities for persons with disabilities, and focusing on a tourism strategy.

“We need sustainable funding,” said Mr. Kimmerer. “We don’t want to spend all of our efforts finding sponsorship. We have work to do and we have people we need to pay to make sure things happen.”

Also outlined at Monday’s Budget meeting were status updates on several projects in the works including the implementation of a public art policy, which Parks and Recreation Director Al Downey said he hopes to bring forward in 2017, along with the continued implementation of the Cultural and Parks & Rec Master Plans and the three-year plan for the Aurora Museum & Archives.

2017 is also hoped to bring the approval of a budget for the first phase of Aurora’s long-planned Wildlife Park, with a construction start targeted for 2018, and a detailed design for Mavrinac Park, which Mr. Downey says they hope to construct in “early 2017” with a completion in the fall.



Artist Clayton Samuel King leads a talk at the Aurora Cultural Centre last Wednesday for his new exhibition Giinwint Aadizookaanaan: Reflections of Ogemawahj (Our Stories: Reflections of Ogemawahj). The show formally opens this Thursday, December 1, with an artist reception from 6 – 8 p.m. The reception will be followed by The Ennis Sisters: An East Coast Family Christmas. For ticket information on the concert, visit www.auroraculturalcentre.ca.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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Khamissas to be Aurora’s voice during Canada 150 celebration

By Brock Weir

Back in her native South Africa, Aurora’s Mae Khamissa has developed a bit of a reputation with her friends and family.

Such is her love for her adopted homeland, one nephew teasingly dubbed her, “Miss Beautiful Canada” for all the marvellous stories she has shared with them.

Now, “Miss Beautiful Canada” has gone legit, with Mae and Raz Khamissa chosen to represent Aurora as part of the “Canada 150 Community Leaders” program, hosted by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

The Khamissas, long-time owners of the venerable Omars Shoes, which was founded by Raz’s father, Omar, nearly 50 years ago, were named to the position by Council last week.

The Canada 150 Leaders is intended to provide a nation-wide network acting as the “Community Voice” for Canada’s 150th Anniversary Celebrations in 2017, whether at local or larger-scale events, all the while sharing stories about their communities “to create an insightful mosaic of our nation.”

“When they approached us, I thought it was a big deal and for us to be considered is pretty neat,” says Raz. “I am so proud to be Canadian. We moved from South Africa almost 48 years ago and we have been so blessed to be living here. We are very blessed to have an opportunity to vote, to express our opinion, to disagree with someone else’s opinion but still get a chance to discuss things.

“The freedom, the comfort level, the safety factor, there are so many things we’re so lucky to be a part of here in Canada. My father was a very proud Canadian and I am glad to be considered to be following in his footsteps. For me, it really is an honour to be considered part of the Canadian celebration of 150 years.”

Mae sums up her feeling with one word: “Pride.”

Over the last two years, Mae has been an active member of the Interfaith Refugee Resettlers, an interfaith group which has brought together members of Aurora United Church, Trinity Anglican Church, and the Newmarket Islamic Centre to



Raz and Mae Khamissa, pictured at Omars Shoes on Monday, have been selected by Council to be Aurora’s voice next year. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**

sponsor groups of Syrian refugees to settle in the Aurora-Newmarket area.

A representative of the Newmarket Islamic Centre, Mae says the experience has helped her not only appreciate but redefine her sense of what it means to be Canadian.

“At Union Station recently there was a [newcomer] family that needed money to go to London, ON, and they didn’t have enough,” she recalls. “The people got together and started putting money into a pot and helped them get to London. In the last few years, there have been a number of new Canadians that I have been involved with and just the feedback I have had from them in such a short period of time [has been amazing].

“On Friday night, we did an overview [with the Syrian family we sponsored] and his view was, ‘at first we were told this country was a dark place, it never gets sunny there, and it is cold all year round. We thought we would be treated like we were in the camps. We got here and there were people waiting for us at the airport to take us, when we got to the home there was a house full of people to welcome us, food was supplied for the longest period of time and it just doesn’t stop. We have never seen this. We really expected to be treated badly, but we had no choice.’”

They were afraid to make that leap, to take that chance, says Mae, but when they did, the community stepped up to make sure they felt comfortable and at ease in their new home.

“It makes me so proud that even someone who just stepped into this

country six or eight months ago has already fallen in love with it,” she says. “We know there are so many countries that can bring in people. There are so many refugees all over the world, and to know that we are willing to open our doors to people coming in. It just builds me into being more proud, and especially

with this government right now I am very happy because we are showing our true side of what Canadians are and what we’re really about and that makes me so happy.”

This is a sense shared by Raz as well, who said from his own family’s immigrant experience they were “treated with the utmost respect” as soon as they arrived in Canada.

“We were always treated with the utmost respect and people were so nice and good to us, and that is the reason why when new immigrants are coming now I take pride in the fact that is what Canadians do,” he says. “They treat people well and they help them as much as they can. They bend over backwards to make things easy for them, because it is not easy moving to a whole new place.”

And as for the teasing nephew? Well, he arrived in Canada nearly five years ago and has come around to Miss Beautiful Canada’s way of thinking. Now she gets to do the teasing.



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Wednesday, December 14 • 7:30 pm

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Comments on Williams are “misguided”, says parent advocate

By Brock Weir

The future of Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School should be taken out of the equation when discussing the need for a school on the east side of Aurora, says an area parent.

Appearing at Council last week on behalf of her neighbours, who have been passionately campaigning for a new high school on Bayview Avenue north of Wellington, Sandra Manherz told elected officials that cautioning their campaign could have “ripple effects,” including the potential closure of Williams is “misguided” and sends a message of “Let’s not fix a problem for fear of what someone may or may not say.”

“How would anything in Town get better if this was the approach we took,” Ms. Manherz asked Council. “As quoted in the Board’s School Improvement Plan, many students on the east side of Town are opting for the Catholic Secondary School to which they can walk, a factor contributing to G.W. Williams’ enrollment dropping. Parents and students are exercising their right to choose. There is already a ripple effect due to no high school being on Bayview. Everyone seems to want to talk about Williams, so let’s talk about Williams tonight.

“In our opinion, the Board hasn’t just let the children down on the east side of Aurora, but they have also let down the children in the west at Dr. G.W. Williams. In 2007, the school was in need of great repairs. What did the board do? Nothing for five or six years. It took the school’s ventilation system breaking down and the school not having heat before they acted. Williams, at this moment, is at approximately 55 per cent capacity. Its attendance has dropped significantly each year since 2010. What has the Board done? Again, nothing for four or five years until the enrollment was at critical levels and then it added an enriched program and will be adding the IB program. That will only result in approximately 100 to 150 students, insignificant for their enrolment issues.”

According to Ms. Manherz, as enrolment decreases, Williams will be left with a reduction of extra-curriculars, specialized teachers and staff, leaving a deficit not only for the teens living west of Bayview, but those living on the east

as well.

“The Board is being reactive, not proactive in their approach,” she continued. “This is also the case with building a school on Bayview. We have waited almost 10 years for them to solve this issue. How much longer are the kids in Aurora supposed to wait? I have heard many times that there will be no high school on Bayview because of the space available at Williams. If that is the Board’s rationale, why are we building elementary schools on the east side of Aurora? Aurora west elementary schools are all under capacity.

“Why aren’t be bussing the kids from the east to the west in order to fill up the schools? Because the Board recognizes there is value in having kids walk to school, there is value to having kids go to school in the community they live in,

value in the social connections when you go to school with kids that live on the same block as you, not to mention all the other reasons – academic, health and wellness, environmental – we discussed the last time we were in front of Council.

“The Board and Councillors keep putting an east-west divide into this issue. Let me make this very clear: we are not divided, not when it comes to the education of our kids, not when we are talking about programming and extra-curricular activities, good teachers and the health and wellness of our children. We, east and west alike, want what’s best for our children. This issue isn’t about the residents, who lives beside what plot of land, building a park or how sentimental we all feel about a building. This is about our children, both east and west sides. This is about all of us: parents, Council

and Board being accountable to the kids these schools service.”

In the end, she said, it is about the best interests of students, what will afford them the best education, programming and opportunities.

Following her delegation to Council, Councillor Tom Mrakas said she would find Council “will stand up and be that voice for residents” and that their voices are behind them. Following Council debate, that is just what happened.

“We’re all united in this,” said Councillor Harold Kim. “But, in terms of how we got there it might be a little different.”

Added Ms. Manherz: “You say, ‘let’s not express our dissatisfaction in case we create a ripple?’ I say, forget about that. Let’s exchange some ideas and come up with a great solution for Aurora.”

Council voices “strong support” for a new high school off Bayview

From page 1

While adding the word “third” would drive home a message to the Board they support keeping Williams open, they said it could mean the motion would be doomed to failure at the outset as the Board has opposed a third high school.

“We have in our Official Plan...that people should be able to have a school central to the feeder primary schools, just like the other side of Town,” said Councillor John Abel saying that without Councillor Thompson’s amendment Council won’t be seen as telling the Board what should be done. “Very simply, if you build a school on Bayview, everyone in Town will be able to walk to school. If you say we want a third one, right away [the Board] will say no. I don’t think we should be asking for that. We should be supporting what the residents have brought forward and they have asked, simply, that they build a high school as planned.”

“We fought hard for our residents to keep Williams open and it is want [but it is also] need,” agreed Councillor Wendy Gaertner. “The Town was planned with a third school on Bayview. The school board purchased the land to provide a third school on

Bayview, and I think it is appropriate we call this the ‘third’ school.”

Mayor Geoff Dawe was also supportive of the amendment.

“The reason why I am in favour of this amendment is [the residents] all indicated they were looking for a school in the area – but I think everyone was pretty clear they weren’t looking for a school in their area at the expense of closing Williams,” he said. “I believe I heard that more than once. My concern with the original motion is it is implied that if we support the motion it would be the closure of Williams. Whether or not the closure of Williams is a good thing or a bad thing, I think it is not the purview of this Council.

“Our Council is to advocate for the residents, wherever they live. All the decisions we make have to be for the Town as a whole. That is our job. I have no problem supporting a request for a school in the east side and that goes back to 2020 when I was banging on doors on the east side. It makes perfect sense there is a high school there and I am absolutely committed to supporting our residents there, but I am not absolutely committed to supporting it at the expense of other planning the Board does, whether or

not we like it is not our purview.”

The amendment nevertheless fell on a 5 – 3 vote, with Councillor Paul Pirri absent from the meeting.

“I was initially in favour of the amendment because, based on what [residents stated earlier] this was not about one area versus another,” said Councillor Harold Kim on why he eventually opposed the amendment. “It is about accommodating the increase in capacity that is going to be happening in the Bayview corridor. For that reason, it sounded like it would be more fitting language.”

He called on Sandra Manherz, a delegate earlier in the evening, to respond to the amendment. She said the original wording was what residents wanted and they did not want to “dictate” to the Board, feeling the phrase “third school” would stop all discussion at the start.

“I don’t think we need this change in there,” agreed Councillor Tom Mrakas. “I think if we go ahead with the original motion the way it was we’re stating a strong support for that school on Bayview and if the school board does come back and say, ‘the only way we’re going to build that school is if we close Williams,’ then we can deal with it at that time.”



Badass at pilates.

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Harry Vowles was “Head Elf” on Pace Credit Union’s float in Saturday’s Santa Under the Stars Parade. He is pictured with Chartwell Aurora’s Lori Hood to his left and, far right, Pace’s Carolyne Trussler.
Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

Harry Vowles rides again

By Brock Weir

They thought they knew what the deal was when they approached the jolly bearded guy in the red velvet suit.

Harry Vowles’ grandchildren grew up “pretty sure” their grandpa was one of Santa’s helper, but there was always that lingering doubt in the backs of their minds. After they sat on his knee and gave him their Christmas wish lists, his daughter told him they were no longer so sure of their theory.

“She said on the way home to Barrie they weren’t too sure whether it was Santa or Grandpa,” says Mr. Vowles with pride. “When I put on the suit I *was* Santa Claus. I behaved as though I was Santa Claus and the suit changed me completely.”

Mr. Vowles was Yorkdale Mall’s professional Santa for nearly 20 years, following his retirement from Famous Players in 1965 but this year, at the tender age of 91, he got a brand new gig, heading down Yonge Street this past Saturday night as the “Head Elf” in the Santa Under the Stars Parade on Pace Credit Union’s float.

Harry, a resident of Chartwell Aurora, formerly Resthaven, secured the gig thanks to a little help from Pace, the Town of Aurora, and a big push from Chartwell and their Moments that Matter Program.

“The program highlights wishes that come from our residents,” says Lori Hood of Chartwell Aurora, adding staff sit down, talk with residents, and fill out ballots for their seniors outlining wishes they might not trumpet to the world. “Every month, we empty out the box and think, ‘Okay, what can we do to make these things happen?’ Harry’s ultimate wish was to do the Santa Claus Parade in Downtown Toronto and be Santa, but we know that is a pretty difficult wish to make come true, so I wondered what we could do on a local scale.”

So, Ms. Hood reached out to the Towns of Aurora and Newmarket with a pitch – just days to spare.

“I said, ‘I understand that making him Santa at this point so late in the game is probably not going to happen, but can we at least get him on a float?’ He is losing his sight, so while he still has some vision left, it would be nice for him to see what is going on there.”

Newmarket, she said, raised issues about liability, but Aurora – and Special Events Coordinator Shelley Ware – stepped up to the plate to find a float to accommodate Harry.

Enter Pace Credit Union.

“Pace and Carolyne Trussler came through for us when it sounded like nobody else was going to,” says Ms. Hood. “What I discovered [talking to him a bit more about it] is he was Yorkdale’s Santa in the 90s and I worked there in the 90s. There is a chance that we were both there at the same time. Christmas in general is his favourite time of year,

anything he can do. We couldn’t make him the big guy, unfortunately. Aurora is very strict about there being more than one Santa and he comes at the end of the parade. As they put it, the contract had already been sent to the North Pole. That was specifically what they had written in the email response to me, so I knew they were so into this thing too.”

Perhaps it goes without saying that Christmas is Harry’s favourite time of year.

For many years, his time as one of Santa’s helpers was a one-man show, until he met Eileen.

The marriage of “Santa” caused a bit of a stir, landing them on the front page of the Sunday edition of The Toronto Star on December 12, 1993. From that point on, he and Eileen were a team, appearing as Santa and Mrs. Claus not only at Yorkdale but, later on, as regular fixtures in Gravenhurst’s Santa Claus parade.

The tradition continued when they moved to Chartwell Aurora, entertaining their fellow residents in costume until Eileen’s passing.

“I initially thought of being a clown for something different, but clown outfits are expensive and a lot of work to put on!” jokes Harry of the crossroads he faced upon retirement. “As Santa, I could get dressed up and take it off in a matter of five minutes.”

But, although the gig was a lot of fun, it wasn’t all jokes.

Harry becomes emotional describing some of the more memorable experiences he had as Santa’s Helpers in one of the most prominent shopping malls in the GTA.

“I had a couple propose marriage,” he says with a sparkle. “The fellow came up to me in the afternoon and told us what he wanted to do, asking if we would go along with it. Of course we would! He was sitting on one knee and she was sitting on the other. I said that according to my records he had been very good all year so I first asked him what he wanted for Christmas. He said, ‘I would like this young lady to marry me.’ There was silence. I said, ‘Well, I’m not hearing anything here,’ but while this was going on he was reaching into his pocket for the ring and then she knew it was for real.

“Another time I had a family with a grandma, a mama, and two kids. The kids came to see Santa, but grandma stood off to the side. They left and a minute or two later, the grandmother came back and said, ‘I am 82 years old and I have never had my picture taken.’ She sat down and we took her picture.

“Then, a little guy came up to me and I was sure he said he wanted a ‘can of beer.’ When I asked him two or three times, I finally figured out he wanted a ‘panda bear.’ It was a fun job and I enjoyed every minute of it.”

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Reindeer take over Petch House as Tree Lighting goes for “Frosty” theme

From page 1

at Town Hall, and while Santa is set to help flip the light switch the Town of Aurora's Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony, which runs from 6.30 to 8.30 p.m., is Mrs. Claus' time to shine.

But, how many of the reindeer will make the cut?

We sat down with Dasher, Santa's lead (and fastest) reindeer on what they're doing to stay in shape and get ready for the big day.

Brock Weir: Santa says you're always the big winner at the Reindeer Games, so I guess you're a shoe-in for next Wednesday.

Dasher: I'm pretty confident, but there are always Reindeer Games to decide.

BW: Is there a friendly wager going on?

D: I can't say because Santa kinda forbids betting, but I am really excited to be heading back to Aurora. We got to spend some time with the kids up close at the Tree Lighting Ceremony last year. But, being out on the deck of the Seniors' Centre was a little bit chilly. We're used to a barn. This year we're going to be inside Petch House and we just have to make sure our big antlers can clear the sides of the door, but I

understand all those little details have been taken care of.

BW: Do you know anything about Petch House?

D: I hear it smells amazing, being over 150 years old. We're really old too, so this is like going back in time. I am really excited to be in a heritage place.

BW: What do you do between the end of your long flight and when the public arrive?

D: It is like a homecoming. With the amount of love the kids and adults gave us last year, all of us were blown away.

BW: Do you get a sneak peek of any of the events before the crowds get there?

D: I have heard, and I don't know for certain, but I have heard the lighting on the tree will be really spectacular this year. Something different is being done to the tree, but my antlers are only so big for eavesdropping on stories. But, I understand the tree lighting ceremony is going to be something not to miss. I don't get to see this, but I heard the families last year talking about the fire jugglers and the fire juggling show that takes place in front of the tree. I wish I got to see that, but the stories I heard from families last year were pretty



Dasher, pictured here at last year's Tree Lighting Ceremony, is pretty confident he'll make the return trip on Wednesday.

Auroran File Photo

spectacular.

BW: What have Mr. and Mrs. Claus doing to get ready for the night?

D: The thing I really love about the Tree **L**ighting is Mrs. Claus gets to come out. She **a**ctually takes charge of us that night because she is going to be inside the Seniors' Centre reading our favourite story, so it is kind of cool that she gets to come out at these events because they always vie to get Santa's attention.

BW: Will Mrs. Claus have any special guests?

D: I don't get to see this, but the Canadian Children's Theatre Company is going to be doing a theatre performance of Frosty the Snowman. You can imagine how much we love Frosty because clearly we're surrounded by snow 12 months of the year. Having youth performers is really special in itself but unfortunately we're going to have to just hear about it because we're going to be **in** Petch House, but I hope the families tell us all about it! People won't be able to escape the "Frosty" theme though. **There** will be Frosty-themed games, and even a craft inside the Petch House for kids to make while we're busy posing for Selfies with their siblings or parents.

BW: So, you guys get to stay warm in Petch House, but what do the organizers have planned to keep Aurorans warm as well?

D: Even though Aurora uses LED lights, they still give off a lot of warmth. There will **also** be free hot chocolate and clementines throughout **the** evening. I am kind of glad they chose clementines

because we really like apples and if people snuck us apple treats we would all have a belly ache. They were smart to bring out the clementines because I wouldn't touch one!

BW: Do you think you will meet new families this year?

D: The tree lighting ceremony I such a special event, regardless of what your family holiday traditions are. It is an event that is **inclusive** of everyone's traditions and we welcome them all. Us reindeer are pretty proud of ourselves, so we love to meet people and all activities cater to the many different ages, whether families that have little ones, or grandparents in tow. There is always something for everyone.

BW: You're right, you do sound pretty confident you'll be making the trip this year. Who else from the herd would you like to join you?

D: We all like to do everything together, but Dancer is one of Santa's prettiest reindeer so we will get to see if she makes that cut. Maybe the kids will get to see Dancer if she is able to come.

BW: It sounds like you and Dancer might have a bit of a thing going.

D: I never reveal my secrets **up** front, but I think if Dancer came we would pose really well for pictures together, especially for selfies. I will make sure my Santa brushes my teeth and I am ready to go.

BW: Maybe a spritz of cologne to woo
Dancer?

D: I think our natural cologne is spiffy enough for her.

BW: Good luck!

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WARMING UP – Revellers taking in the Santa Under the Stars parade on Saturday experienced warmer than usual weather, but, if that wasn't enough, the Aurora Historical Society was prepared, with plenty of hot chocolate on the Hillary House verandah to go around. Pictured here are Joan, Sofie, Carol, Leigh, Ron, Jason.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger



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Welsh Choir returns to raise voices for Welcome Table

By Brock Weir

Volunteers at Welcome Table devote hours of their time to the organization's weekly meal for people in need, but recently they have been getting the hang of making buttery, currant-filled Welsh cakes.

Welcome Table isn't necessarily flexing their international culinary muscles, but getting everything in place for next Saturday when the Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir lifts up the community through song at Trinity Anglican Church.

The internationally recognized chorus, which boasts several Trinity members among its ranks, returns to the church on December 10 following their first smash concert at the church two years ago.

Featuring an eclectic program of Welsh, Canadian and International pieces, and some chosen to reflect the sounds of the season, the concert not only features what promises to be a moving performance, but an intermission where Welsh cakes come into the spotlight.

“Our first mission is to bring pleasure because we ourselves enjoy singing with this four-part harmony,” says choir member John Hitchmough, a driving force behind the Trinity concert. “We enjoy the camaraderie, with anywhere from 30 – 40 guys, depending on the time of year and events. This year we have [choir members performing] coming in from as far as Bowmanville on the east and Guelph on the west.”

The four-part harmony of the Welsh choir is unique among choruses and something which invariably sparks an emotional reaction in the listener. Two winters ago, Joy Marshall was among them. Her interest in the choir was sparked last year when they first visited Trinity. Outside of rehearsals she was only able to hear them from a distance as she and her fellow volunteers at Welcome Table were busy preparing the event's "Afterglow," which provides a hot meal for the choir members.

Not content with hearing the final performance from a distance, she picked up some of their CDs after the show and, almost a year later of listening to them at home and in the

car, she's almost ready to join the men as a female soloist.

She shies away from the suggestion but is nevertheless eager to welcome them back to Trinity, particularly as a fundraiser for Welcome Table.

“Most of the people who come in are in need of some sort in terms of financial assistance, but it is also for people who need to get out and have a social time,” says Ms. Marshall who, after starting out as a volunteer, is now the coordinator of Welcome Table. “For our seniors who are on pensions and are by themselves, they absolutely love coming every week. The dinner is totally self-sufficient, run by donations, and we have 100 volunteers, four teams, and four chefs who come and volunteer their time every week.”

But in the darkness of the last gasps of autumn and the dawn of winter on the horizon, Welcome Table is need of assistance now more than ever.

"I find around late fall it starts to pick up as it gets darker and colder and damper," says Ms. Marshall. "People are looking to get in out of the cold and have a wonderful meal. At Christmas, we do have a special Christmas meal. This year it will be December 28. The food is usually donated by several people and they get little gifts and we try to make

it a bit special. For many people, it is their only Christmas dinner.

“For many, it is their only chance to have a real Christmas dinner with people who care about them. The thing that makes Welcome Table special for me is the people who volunteer, without a doubt, get more out of being there than often people who are our guests. There is no question. One lady said to me that the only other person who talks to her during the week is at Welcome Table. Think about that. That stuck with me. For someone like me who volunteers on a regular basis at Welcome Table, often it is a Wednesday night, you're tired, and it is the middle of the week, and you come and the energy from the volunteers and the people preparing the food, it is like you forget that you're tired and it is quite wonderful.”

As the clock counts down for the December 10 concert, you're out of luck if you want to sample the meal the Welcome Table volunteers have been planning for the Afterglow following the performance as it is sold out. Tickets for the performance itself, however, are still available from Trinity Anglican Church by calling 905-727-6101 or visiting www.welshchoir.ca.

The show gets underway at 7.30 p.m.
Tickets are \$25.



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Joy Marshall, Coordinator of Welcome Table, and Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir Member – and Trinity parishioner – John Hitchmough are pictured at Trinity Anglican Church last week preparing for their December 10 concert.

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Aurora requests Police offer designated safe spaces for Classified purchases

By Brock Weir

Any transaction stemming from a classified ad is always a matter of “buyer beware” but as safety concerns regarding meeting strangers to complete online transactions mount, the York Regional Police should take action to make these concerns a thing of the past.

At least, according to Aurora Council.

Councillors approved a motion from Councillor Tom Mrakas last week calling on York Regional Police to designate areas at local police stations to provide a supervised, monitored space for these transactions to go down.

“There is always a risk when meeting a stranger in person,” said Councillor Mrakas in his motion. “Designated exchange areas in police stations, such as a couple of parking spots, would help residents safely conduct these transactions.”

The motion called on the Town of Aurora to make a request to the York Regional Police Services Board, the Regional body overseeing the delivery of police services throughout York, to review “the possibility of designating areas in police stations” or at their Aurora headquarters “for residents to meet buyers and sellers of online classified ads.

York going down this route, he said, would follow in the footsteps of Peel and legislation working its way through the City of Toronto.

“I have just reworked some of what [Toronto] Councillor Norm Kelly put forward...to speak specifically to York Region and Aurora,” said Councillor Mrakas at last Tuesday’s Council meeting. “I think it makes

sense, especially in this day and age. A lot of people are doing business and transactions online and you don’t know who you are meeting. I think to give them a place where you can feel safe and make these transactions is a good thing, to have somewhere where it is safe for our residents to do this. It is only happening more and more and, for me, it is a no-brainer.”

Speaking to his motion, the Councillor amended what he put forward calling on the motion to be circulated to the eight other York Region municipalities for their consideration and support as well. It was a move which found support around the Council table, with members moving to ensure the results of what the Police Services Board decides are communicated back to Council.

A lot of people are doing business and transactions online and you don't know who you are meeting.

“I think this is very good for our residents,” said Councillor John Abel. “For my son and daughter, this is how they do business and I am stunned sometimes when my son says, ‘Oh, I got this.’ I actually don’t want to know, but I should know, and I think this is a really good Notice of Motion.”

Added Councillor Sandra Humfries: “This is exactly what my kids do. My son was meeting someone here and there and something strange was happening and he left the place. I am thankful that this is being brought forward, knowing kids ourselves who can utilize this safe space to do business.”

Briefly

DRUNK DRIVER CHARGED AT SANTA CLAUS PARADE

An impaired driver was charged Saturday after breaching a barrier at Aurora’s annual Santa Under The Stars Parade. According to York Regional Police, the incident took place just after 6.30 p.m. while the parade was already in progress. “An officer was at a road closure location for the Aurora Santa Claus Parade, lights on, road closure barriers out, when vehicle travelling southbound on Yonge Street just past St. John’s Sideroad went right around the officer and those barriers,” said Constable Andy Pattenden. “Thankfully another officer was able to get the car stopped. The driver was investigated, four bottles of empty alcohol [were] found in the car and, sure enough, the driver was impaired. Taken back for a breath test he blew twice the legal limit for alcohol in his system. Thankfully no one was injured at the parade.” The alcohol was later identified in a police statement as vodka coolers. This was just one of 20 incidents of impaired driving identified by York Regional Police over the weekend.

HAVE YOUR SAY ON LIBRARY SQUARE

Have your say on the future of Library Square this Thursday, December 1, as Councillors Tom Mrakas and Michael Thompson host a roundtable discussion Library Square: From Concept to Reality. The meeting, which gets underway at Town Hall starting at 7 p.m., is a chance for Council members to hear from area business owners and residents at large on the next steps towards “realizing the future of Library Square. Come out and have your say in the revitalization of our downtown by helping to move Library Square from concept to reality.”

BE A HOLIDAY HERO

Be a Holiday Hero this season and help a family in need with the York Regional Police. From December 3 at 11 a.m. through Monday, December 5 at 7 p.m. drop off a new, unwrapped toy, new children’s clothing or gift cards at the YRP’s donation station at Upper Canada Mall near Starbucks in Newmarket. For more information on the program, visit www.yrp.ca.

ONE FLOOR TO GO!

This year’s response to the Aurora Senior’ Wish Association has been overwhelming. So far, businesses and residents have stepped up to the plate to “adopt” floors of residents at a local long term care facility with such enthusiasm there is just one floor of residents left in need. To get on board by the end of this week, contact Eve Kotusiewicz at info@seniorswish.org or call 705-321-6539.



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Cami Ormond, pictured at the finish line of the Junior Girls OFSAA Cross Country championship earlier this month, won gold with Team Ontario at the Canadian Cross Country Championships in Kingston over the weekend.
Photo by Timothy Ormond

Aurora's Ormond runs away with gold

By Jake Courtepatte

It has been a whirlwind of a month for cross country star Cami Ormond.

The Aurora Eagles athlete, a Grade Ten student, opened November with her second junior girls cross country title in a row at the Ontario Federation of Schools Athletic Association championships, and her fourth OFSAA title in the last twelve months.

Finishing the 4,200-metre race in an impressive 15 minutes and 23 seconds, Ormond crossed the line sixteen seconds ahead of her closest opponent.

The victory comes as no surprise: in the spring of her Grade Nine year, she earned gold in both the 1,500 and 3,000-metre races in the midjet category, breaking a 30-year old record in the 3,000-metre.

"The competition at OFSAA cross country is awesome," said Ormond. "I have so many great runners there to encourage me to go faster and do my best."

Ormond, who also plays on Aurora High School's Aurora Eagles' basketball team, got into cross country and track at the elementary

school level. Before long, she realized that long distance was her strong suit.

Shortly before high school, Ormond joined her first running team, and gave up rep basketball last summer to focus on running competitively.

She has since steadily climbed to the top at the regional, provincial, and even national levels.

"My strategy always depends on who my competition is, and what the conditions are," said Ormond. "I tend to start slow and gradually speed up and pick people off throughout the race."

The honours continued to pour in just this past weekend, taking part in the Canadian Cross Country Championships in Kingston, something Ormond said she was "super excited" about.

"My nationals meet was awesome. It was really fun to spend time with my team, and I loved having the opportunity to race against under 18 girls from all across Canada."

Finishing in fourth in the four-km race, Ormond played a key role in Team Ontario bringing home provincial gold at the event.

Nick Mota, Joshua DeSouza, and Jonathan DeSouza, of the Newmarket Huskies, also placed fourth, second, and tenth respectively in the under-18 boys six kilometre race.

As for Ormond, she hopes that one day her running leads her to a spot on the Canadian Olympic team, possible alongside her sister Sion, who swims on the junior national synchronized swimming team.

Tigers rally to beat Icehawks

By Jake Courtepatte

The Aurora Tigers further separated themselves from the Ontario Junior Hockey League basement with their first road win of the season on Friday.

Adam Petric scored twice in the third period to complete a comeback from an early 2-0 deficit, while Jacob Kostopolous added an insurance marker in the final five minutes for a 4-2 win over the Milton Icehawks at the Milton Memorial Arena.

Mel Melconian broke the shutout in the second period with his team-leading sixteenth goal of the season, also assisting on Kostopolous' marker to earn second star honours in the game.

The win was Aurora's first in fifteen attempts on the road this season.

At the other end, Jake Sabourin was able to earn his first win of the season, having lost or earned a no-decision in his first ten appearances. He was solid between the pipes in stopping 29 of 31 shots faced.

The Icehawks, with only seven points in league standings all season, slip even further out of the playoff picture with the loss.

A much tougher challenge awaited Sunday night in the Tigers' Den, hosting the Cobourg Cougars, one of four OJHL teams ranked in the top 20 in all of Canadian minor junior hockey.

Brayden LaChance, fresh off his best performance of the year in a shutout of the Trenton Golden Hawks last week, was forced to contend with an astonishing 62 shots in the game while killing off nine minor penalties.

Opening the scoring in the first minute of play, Cobourg spread three more goals out between the second and third periods for a 4-0 shutout of the home team.

It was just the seventh game all season that Melconian was held off the game sheet, after putting up ten points over the previous five games.

The eighteen-year old forward has played a key role in the recent resurgence of the Tigers' offense prior to the shutout, though he has been playing at over a point-per-game pace all season.

With sixteen goals and sixteen assists through the first 29 games of the season, Melconian is currently tied for twentieth in OJHL scoring in his first full season of Junior A hockey.

"He obviously has a lot of talent," said head coach Brian Perrin, who took over the reins just over a month ago. "He's a 'gamebreaker' kind of kid. Puts in his best effort every night."

The Aurora club will need their best effort in their only game this week, hosting the Pickering Panthers this Sunday.

Pickering, with three games in hand, lie just two points back of the Tigers in the OJHL's North division.

Puck drop is at 7 p.m. at the Aurora Community Centre.

The Tigers' record of 5-22-0-4 is a marked improvement as of late on a season that saw the club win only two of their first 24 games.

For stats, schedules, and more information, visit www.auroratigers.pointstreaksites.com.



Sebastian Cirillo eyes down the puck in action at the Aurora Community Centre. The Aurora Tigers went 1-1 over two games last week.

Auroran photo by Jake Courtepatte

Tigers see resurgence under new coach Perrin

By Jake Courtepatte

A new face behind the bench of the Aurora Tigers has brought back a sparkle of the Tigers of the past.

Since Brian Perrin took over as head coach of the Junior A club, the team has put up a 3-3-2 record, a major improvement over the first half of the Ontario Junior Hockey League season.

The Tigers have had a revolving door of coaches over the past two seasons as they try to rekindle the fire that brought them to the OJHL finals in 2013-14. Mark

Joslin lasted just thirteen games behind the bench last season before getting the boot, with owner Jim Thomson calling his team's play "undisciplined".

Thomas Milne then took the reins, having formerly served under James Richmond as the team's assistant coach. When he stepped down at the end of the season after the Tigers bowed out of the first round of the postseason, Thomson made a bold move to hire Nikita Poliakov, the youngest head coach in the league

Continued on page 21



Brian Perrin has led the Aurora Tigers to a 3-3-2 record since taking over behind the bench.

Photo by OJHL Images



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Aurora pedals forward on cycling master plan

By Brock Weir

If you're a cycling enthusiast – or even someone who just goes for a fun weekend pedal – you might have found an obstacle in your path to veer around, but Council took a sharp right turn this week in a direction that could make the self-propelled commute a little bit easier down the road.

Council signed off on a notice of motion brought forward last week by Councillors Sandra Humfryes and Tom Mrakas, which will set in motion a new “Cycling Master Plan” for the Town of Aurora.

In their motion, the Councillors pointed out cycling is not only a viable and cost-effective way to travel, but also the mode's environmental credentials.

“A Cycling Master Plan would create and improve opportunities throughout the Town of Aurora for active

recreation and active transportation for all residents and visitors,” said the Councillors. “The development of active transportation infrastructure, policies and promotion strategies are also supported at the Federal, Provincial, County and local municipal levels of government. The purpose of a Cycling Master Plan is to guide the development of a long-term, comprehensive, Town-wide on- and off-road commuter and recreational bicycling network. [It] will help support the Town of Aurora's pursuit of becoming Canada's most active municipality.”

The recommendation called on Town Staff to work with the municipal Trails and Active Transportation Committee to develop the Plan and, speaking to the motion, the Councillors emphasised how much this would mean to achieving that overall goal of “activity” Aurora has set for itself with an eye to 2020.

“We have been discussing this as far as the Trails Committee for quite a while, looking at developing a cycling master plan and I, along with Councillor Humfryes, figured it was

time we worked on it and thought it is time to move forward, and have the Trails Committee begin to do a lot of work in developing this,” said Councillor Mrakas, noting they didn't think there would be any need to bring on consultants to finish the job.

“We don't feel there is a need to go to anything exterior. We feel this can be done in house. We have a great committee and they will be excited to move forward on this. The thought is not just to create a Cycling Master Plan for the Town of Aurora, but we need to look at how we can interconnect with all the other municipalities and with the Region's Cycling Master Plan they developed back in 2008. We need to have that connection between all of them so if someone wants to go from Georgina through Richmond Hill on their bike they should be able to safely, and so I think that if we put forward that plan and let it out there and work with the other municipalities we can create an excellent bike movement throughout York Region.”

Speaking to their motion, Councillor

Humfryes reiterated the “excitement” felt by the Committee in moving this forward and gave Council a sneak peek at what's to come.

“[This Master Plan] is just one of the things the Trails and Active Transportation Committee would like to do [including] a Bike Aurora Day next year,” she said. “We are really excited that they are taking [this] on and I can't wait to get moving on it. You'll hear more about it shortly.”

While Council waits to hear more about Bike Aurora Day, they voiced their overall support of the proposal.

Councillor Michael Thompson, for instance, said he agrees that it “aligns well” with other initiatives the Town has either recently completed or still have in the works including the “most active community” goal and Aurora's Sports Plan.

“I look forward to [this] coming back” he said, suggesting that once the framework for developing the Cycling Master Plan is established that the Town's Parks and Recreation be invited to provide their input.



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Aliana and Sienna proudly display their new skates from the Aurora Skate and Skate Dress Swap, held at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex on Saturday and sponsored by Activate Aurora.
 Auroran photo by Jake Courtepatte

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TOWN OF RICHMOND HILL

IMPROVEMENTS ARE COMING. LEARN MORE!



The Regional Municipality of York will be working in your community to enhance the McCleary Court Community Environmental Centre (CEC) located at 130 McCleary Court (see map, right top), as well as the Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre (CEC) located at 1124 Elgin Mills Road East (see map, right bottom). Construction will begin October 2016.

The project includes:

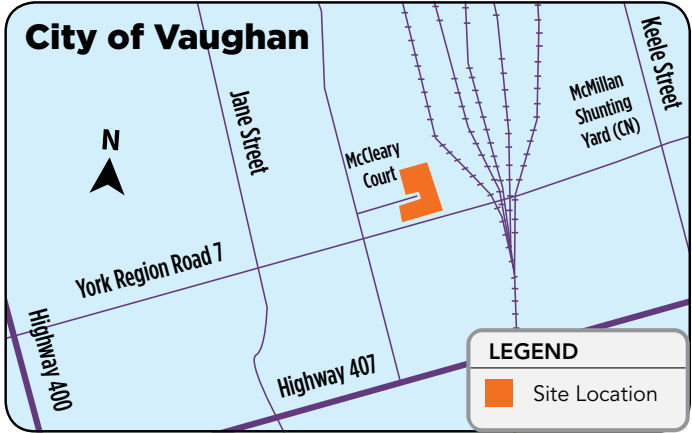
- Addition of weigh scales for processing customer transactions
- Integration of a Household Hazardous Waste Depot onsite

What can you expect during construction?

The CEC site will remain open to the public during construction and operations will be adjusted as required. Including:

- Changes to traffic flow at the facility
- Location of bins and/or materials accepted
- Extended wait time and onsite line ups
- Possible delays and short-term site closures

As with any construction project, there may be minor inconveniences which may affect you, however, every attempt will be made to keep these to a minimum. We appreciate your patience while construction is being completed.



Where can I get more information?

Staff will be available onsite to answer questions and direct traffic. For more information visit york.ca/wastedepots, follow @YorkRegionGovt or call 1-866-665-6752



For general construction questions please contact:

Luis Carvalho, M.Sc. (Eng.), P.Eng., PMP
 Senior Project Manager, Environmental Services Department
 Phone: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 75015
 Email: Luis.carvalho@york.ca



Jump into the Canadian Tire Aquatics Centre at the SARC

By Brock Weir

Local swimmers can now dip their toes into the waters of the newly minted Canadian Tire Aquatics Centre.

The new name of the pool at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex on Wellington Street East was unveiled on Wednesday morning by Mayor Geoff Dawe and Jeff Hodgkinson, owner of Aurora's Canadian Tire store on Bayview Avenue.

Canadian Tire has purchased the naming rights of the facility for five years, joining the ranks of organizations like Highland Automotive Professionals, Aurora Toyota, and Pfaff, who have each lent their name to municipal facilities – in their case, arenas – over the last few years.

“Sponsors play an important role in developing youth and recreation programs in our community,” said the Town in a statement. “Funds from this \$10,000 sponsorship will go back into youth programming and help Aurora maintain quality programs at affordable pricing for all members of the community.

“Canadian Tire Aurora has included their charitable arm Jumpstart in the naming rights. The new owner of Canadian Tire Aurora is dedicated to making a positive difference in Aurora and supporting Jumpstart's core purpose of enriching the lives of kids in financial need through sports and physical activity. As a strong supporter of Jumpstart, Canadian Tire Aurora helps to give kids in our community from families in financial need the same chance to participate in sports as their neighbours, classmates and friends. Whether it's the chance to try a new sport or to continue with a favourite one, no child is left out.”

Speaking after the photo opportunity, which was also attended by Councillors Wendy Gaertner and Tom Mrakas, Aurora CAO Doug Nadorozny, and Parks and Recreation Director Al Downey, Mr. Hodgkinson

reaffirmed this commitment.

“I think it is important to give back to the community,” he said. “There is a good synergy between the Town, Canadian Tire and our Jumpstart Program, so this was a natural fit. For the first time, the local store is going to take an active role with Jumpstart with our own chairperson to oversee things. We try to stay arms-length and we need to have it as a non-profit group and that is where the Town fits in to be able to administer that and bring the funds back into the community and it can stay here.”

Added Mayor Dawe: “It is a great partnership. We have had this conversation many times; Aurora is a very affluent Town, but there are still a fair number of people who struggle to get by. Programs like Jumpstart help those kids who couldn't otherwise play a sport. Canadian Tire is extremely generous in how they put that program together and what they do. Even the program they run in the spring where they have that big Play Day at Machell Park, putting that together it is a great partnership and I think it is an opportunity for the Town to recognize how our business partners do give back.”



The Canadian Tire Aquatics Centre at the SARC was dedicated Wednesday by (from left) Councillor Wendy Gaertner, Parks & Recreation Director Al Downey, Town of Aurora's Louise Dyer, Canadian Tire's Jeff Hodgkinson, Lori Gagnon of Jumpstart, Mayor Geoff Dawe, Councillor Tom Mrakas, Aurora CAO Doug Nadorozny, and Town of Aurora's John Firman.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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Christmas Tunes with Michelle White
THURSDAY | DECEMBER 15
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Santa Under the Stars



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Santa usually has to contend with snow as he makes his way down Yonge Street in the annual Aurora parade, but rain added a bit of cheerful glisten to his path. (Opposite, Top Row) Crowds lining Yonge Street, armed with snowsuits, umbrellas and blankets, were prepared for anything Mother Nature threw at them. (Opposite, Second Row) The Royal Canadian Legion Colour Guard, far left, and Town Crier John Webster, far right, leant the parade a bit of pomp and circumstance, while the Aurora Winter Blues Fest brought the party atmosphere. Local churches were well represented with bands, floats, and this nativity scene. (Opposite, Third Row) Representing the Town of Aurora were Mayor Geoff Dawe, along with Councillors Michael Thompson, Jeff Thom, Tom Mrakas, Wendy Gaertner, and John Abel. Newmarket-Aurora MP Kyle Peterson and wife Andrea wave to the crowds while veteran Dorothy Gummarsall rides shotgun. Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP Leona Alleslev. (Opposite, fourth row) The Aurora Tigers thrilled sports fans. Citizen of the Year Mary Georgopoulos gives a cheery wave. Newmarket-Aurora MPP Chris Ballard was joined by his team. (Opposite, Bottom Row & This Page, Top Row) Friendly faces from a variety of community groups, organizations and businesses were out in force. (Second Row) The St. Andrew's College Pipes and Drums had their bagpipes decorated in Christmas lights. (Third Row) Canada Post helped Santa pick up letters from kids along the parade

route while the Newmarket Community Band kept toes tapping. (Bottom) Central York Fire Services' vintage wheels.
Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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COMMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 1 – 4

The Patrick House Art Studio & Gallery will feature “Ambiance”, recent paintings by Mahtab Abdollahi and Josee Savaria. Opening reception is Thursday, December 1 from 6 – 9 p.m. Gallery hours are Friday, December 2 and Saturday, December 3 from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday, December 4, from 12 noon to 4 p.m. For more information, call 416-220-2127.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1

Celebrate the launch of two new exhibitions at the Aurora Cultural Centre this evening from 6 – 9 p.m. Formally opening tonight are Giinwint Aadizookaanan: Reflections of Ogemawahj, solo exhibition and sale by Clayton Samuel King. Also opening is the seven-artist Raw Material: Double Door Gallery Artists' Group Exhibition and Sale. Plan to make it an evening of art and music! Come for the exhibition, then stay for the Cultural Centre's holiday concert, featuring the Ennis Sisters of Newfoundland with an East Coast Family Christmas. Concert starts at 8 pm, directly following the reception. Exhibitions continue through December 17. For more information, including tickets, visit www.auroraculturalcentre.ca.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3

Come to the Aurora Public Library today for their annual Holiday Open House from 9:30 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. Enjoy hot chocolate, cookies and holiday fun while posing for a holiday picture. Their photographer will “Trap” you inside a snow globe and the photo will then be sent to you to share. Enjoy a festive story time with carols, seasonal books and more. The Festive Photo Op runs from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., and Polly & Her Puppets take the stage from 10:30 – 11:15 a.m.

Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP Leona Alleslev will be serving up hot chocolate at her Constituency Office today from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Come and warm up with a cup and a chat with your Member of Parliament. The office is located at 12820 Yonge Street, Suite 202, in Oak Ridges.

The Northridge Community Church, 15338 Leslie Street, Aurora, hosts a Santa Shuffle today from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, supporting the Salvation Army. This Fun Run and Elf Walk aims to have over 300 participants. For more information, visit Santashuffle.ca.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

CHRISTMAS AT THE MANOR: The Aurora Historical Society hosts their annual Family Christmas today from 1 – 4 p.m. Enjoy live music, children's activities, light refreshments, a gift shop, Art at the Manor 2016, and get your photos taken with Santa! \$5 per adult and \$3 per child. For more, call 905-727-8991 or visit www.aurorahs.com.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9

The Aurora Community Band presents a holiday concert like no other! Join a musical journey to celebrate indomitable human spirit with heroic fanfares, lyric chorales, movie monsters and tuneless witches in a “Heroes & Monsters” theme. Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria Street, 8 p.m. Tickets are \$10, \$5 for seniors & students, available at the door or at auroracommunityband@gmail.com.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7

Come to Town Hall this evening to celebrate the holiday season at Aurora's Tree Lighting Ceremony from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Meet Santa, Mrs. Claus and see Santa's reindeer. Mrs. Claus will be reading her favourite book ‘Twas the Night before Christmas at the Aurora Seniors' Centre located at 90 John West Way. This year, the Petch House will be housing Santa's reindeer and you can also enjoy a fire juggling show and Frosty the Snowman live theatrical performance by The Canadian Children's Theatre Company. The Salvation Army will be collecting food and toy donations as well as money for their Christmas Kettle Drive. Every donation helps put a smile on a family's face.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10

The Aurora Public Library and Amnesty International host World Human Rights Day today from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Celebrate our human rights – a family story time and community art are all part of the festivities. Meet your local Amnesty International Chapter, write a letter, pick up some information, and enjoy their displays.

Trinity Anglican Aurora hosts the Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir in aid of Welcome Table, a weekly free sit down meal provided for people in need. The performance starts at 7:30 p.m. in the church located at 79 Victoria Street. Tickets are \$25 and can be ordered through the church office at 905-727-6101. The choir played to a sold out auditorium on its first visit two years ago. The program includes Canadian, International and Welsh pieces including We Rise Again, Finlandia, Nessun Dorma, When I Fall in Love, and sing-along carols such as Do You Hear What I Hear, The First Noel and O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. A cash bar and buffet will be held in the church basement after the concert. All are invited to this traditional Afterglow, where more singing usually occurs. The cost of the buffet is \$10; drinks are extra.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11

A Musical Christmas: Join the Aurora Historical Society once again at Hillary House this afternoon from 1 – 4 p.m. with a musical interlude featuring pianist Ellen Meyer. She will play Christmas favourites while you enjoy light refreshments, Art At The Manor, holiday décor, and the gift shop. \$7 per adult or \$3 per child. For more, call 905-727-8991 or visit www.aurorahs.com.

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

THAT’S A SPICY MEATBALL!



Members of the Queen's York Rangers Army Cadets took over the Royal Canadian Legion on Saturday night for their traditional Spaghetti Dinner. Proceeds from this fall's event will go towards sending 40 members of the Corps to Vimy Ridge this April to participate in commemorations marking the 100th Anniversary of the defining Canadian victory in the First World War. (Clockwise from Above Left) Brandon and Alicia, pictured here with Captain Sue Lusk, let the meatballs go to their heads. Natalia, Seamus and Nicholas run the dish pit. The pasta, meatballs and garlic bread were dished out by Silvana, Joanne, Gail and Mike.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

New coach has turned around Tigers' fortunes

From page 15

at 27-years old, having worked with Thomson at his camp for years.

But now Thomson and his staff hope they have finally found their guy, in hiring the veteran coach Perrin when the Tigers remained poised to stay in the OJHL's basement.

Perrin, unlike Poliakov, took the job with plenty of experience in the OJHL, having last worked in the league as the head coach and general manager of the rival Newmarket Hurricanes in the 2014-15 season. He was released from the team over disagreements with the ownership.

Perrin first met Thomson when his son, Tigers veteran defenseman James Thomson, was a call-up for the Hurricanes in the 2013-14 season.

Taking over a team that had just lost nine straight games, the Tigers have more than doubled their standings points in the eight games that Perrin has been behind the bench, and are now ahead of or tied with four other teams in the OJHL.

It's a long and challenging task, to bring up to speed a group of youngsters that consists of just two returning players from the previous season. With player cards on short order after using up the majority to try to fix the team early in the season, not much can be done in terms of roster moves going forward.

“It's a young team, that's growing,” said Perrin. “There's a lot of potential, and you can tell it's a team that can be very competitive very soon.”

Perrin said he sees major potential in the club's goaltending, the tandem of Brayden LaChance and Jake Sabourin.

“The goaltending has been the strength from the start,” said Perrin. “Our goaltenders give us the chance to compete

every night and that's all you can ask from them.”

While the long term goal for the team is to squeak into the postseason, Perrin said his team will have to work hard to get there.

“It's not out of the question.”

Briefly

NEW GORMLEY STATION OFFERS MORE COMMUTER OPTIONS

A new GO Transit station in Gormley will offer local commuters more options on how to get Downtown. Starting December 5, five morning and five afternoon peak-period train trips will be extended from Richmond Hill GO Station to serve the new Gormley GO Station. In addition, there will be two-way bus service between Gormley GO Station and Union Station during the midday and night-time bus service from Union to Gormley.

The Gormley GO Station is fully accessible and has been built to achieve LEED Silver certification. Green building features include rainwater harvesting technology and innovative roofing that is made from 95 per cent recycled materials. To support new service to Gormley GO Station, a new train storage facility with capacity for six trains was recently built and opened in Richmond Hill. Careful design work also preserved the natural environment around Gormley GO Station, including a creek, a forested area and a small meadow.

The new Gormley GO Station is on the Richmond Hill GO rail line at Stouffville Road, west of Highway 404. The station features 850 parking spaces, a bus loop, and several amenities for customer convenience including two electric vehicle charging stations, a kiss-and-ride area, heated shelters, and a platform snowmelt system.

The opening of this new station helps meet the growing demand for GO rail and bus in York Region, and is part of Ontario's GO Regional Express Rail plan to bring more transit to more people throughout the GTHA.

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CONSTRUCTION COMPANY LOOKING for experienced, knowledgeable, on-site supervisor for the York Region area. Please email resume to: stephen@intercityrealty.com fax: 905-597-0493 office: 905-597-0227.

GOT SOMETHING TO SELL? Place your ad in The Auroran Community Newspaper. “FOR SALE” Call 905-727-3300 extension 102. NEED HELP IN THE OFFICE? Place your Help Wanted ad in The Auroran Community Newspaper. Call 905-727-3300 extension 102. We look forward to hearing from you.

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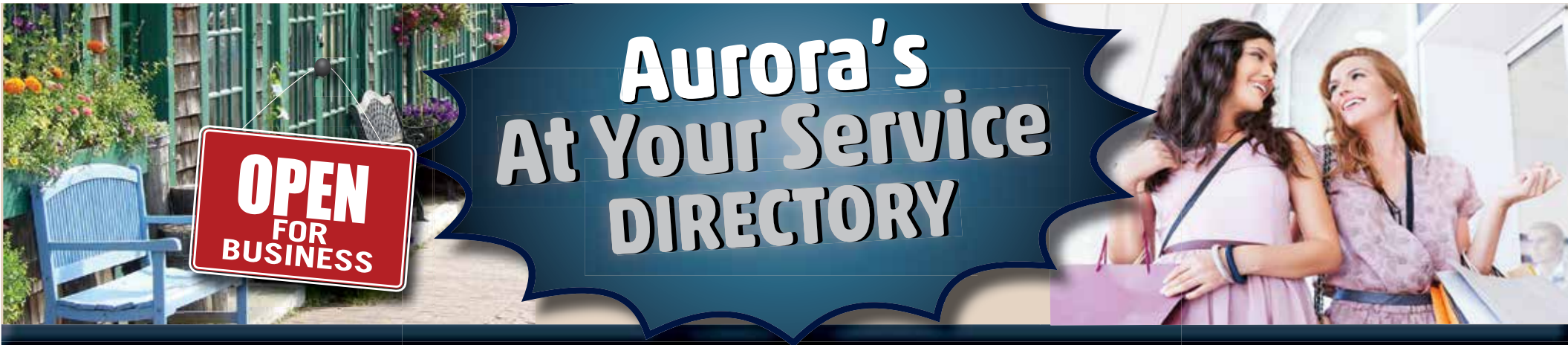


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.....

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- Freelance reporting work for weekly community newspapers and special projects
- Will produce stories and bylines for the events they cover
- Will be paid on a freelance/contract basis per project/story
 - Generate story ideas and follow up on news tips
 - Take photographs
- Work some evenings and weekends, as required

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Diploma in journalism preferred
- Candidates should have experience working on the editorial side of the newspaper industry
- Excellent writing, editing and photography skills
- Valid driver's license and a reliable vehicle
- Reporting experience an asset
- An interest in local issues is a necessity, as the majority of the writing for this role will be local

.....

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