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MAY THE FOURTH BE WITH YOU – Visitors to the Aurora Farmers' Market got up close and personal with some of their favourite Star Wars characters at the Market opened its 2019 Outdoor Season at Town Park on Saturday. Darth Vader, CP30, R2D2, and a Storm Trooper were among the characters represented as local farmers, artisans and chefs got revved up for the warmer weather ahead. For more, see Page 27.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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Wards might hinge on Province

By Brock Weir

The adoption of a ward system in Aurora could hinge on the Province's review of Regional government.

Council this week is set to review a recommendation calling for a Town-wide study of the Aurora's electoral system, but staff recommend their approval be contingent on the Regional Governance Review leaving Aurora's boundaries unchanged.

Following his election last year, Mayor Tom Mrakas made adopting a ward system – where Councillors are elected to represent specific segments of Town – a top priority, but Aurora's Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee has recommended that a wholesale review of the electoral system not go forward until Ontario completes its review of Regional Government.

"The Provincial Government is currently undertaking a Regional Government Review, which aims at making recommendations to improve service delivery in parts of Ontario," says Town Clerk Mike de Rond in a report that will be before Councillors at this week's General Committee meeting. "At this point, few details have emerged as to what changes could be coming to municipal boundaries, if any at all. It has been rumoured that the Government intends to release their findings in the late spring or over the summer; however, this is not confirmed. At their meeting on April 1, the Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee agreed unanimously that the Town's review should not proceed until the Town has confirmation that the Town of Aurora's boundaries will not be changing [under the review]."

Continued on page 25

Ontario Bill backtracks on OMB reform: Mayor

By Brock Weir

A new bill introduced into the Ontario Legislature in the name of creating more housing will take away the ability of communities like Aurora to have a say in planning decisions, according to Mayor Tom Mrakas.

Mayor Mrakas was joined Monday in Toronto by several colleagues from across the GTA to speak out against the Provincial Government's "Housing

Continued on page 3

SHOVEL-READY – Owen and Brandon grab a bite to eat after working up a sweat in the Aurora Community Arboretum on Saturday. The duo was among the throngs of volunteers who braved the rain for the group's annual community tree-planting. For more, see Page 13.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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Paws in the SARC gives your dog the chance to shine

By Brock Weir

If you've ever watched dogs blaze a path to glory through an agility course, or make a splash with some diving and wondered why your four-legged friend can't do the same, you'll have a chance to see how your pooch measures up this weekend at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex.

The Town of Aurora will host the second annual, free admission Paws in the SARC this Saturday and Sunday – an extra day added this year for added attraction.

Doors open May 11 at 10 a.m. with a day of vendors and entertainment through 6 p.m. Sunday, however, will be a day dedicated to entertainment – showcasing dog shows and giving local dogs the opportunity to hold their own.

"Last year was our first event and it was a great success," says Brad Dewar, Supervisor of Animal Services for Aurora, Newmarket and Georgina. "We saw more than 600 people in attendance and moving forward we would take the opportunity to introduce a little bit more this year and see how our communities respond to the additions.

"We have dedicated May 11 to our vendors and some of the entertainment, with Aqua Dog Dock Jumping, which is a combination of their competition as well as opening the door to community members to allow their pets to try the dock diving. We'll also have a dog luring course, which is something open to the public to try."

Specially trained dogs kept the crowds entertained at the first annual Paws in the SARC held last spring. The event returns to the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex for a second year – now spread over two days – this Saturday and Sunday. Auroran photo by Jake Courtepatte

This year's Paws in the SARC will be spread over two arenas, one of which will be dedicated to entertainment and the other left to vendors and community partners.

Sunday's day of entertainment will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with more dock diving and other agility performances.

"It is a great opportunity to see something different, something we don't always see within our community, and it is amazing to watch and see how these dogs just thoroughly enjoy this type of activity," says Mr. Dewar. "It is pretty amazing to see how high they can actually jump."

Part of the reasons behind the decision to separate the vendors from the entertainment was that dogs can get very excited in loud environments. Mr. Dewar says it was important for organizers to strike the right balance between vendors and dogs.

In addition to entertainment and learning about local businesses that cater to pets, Paws in the SARC is also an opportunity for the Town's Bylaw Department to underscore the importance of what Mr. Dewar describes as responsible pet ownership and "debunking any myths" that might surround pet licencing.

"We want to help our community understand that when your pets are licensed, the reason why they need to be licenced and [have that license] affixed to their collars is in the off chance your pet does get away from you – such as if the wind opens up a gate – that, as officers, we're able to find your pet and we're able to get it back home as quickly as possible. When your pet is licensed and does have its tag on, the officer doesn't take your dog to the shelter; we'll contact the owner right away and get the dog back home. It's a benefit to the animal because they get reunited with their owners as quickly as possible, but it is also a benefit to the owners because they don't have to drive to a shelter and they don't have to pay pound fees."

Although Paws in the SARC is now entering its second year, this is a year of firsts for the local Animal Control department. It is the first year of a municipal partnership between Aurora, Georgina and Newmarket working together to provide animal services and both additional municipalities are set to take part in this weekend's event.

Also on board are Shades of Hope, the local wildlife rehabilitation provider, and the Ministry of Natural Resources' canine unit, both of which will be on hand to answer questions for the public.

Another first for this event is volunteers will be on hand to collect donations such as blankets, towels, unopened bags of dog and cat food or treats, or even monetary donations to keep local shelters running.

"Anything that can help our shelter provide the best temporary housing for our community animals will be accepted," says Dewar. "One of our animal service vehicles will be present and they can load donations right into the vehicle before going into the event."

For more information, visit www.aurora.ca/pawsinthesarc.

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Planning changes could have impact on heritage preservation: Mayor

From page 1

Supply Action Plan" which is aimed at "cutting red tape, building more housing and increasing the number of affordable homes."

The plan was announced Thursday by Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who said people struggling to find affordable housing "that fits their family budget will see real relief and real choices" thanks to the changes outlined in the changes.

""We've heard loud and clear from families across Ontario that finding housing that is affordable takes too long and costs too much," said Clark. "After years of neglect by the former government, there is now a housing crisis in Ontario and the dream of ownership is out of reach for too many. Our plan will make it easier to build the right type of homes in the right places, giving Ontarians and their families more flexibility when looking for a home they can afford."

Thursday's announcement said that the Plan would "streamline the overly complex development approvals process to remove unnecessary duplication and barriers, making costs and timelines more predictable," focusing on five key themes of speed, cost, mix, rent and innovation.

Mayor Mrakas, however, said the changes give Local Planning Appeal Tribunals, set up under the previous Provincial government, much of the same powers previously enjoyed by former Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), and put communities' abilities to make planning decisions that suit local needs in jeopardy.

"I was shocked, and I couldn't believe that we're going backwards instead of forwards," said Mayor Mrakas, who chaired the OMB Reform Group, on his initial thoughts following the announcement. "Normally, when you make changes to policy or legislation, we need to have a certain amount of time to see how it unfolds, how it works, how it is going to be working, and when you re-evaluate it, you don't just kind of throw it out and go backwards and back to the old system. You look to see how you can make some minor changes to keep it moving forward.

"The changes to the OMB in the House was a unanimous decision, so every party voted in favour of making changes to the OMB. They all understood there was a need to make changes to that piece of legislation, so now to go back to something that people unanimously supported moving forward with really doesn't make any sense."

Going back to the old system will see local Councils elected by the people to make decisions on behalf of constituents "on how we grow taken out of our hand and an unelected, unaccountable body, in turn, is going to be deciding how the Town of Aurora will grow, how it will intensify, how much density will occur, regardless of how we see our Town evolving."

At the local level, Mayor Mrakas said he was particularly concerned about the impacts such a move would have on efforts to put in place changes to protect Aurora's so-called Stable Neighbourhoods against incompatible development, as well as efforts to preserve local heritage.

"I am glad we're moving ahead with changes to the zoning in regards to stable neighbourhoods and we're at the point where it is going to be in front of General Committee (in early June), so we can get it in front of Council and ratify those changes," he said. "If we don't implement the changes we're looking at doing, and this became law, then through the appeal process, that appeal of our changes to the zoning would end up going to the new, but the old OMB system which means that chances are they would be unfavourable to the Town's new changes."

Additionally under the proposed changes, matters related to heritage designations, or any appeals under that banner, could go before the Local Planning Appeals Tribunal (LPAT) instead of the current system where matters appear before the Conservation Review Board.

"LPAT's decisions are binding, whereas the Conservation Review Board's decisions are not binding, said Mayor Mrakas. "Normally, in the infinite wisdom of the Province, they have the authority when it came to heritage matters to the local municipality. We had the ultimate authority. With this change, now you've almost reversed it and now you're giving the authority, once again, to that unelected, unaccountable body and they will be deciding what is historic in our Town.

"To me, that is absolutely wrong and could have long-lasting ramifications to the heritage in our community."

For the Province's perspective on the matter, please see Page 16.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

An Open Letter to Mayor & Council from Town Park Ratepayers member

Firstly, I am writing to thank Councillors Gaertner and Gallo for their integrity in voting against the flawed and biased consultant report on Protecting Stable Neighbourhoods (SN).

I feel extreme disappointment and frustration with regard to the position of the mayor and all the other Councillors who supported this report. The report would be better named "Destabilizing older neighbourhoods" or "Selling out older neighbourhoods to the highest bidder" or "Supporting the contractors' and businesses' bottom line" reports.

Although I am aware that some compromise is necessary to appease the developers, I can't believe that anyone would agree that a 4,000 square foot home is compatible with homes that are 1,000-1,500 square feet and meet with the intent of the Official Plan (OP) with regard to protecting older neighbourhoods from incompatible and inappropriate building.

One of the largest original homes on my block has a footprint of 1,100 square feet, so that would mean, using the consultant recommendations, if a home is built in the neighbourhood its footprint would be almost 2 ½ times the footprint of the adjacent homes. Trying to tell people that this is protecting Stable Neighbourhoods is an insult and an attempt to make fools of those who expected support from the Council and Mayor.

I have heard and witnessed many stories about new development contractors and developers and their treatment of the existing neighbours.

Based on the stories, they are only interested in how fast and how much money they can make. The stories range from demolishing the interior of a home and burning the debris in the discarded bathtub in the backyard, to using a chain saw to saw off the roots of 6-8 50-year-old trees in a neighbour's yard and thereby killing the trees.

These are not stories of caring contractors and it appears that the council and mayor think these people deserve more respect and consideration that the hundreds of existing residents in the SNs.

In spite of many of the present Council and Mayor running their campaign on protecting SNs, when they started investigating the Stable Neighbourhoods after the last election, it has become obvious that they have an agenda and want this settled as soon as possible and not in favour of the people who live in the SNs.

There seems to be the ability of the council and mayor to ignore the OP and their responsibility to ensure that they follow the policies within the OP with regard to SNs. It is the same way we were treated in Old SE Aurora when we tried to make it a heritage district.

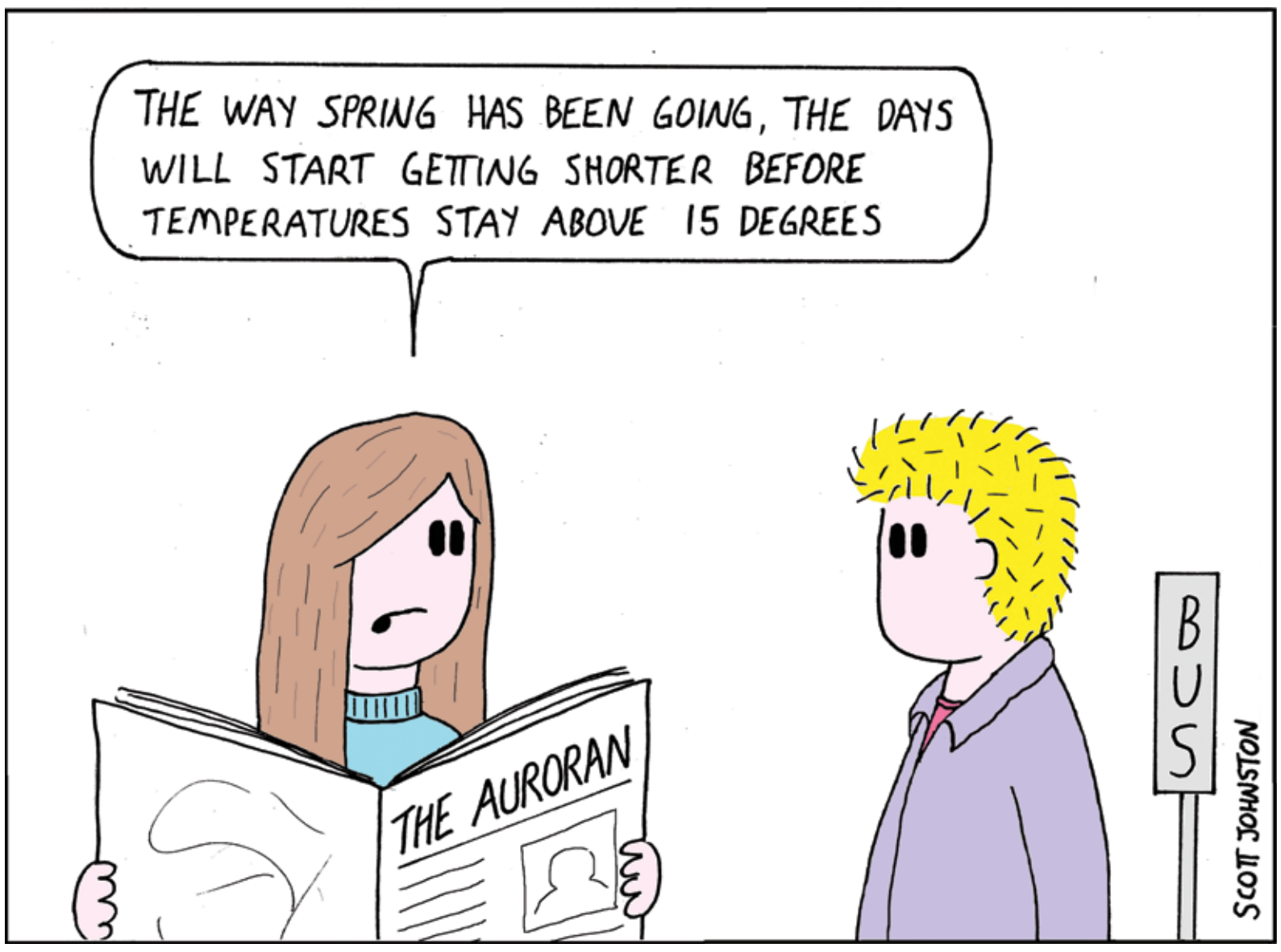
Wellington Street was added to the Old SE area map knowing that those same business owners on Wellington, who had fought against the NE Heritage district would do whatever it took to stop being part of the SE Heritage District, including lying to residents and fear mongering to get the people in the community to fight tooth and nail to stop any plan to make the SE a Heritage District.

And then when the Heritage Advisory Committee took my recommendation to Council that Wellington Street be removed from the map to appease those who were most against the Heritage District, Council totally ignored this as a compromise and stopped the process.

This is a different issue, but our present mayor and council have used the same plan. Make it the responsibility of the neighbours to fight for something that was/is the council's responsibility to follow the OP.

Continued on page 23

Machell's Corners



Putting a value on culture

BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

Memory is a powerful thing.

Sometimes there is no rhyme or reason on how memories are filed away, or how they are conjured up once again, often to the surprise of the individual.

They can often be evoked by sight, smell, taste and sound.

We all know the sensation of a scent or flavour that has an instant familiarity. As far as familiarity goes, it can sometimes be elusive, something that conjures up seemingly random images that don't necessary fit together. Like a 1,000 piece jigsaw puzzle that has taken you days to put together only to find you're short one key piece to make the image come into full focus.

Whether it is a taste of something your grandmother cooked decades ago, or a voice that rings eerily close to that of someone who had a special impact on our own life – it has more in common than just being a memory; it's part of your history, the collection of people, places and things that converge to make you who you are.

If life was a tapestry, they are stitches of experiences, fulfilling or otherwise, that come together to form the whole. If one is fulfilling, chances are there are more that serve as lingering reminders of trauma – physical or emotional. Each stitch, however, is just as important as the last, and we don't often appreciate what they bring to the whole until they are just out of reach.

To this end, a certain meme making the rounds on social media over the last few years has always made me laugh. It can take various forms, have any number of evocative images used to underscore the point, but the gist is usually the same: book lovers are still traumatized.

By what?

The fire at the Library of Alexandria.

Yes, that fire. That fire that Julius Caesar's troops purportedly set when they sacked the city. Yes, that very same fire that happened nearly two millennia ago.

This meme, of course, is wholeheartedly tongue-in-cheek, but there is an underlying truth in it.

That fire was not just a fire – and, truth be told, it was probably more of a symbolic fire than anything else – rather, it was the wiping out of thousands of years of our collective human history.

Who we were, and what we had been up until that point, was largely wiped out; a link to our collective history irreparably broken and, of course, impossible to replace.

The meaning behind the meme has, in my opinion taken on new meaning given world events that post-date its existence, particularly the fire at Notre-Dame last month.

That fire, of course, received its fair share of column inches in this space, but in the days and weeks since the blaze, the tone of the conversation has changed.

While the flames ranged, the people of the world seemed united in disbelief that such a stalwart symbol of history could be all but destroyed by a flame, regardless of whether its underlying cause was a rogue spark from ongoing renovations, a short circuit, or a carelessly discarded cigarette.

The first sour notes seemed to come the following day when French billionaires began lining up making significant donations towards the cathedral's rebuilding fund, compounded by President Macron's vow that reconstruction of the iconic building would be complete within five years.

Why, asked some voices in the crowd, were private resources being sought for this project when there was nary a word from the Vatican on how much they would be offering up from their impossibly rich coffers?

A valid question, and a question that still remains valid, but the fact the Catholic Church, in theory, did not claim ownership of the building factored little into the conversation.

This argument was followed shortly thereafter by criticism stemming from the US government's decision – or, at the very least, the White House's decision – to help in the rebuild in the face of mounting challenges at home, not the least of which being the lack of government support towards restoring clean drinking water to Flint and other parts of Michigan. A very valid concern, and a concern which has been top of mind for a number of people for many years, and one which is still yet to be fully addressed.

More pointedly, there were questions of scale.

In Jerusalem, for instance, Muslim faithful were shocked at the blaze at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third-holiest sight in Islam, at the same time that Notre-Dame burned. Although the fire was relatively small and contained compared to what happened in Paris, criticism began to fly about a disproportionate amount of news coverage given to Notre-Dame compared to this non-Christian site, and all the conjecture of racism and prejudice entailed in that.

If disproportionate coverage is a talking point, perhaps a more apt comparison is the seeming lack of coverage and, in turn, public awareness over a spate or arsons in the United States targeting primarily African American places of worship.

Many people in North American quite rightly pointed out that there has been – and continues to be – a complacency beyond Louisiana of the fires that destroyed three historically black churches in one of the state's parishes over less than two weeks, and a subsequent fire that appeared to target a largely white church in the same area.

Whether it is a fire that damaged or destroyed a place of worship, a humanitarian crisis relatively close to home, or human rights issues anywhere around the globe, they are issues that should concern us all, regardless of where we live, what faith we belong to, or if we don't subscribe to any particular faith whatsoever.

If one grieves for one, or chooses to support one particular cause, it does not invalidate any other experience. Each one directly impacts the collective human tapestry.

Mourning the loss of a cultural touchstone, however you choose to define it, shouldn't be derided, particularly in this climate that seems to be trending towards a society discounting the value and impact culture, history and the arts has on our society, re-framing it as something that is either elitist or irrelevant.

That couldn't be further from the truth.

History and the arts are all part of culture, but so too is everything else. It is who we are, what we want to be, and what we will be.

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Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

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The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating…

The 105th anniversary of the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club (May 15)

This pair of lawn bowls belonged to Milton Fleury (1852 – 1946) and were later used by Ada Johnson. They both played on the old lawn bowling green behind Trinity Anglican Church. On May 15, the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club is celebrating their 105th anniversary – to learn more about the oldest sports club in Aurora, be sure to read this week's Time Traveller's Diary column.

TIME TRAVELLER'S DIARY

By Jeff Walker
Community Time Traveller
Aurora Lawn Bowling Club

Lawn Bowling – the Oldest Sport in Aurora

The first lawn bowling was enjoyed in the early 1900s, when people found room to play on sections of their own lawns; one was on the Hillary House lawn just north of the existing building.

During this time, the Men's Group at Trinity Anglican Church decided to level the grounds adjacent to the church for a bowling green, and with uncharacteristic disregard for the history of the parish, moved any remaining stones from the cemetery from sixty years earlier and laid them by the east wall of the chancel.

Over the graves of some of the church's earliest members, lawn bowls rolled and tournaments were held.

In 1912, a lawn bowling and tennis club was organized in connection with Trinity Church, with Dr. Hillary as president and the Reverend Gerald S. Despard, honourary president.

In 1914, on May 15, there was an enthusiastic re-organization meeting when the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club was formed with Dr. Ford Butler (dentist) as president.

In 1933, after many years of lawn bowling on the church grounds, the Club was lucky to get a section of McMahon Park for the creation of a full-sized bowling green. A clubhouse was needed, so an old log cabin was acquired near Pefferlaw, and the men from the Club took it down log by log, and Mr. Charles Fry used his truck to bring the building to McMahon Park where it was assembled and used as the clubhouse for many years.

In 1973, the Town of Aurora, with a financial contribution from the Lions Club of Aurora, decided to construct a new clubhouse for the Lawn Bowling and Tennis Clubs, which resulted in the log cabin being moved from McMahon Park to the Sheppard's Bush Conservation Area – where it is today.

In June of that year, Mayor Evelyn Buck officially opened the new McMahon Sports Pavilion where both Clubs now enjoy their sport.

On July 23, 2014, the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club celebrated its 100th Anniversary with members and guests enjoying an afternoon of celebration and games with Reverend Ian Martin from Trinity Anglican Church, Mayor Geoffrey Dawe and MPP Chris Ballard.

On May 15, 2019 the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club will be 105 years old.

Lawn bowling is a sport for all ages and the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club is the best place to learn how to play the game, meet people and enjoy friendly competition.

Canada's Employment Landscape: Shifting and Uncertain

MP'S REPORT

Leona Alleslev, MP
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

It doesn't matter where I go or who I speak with - the message is clear and consistent – Canadians are concerned about the changing nature of employment. It is not only about the quantity of jobs but also about the quality.

Those who have full time jobs – and they do consider themselves the "luckier" ones - have watched as conditions within those jobs have drastically declined - whether that's longer working hours and more responsibility for the same pay, the reduction of career training programs, the erosion or elimination of pensions and benefits, or the constant fear of being laid off as their employer seeks to downsize or trade full time employment positions for part time and contract ones.

For part time workers the stresses are similar but often compounded by the lack of any benefits and the need to have multiple part time jobs. They often get 0 hours in a week or have conflicts between their part time jobs as their employers want them to work during the same periods. Contract workers are the most at risk in the modern employment landscape as many are not contract workers by choice, often performing the same duties as those who are part time or full time. They often have to provide their own equipment, and have no workplace health and safety, sick days, or vacation time, and can be terminated without notice, cause or compensation.

There is no commonly accepted definition of precarious employment. Instead, it typically exhibits symptoms such as low pay (sometimes below minimum pay), variable work hours, uncertainty in current or future employment, no pension, no weekly minimum hours of work, no benefits, no sick pay etc. The lack of a clear, objective definition prevents the collection of concrete statistics to determine the extent of precarious employment and to develop a framework to reduce workplace insecurity.

In 2014, 30-32% of Canadians were in precarious work, with single parents (51.7%), recent immigrants (40.7%) and visible minorities (34.4%) amongst the highest percentage in Ontario alone. The age groups impacted the most were youth (under 25 years old) who are trying to enter the workforce and seniors (over 65 years old) who are unable to retire as they have no pension security to rely upon. In 2015, more than 26% of Ontario's workforce was categorized as non-standard employment, including temporary employees, solo self-employed and involuntary part-time workers. It is clear that our employment landscape has shifted leaving Canadians with not only financial uncertainty, but also the inability to plan for the future.

Employment instability affects the financial, mental and physical health of individuals and their families – and this has consequences on Canadian society. Precarious employment not only affects an individual's standard of living, but also increases the cost to the Canadian taxpayer – by increasing the demands on our healthcare system, our Employment Insurance (EI) program, and delivering less income tax revenue to pay for the programs and services that ensure a prosperous economy and the well-being of all Canadians.

Last month, I hosted a town hall to discuss this issue and explore several policy areas that might improve both the quality and the quantity of jobs for Canadians. Suggestions include:

- Reward Companies that have a high percentage of full time Employees. This could be done by offering a lower EI premium than that of companies who have a higher ratio of part time to full time.
- Reward Companies that have comprehensive benefit and pension packages for all their workers. This could be provided through incentives or an overall lower corporate tax rate.
- Reward Companies that provide career development and training programs. This could be provided through lower EI premiums or other incentives.

To reduce precarious employment, it is critical we begin collecting relevant, robust data that will allow the federal government to create comprehensive tax reforms and policies. The federal government must define a legal and policy framework that fosters increased economic security, and positions Canadians to get ahead, and not just get by.

As always, do not hesitate to contact me at Leona.Alleslev@parl.gc.ca or by phone at 905-773-8358 to let me know your priorities for building a better Canada in 2019.

Even Better

INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

Based on the article on the front page last week, it appears as if Aurora is once again hoping to be named Canada's most fit community.

This time around, it's ParticipACTION's Community Better Challenge. In this event, people across Canada are being asked to track their minutes of fitness. These will be rolled up within each community via postal code to see which municipality is the most active.

The winning community will receive bragging rights, as well as $150k to be directed to local fitness needs.

In Aurora's case, I'm sure $150k could go towards the inevitable annual repairs to the Leisure Complex's pool, skateboard park, or whatever else happens to be falling apart in the building when we receive the prize money.

It's a noble ambition for the Town to be number one, and I know to some of you the effort required to participate may seem daunting, especially if you haven't stepped foot in Club Aurora since you took out your annual fitness membership in early January.

However, while it's assumed participants in the Challenge will focus on traditional exercise like jogging, swimming and team sports, nowhere does it say specifically what activities are included or excluded, and there are many activities unique to Aurora that could give us an edge.

For example, repeated standing up and sitting down burns calories. Therefore, by leaving your picnic table to pick up that third helping at Ribfest, you are doing your part for the Town. So count those minutes, including ones spent agonizing over the option of getting the barbeque or honey-glazed.

The lack of parking near the GO station means that Aurorans walk untold extra kilometres each day to and from their cars. Citizens in other Canadian communities participating in the Challenge can only dream about the minutes of activity they're missing out on by their municipalities providing more than enough parking near their train stations. While one may think of this time as just commuting, let's take advantage of it.

Note that this lack-of-parking-that-encourages-fitness-so-let's-count-those-minutes strategy also applies to visits to the library and Cultural Centre.

There are many other things you may not think to include in your Challenge minutes, but really should, as collectively they consume a lot of time.

Just to name a few, these include such things as employing erratic steering motions to dodge local pot holes, trying in vain to eradicate your portion of Aurora's eight billion dandelions from your yard, and chasing after your recyclables on windy pick-up days, even if you are doing so in your pajamas and fuzzy slippers, rather than proper athletic attire.

While not traditional, or even intentional physical activities, the above examples do include an element of movement. However, Aurora provides opportunities to count minutes of activity when you're simply staying still.

Being angry and/or stressed is not particularly healthy, but technically it does still burn calories. So make sure you count those minutes you spend stuck forever behind people turning left at Yonge and Wellington, or time spent fuming when you see your latest water bill, or waiting endlessly in line at the polling station at the upcoming Federal election, while those in front of you try to convince the polling clerk that their old Blockbuster membership card qualifies as proper identification.

Based on the above ideas, even the most devout couch potato should be able to contribute some minutes to the Community Better Challenge.

If we all play our part, I think Aurora's got this one in the bag.

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

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Should the Town wait for the Province to weigh in before implementing a ward system in Aurora?

Yes No Unsure

Go to www.theauroran.com to vote!

Do you think the Downtown BIA will see results in bringing people into Aurora's Downtown Core?

RESULTS TO DATE MAY 7, 2019	YES	NO	UNSURE
	29%	57%	14%

The fight isn't over, says activist Judy Rebick

By Brock Weir

Judy Rebick used to hear a lot of young women distance themselves from the cause, saying, 'I'm not a feminist," but, over the last five years, the tide seems to be turning – for better or worse.

More young women – and indeed young men – are standing up as proud feminists, but conversely, Ms. Rebick said some of the fights she and her generation won might now have to be refought.

The iconic Canadian activist, who became a symbol for the pro-choice movement in the 1980s and has dedicated herself to gender and racial equality for the better part of four decades, was at the Aurora Public Library last week to speak with this writer about her new book, Heroes in My Head, which charts her journey through abuse, trauma and dissociative identity disorder.

Ms. Rebick told the audience that the traumas she experienced as a child helped her to be fearless in her activism as well as compassionate to individuals who might be marginalized.

"I teach a class at Ryerson called Movements that Change the World," said Ms. Rebick. "When I tell [students] that abortion was completely illegal until 1969 and mostly illegal until 1988, they can't believe it. The comment I get from young women is always that they had no idea we had to fight so hard for the changes that happened."

And the fight, she says, is far from over.

Asked how activists and, indeed, the public at large, can combat instances of racism and intolerance around the world, Ms. Rebick said the way to do it is "by standing up to it on every level."

Certain political movements, she said, run the risk of "destroying the world that we've built, the country that we've built," and it's time to put a stop to that.

"The most important thing we can do is stand up and work with those people who are being assaulted," she said. "In Canada, I think we're doing a pretty good job of that at the community level in solidarity with the communities that have been assaulted. I think in the States, it is a lot scarier because of the gun culture and it is much more advanced."

Author and activist Judy Rebick sat down with Auroran editor Brock Weir at the Aurora Public Library last week to discuss her latest book, Heroes in My Head. Photo by Lucy Frechette

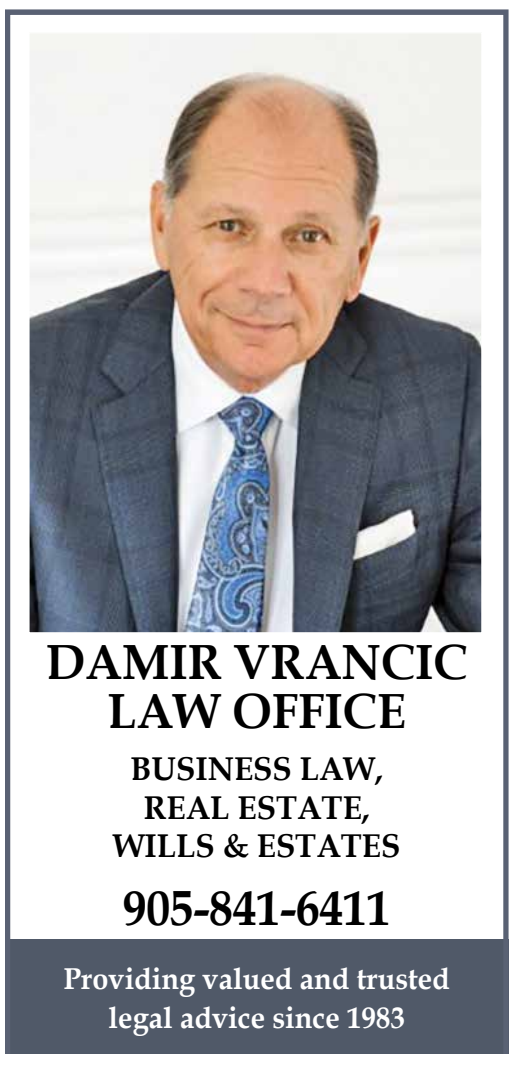
Another threat, she said, were changes to Ontario's health care system and funding cuts to bodies like public libraries.

"There are people organizing and there are demonstrations at Queen's Park practically every day now," she said, noting that one of the most "tragic" cuts has been towards safe injection sites, which will put many "marginalized" people in peril. "We're in a very precarious time and the left is weak. The movements, however, are organizing and I think that is good."

People know a big change is needed and we have to decide what kind of society we want, she said.

"Either we're going to have a big change where the rich get richer and everyone else just fights it out on the streets – and I have no doubt in the United States that's where it's going – or we want a society where we take care of people and take care of each other," she said. "That's why I like the Green New Deal or the Leap Manifesto because it links the environmental, the social, talks about caring work as Green work; to start talking about libraries and nursing as jobs that bring value to the society, that they're green jobs, they're caring jobs, they're helping people. To put more value on that and to not accept their frame that everything is about money and success and so on.

"I think my generation is the most privileged generation. Our parents lived through terrible discrimination, terrible abuse, state discrimination and every generation before suffered terrible violence and lack of resources and everything else. Our generation was the lucky one and now I think it is our responsibility to stand up and make sure the generations to come have a decent life – and it's not all about money and success."



Pencil Studio Aurora is now open for business located at 38 Wellington St. E. Owner Joyce Ng is excited about opening her second location in the Town of Aurora. Pencil Studio is an innovative, fun and cozy art studio that offers an exciting Arts & Crafts learning experience for all ages. Joyce believes the first and foremost lesson of Arts is to enjoy, just ask Mayor Tom Mrakas. Left to right: Joyce Ng, Mayor Tom Mrakes and Michael Lin.

Canadian Tire plans clear hurdle amid resident concerns

By Brock Weir

Plans to reconfigure the former Canadian Tire site on Yonge Street at Murray Drive to allow for more retail and restaurant space cleared a Council hurdle last week amid noise and traffic concerns from nearby residents.

Council approved a zoning bylaw amendment paving the way for additional commercial uses at the vacant big box store that would allow Canadian Tire to subdivide the existing building for multiple retail units, which they plan to lease to tenants. The building has been vacant since 2016 after the business moved to the Bayview Avenue corridor.

The zoning bylaw amendment will also allow for a proposed restaurant with drive-thru near the property's Yonge Street frontage.

All plans will be subject to a further site plan review.

Council's approval followed a delegation by area resident Gord de Bruin who shared several concerns on behalf of himself and his neighbours.

"Most of the residents aren't in disagreement to have something put there; obviously it is going to be better for the community and the Town of Aurora to have a store going in there versus an empty spot, but we do have a couple of concerns," he told Council, leading with a proposed reconfigured loading dock he said would interfere with area traffic and potentially lead to noise concerns from houses on the west side of the property.

"Obviously there is the noise level and depending on what time they have shipping and receiving. I know the road there is already in quite a bit of disarray, and then you have much more truck traffic going through and that is going to make things a little bit more difficult, too.

"The other thing we have an issue with potentially is the restaurant. Having a restaurant already there, we have noticed a rodent issue in our community which isn't very nice. I have been there since 1999 when the complex first opened, so we have had a Canadian Tire store, and it was great, but certainly things need to be looked at as far as the [rodent] aspect goes with the Town and how they are going to monitor that as part of the clean-up."

Mr. de Bruin also cited worries about snow plowing in the parking lot as well as a monitoring well situated in the parking lot.

"The community does need something in there and they are all for that, but it is about getting that right fit for our community and the Town of Aurora," he concluded.

Many of the points raised by the delegate were taken up by Councillor Wendy Gaertner who said she had the same concerns.

"I had the honour of living pretty near a truck loading dock and it was noisy, there were a lot of fumes, and there doesn't seem to be many time constraints," she said. "We, as a Council, will hopefully ask the developer to do what they can to help you."

These sentiments were echoed by Councillor Sandra Humfryes, who said, "We're going to be looking at where that loading dock is going to go, what the noise level anticipation is going to be and I believe that will come to us during [the site plan stage]. We want to make sure your living will be comfortable and you won't be inundated with unwanted environmental issues."

Following the delegation, some of the points raised by the delegate were pointed out to staff by Council, including the impacts of the drive-thru and buffers separating the plaza from the nearby subdivision.

Whether or not the existing buffers and associated landscaping will need to be upgraded to accommodate Canadian Tire's plans is something that will be examined, said staff.

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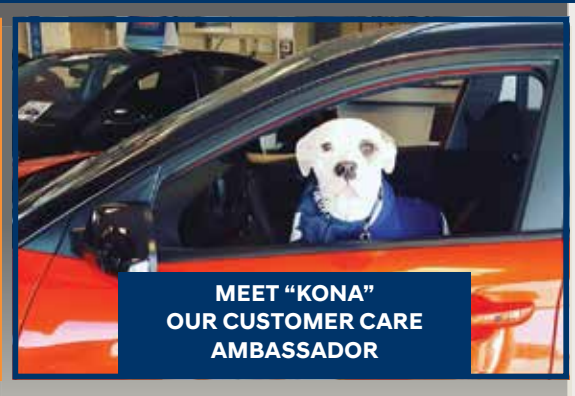

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Ultimate model shown ♦
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Heated Leather Steering Wheel	✓	✗	✗
Rear Heated Seats	✓	✗	✗
5-Year Comprehensive Limited Warranty††	✓	✗	✗

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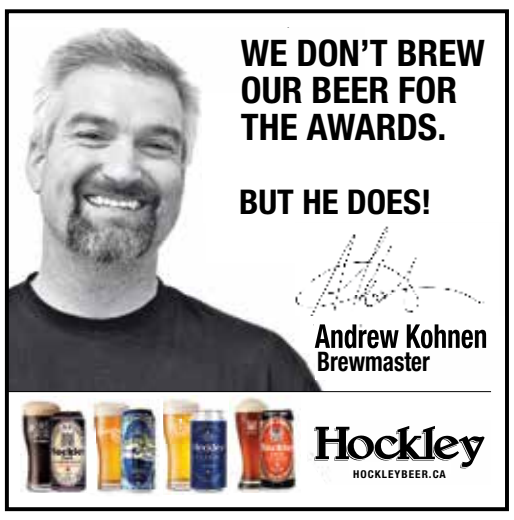


BUSINESS & FINANCE

Red tape and green technology colour MPP's Chamber breakfast

By Brock Weir

Cutting red tape and boosting supports for green technology added colour to a recent breakfast hosted by the Aurora & Newmarket Chambers of Commerce for Aurora's Provincial Representatives.

MPPs Christine Elliott and Michael Parsa sat down with business leaders at St. Andrew's Valley Golf Course recently for a meeting which focused on business growth, education and health.

Among the audience members to ask a question was a manufacturer of over three decades, who commended the Province for moving to foster a climate that makes it more attractive for businesses to make capital investments in equipment.

That being said, however, he questioned what the Government was doing to help businesses make the move into a global arena and attract international investment.

"It is [about] giving confidence back to investors and job creators because, quite frankly, we lost many people who were not looking at Ontario anymore," said Mr. Parsa, who represents Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill. "The amount of red tape we had here, the regulations that businesses had to deal with… we lost many opportunities where people wanted to invest in Ontario."

Citing the United States, Mr. Parsa underscored his point with a hypothetical: if a manufacturer wanted to open up new warehouse space south of the border, they would be up and running in six months. In Ontario, he argued, red tape means it could take over two years.

"We're looking into putting in a bill in the spring and fall of every year to remove [red tape]," he continued. "We want to hear directly from businesses [like you about] some of the red tape and over-regulation you're dealing with in your industry."

Added Ms. Elliott, who represents Newmarket-Aurora, "I want to reiterate how important it is that you let us know some [of] the biggest impediments to you. That is something we don't just talk about and say we want to reduce [it] by 25 per cent and nothing ever happens."

Another attendee, George Hughes, said up until he replaced his pickup truck with an electric vehicle, he was spending upwards of $8,000 on fuel. Since going green, he said it costs around $500 a year to keep the car going, but the challenge he has is finding a place to refuel the vehicle because there are so few places to plug in.

Posing the question of what the Government's plans are to increase the Province-wide use of non-fossil fuels to help offset the cost of running a business, Mr. Hughes was told by Mr. Parsa that the Government is "asking businesses and people to go more green in order to reduce greenhouse emissions."

"We also have to do our part to make sure that it is convenient for the people," Mr. Parsa said. "It is early on, and you're right, I personally looked at an electric vehicle for myself and because of the travel I do it wasn't available in certain areas, it wasn't viable, we're not there yet, and you're absolutely right. We have to do a better job. There are areas where I think all levels of government can work together to accomplish a certain goal and that is certainly one of them."

Other levels of government, however, had their own concerns to pose to the MPPs.

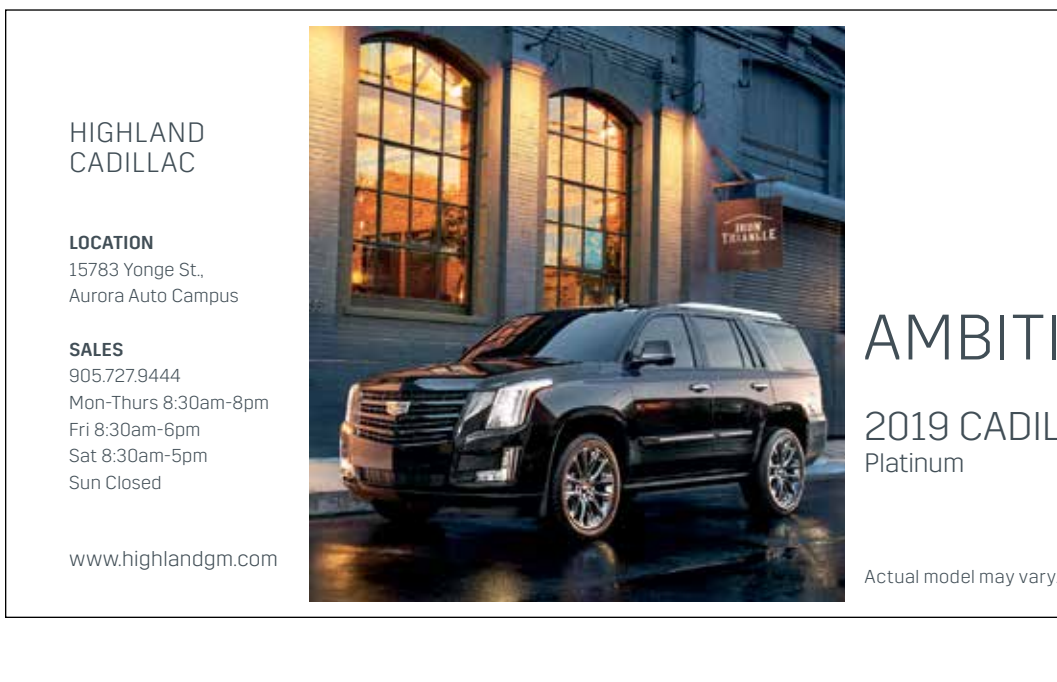
Among these representatives was Tom Vegh, Deputy Mayor and Regional Councillor for the Town of Newmarket.

"When I first came into municipal politics, it was at the tail end of the Mike Harris government where they downloaded a lot of the responsibilities and financial obligations onto municipalities, causing an average of $200 increase to property owners," he said. "On the one hand, it helped with the Provincial deficit, but we didn't have anybody else to download onto except the taxpayer [through] property taxes. Going forward [over the next few years] perhaps you can provide some reassurances that you're not going to be balancing the budget by downloading responsibilities onto the municipalities. That was not a good experience and it was a bit of shuffling of the chairs."

This question was tackled by Ms. Elliott who said, "we can provide that reassurance."

"In fact, we're taking on some of the responsibility in Toronto with respect to the subway system, $11 billion out of $28.2 billion budget. That is an upload, not a download. With respect to some of the public health services, I know some people are feeling that that is being downloaded to a greater degree on the municipalities; however, the actual legislation indicates it is the municipality's responsibility in the first place. There is no obligation for any public funds at the Provincial level to be provided.

"That said, we know there always has been that agreement between the Province and municipalities, so any increase is going to be done over a gradual basis and is not going to be something that is going to require, in my view anyway, given the amount of money that is involved, it wouldn't require a property tax increase because we recognize at the end of the day there is only one taxpayer."



Funding shortfalls for road projects raise Council eyebrows

By Brock Weir

A further report investigating the funding for road rehabilitation projects on Yonge Street, Edward Street, Golf Links Drive and Dunning Avenue has been requested by Council after local lawmakers raised questions on how the project had been budgeted.

The projects were earmarked as part of the Town's 10-Year Capital Plan, but concerns were recently raised by Councillor John Gallo about the road rehabilitation project being split into two phases and two tenders – and two phases for which money had been under-budgeted.

Councillor Gallo first raised his concerns at a General Committee meeting in early April and reiterated them once again at the last Council meeting.

He said he had "two main issues" with the project.

"It was a budgeted item about a year ago as one project and, as we know from the report, it was divided under the rationale it was a large project," he said. "Part One was tendered and approved and Part Two was over-budget. My concern is…process and Council authority, to me, are sacrosanct and I don't waver on that. When Council passes a resolution on a project, Council should expect the project to be complete in its entirety. Parsing off a piece and doing it, and then submitting a report to Council for another piece that is somewhat arbitrarily…separated, and that second piece is overbudget by 10 per cent of the total budget -- $365,000 over-budget of $3.6 million project."

At the end of the day, he said, it was a project approved by Council and it was hard to follow the bouncing ball on just how the project had come to be split.

"The rationale was for the second part of the asphalt costs were budgeted for last year, about a year ago, and they are higher now," Councillor Gallo continued. "If that is true for Part Two, why wouldn't it be true for Part One? You simply can't separate them because the tender (for Part 1) was issued in March of this year. I am struggling because I want this project to go forward and I actually don't have an issue with the project, and it is on our 10 year capital plan and should go forward – in a perfect world, I believe, staff should have come back to us with the entire project and said, 'It's over budget. We need more money for the entire project. Can we have that to move it forward?' To me, that would have been the appropriate thing to do; not split the project, do half of it, and then come to Council in the second half and ask for money because it is overbudget.

"As we all know, there is an economy of scale and we do one project, you tend to get a better price if it is larger. We all know that the Town is capable of doing large projects, $30 million projects. A $3 million project, to me, the justification that it was too big to go out once, I just have a tough time understanding that."

As the discussion continued around the Council table, Councillor Harold Kim said Councillor Gallo had made "some very good points." He asked Acting Town Treasurer Jason Gaertner on the implications of discontinuing or postponing the road rehabilitation project.

Mr. Gaertner responded that the first part of the project has to proceed as tendered, but the second part was still up air. That being said, he added, this road rehabilitation project was part of a larger plan and not proceeding could impact forecasted service levels in Aurora.

To these points, Councillor Kim said he was fine with going ahead with both phases of the project, but said Council "would feel more comfortable if we had a deeper dive or forensic analysis as to how this took shape and became over-budgeted and how it came to be two parts."

"Let's move ahead with this, but I would like to have staff come back with a report as to how to make sure this process doesn't unfold like the way it did."

Added Councillor Wendy Gaertner: "I would like to echo what both Councillors have said, and I do think we need a report on how this happened because it shouldn't have happened. We have a certain process, so let's find out where the glitch was in the process and not do it again."

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Arts & Culture

Young actors find their voices at Theatre Aurora this weekend

Budding actors at Theatre Aurora are preparing two shows for the community this week: Robin Hood & His Merry Men?, above, and, below, Camp Super.

Photos courtesy of Theatre Aurora

By Brock Weir

They have entertained and inspired generations with their daring feats and spellbinding stories, but Robin Hood and modern-day superheroes have something else in common: they are helping youngsters find their voices through theatre.

This Thursday through Sunday, members of Theatre Aurora's "Theatre Kids" and "Young Company" groups will be showcasing their talents in "Robin Hood & The Merry Men?" and "Camp Super."

The fun begins this Thursday with Robin Hood & The Merry Men?, a gender-bending spin on the traditional tale, which takes the stage May 9 – 11 at 8 p.m. The Theatre Kids' production of Camp Super steps into the spotlight May 11 and 12 with shows at 1 p.m.

While both productions offer fresh takes on time-honoured stories and concepts, the development of these stories, driven by the young actors, has served to help kids and youth find their respective voices.

"Camp Super is a comedy about a group of kids who are superheroes at this summer camp who have to team up with this villain who wants to burn the entire world," says co-director Joey Ferguson. "It's a very campy show, it's very fun and the kids did everything from creating their characters, to their costumes, to writing some of the scenes. It is very much their show and they are super-excited about it. The older kids, the Young Company, are doing Robin Hood & The Merry Men?, which is a gender-bent tale. King Richard has taken all the men to war and his brother, John has been left in charge and says any man who is left and doesn't go and fight will be executed, so the men decide they don't want to go and fight and dress up as women. Meanwhile, the women in the country, they are told because only men can own land all the land now belongs to the king. They decide to dress up as men and that is how Robin Hood is formed, by this group of ladies who are rising up against the king."

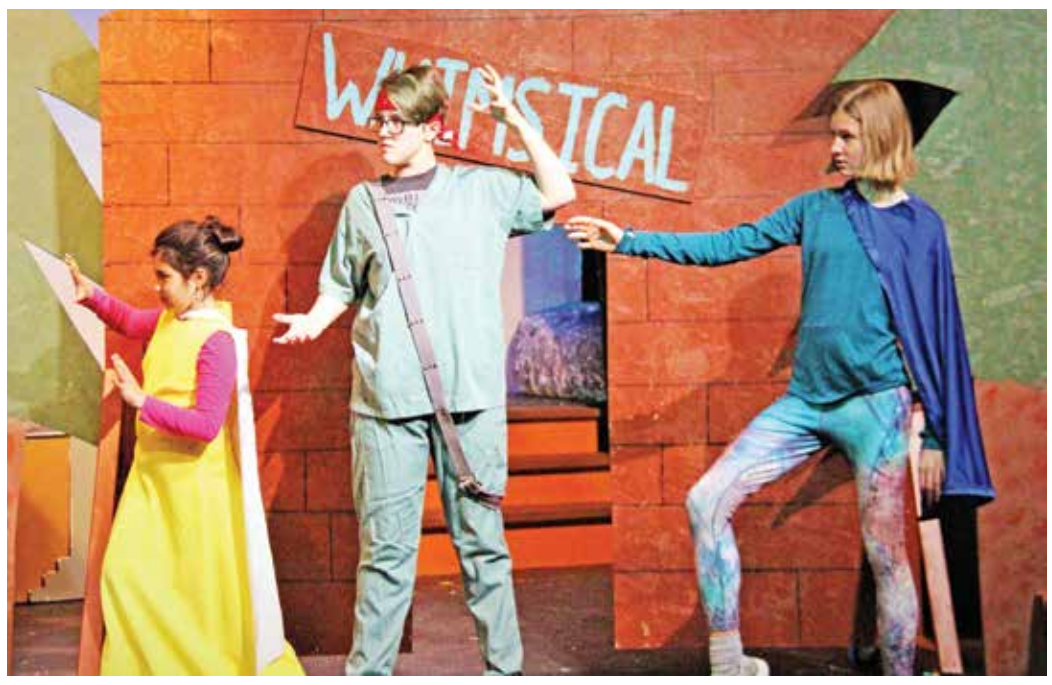
The idea of taking the well-worn story of Robin Hood and skewing the genders involved is something Mr. Ferguson says was brought to the table by the youth.

Theatre is a "very safe space," he said, and kids were free to explore these ideas and concepts in this safe setting.

"We really worked with the students and they talked to us about the whole idea of gender identity and what it means to identify different genders and how they don't have to be part of the typical roles," says Mr. Ferguson, who has been involved with Theatre Aurora since his own days as a member of the youth group. "Looking back ten years ago, while it wasn't that these topics didn't exist, they weren't as present in our everyday life and for many of these students, they are topics that are present in their lives. For them to be able to come here and have a space to discuss it and use these experiences to create a story, whether they are experiences of their own or experiences of those around them, I think it is a very powerful thing. The idea of acceptance is very present in both of our shows.

"We're all very impressed with what they have been able to do. We really enjoy having them around. It is a very unique thing for a community theatre to have, not just a Youth Group but a very active Youth Group. We're hoping our audiences and people around Town support them like they do for all our other shows."

For more information on Robin Hood & The Merry Men? and Camp Super, including tickets, visit www.theatreaurora.com, or call 905-727-3669.



Celebrating 57 years of local creativity

More than 300 pieces of original artwork were showcased at Town Hall over the weekend as part of the 57th annual Aurora Art Show & Sale, co-hosted by the Society of York Region Artists (SOYRA) and the Town of Aurora. Prior to the show's grand opening on Saturday, participating artists were welcomed to a special reception Friday evening celebrating the best of the best. Honoured by SOYRA President Linda Welch and Mayor Tom Mrakas with First Place in Oils was Anita Niemeyer with "My Space" with honourable mentions going to Robert McAffee with "The Lake Last Fall" and Sandra Murphy with "Shoe In." Taking top honours in acrylics was Mary Morganelli with "Out for the Evening", with honourable mentions for Suzy Nault's "Slithering Scales" and Angela Wong's "Fashion Hats." First place in watercolours went to Margot Jung with "Fisherman & Friends in Puerto Vallarta" with honourable mentions to Josephine Sherman's "Fall Leaves" and Jean Spinney's "The Swamp." First Prize for mixed/alternative media went to Kim Steffen with "Imagination Burst" and Honourable Mentions to Karen Lee Garrido's "Beneath the Surface" and Claudine Mueller with "La Femme au Regard." Tops in photography went to Elizabeth H. Nicholas with "Luskentyre Beach: Harris, Scotland" and Honourable Mentions to Pete Herlihy with "Shades of Silver" and Kevin McBean with "In Repose." Youth were recognized by the Optimist Club of Aurora with the "Best in Youth Award", which went to Lauren Rae for "Ghost Whale's Got the Black Fish" and Honourable Mentions to Wendy Jiang's "Self-Portrait" and Valerie Kniazeva with "Lilypad Lake."

(Top Row) Sandra Murphy, centre, with Ms. Welch and Mayor Mrakas. Kim Steffen. (Middle Row) Elizabeth H. Nicholas. Anita Niemeyer. (Third Row) Mary Morganelli. (Fourth Row) Lauren Rae. Elizabeth Jackson. (Bottom Row) Mayor Mrakas, Ms. Welch and Optimist Anna Kroeplin congratulate youth participants.

SPEAKEASY

Jane Taylor & Reccia Mandelcorn

Our Speakeasy broadcast opened to the contemplative sounds of Eric Satie – perfect for getting us in the mood to chat with photographer Gary Johnson.

Gary has always lived the life of a "Creative". He has been a film and video writer and producer, spun jazz selections on air and has a book of poetry out. His upcoming exhibit, Photographic Abstraction, opens May 13 in the Colleen Abbott Gallery at Aurora Public Library and we were very interested in hearing the back-story to the exhibit.

Gary's work is abstract, photography with a beautiful painterly quality. His love for words and images crosses genres - hunting with his camera, looking for random views off the beaten track, creating textures, colours, scenes and out-of-the-ordinary juxtapositions; often adding a few lines of verse to further engage the viewer.

Gary is a thoughtful man, and that comes across in his art and his writing. He mused about looking at life through a different perspective than he did as a young man. What was then impressive no longer rings true; he looks back at a life that has been lived knowing there are only so many years ahead.

The exhibit is rich, featuring abstract images – something Gary, like many artists, only fully embraced as he matured in his craft. We think this will be an exhibit that will stay with you long after you leave. Photographic Abstraction continues through June 15.

Moving into the dance groove of R&B, Motown, Funk and Disco was the energetic Steve Falk of Soul Benefit. This band of 12 musicians has contributed to the musical landscape of Aurora for over 20 years.

Soul Benefit, formally known as The Thursday Night Jam, started when a few musicians got together at local jam nights and decided that they would get together on a weekly basis and form a band. Over the years, about 55 musicians have passed through Soul Benefit, some professional, others just loving the joy of performing.

Steve sings lead vocals, plays guitar, harmonica, occasionally flute and recently has picked up the trumpet. Although there was a piano in his home, Steve didn't take to formal lessons. But he loved to play music and formed a harmonica band in Grade Three with instruments purchased at Second Hand Betty.

What is really unique about this group of musicians is their giveback to our community. Soul Benefit makes itself available to local charities about every six weeks during the year, taking a break in the summer. Steve estimates that they've played over 100 fundraising gigs that have raised over two million dollars for charitable organizations.

Check out their website (soulbenefit.band) or follow them on Facebook. Their next fundraiser will be at the Aurora Legion in support of Commons Coffee & Catering on June 15, 7 pm. Tickets are now available.

With spring in the air, we captured some of our seasonal favourites in a round-up of "must-experience".

Merlin's Hollow, David and Dierdre Tomlinson's 1,500-plant English flower garden, opens to the public the second Saturday of May and June (for full schedule, call 905-727-8979), the Aurora Farmers' Market happens Saturday mornings in Town Park from 8 am – 1 pm; and the York Chamber Ensemble presents "The Age of Elegance and Romanticism" on Saturday, May 11 at the Trinity Anglican Church. Not to be missed is the Spring Documentary Film Festival at Aurora Public Library, Wednesdays at 7 pm, and artist Daniel St-Amant invites you to experience his artistic process and even take part in the creation of a new painting at the Aurora Cultural Centre on May 11, 12 pm.

There is so much to see and do in Aurora this month, we're definitely not leaving Town.

Jane Taylor is Communications & Events Manager at the Aurora Cultural Centre, and Reccia Mandelcorn is Manager of Community Collaboration at Aurora Public Library. They co-host The Speakeasy on the first Wednesday of each month on 102.7 CHOP-FM.

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PLANTING DAY – Mother Nature may have made a muddy mess on Saturday, but she provided a helping hand as well as volunteers converged on the Aurora Community Arboretum on the weekend for their annual Community Planting Day. (Pictured Clockwise from Top Left) The Arboretum's John Clement enjoys a hot dog grilled up by Trudy, Michelle and Sheila of the Aurora Lions Club. Arianna, Milan and Kaelyn made things a family affair. Jeremiah, Jake, Carly, Disha, Olivia and Steve made it a team effort. Ailish wore green – appropriate for the occasion. The Arboretum aimed to plant 500 new trees just off Industrial Parkway North near the Town's Joint Operations Centre. **Auroran photos by Brock Weir**

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Faced with funding shortage, senior driving service seeks support

By Brock Weir

Faced with a future funding shortage, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing safe and affordable transportation for seniors in York Region is looking for support.

For over 30 years, the Sutton-based Routes Connecting Communities organization has been helping people get where they need to go, improving access to both basic needs and special destinations, including here in Aurora.

Partially funded by the Aurora-based CHATS (Community & Home Assistance to Seniors), Routes also receives funding from the Region of York and the Ontario Trillium Foundation. With the latter two funding sources set to dry up at the end of this year, as well as just one volunteer driver serving the Aurora area, Routes is looking for some help to keep the community moving.

"We have been around for 30 years and we provide timely, safe and affordable transportation, as well as a caring conversation along the way," said Danielle Koren, Executive Director of Routes. "Our volunteer drivers use their own personal vehicles to take our clients to destinations within, as well as outside York Region for medical, social, banking or recreational purposes and activities of daily living requirements. We also offer bus trips to shopping centres, local special events and attractions, and these trips are aimed at reducing social isolation."

In 2018, Routes carried out more than 15,135 rides for 7,283 riders. They saw a 38 per cent growth in their service, provided by just 43 volunteer drivers.

With Routes, a client can reimburse a driver for their mileage (set at 47 cents per kilometre) or their office can bill a third-party organization like ODSP or an insurance company for their cost. Clients can also apply for fee subsidy assistance if they are truly low income.

In addition to this, Routes provides free rides to food pantries and community meal programs.

"We believe that if people don't have the funds to buy food, they don't have the funds to get to the food," said Ms. Koren. "We actually do some rides for the Aurora Food Pantry and it is all free of charge.

"Our clients are our neighbours. They are experiencing social, physical, mental and/or financial barriers to timely, safe and compassionate transportation. Those people cannot take YRT for whatever reason and they cannot afford a regular taxi service. Although most of our clients live in Georgina because it is the most rural municipality (in York Region), we also have clients in Aurora."

With their funding from the Region and Trillium set to come to a close, Ms. Koren said Routes is currently looking at opportunities for outreach.

They will have a presence at the June 2 Aurora Chamber Street Festival, for instance.

They are also looking for organizations to partner with and even corporate connections for businesses that might be interested in sponsoring rides to food pantries or additional rides for low income residents.

"Most importantly, we're looking at volunteer drivers," she said. "Right now, we have one volunteer driver in Aurora and we need more. Maybe there are realtors who are looking for opportunities to give back to their community and they may be willing to sponsor rides."

For more information on Routes Connecting Communities, how to become a client, volunteer as a driver, or provide support or sponsorship to the program, visit routescc.org, email info@routescc.org, or call 905-722-4618.

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We have a plan to get more homes built and bring costs down

An Op Ed by Christine Elliott, MPP Newmarket-Aurora

Finding a home that meets your budget is hard. Not just here in Newmarket-Aurora, but across our province. People have said that their top concern is finding the right home that fits their needs and budget. Our government has a plan to get more houses and units built and bring costs down for renters and owners.

We will encourage industry to address challenges like affordability, size of rental units, and housing type. It's not fair and it's unrealistic to tell a young family with a couple of children to squeeze into a 700 square foot condo. Seniors are living in homes that are too big and too expensive to heat because they can't afford to move. This is all about choice and housing mix. We need home builders to build for the practical needs of our communities.

We listened to experts and the public on how to increase the supply of housing, so people will have more choice and can find a home they can afford. We took the best ideas and developed *More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan.*

On May 2, Minister Steve Clark announced our plan to increase the supply of housing in Ontario. *More Homes, More Choice* proposes new measures that would make it faster and easier to build a range and mix of housing for people to rent or own.

Our role as government is to create the conditions where builders can build more and build more of what communities actually need. Our plan includes changes that would make it easier to build a mix of housing – townhomes, apartments, condos, single family homes - for people to rent or own.

Our plan is about unlocking the potential for all kinds of housing. From ownership to rental housing, whether built by home builders or non-profits, *More Homes, More Choice* will help units actually get built and bring costs down for residents. We will cut red tape around process approvals so new homes will be available to rent or buy sooner.

And we are encouraging small landlords to create new rental units too, by making it easier to build second suites (like basement apartments) and helping them navigate the complicated building code approvals process. As more rental units are built, tenants will have more choices and rents will decrease.

Community members here in Newmarket-Aurora are spending too much time in traffic on their way to and from work and we must play a part in making life easier for transit users and commuters. So, part of our plan includes measures to allow for more housing to be built near transit and help people get home to family and friends faster and create vibrant neighbourhoods.

The changes we are proposing will also help to convert old, vacant buildings into new modern homes and this would expand existing neighbourhoods, while protecting their character.

Different parts of Ontario have different needs when it comes to housing. Our plan will work here in Newmarket-Aurora because it puts people first, whether you are buying for the first time, a growing family looking for a larger place, or an empty-nester downsizing into a smaller and more accessible home.

Government cannot fix the housing shortage on its own, so we're calling on home builders, municipalities, not-for-profits and communities to work together. Working together, we can create more housing, strengthen our economy and help make sure the hard-working people of Newmarket-Aurora have homes that meet their needs and their budgets.

Getting Things Done

Mayor Tom Mrakas

The OMB Reform working group started a few years ago as a grass roots movement among municipal leaders to bring long awaited change to a flawed system for land use planning.

Working with residents, ratepayers, community groups and municipal councils and staff across this province, we brought forward recommendations that informed the provincial legislative review and led to meaningful change in the legislative framework for land-use planning decisions.

And that hard work is now under threat.

On Monday, the members of the OMB reform group got together once again to have some initial discussions about Bill 108, its impacts and implications for our communities.

The abolishment of the OMB and replacement with LPAT (Local Planning Appeal Tribunals) represented thoughtful, informed, evidence-based policy development.

It's why the legislation received unanimous – all party – support. All parties recognized that local governments should have the authority to uphold their provincially approved Official Plans; to uphold their community driven planning.

All Parties recognized that as municipal councils are the front-line workers of elected government, that local governments should have the authority to exercise greater control over planning matters in their own communities.

A recent bill brought forward by the Provincial Government is a reversal of that decision.

There is a crisis in housing affordability in our province, but it isn't one of supply, its one of demand. Demands made by a for profit driven building industry that doesn't just want to change the rules, it wants to rewrite them entirely.

As a consequence, what's being supplied isn't what's demanded. Residents need housing options – and in particular purpose-built rental housing. And nothing I see in this draft Bill addresses that fundamental need.

Its sole focus is not on better planning decisions, it seems to be on faster planning

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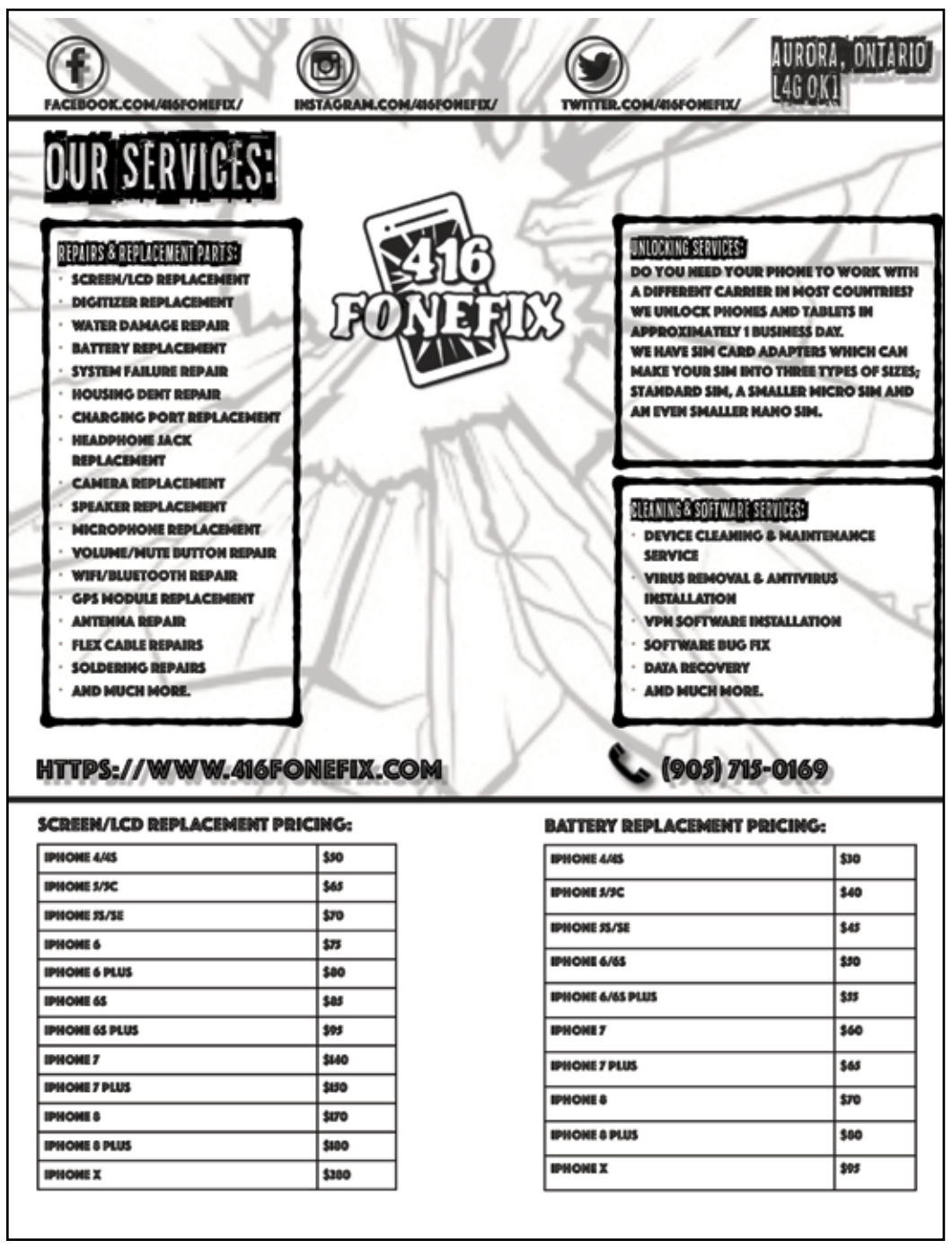


decisions and removing the supposed red tape that is "holding up" development.

But it doesn't address the fundamental reason why developments are often stalled – because of appeals by some developers who don't want to follow the rules. Rather than build what is allowed and get on with it, instead demanding amendment after amendment to municipal Official Plans, clogging up the case load of the planning tribunal with unnecessary appeals then claiming nothing can get built because cases take so long to be heard by an understaffed and overworked LPAT.

The roadblocks are built by developers who are in the business of building a profit, not municipal governments who are in the business of building a community.

While I can't speak to the Toronto context, I can speak to York Region's. And I can tell you that in York Region, we don't have a supply issue; we have a building issue.

Right now, our Region has a designated supply of 180,000 units; units that are within planning applications that are proposed as well as potential development and re-development of lands with a residential designation in local municipal plans, but which currently have no application.

180,000 units of supply. No red tape to be seen. Follow the rules and build tomorrow.

If the issue is truly one of a lack of supply, then why not build the thousands of units in the areas already zoned for housing, rather than fight to open up land that isn't?

There is an affordability crisis in housing in Ontario but conflating supply with affordability won't solve it. We need housing options – and in particular purpose-built rental housing – to meet the needs of a diverse and growing population.

This complex issue cannot be solved by taking a big box store approach to legislation. A local issue can't be solved at 50,000 feet. Community specific housing issues need solutions that are informed by the communities themselves.

On August 21, 2018, Minister Clark once again signed the MOU with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and entered into "...a legally binding agreement recognizing Ontario Municipalities as a mature, accountable order of government."

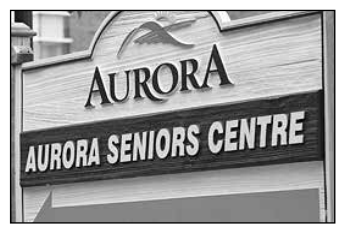
This MOU is "enshrined in law as part of the Municipal Act". And recognizes that as "...public policy issues are complex and thus require coordinated responses...the Province endorses the principle of regular consultation between Ontario and municipalities in relation to matters of mutual interest".

By signing this agreement, the Province made "...a commitment to cooperating with its municipal governments in considering new legislation or regulations that will have a municipal impact".

Thus, we, the OMB Reform working group, would like to extend an invitation to Minister Steve Clark to meet with myself and our group to discuss how we can work together to better address the housing needs of our residents and the shared bottom line of appropriate growth.

By working together we can build a positive future and ensure planning that's for the people, not just for profit.

"My mom moved into a new condo, and I went to visit for a couple of days. Searching for a coffee cup one morning, I sighed, 'It seems like I'm always looking for something in your kitchen.' 'That's good,' Mom said. When I looked confused, she explained, 'Because when you know where to look, it's time to go home.' — ***Caroline Young***



SENIOR SCAPE

Christina Doyle

This month dear readers, it is a pleasure to bring you the thoughts of what a mother means to us? Us, is the Evergreen Choir! So, without further ado, I give you the Evergreen Choir and a few others to make you smile.

My mother taught me something very important. As a soloist, Mom said, "You are in demand as a vocalist now which can be a lifetime activity, but I want you to know that there comes a time to step down and finish on a good note." (pardon the pun)

I retired from solo singing when I turned seventy-five. What a wonderful life in music I have had! I had open heart surgery and I wasn't the same afterwards. It was time to follow my mother's advice.

Enid (One of our founding members of our choir)

In my autograph book when I was about 11 years old, my mother wrote:

Life is mostly froth and bubble
But two things stand like stone
Kindness in another's trouble
And courage in your own.

That is how I have tried to live my life!

Sylvia

When I was a teenager, my mother taught me how to smile with my eyes. She showed me how to let my soul come through. She always reminded my sister and I that it is our inner beauty that is really important**.**

Willo Rodrigues

My mother and her mother were strong women. Stand tall, never allow yourself to be bullied and do a kindness every day.

Ruth McD

A mother is she who can take the place of all others but whose place no one else can take.

Cardinal Meymillod

My mother died when I was 16 in 1960.

In those years, although I was in boarding school for 5 of them, I learned to love to sing, do crafty things and to sew. Like her I love flowers and china. From her I learned to enjoy life. I only knew my mother until she was 47; no wonder I don't know how to grow old!

When I see mothers and daughters sharing shopping outings, movies, dinners and manicures there is a touch of jealousy.

When I observe mothers helping their daughters become mothers, I realize how much I missed. I also know I will meet her again one day.

Mothers, we all had one!

Maggie K.

As you can see, mothers indeed have a special place in our hearts and I sincerely hope that is the case in yours too. As for me, what has impressed me the most about my own mother, is her ability to persevere. Through my mom I have learned "never owe money to anyone". Make sure you pay off something before you go and buy anything else. And yes, I did just that. Thanks, so much mom.

Christina

May this Mother's Day be a special one for all of you who have had a wonderful mother.

There is no one who can replace her. It is no matter that she may be a foster mother, a step mother a biological mother, a grandma, a friend. Someone who has been a mother to you.

On behalf of the Evergreen choir and a few others, thank you for your quotes, your memories and the love of a mother. To all the mothers everywhere here and in Heaven, thank you mom, we couldn't have done it without you. Thank you, dear readers, as always for your positive encouragement for my wee column that I so enjoy sharing with you each month. May God richly Bless all of you and your families as we celebrate and remember our Mothers.

HAPPENINGS AT THE SENIORS' CENTRE

BLACK TIE GALA EVENT. This popular event is being held again on **Saturday, June 8.** Tickets go on sale at Reception on May 1.

SILVER STARS. The Silver Stars always put on a fun performance. This spring it will be held on **Saturday, June 22** and **Sunday, June 23** at 2 pm. The title is "***Let Him Sleep 'Til It's Time For His Funeral."*** Tickets go on sale at Reception on May 1 and will cost $5 per person, which includes refreshments at intermission.

EVERGREEN CHOIR. The choir's Spring performance will be held **Saturday May 25** starting at **1.30 pm.** Tickets are $5 each but children 14 and under are free with a ticket.

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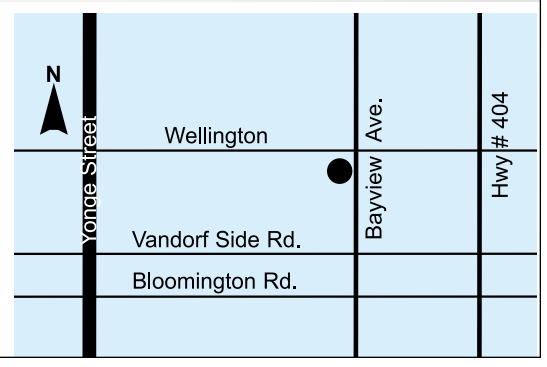

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Ex-Tiger Delmas named captain of Niagara Purple Eagles

Noah Delmas, pictured with the OJHL's Aurora Tigers, was named the captain of the prestigious Niagara Purple Eagles of the NCAA's Division I on Friday.

Auroran photo by Jake Courtepatte

By Jake Courtepatte

The latest former Tiger to lace up for the Purple Eagles will be leading his flock of NHL hopefuls onto the ice next season.

Noah Delmas was named the captain of the Niagara Purple Eagles in a news conference held by the NCAA Division I team last week, who compete in the prestigious Atlantic Hockey conference.

"We are confident in Noah because has set the expectations of our team high as we continue to grow men through hockey," said Purple Eagles head coach Jason Lammers in a press release. "Noah embodies our mission as a person, student and player. His own personal growth has been impressive and now he has the honor to lead others by putting 'we' ahead of 'me.'"

The Schomberg native spent his entire junior hockey career with the Junior A Aurora Tigers, blooming in his second season in 2014-15 to become one of the top offensive defenseman in the OJHL.

After posting 42 points in 51 games with the Tigers that year, the blueliner earned a scholarship from the Niagara Univesity Purple Eagles, opting to stick close to home to play Division I hockey in Lewiston, New York.

"Playing Division 1 hockey has always been a goal of mine," Delmas told The Auroran. "Niagara is close to home and provides a great education along with a great hockey program. When Niagara showed interest, I knew that was where I wanted to play."

Delmas spent his minor hockey years with the York-Simcoe Express AAA system, nine in total.

His fifteen assists in 35 games as a freshman led all Purple Eagles skaters, earning him the role of assistant captain last season. He once again led all Purple Eagles in assists as a junior this season, and finished fourth among all Division I blueliners in both goals with fifteen and points with forty.

Delmas said he was "deeply honoured" to take over the captaincy, and to lead "such amazing players."

"I'm committed to doing what I can on and off the ice in order to make sure we have a successful year."

The Purple Eagles program has shown an affinity towards Aurora in recent years, including putting Delmas on the ice with former Tigers captain Robert Angiolella. 2014-15 Tigers leading scorer John Curran posted twenty points with the Eagles as a forward this season, while former Tigers Drake Board and Matthew Bernard had commitments for the 2017-18 season, though both fell through.

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The annual Challenge is open to all communities and individuals, recognizing the community with the most **active minutes** – based on population size.

If all of us pull together, Aurora could earn the title **'Canada's Most Active Community'**, and win $150,000 to support local physical activity initiatives. Five regional winners will also be recognized and receive $20,000 each.

TO FIND OUT MORE:
Ron Weese, Chair Activate Aurora, ron@activateaurora.com
or Laurie Mueller, Executive Director, Activate Aurora, executive.director@sportaurora.ca

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Aurora FC off to hot start in League1 Ontario season opener

By Jake Courtepatte

Just one week into what team staff are calling a "rebuilding process", the Aurora FC men have already gathered three points in the 2019 League1 Ontario season.

The yellow and black took to the pitch off Ottawa's OSU Force for game one of the semi-professional soccer league's season on Saturday, where Aurora FC walked off with a 4 – 1 victory.

It was just five minutes into the game when OSU Force opened the scoring, pressing the away squad over the opening minutes.

Yet Aurora posted a pair of their own before the half, one off the foot of Nuno Carvalho and another from Niklaus Bauer in stoppage time, to take the 2 – 1 lead at the whistle.

Youssef Zaghloul and Max Ferrari each found the back of the net for the Aurora squad in the second half to secure all three available points.

Aurora head coach Michael Aquino was pleased with the results, especially given his team's inexperience at the high level of play.

"First off, it's a team that myself and coach Alex Sabatini have taken over as a duo and we are leading a rebuilding process," said Aquino. "I think we've only brought three to five players from last year's team, many of which are younger and will play U21 with some important League1 minutes as well."

Not all new faces are new to the league; however, Filipe Vilela was a staple with the Oakville squad, winning a Golden Boot in 2015.

"We're looking to him for that veteran leadership and hopefully to put some goals in the back of the net for us. He's a key player coming in."

Aquino added that veteran League1 player Michael Fayehun, previously of Unionville and winner of a national title with Humber College last year, brings "experience to the centre-back spot." Both Vilela and Fayehun have been named captains for the 2019 season.

As for the familiar faces, Aurora will rely on those like Ferrari and Parm Singh, who each played top minutes for the squad in the 2018 season.

"**(Ferrari)** is a 2000-born player that was with Aurora last year and I believe he scored six or seven goals," said Aquino. "Very good in and out of possession and has an excellent mentality. Max will also be attending Humber College next year so we're excited to have him."

Aquino also said he sees "great potential" in Singh, who played top three minutes last year despite only being in grade eleven.

A challenge lies ahead for the Aurora men, who next face the perennial powerhouse Woodbridge Strikers, scheduled for Sunday as Aurora's home opener. Kickoff is set for 6 p.m. at Stewart Burnett Park.

As for the other half of the program, the Aurora FC women found themselves returning from Ottawa empty handed, after falling 2 – 1 in a close match with the OSU Force.

Veteran goalkeeper Meaghan Phillips was able to keep the home side off the board for the first seventeen minutes before she was beaten, and holding onto a 1 – 0 deficit into the late stages of the second half.

Courtney Chocol tied it up for Aurora in the 70th minute on a penalty kick, though OSU Force earned the three points with an 81st minute strike.

Despite the loss, head coach Gianni Cimini sees a number of standouts who can make this season a success, like veterans Markela Bejleri, Phillips, as well as captain Laura Morelli, who joins the team from the University of Guelph.

"Really, there are so many good pieces in this group to highlight and some excellent chemistry in there as well," said Cimini.

"You can't say there is one piece that stands out, but we have a lot of young talent that is eager to prove themselves. This could be the year that they prove it."

Next up for the Aurora women is a meeting with DeRo United FC in Toronto on Sunday, before hosting their first home game at Stewart Burnett against Hamilton United on May 18.

SAC grad tackles his way to CFL's Stampeders

St. Andrew's College grad Fraser Sopik, pictured with the Western Mustangs, was selected by the Calgary Stampeders in Thursday's CFL Draft.

Photo courtesy

By Jake Courtepatte

Linebacker Fraser Sopik traded his red for purple in the 2015 season, and has come full circle back to red in 2019.

The St. Andrew's College graduate was chosen in the fourth round of the Canadian Football League Draft last week by the Calgary Stampeders, after a stellar four-year career with the Western Mustangs of USports. He was the 31st overall pick in the draft.

"I've grown up playing football for as long as I can remember," said Sopik. "I grew up in Scarborough, just east of the city, and I started playing there when I was six or seven, and have been playing ever since."

The six-foot, 194-lb. Sopik shone on the field for the Saints in his varsity years, named a two-time OVFL All-Star.

He was a two-time OUA All-Star with the high-powered Mustangs squad, leading the line in tackles in 2018.

"If you want to win, and you want to compete, and you want to be the best, Western is the place to go," said Sopik, who helped his team to a Vanier Cup victory with the Mustangs in the 2017 season.

Sopik admits his size may be on the lower end of the scale for such an in-your-face, aggressive position, yet his confidence more than makes up for what he lacks on the scale.

"I'm going to go out there, I'm going to try to make plays, I'm going to be aggressive and get in people's faces, I'm going to do all those things because I love this game and I'm competitive."

After being named both the USports and OUA Outstanding Stand-Up Defensive Player of the Year, Sopik's name gained on team's draft rankings come the CFL Combine last month, where he posted a 4.79 second 40-yard dash as well as ten reps on the bench press, before strapping on the pads and showing his greatest asset: his mental tenacity.

"I'm someone who is versatile," said Sopik. "I can do a lot of things on the football field, and a lot of things that other people can't. I'm a pretty special player and I think a player that people would be happy to have."

St. Andrew's varsity head coach Len Gurr shared his own message of congratulations for one of his former stars on Twitter, adding "Another great (St. Andrew's) old boy is headed to the CFL. No doubt that (Sopik) was one of the best players in the CFL Draft. The (Stampeders) are going to be thrilled with this pick. Just wait until the pads go on!"

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Roads Manager Jim Tree celebrated for 40 years' service to Aurora

Long-time Town of Aurora employee Jim Tree, fourth from left, is honoured for his service by Councillors Rachel Gilliland, Sandra Humfryes, and Harold Kim, Mayor Tom Mrakas, and Councillors Wendy Gaertner and John Gallo, and Operations Director Al Downey.

Auroran photo by Anna Lozyk Romeo

By Brock Weir

He's been through 14 elections, seen seven different mayors, 43 Council members, 10 CAOs and six directors, but Jim Tree is still going strong at the Town of Aurora.

Mr. Tree, who now serves as Roads Manager for the Town, was celebrated for his 40 years with the municipality last week with a special presentation in Council Chambers marking his service.

Saluted by Al Downey, the Town's Director of Operations, Mr. Tree was hailed as someone who "always seems to be in the background but his ideas are always in the forefront."

"Jim, to me, has always been a very special person; he and I often agree and often disagree and it seems to work good either way," said Mr. Downey. "Jim has always been, to me, Mr. Aurora. Norm Weller originally brought Jim Tree to Aurora, hired Jim out of Westview Golf Course. Jim has been instrumental in guiding the Town of Aurora Parks Department [as Parks Manager] as well as now the Operational Division through his tenure.

"No task seems too big for Jim. He always goes there with an open mind and enthusiasm. I say he has the curiosity of a kid. It is amazing to see a fellow who has been here that long not satisfied with 'good enough.' We always have to do better, we always have to do something different. I feel lucky to have Jim as part of our team and you should, as being part of Aurora's team, in guiding us in the past and into the future."

Jim Tree officially marked his 40th anniversary at the Town of Aurora on April 19.

The anniversary itself was marked prior to his Council salute with a special breakfast in his honour.

At Council, his tenure was celebrated with a slide show presentation charting his history in both the Parks and Operations departments.

"When you start thinking back about 40 years ago, it gives you a little bit of a better idea of all the things that have happened and all the accomplishments Jim has made," said Mr. Downey, highlighting the reconstruction of Petch House and work carried out at Sheppard's Bush among the CV. "We have a little saying over at the Joint Operations Centre about making a difference and Jim is one of those people who truly makes a difference in everyone's lives at the Town of Aurora. I am so happy to call him a friend, and I am so happy to be working with him all these years."

Mr. Tree was joined at Council by his wife, Deb, and the youngest of their three sons.

"It has been a privilege and an honour to be part of the Town of Aurora," said Mr. Tree. "I came to Aurora when I was two years old. I don't live in Aurora anymore, but my heart is still here, my family's heart is still here. We raised our children here and it is the best Town in the world. It has just been an honour and a pleasure to serve the community. All the different members of Council, the Mayors, directors and residents – it has just been fabulous. I never really considered it work. It has always been fun to come to work and a real pleasure.

"We have always had fabulous support of our initiatives and endeavours, and that has made it just fabulous. Words don't really describe it and it has just been a real pleasure."

These warm sentiments were returned by members of Council.

"You come to work every day like it's your first day on the job and you're so excited and everything you approach is an opportunity," said Councillor Sandra Humfryes. "You honestly have a real refreshing way about you and I wish we could clone that so people can come to work really excited like you are. You make our Town such a great place to live. You've had a huge impact."

Councillor Wendy Gaertner, in turn, said she was sitting at the table when they celebrated his twenty-fifth anniversary with the Town and was happy to be there to celebrate his fortieth.

"We've benefited as a Town because of your expertise, your experience," added Mayor Mrakas. "Everyone always talks about how blessed we are in Aurora with our green parks, our fantastic trails and, quite frankly, we owe it all to you. You have done a tremendous job making Aurora what it is when it comes to green space. You've moved on into Roads and starting off in the same way with Roads – creating an incredible atmosphere in that department as well and Aurora, as a Town, is only going to benefit from that."

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From page 4

I think it might be called bait and switch. It would have been fairer for the council and mayor to be honest and let people know up front that they are only going to support the developers and contractors so don't bother with fighting for what was evidently promised to those of us in the old SNs. If you aren't going to follow the OP why have it or why not just change it so you can do whatever you want?

Some flaws in the Consultant Report

The problem/bias towards this larger footprint max recommendation seems to be a result several steps in the calculation methodology:

Taking the existing average footprints of the four neighborhoods, (Town Park actually has the smallest), and coming up with a single average to be applied to all;

It appears they included all the footprints and GFA of the recent large homes in the averaging. Why would you include in establishing the existing averaging oversized footprints of recent houses the problem you are trying to address.

But of most significance, they then come up with two types of 50% increases in existing to determine future maximum.

Again I don't see how creating a maximum footprint by adding 50% increases over averages of four neighbourhoods fits with the intent of the Design Policies in the Official Plan with focus on compatibility with: the size and configuration of nearby lots; the building type of nearby residential properties; the heights and scale of nearby residential properties.

If there are a hundred houses my size in a neighbourhood and all of the 100 houses have a 1,000 Gross Floor Area (GFA) but one house is 5,000 square feet then the existing average GFA of all 101 houses in the neighbourhood would be 1,040 sq. feet.

That's fine but "...To establish the "50% of range" maximum GFA and Building Footprint for new dwellings, the midway point between the 'average' GFA and building footprint and the highest values was identified..." Therefore, in the 101 home neighbourhood even though the average is 1,040 sq. ft. they would take the midpoint to the highest value, the single 5,000 sq. ft. house, (again probably a recent build the problem being addressed) and end up with a recommendation for a Maximum GFA for new houses in the neighbourhood of 3,000 sq. ft. allowing new homes to be three times the size of any of the other 100 homes in the neighbourhood which doesn't seem right.

The three Ratepayers Associations have asked planning for the actual numbers with regard to building sizes to try to better understand how the consultant determined his figures because the ratepayers did not have access to the consultant at any time during his consultation.

The original motion to protect the stable neighbourhoods made by Wendy Gaertner October 24, 2017, was "Be it resolved that Council and Staff do a study of the By-laws governing development of stable neighbourhoods to ensure that the intent of our planning policy is being realized and reflected through these By-laws."

Since the purpose of the Official Plan is to promote responsible growth management Section 3.0 and the fundamental principle related to protecting stable neighbourhoods is to ensure that the stability and vibrancy of these existing homes in the stable neighbourhoods are protected from the negative impacts of potential incompatible development and growth pressures, then any infill that occurs must be compatible with the established community character (OP Section 2.1 vi). That refers to the original homes and not the new builds that occurred as a result of Council not doing timely due diligence with regard to the directions in the Official Plan.

Under the Development Policies (OP 8.3.1), it states that "new development and site alteration abutting existing residential development shall be sympathetic to the form and character of the existing development and shall be compatible with regard to building scale and urban design."

What part of this doesn't Council understand? Why are we having to fight for what has already been stated in the official plan?

We know that in order to do what the OP states that the zoning requirements have to be changed as they presently don't reflect the OP directions. Since the zoning of older neighbourhoods has been amalgamated with other newer areas where homes have been larger, the intent was to put the stable neighbourhoods in a different zoning area with different zoning rules.

That said we know the present zoning by laws for stable neighbourhoods go against the intent and spirit of OP clause 2.1a vi and OP 8.1.3.

The consultant indicates that the new builds were included in the data to make the study "inclusive" but this is not the objective of the study and the purpose of the consultation was to look at keeping the study areas separate and unique. He also indicated that he did not do studies on each distinct area as he was told that budget limitations given by council did not allow him to do that. So, if he did study each area I'm sure he would have ended up with completely different results.

Therefore, council should not have accepted his report as his GFA decision is based on flawed methodology and totally opposed to the purpose and intent of the OP policies for SNs. Recommendations of GFA, max building footprint and 35% all contravene the OP and should not be ratified by council in its current form.

Lenore Pressley
Aurora

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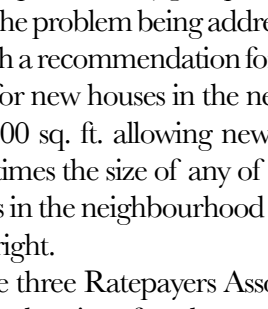
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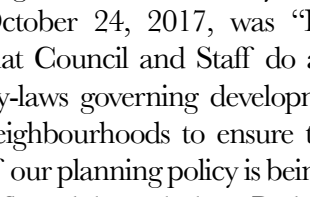
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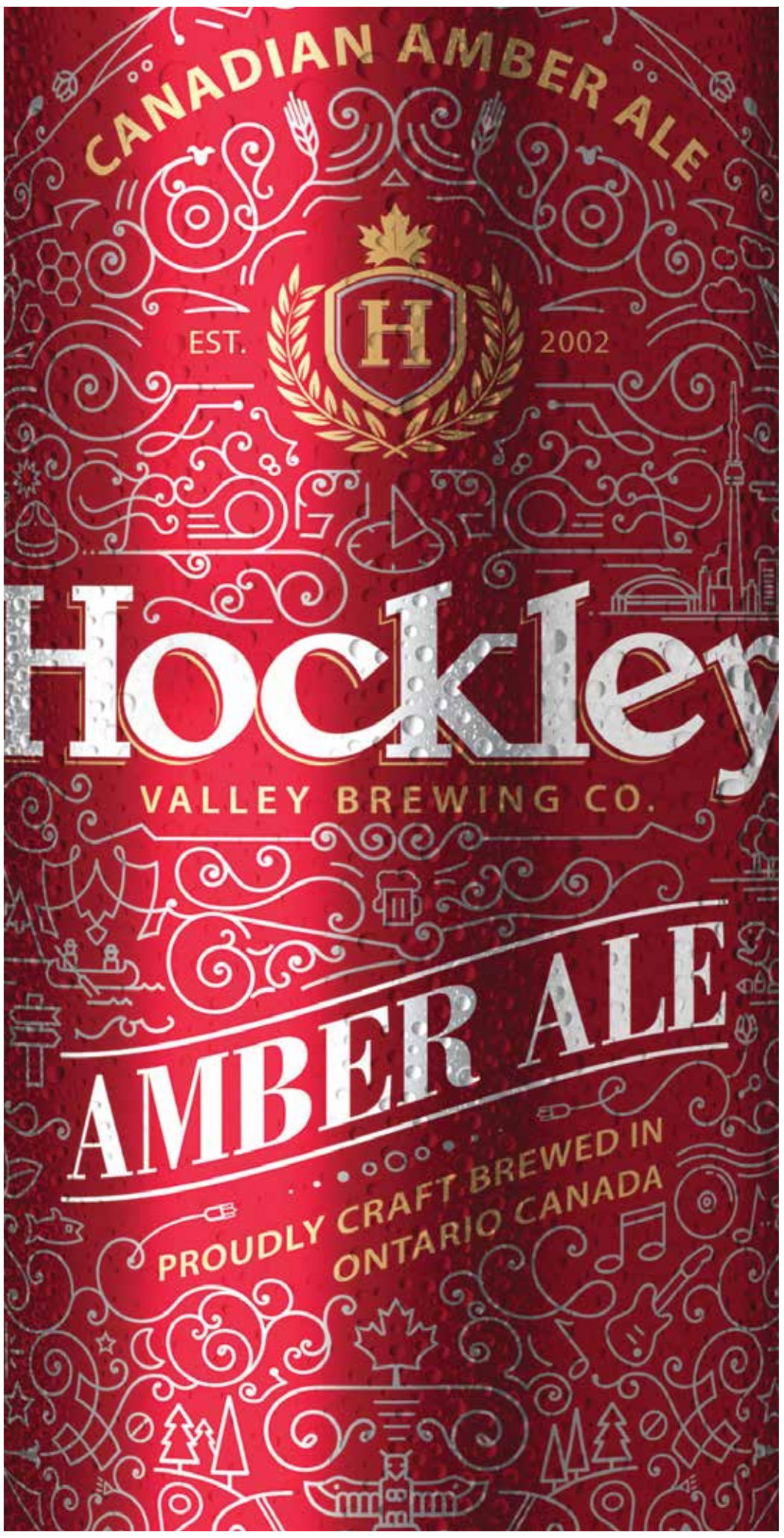
HIKE FOR HOSPICE – The 2019 Hike For Hospice event was the most successful one yet. Taking place at Newmarket's Fairy Lake, the event supported Margaret Bahen Hospice and Doane House Hospice. (Top) Participants set out for their journey, led by Gold Medal Olympian Gabby Daleman. (Below Left) Deborah Kesheshian, Director of Development for the Better Living Charitable Foundation, which funds both hospices, congratulates participants. (Below Right) Daelman is greeted by Newmarket-Aurora MP Kyle Peterson.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger



THINGS
YOU OUGHT TO KNOW

MAY 11 – 12

The Town of Aurora hosts Paws in the SARC this Saturday and Sunday. Taking place at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, the event includes activities for the whole family, vendors (Saturday only), the Aquadogs Dock Jumping competition, lure courses, and more. Free admission with donations accepted for the Georgina Animal Shelter. Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, visit aurora.ca/pawsinthesarc.

SATURDAY, MAY 11

David and Dierdre Tomlinson invite you to visit their English flower garden, Merlin's Hollow, at 181 Centre Crescent which is open rain or shine today from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This month's opening will feature spring bulbs, wild flowers, and alpine scree. Merlin's Hollow was designed by David, a landscape architect, to create a series of gardens within a garden. Enclosed by high cedar hedges, each garden has its own distinct character and a series of arches invite visitors from one garden to the next. For further information, call 905-727-8979.

THURSDAY, MAY 16

The Prostate Cancer Canada Network will host its monthly support group tonight from 6.30 – 9 p.m. at the Newmarket Seniors Meeting Place. (474 Davis Drive, Newmarket). Meet and Greet at 6.30, with session to start at 7 p.m. Presenter: Rouge Valley Hyperbaric Centre on Hyperbaric Use in treating prostate cancer and other diseases. For more information, call 905-235-7021, or visit www.newmarketprostatecancer.com

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22

The Aurora Historical Society's Speaker Series continues this evening with Jennifer L. Bazar with "Cottages for the Chronic Insane: The Origins of the Mimico Asylum". 7 – 9 p.m. at Hillary House National Historic Site. Institutionalization has defined much of the history of mental health care in Canada. Although linked by a unifying philosophy, each institution boasts its own unique past. This presentation will introduce the story of the Mimico Branch Asylum in Etobicoke with a focus on the decisions behind its opening, the adoption of the cottage plan, and the attempt to segregate patients who had been deemed "chronic." 15372 Yonge Street, Aurora Ontario. $5/Member, $7/Non Member. For more information call 905-727-8991 or leigha.cooney@aurorahs.com

SATURDAY, MAY 25

Aurora United Church hosts the Wesley Bells in concert today at 7.30 p.m. at Trinity Anglican Church. Wesley Bells in concert with Aurora Chorealis, soprano Ursula Ivanoffski, and soprano Margaret Heney on piano. Free will offering will be held after the concert. For more information, contact 905-727-1935 x21.

****

The Aurora Seniors' Association presents their spring concert, Something to Sing About, under the direction of Dan W. Lenz. Tickets are $5. Children 14 years and younger are free, but tickets are required. Doors open at 1 p.m. for a 1.30 concert start. For more information, call 905-727-4767. Light refreshments will be served at intermission. The Aurora Seniors' Centre is located at 90 John West Way.

SUNDAY, MAY 26

The Aurora & Newmarket Lions Clubs are coming together for the annual PetValu Walk for Dog Guides today at Newmarket's George Richardson Park (Bayview Parkway). This program "gives Canadians a new leash on life", and proceeds support canine vision, hearing, service, seizure response, autism assistance, diabetic alert, and more. For more information on how to become involved with the Walk, visit www.walkfordogguides.com.

FRIDAY, MAY 31

Attention All Elvis Fans – Elvis in Concert featuring Garry Wesley, a renowned tribute artist hosted by Dorian Baxter. Don't forget your dancing shoes. Proudly presented by Christ the King Church. To be held at the Aurora Legion. Tickets are $30 at the door. For more information, call 289-221-2687.

SATURDAY, JUNE 8

David and Dierdre Tomlinson invite you to visit their English flower garden, Merlin's Hollow, at 181 Centre Crescent which is open rain or shine today from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This month's opening will feature the fragrant garden, thyme lawn, iris and peonies. Merlin's Hollow was designed by David, a landscape architect, to create a series of gardens within a garden. Enclosed by high cedar hedges, each garden has its own distinct character and a series of arches invite visitors from one garden to the next. For further information, call 905-727-8979.

SUNDAY, JUNE 9

The Aurora Community Band presents Journeys: Music from Around the World this afternoon at 3.30 p.m. at Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria Street. Enjoy the beautiful sounds of concert band music on this very special afternoon Tickets are $15 for adults and $10 for seniors and students. For tickets, email auroracommunityband@gmail.com.

SATURDAY, JULY 6

David and Dierdre Tomlinson invite you to visit their English flower garden, Merlin's Hollow, at 181 Centre Crescent which is open rain or shine today from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This month's opening will feature summer flowering perennials, pond and water garden. Merlin's Hollow was designed by David, a landscape architect, to create a series of gardens within a garden. Enclosed by high cedar hedges, each garden has its own distinct character and a series of arches invite visitors from one garden to the next. For further information, call 905-727-8979. The next open day is Sunday, July 14.

Province's review of Regional Government puts future of wards in question

From page 1

Nevertheless, Mr. de Rond notes that electoral system reviews, such as the one being proposed here, are "uncommon" projects for municipalities and usually only occur every eight to twelve years.

Electoral system reviews are more "involved" than a regular ward boundary review, he continues.

If hired, the consultant hired by the Town to carry out the review will be required to do an in-depth analysis of Aurora "to determine appropriate ward options" for the community; the aim being any changes stemming from the review being firmed up in time for the 2022 Municipal Election.

"A review of the Town's electoral system is warranted and largely driven by population growth," says Mr. de Rond. "According to Census data, the population of Aurora in 2016 was 55,455. As stated in the population statistics in York Region's annual Growth and Development Report, the Town continues to be one of the fastest-growing municipalities in the Region with a 2.5 per cent increase in population between 2014 and 2015, 4.2 per cent increase between 2015 and 2016, and 5.7 per cent increase between 2016 and 2017. The Town's Official Plan (OP) growth forecasts estimate the Town's population to increase to 68,100 before the next Municipal Election, and 70,200 by 2031.

"All municipalities in Ontario with a population greater than 50,000, with the exception of North Bay, have adopted a ward system for electing their Councils. With the City of Oshawa moving back to a ward system before the last election, the Town of Aurora is now the largest municipality in Ontario to elect their representatives using the at-large system. This is not to say that Aurora must make the change to the ward system, as North Bay also uses an at-large system and has just 4,000 less residents than Aurora, but looking at whether the at-large system is still best for Aurora warrants a review."

According to the report, electoral system reviews usually follow guidelines set out by the Supreme Court of Canada in their Carter Decision, set in 1991, which stems from a Saskatchewan case that established the right to "effective representation."

"The main tenet of the Carter decision is effective representation rather than absolute voter parity," Mr. de Rond explains. "When defining effective representation as the right protected by the Charter, the Court noted that the relative parity of voting power was a prime, but not an exclusive, condition of effective representation. It found that deviations could be justified where the consideration of other factors, such as geography, community history, community interests and minority representation would result in a legislative body that was more representative of Canada's diversity. According to the Court, considering all these factors provides effective representation.

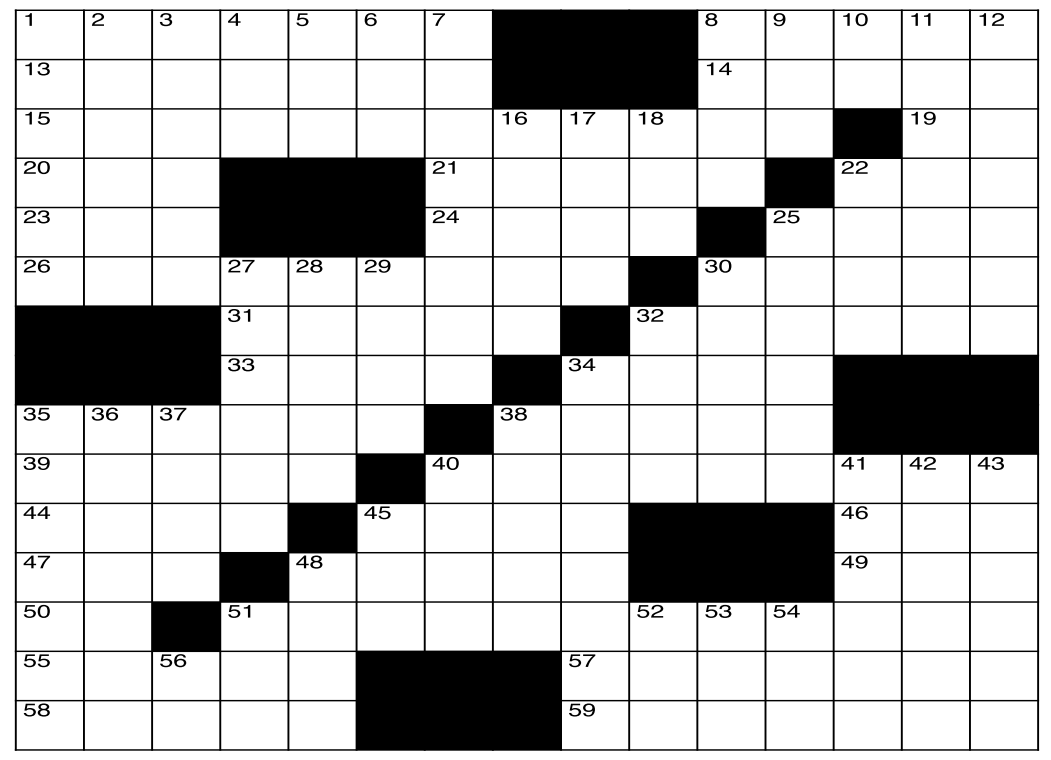
"The principle of representation by population is founded on the premise that each person is entitled to one vote and that all votes should carry the same weight. Accordingly, in support of this principle, it is expected that each elected representative should generally represent the same number of constituents. This principle, in a ward system, is tied closely to the principle of effective representation, as any deviation from voting parity would dilute an individual's right to effective representation.

"As noted in the Carter decision, the recognition and protection of communities of interest may justifiably override the principle of voter parity where the inclusion of a community interest will lead to a system that is more representative of the Town's diversity. The Court did not define what constitutes a community of interest; however, it has been leveraged in Ontario Municipal Board appeals to recognize historical settlement patters or existing communities and to represent social, historical, economic, religious, linguistic or political groups."

Aurora voters were last asked whether the Town should adopt a ward system in 2014.

The results of the ballot came down 54.75 per cent in favour of keeping the present at large system.

CROSSWORD



CLUES ACROSS

1. Half-conscious states
8. Strange
13. Deep regret
14. Rogue
15. Took without permission
19. An alternative
20. Performer __-Lo
21. Partner to flowed
22. Best day of the week (abbr.)
23. Body part
24. Famed river
25. Lake __, one of the Great
26. Make free from bacteria
30. People native to Canada
31. Japanese seaport
32. Least clothed
33. Horse of small breed
34. Italian doctor and poet
35. Moving away from land
38. One who parks cars
39. Some are front and some are bacl
40. Views
44. Ancient Greek shield (alt. sp.)
45. Spanish seaport
46. New England college (abbr.)
47. The woman
48. Belgian province
49. Danish krone
50. Excessive dose (abbr.)
51. In great shape
55. 7th month of Islamic calendar
57. Shaped
58. Icelandic poems
59. Swollen area within tissue

CLUES DOWN

1. Small amounts
2. Duplicate
3. Current unit
4. Neither
5. Chromium(II) oxide
6. Second sight
7. The absence of mental stress or anxiety
8. Supplemented with difficulty
9. Not the beginning
10. Dorm employee
11. Hard, white substances
12. Scariest
16. Spanish island
17. Having sufficient skill
18. Where golfers start
22. No charge
25. Print errors
27. Where rafters ply their trade
28. Paintings of holy figures
29. CNN host Lisa
30. Gives whippings
32. Type of tie
34. Unbroken view
35. Blemish
36. National capital
37. "Captain Marvel" actress Larson
38. Tenth pair of cranial nerves
40. Arizona native peoples
41. Confuse
42. Body parts
43. Plays a fast guitar
45. Tub
48. Pen parts
51. Supervises flying
52. Cars come with one
53. Some are fake
54. Calendar month
56. American whiskey (abbr.)

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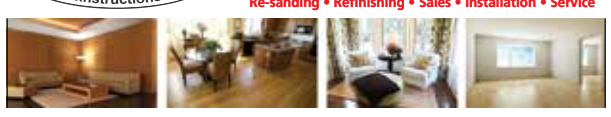

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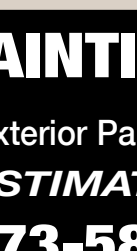

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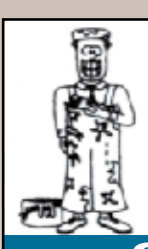

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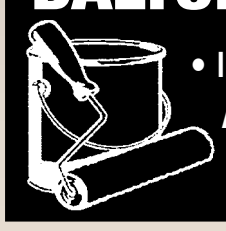

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Late Canucks beat reporter had roots in Aurora

By Jake Courtepatte

A familiar face among the Vancouver Canucks community, beat writer Jason Botchford passed away suddenly of heart failure last weekend, leaving the hockey world in mourning.

A writer with The Athletic Vancouver, and more popularly previously with The Province newspaper in Vancouver, it was his upbringing in Aurora that first brought Botchford to the offices of the Toronto Sun.

Born in Aurora in 1971, Botchford's keen eye for detail and affinity for bipartisanism made him a star at Centennial College's advanced journalism program, earning a position at the Sun shortly after.

He moved to Vancouver in 2005 as a news reporter for The Province, quickly converting to the Canucks beat.

Support for his family came pouring out from the hockey world shortly after his passing.

"I am shattered," said Jeff Paterson, his partner on his weekly podcast, on Twitter. "Just sitting here in a daze. I have lost the best podcasting partner a guy could ask for. Botch was also a friend, colleague, travelling companion & a driving force in Canucks coverage. So many great memories. My sincerest sympathy to his family."

"Jason was an incredibly passionate and dedicated reporter who connected with Canucks fans everywhere," said the Canucks organization in a press release. "His loss is heart-breaking for us all. The Botchford family is in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time."

"Even though our time collaborating was brief, I'm thankful I had the chance to get to know Jason this season," said James Mirtle, head of The Athletic. "I've been in this business nearly 20 years, and I've never worked with anyone quite like him. We built a strong connection in a short period of time, in part because we realized we both came up as outsiders — in our markets and in the business — and found a way to do things a little differently and find success."

One ray of light to appear from the tragedy has been the community's ability to rally behind the Botchford family, which includes Botchford's wife Kathryn as well as two daughters and one son.

A GoFundMe page was set up the day after news broke of Botchford's passing, and has raised more than $90,000 since its inception, something Kathryn said had her "deeply touched" in a statement released by the family.

Any Aurora residents looking to contribute can find the page at www.gofundme.com/supporting-the-botchford-family.

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(Top and Middle) Alex and Mia donned their costumes and got in some light sabre action Saturday at the opening of the Aurora Farmers' Market at Town Park. (Above) The weather might have been grey and drizzly, but Fiore Sicoly helped his daughter bring a breath of spring into the air with their booth of fresh blooms.

Auroran photos by Brock Weir

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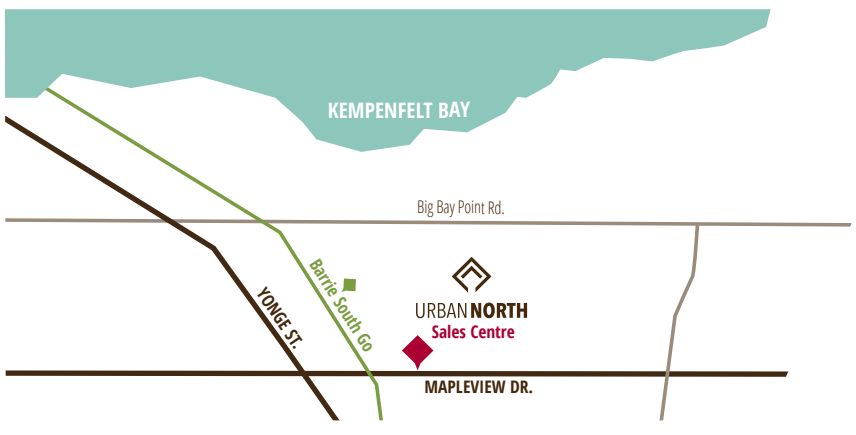

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