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FREE

Week of April 16, 2020



Long-term care homes now the frontline of COVID-19 fight: Premier

By Brock Weir

Long term care homes are now at the "frontline" of Ontario's COVID-19 fight, according to Premier Doug Ford.

Mr. Ford spoke to significant virus outbreaks at more than 100 long-term care homes across the Province, including Chartwell Aurora (formerly Resthaven), in a press conference on Tuesday afternoon, where he also confirmed students would not be returning to classrooms on May 4 as previously announced.

"We're in the fight of our lives right now and the enemy is ruthless," said Mr. Ford. "It preys on our seniors and the most vulnerable and the reality is despite our best efforts, we're dealing with a wildfire at our long-term care homes right now. This is extremely difficult on people and families. Families are separated from their loved ones right now and people are dying. My heart breaks for those who have lost their loved ones at long-term care homes.

Continued on page 7

Breaking emergency orders? That will cost you

By Brock Weir

Individuals found to be flouting emergency orders during the COVID-19 pandemic will now face hefty fines in the Town of Aurora.

On Thursday, the Town announced it would begin the strict enforcement of provincial emergency orders as well as levy fines against those trespassing on municipal property – such as parks – closed in a bid to help

Continued on page 16



LIGHTS OF HOPE



This past weekend was an Easter like no other as families stayed at home to help flatten the curve. On Good Friday, however, community leaders and residents at large, came together in a show of solidarity to "Light up the Light," an initiative of Newmarket Councillor Grace Simon to show Canadians "together apart...united in prayer for the healing of our towns, cities and nations." (Top) Mayor Tom Mrakas and wife Alison Collins Mrakas light a candle outside their home. (Second Row) The Martin family sent a message with candles and phone lights. Councillor Sandra Humfries and husband Brad. (Third Row) Joe, Harold and Shelley, Vicki, and Christian. (Fourth Row) Councillor Harold Kim, wife Carol Lee Kim and children Hudson and Hunter.

Auroran photos by Brock Weir

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Optimists help spread Easter cheer to families in need at Aurora Food Pantry

By Brock Weir

Carts were wiped down. Maps of aisles were charted. Social distancing was practiced. And hand-sewn masks were donned just to be on the safe side. Volunteers were not leaving anything to chance as they embarked on their mission early on Wednesday morning.

Their mission was simple: helping families in need have food on the table over Easter Weekend.

Drawn from the ranks of the Optimist Club of Aurora, this volunteer crew descended on No Frills last week armed with three things: two cheques of \$500 to help families make ends meet by providing the essentials, and determination.

“About a month ago, the Optimists did a shopping trip of about \$500 realizing there was a need here in Aurora,” says Sandy Bundy of the Optimist Club of Aurora. “We did a shopping of \$500 and took it to

the Aurora Food Pantry. Then we designated another \$500 for the Food Pantry and No Frills, which

has been a sponsor of ours in the past, donated another \$500 for our shopping last week.

“First of all, we contacted the Food Pantry to see what they needed and learned they have had problems getting shipping from some of their suppliers. They just needed to have food on the shelves, so I got a list from the Food Pantry, went online and priced the best deals, gave everybody a shopping list, then we all met outside and picked our groceries.

“No Frills was amazing. Knowing we were coming, they had staff there at the front door, let us in, had carts ready for us and they were really welcoming. Russ, the owner of the store, gave us our \$500 card and off we went.”

The Food Pantry’s needs were the simple staples: milk, cheese, carrots, potatoes, apples, oranges, rice and

margarine, along with soup and canned vegetables. But the Optimists went a step further, securing Easter goodies for the kids for an Easter that turned out to be anything but normal.

“We wanted to make sure Easter wouldn’t be missed by them,” says Ms. Bundy.

The Optimist Club of Aurora’s mandate is to work with youth, but they recognize the importance of families at this trying time.

“They are struggling and not having enough food will create a lot of stress, which makes it difficult on parents, as well as children,” she says. “We wanted them to not miss out on Easter, so we picked up some things that were kid-friendly and a bit of a treat on top of the necessities.”

The Optimists delivered their supplies to the Industrial Parkway-based food bank just after lunch on Wednesday, giving the Food Pantry enough time to have the products on shelves by the time clients came by to have food delivered to their cars or to a safe drop-off location on site.

“We’re all trying to be useful and the Food Pantry has a huge need, so we’re just really happy to help in some small way,” says Ms. Bundy. “It is going to take a lot more than what we were able to do. The Food Pantry said the food we delivered on Wednesday would all be gone by Thursday and that was just the \$1,000 we brought in.”

For more on the Aurora Food Pantry and how you can help, including a list of the most pressing needs, visit aurorafoodpantry.ca or call 905-841-1577.



Helping families in need to put food on their table this Easter were No Frills owner Ross, employees Joe and Jeff, and Aurora Optimists Sandy, Stu, Jack and Kim. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

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Aurora mom, realtor says thanks to frontline workers in very visible way



Contributed photo

Realtor Sarah Kavooosi has spearheaded the creation of signs allowing homeowners to show their appreciation for frontline workers – a cause very close to her heart.

By Brock Weir

As the mother of an emergency room doctor, this is a very worrying time for Sarah Kavooosi.

The Aurora realtor regularly checks in with her son, Kaveh, when he's finished his shift at Alliston's Stevenson Memorial Hospital. She hears of the challenges they face, and knows how hard it can be for frontline workers to clear their heads at the end of the herculean shifts each of them are being asked to carry out each day in the fight against COVID-19.

In times like these, there is little else one can say but "thank you," but Ms. Kavooosi, a broker at Re/Max Hallmark York Group Realty, has taken her thanks to the next level, helping distribute dozens of lawn signs to help every day residents do just that: say thanks and encourage everyone to do their part and stay home.

Ms. Kavooosi's signs have become increasingly prominent across Aurora as individuals look for ways to spread the poignant message. Initially popping

up on lawns in the Kennedy Street West area before spreading onto neighbouring streets, they can now be found all across Aurora in a show of solidarity.

"I just felt I needed to express myself in any way I could to show my gratitude not only to my son but everyone who works on the frontlines," she says. "We just have to stay home and as we are watching things from a distance, I wanted to be able to do something to help. It makes them feel better to know that we are aware of the work they are doing."

Coming up with the design, Ms. Kavooosi partnered with Signs in the Making, located on Industrial Parkway South, to print several signs which she then distributed to her real estate clients throughout Aurora. Once they were printed, she secured the signs from curbside pickup, spraying each one with Lysol before loading them in her trunk for distribution.

Now, as the popularity of the signs continue to mushroom, Signs in the Making is now taking orders directly, using Ms. Kavooosi's template to keep paying it forward. The result is a way to spread a

positive message while, at the same time, supporting a small local business.

"At first, the feedback I got was from people working in the frontlines or those who knew somebody on the frontlines and they all wanted to show their gratitude," says Ms. Kavooosi. "They would message me with pictures of their son working on the frontlines in British Columbia, or supporting a neighbour who was a nurse – everyone wanted to do something at this difficult time and this little gesture of support had people saying, 'I feel better today seeing this sign on my lawn, that I am doing something to show my support.' Everyone wants to do that and this sign gives them a little bit of an opportunity to do that.

"I am one person and I don't have the time to go out and deliver more – that could be a full-time job, which I don't

mind doing at all, but I think it is an achievable thing if somebody – and I do think people have to stay at home – has to go out to do the grocery run, just pick up a sign. People really want to do something. It comes from the desire of all of us in the beautiful community of Aurora who want to show our support and unity. That is so touching. It is a testament to who we are. As horrible as it is in this time and how people are feeling, it is just heartwarming the actions of everyone in the community that really helps us feel special living here."

For more information on how to secure your signs, contact Signs in the Making at 905-713-1883. They are located at 225 Industrial Parkway South, Unit 18, and they are happy to arrange contactless pickup.

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Briefly

STREET FESTIVAL CANCELLED

On Sunday, June 7, the Aurora Chamber of Commerce Street Festival was due to celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary, but those celebrations will have to wait until 2021. Last week, the Chamber announced the 2020 Street Festival was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "The Aurora Chamber of Commerce has made the difficult decision to cancel the [Festival]. The safety of everyone in our community is the most important factor in making this decision. Anyone who has already paid for their booth will be contacted...to arrange a full refund. No need to reach out, we will be in touch. The Street Festival is a long-standing staple in the Aurora community and one of the Chamber's main business to consumer marketplaces. This year would have marked our 25th anniversary. We look forward to welcoming everyone to an extra-special Street Festival next year on Sunday, June 6, 2021."

DIAL-A-DOC

As it gets harder for patients in Ontario to see doctors amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a Toronto doctor is hoping to help. Dr Mark Auspitz, MD, CCFP, has launched Dial-a-Doc, a free website that connects patients in Ontario with doctors for phone appointments. The purpose is to try to keep as many people as possible away from emergency rooms/busy walk-in clinics. For the full story by Kinjal Dagli Shah, visit theauroran.com.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A message to the business community

It is our hope everyone is taking all appropriate precautions to stay safe and keep their family and loved ones safe. As we navigate these tumultuous times, we are keenly aware of the hardships felt by many of our local businesses.

This economic situation has seen many of our local businesses shutting their doors or providing reduced services through delivery and e-commerce. We applaud the businesses that have closed their doors in support of flattening the curve, however, these businesses have been left with little to no income. While we know this will pass, and the future will once again be bright, we know there is a need for help in the short-term. These businesses will require community support to strategically look at options that are available to support their long-term viability. That is why we are jointly reaching out to our community today.

The Town of Aurora and the Aurora Chamber of Commerce have jointly set up the Aurora Business Continuity Task Force, to bring local business leaders together to discuss the state of the local economy and how best to support our business community.

We are asking landlords and tenants to work together, support one another and do what we can to ease the burden on business. The Town of Aurora has deferred tax payments to June 23, 2020 for commercial building owners who work with their tenants to defer rent payments where needed.

We are also requesting support from companies and individuals willing to provide volunteer strategic planning, financial planning, marketing strategy, HR support or IT support or business pivoting support to our businesses. If you can't volunteer, but would like to help, we want to know your area of expertise and your offerings. If you can help in any way, please fill out the survey at aurorachamber.on.ca that will be sent to Sandra at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

To our businesses, if you are in need of professional support but can't afford to pay for it right now, or perhaps can pay but don't know where to go for support, please fill out the form and a connection will be made for you by the Chamber with someone who is willing to help.

We need to pull together as a business community today to ensure a vibrant business community in the future. Please offer your help if you are able to. And to our businesses, use this initiative to reach out to each other; now is the time to seek support from one another. These are unprecedented times, and we are all in this together.

For those businesses who are still able to offer products and services, the Town and the Chamber have launched the www.ShopFromHomeAurora.ca website to showcase our local Aurora businesses and their offerings. Please, if you are in need of something, check out this website first and support our local businesses. While this website includes restaurants, the Aurora Chamber of Commerce has also set up a Facebook page Aurora Restaurants – Takeout & Delivery, where you can find daily deals and offerings from our local restaurants.

And this week, the Aurora Chamber of Commerce partnered with FanSaves on a Gift Certificate Program being offered to members of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. This program provides the opportunity for the community to support businesses that have had to close their doors or drastically reduce their income by purchasing gift certificates to be used at a later date. The money raised through the gift certificates may help local businesses keep their doors open.

Continued on page 12

Macell's Corners

SELF - ISOLATION BINGO

RESOLVE THAT DIET STARTS TOMORROW	ROLL EYES AT LATEST TRUMP QUOTE	ACTUALLY WORK DURING WORK AT HOME DAY	DAILY SCREEN TIME EXCEEDS 6 HOURS	CEREAL FOR DINNER
BINGE WATCH NETFLIX	PURCHASE SOMETHING UNNECESSARY ON-LINE	STILL IN PAJAMAS AT NOON	STARE WISTFULLY OUT OF THE WINDOW	NON-COVID STORY LEADS TV OR RADIO NEWSCAST
ADD ANOTHER THING YOU'LL NEVER DO TO "TO DO" LIST	A POLITICIAN ANNOUNCES MORE RESTRICTIONS	FREE SPACE	DINNER ARRIVES VIA DELIVERY	APPLY MAKEUP OR SHAVE TODAY
FIND YOU DON'T HAVE KEY RECIPE INGREDIENT	KIDS WHINE THAT THERE'S NOTHING TO DO	ACCURATELY GUESS WHAT DAY OF THE WEEK IT IS	RESEARCH HOME HAIRCUTTING	START RATIONING JUNK FOOD
WORRY THAT EVERY ACHE IS A SIGN YOU HAVE COVID-19	DOG REFUSES TO GO ON ANY MORE WALKS TODAY	RATIONALIZE DEFERRING HOUSEWORK FOR ANOTHER DAY	REMOVE A CANCELLED ACTIVITY FROM CALENDAR	EXCITEDLY WATCH FOR UNEXPECTED MAIL/COURIER DELIVERY

SCOTT JOHNSTON

Re-setting our collective goalposts

As a September baby, I left high school and began my post-secondary education just a little bit younger than most of my peers.

Having set off for Ottawa within a few weeks of being seventeen, there were a few rites of passage I wasn't able to legally participate in alongside my peers, at least for a little while – and don't let them tell you otherwise.

While some of my dormmates headed across the Ottawa river to get their frosh buzz on in any number of bars that seemed to cater almost exclusively to Ontarians of a certain age, I had a fair bit of time on my hands.

So, I got to know our campus very well. One thing that gave our campus an edge were the intricate warren of tunnels that, although impractical from a distance standpoint, connected most of the buildings on site, thus allowing us to avoid the frigid winters of the National Capital Region if we so desired. And many of us did.

Jazzing up the tunnels was a cacophony of colour as each dorm floor was allocated a certain length of wall to emblazon with their creative juices, immortalizing their year in the form of a mural for future generations to enjoy.

So, while most people were off enjoying all the grape and grain Quebec had to offer, I often explored. Some murals provided social commentary on the quality of the cafeteria food, a perennial favourite. Others were very much a sign of the times, featuring pop culture references that were probably dated before the paint dried.

Most were light in content, but some were darker, and one that sticks out in my mind years later is a painting of a campus building just in the background with a gaggle of teens heading off for parts unknown with one solitary figure in a window above, looking forlornly below, with the caption, "Failure to adjust."

Now, I should say at the outset that I did not identify with that figure in the window as I waited for the age of majority to hit me. Rather, it was the fact that so many of us are reluctant to adjust to the reality before us, particularly if it is nowhere close to being our own idea.

The reality before us now, at least for the next little while, is the furthest thing from what we were hoping to be the hallmark of our spring after yet another taxing winter, but I have to say I am



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

heartened each and every day by how well we, as a collective, are adjusting to our temporary new normal and buckling down to flatten the curve.

From a personal perspective, I have to pause every once in a while to do a mental check on just how many weeks this has been going on for. Four? Five? Surely not six. Who even knows anymore? Yet, as it drags on and the Provincial and National goal posts keep getting moved, the less claustrophobic I find myself feeling about the whole situation. In fact, I find my own goalposts moving along with the national average.

When we knew we had to hunker down in quarantine until early April to help flatten the curve, it was distressing how many plans had to be dropped along the wayside, with mild anger over such cancellations leading to the feeling that the powers-that-be were, in a way, overreacting to what was to come.

Events which were always a pleasure to cover for this newspaper, scheduled to take place less than two weeks before it became clear social distancing was in the cards, were put on ice. Charity events which, in a cruel twist of fate, were specifically planned to benefit our frontline healthcare workers, were pushed to the backburner. Speaking purely for myself, the cancellation of

a number of theatre events we were eagerly anticipating for the back half of March were particularly bitter pills to swallow.

While there was a feeling of acute disappointment at the time, the longer this goes on the less consequential those events seem.

Now, instead of pining for new dates to these old (and new) favourites, the goalposts seem less ambitious.

As the walls of the home office are feeling far too close for comfort, I'm clearing my head by hitting the trails just a stone's throw from my house which, for reasons which escape me, I had never ventured on to despite living in my present home for several years.

Now, when this quarantine is lifted, taking stock of the beauty around me, particularly beauty that has been previously overlooked, is a top priority.

Getting a haircut was something I used to take for granted. Now, a previously inconsequential exercise seems like the height of indulgence after all this is over.

And, as I sit here at my computer on Easter Sunday, the festivities over by noon as we made due with a box of ready-made pancake mix for the celebratory meal rather than a full-blown gathering of relatives, seeing those familiar faces in person under "normal" circumstances, faces which have become an inextricable part of my personal tapestry, can't come soon enough.

Making these adjustments are difficult, but I am continually impressed by how each and every one of us are rising to the occasion. There will be more challenges ahead, to be sure, but all we can do is our best – and rejig those goalposts as we see fit.



MEET THE NEIGHBOURS

Part of exploring the beauty around you close to home in this time of physical distancing is meeting neighbours – from a safe distance, of course. Taking in this particular part of the Aurora Community Arboretum for the very first time last week as well were mom Rosie along with Nathaniel and Sophie.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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



Welcome to Library Land

By Reccia Mandelcorn

The societal disruption wrought by the coronavirus has penetrated all facets of our daily lives. Today's column is a personal reflection of life in Library Land during the time of COVID-19. It is also a wish for the people in our community.

I remember the recession of 2008. The economy crashed, markets were down, but public libraries thrived. In a strange way, it was a Golden Age for libraries. Usage numbers grew in the double digits. In times of a downward economy, people always take advantage of free services, and it was obvious that as people searched for work, completed government forms, borrowed books and videos and brought their kids in for fun during family staycations, we were definitely a hot destination of choice.

In so many ways, technology has made it easier for libraries to be relevant and to connect with our communities during these hard times. Online resources have exponentially increased, providing immediate access to free books, music, movies, TV and courses. And through social media, we are communicating with users in ways I would have never imagined just over 10 years ago.

But the public library is also one of the few places that anyone can go to without the expectation of having to buy something. The library as a public space is where someone can come in to use the washroom, get warmed up or simply chat and feel connected to their community. And with the temporary closure of our facilities during this extraordinary time, inhabitants of Library Land are acutely aware of the impact these closures have on the communities we serve.

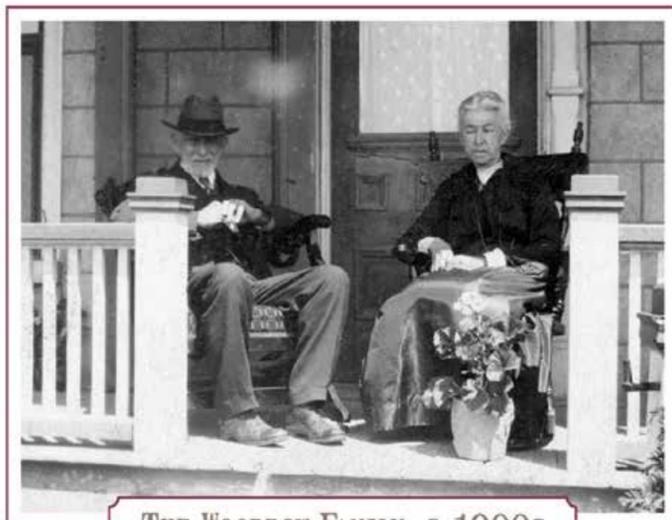
Libraries are lifelines for people with limited resources who may not be able to take advantage of the wealth of digital offerings. Without a computer, without access to wifi, or even without stable housing from where they can access these services remotely, the closure of our facilities creates significant hardships for those who already live on the margins and for those newly impacted by the economic and societal fallout of this global crisis.

Libraries have evolved into the living rooms of their communities. At APL, the door to our living room is temporarily shut. As I write this column from the comfort of my home and with the technology I normally take for granted, I think about those who are living through this pandemic without access to online digital services and connections through social media. This column is for you. When the crisis is over and our doors reopen, we'll look forward to welcoming you back. Stay safe.

Reccia Mandelcorn is the Manager, Community Collaboration at Aurora Public Library. The opinions expressed in this column reflect her personal thoughts about the engagement of community with their public library.

The Aurora Museum & Archives is supporting... #Auroraathome

Did you know that during the early 1900s, families would regularly gather on their front porch for a photo? Now it's your turn! Help us document the self-isolation aspect of Aurora's COVID-19 experience by creating your own front yard photo. If you're not able to go outside, feel free to take a photo from inside your home – all images of Aurorans at home are welcome. Share your image to social media and use the hashtag #Auroraathome. Together we will overcome this. Please follow all physical distancing protocols and only take photos with members of your immediate family.



THE WOODROW FAMILY, c. 1900s

#Auroraathome



Bylaw Update



Getting Things Done

Mayor
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- An outdoor celebration with 17 people.
- Visitors from out of town for Easter celebrations.
- 5+ young adults scaling a locked and gated field to play a game of soccer.
- An adult, who had been educated 1 week prior was found in a sports field again.
- Tennis/badminton nets being setup in parks.

These cases are not misunderstanding the rules, but intentional non-compliance. I fully appreciate this is difficult for our community, and for the most part, our community has done a great job supporting the greater good and following the rules. We have all missed family gatherings, birthdays celebrations and many other activities and gatherings. But those are the sacrifices that we have all been willing to make for the safety of our community.

I am asking all of Aurora to support each other and comply with the provincial orders so we get through this safely and as quickly as possible.

I feel it is important to update the community on the actions of our Bylaw department related to the Provincial emergency orders.

To date, Bylaw Officers have placed a strong emphasis on public education and have only issued charges in 1 per cent of cases due to blatant and continued non-compliance.

Since March 25, Aurora By-law Officers have spoken to 1,689 residents found in violation of park closures and provincial orders.

Since March 27, Bylaw Officers have responded to 113 formal complaints related to COVID-19 concerns. For example, this past weekend Officers responded to the following:

COVID Chronicle – Part 2

Some continued personal and local observations regarding the ongoing COVID-19 situation, picking up where I left off last time.

March 17

Strange to see so many cars parked in driveways on weekdays. There must be a lot of people off work, working from home, and/or not travelling for March break.

March 18

The Town declares a State of Emergency. I don't believe this has happened since the Town lost the bet of who would win the 2019 Tigers/Hurricanes playoff series to Newmarket.

March 20

Had to pick up a prescription. You'd think a drug store would be one of the places leading by example, but it did not have any hand sanitizer stations or bottles for customer use.

March 21

It's spring and the weather is better, but there are a lot more people than usual strolling outside, walking their dogs, and working in their yards. Understandable, considering how much time we're all spending cooped up indoors.

March 22

A bunch of neighbours had a street party, where we met up in a large circle outside (at minimum 2 metre spacing) to have a drink, catch up and swap stories. Nice to have such positive social interaction outside one's immediate family after being stuck inside so much.

March 24

Final (I hope) prescription pickup for a while. Spooky out there... streets quiet, stores closed, parks empty, and parking lots sparsely populated. Lots of people wearing masks. Designated extra spacing for



INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

lineups and at counters visible in all stores.

After all the panic buying, I was surprised to see toilet paper finally available, so filled my cart with all they had (kidding!).

March 31

The 10th COVID-19 case is confirmed in Aurora. Apart from hoping they'll be okay, you wonder who they are, and if you've somehow been exposed to them. Did they touch that loaf of bread now in your shopping basket? Were they using the gas pump before you arrived? Were they the people who invaded your 2 metre buffer zone when you were out walking? Unsettling.

April 2

A sign of limited traffic; hearing a lot of cars speeding along local roads at what is obviously way over the posted speed limit.

April 3

Another grocery run. Tried a new bigger store, which seemed to do well keeping high touch surfaces disinfected (carts, checkout), but had limits on many items. Realize they're trying to reduce hoarding, but it makes it hard to self-isolate when you are limited to only one of everyday items, and, as a result, have to make more frequent visits to the store.

April 5

Saw the first blue ribbons on trees in our neighbourhood supporting medical workers. Have already seen a number of hope and encouragement messages both as signs in windows and chalked on the sidewalk. Certainly, they're much more uplifting signs than those now posted in the parks advising that they are closed and that playground equipment and benches are not to be used.

April 7

It's amazing how quickly folks have adapted to giving each other a wide berth when walking on the sidewalk. One party always shifts out onto the road well before the two meet. Not sure what the protocol is for who moves. Does it have to do with the number in each group? Which direction they're moving? Which is more paranoid? Is it something to do with the phase of the moon? Whatever the unwritten rule, it seems to be working.

April 9

If the Town's Annual Cleanup Day had proceeded this month as originally scheduled, who would have thought that most of the litter in plaza parking lots would consist of used masks and surgical gloves? We'll add the folks who have to pick these up to all the other essential service people we need to thank for supporting us through all this.

April 13

Aurora now has 31 total confirmed COVID-19 cases (25 active). Our thoughts are with all of them.

Stay safe, Aurora.

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

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Are you satisfied with the Provincial and Federal response to the COVID-19 crisis?

Yes No Unsure

www.theauroran.com

RESULTS TO DATE	YES	NO	UNSURE
April 14, 2020	43%	57%	0%



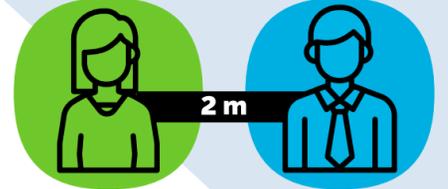
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Region braced for economic slowdown following COVID-19

By Brock Weir

There are many unknowns still to factor; but the Region of York is braced for an economic slowdown as a result of COVID-19.

The anticipated slowdown was addressed by Regional Council this month as they began to work remotely.

As The Auroran reported last week, the first meeting in this new normal resulted in the deferral of a planned hike to water rates, but it also got down into the fine details of just how this economic slowdown – one which has left countless small businesses across the Region operating one day at a time – might impact York down the road.

“The magnitude of the impact to York Region is not yet known, but the extent of the social distancing measures and the economic shut-down are unprecedented,” said Regional staff in a report to Council. “The Conference Board of Canada has projected two scenarios: a baseline in which social distancing will end in six weeks, and

an alternate forecast where it will end in 24 weeks (by the end of August). Depending upon which scenario plays out, the impact to York Region, Ontario and Canada will be very different.

“The impact to York Region will be determined by factors such as the effect of the steep drop in consumer spending due to job losses and quarantine; the effect of the interest rate decline on the housing market – while borrowing rates are lower, consumers are also faced with a lower investment return on their savings; consumer confidence plummeted in March 2020 due to COVID-19 fears. Consumer confidence partially measures a household’s view on the short-term employment outlook and the likelihood to make a major purchase such as a house or a car.”

The report predicts that Ontario will make an economic rebound in 2021 and anticipates York Region will follow suit.

The Region’s analysis of the business situation has found that local industry most impacted by

temporary government policies such as closures, travel bans and social distancing have led to significant hits in the transportation industry, food and retail sectors, accommodation and entertainment.

“These were also the same industries that were hardest hit during the SARS epidemic,” said the Region. “In the wake of SARS, the GDP attributable to the tourism sector dropped five per cent in between the first and second quarter of 2003, with air transportation experiencing greater decline and longer recovery compared to accommodation and food services.

“Small and medium-sized (under 100 employees) businesses are expected to experience a harder hit from COVID-19 due to challenges in liquidity and securing loans. Small and medium-sized businesses make up the backbone of the Region’s economy, accounting for 97 per cent of all businesses and 60 per cent of non-broad public sector jobs. Small and medium businesses in the transportation, accommodation,

Continued on page 17

Now is the time for parents to get creative with their kids: Sport Aurora

By Robert Belardi

When Novak Djokovic and his brother Marko released a video last week of them playing tennis in their home with frying pans over a set of chairs, aligned through the foyer in their family home was a simple reminder of what it means to get creative.

Better yet, creativity is not a concept that simply compels professional athletes to shape-shift their home into a professional game, but it also means that everyone needs to occupy their time – and thinking outside the box is a good start to making the best use of your time.

This is important for all age groups, but especially for children. In fact, it is imperative that children get outdoors and play; not just exercise, but play, according to Sport Aurora President Ron Weese.

“Play is a concept more related to freedom,” says Mr. Weese. “It’s related to developing risk strategies, it has a large component of fun and as a result of that, people who play tend to play longer and tend to play harder.”

With recent changes in the COVID-19 pandemic, citizens have to abide by new physical distancing by-laws and are encouraged to stay home as much as possible, but that doesn’t mean that children cannot play in their own backyard.

That’s where families with multiple children benefit the most, but parents also need to be there to help their child/children mitigate the potential of boredom. It’s also important to keep the child’s mind active.

Playing is intellectual, Weese adds. If you give the child a chance to play, they will make choices. If adults instruct them to play a certain way then that creativity is lost.

When parents instructed their children to go play years ago, he says nobody told you what to play; just get out there and have fun and do what you want – safely, of course.

Any form of running, jumping, hopping and skipping has a lot of benefits for the body.

According to Weese, children that reap the benefits from the locomotive activities increase their balance, reactions and strength.

Being outdoors and surrounding yourself in even the slightest of natures helps develop cognitive abilities.

For a group that advocates for children being outside, Sport Aurora says outdoor play also has internal benefits to the body and to the immune system.

“So, people boost their immune system by getting a healthy dose of sunlight and it’s proven, that’s science,” Weese explained.

As COVID-19 protective measures stay in force for the time being, it is still important not to neglect any play, while respecting the laws. Play safe and play smart.

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Response to Southlake's PPE drive has been "wonderful": Foundation

By Brock Weir

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, residents across northern York Region and South Simcoe have come together in various ways to say thank you to the healthcare workers on the frontlines of this global fight, and they continue to do so.

Southlake Regional Health Centre sounded the call last month asking individuals and businesses large and small to help secure and donate personal protective equipment (PPEs) to the people who need them the most, but which have proven in recent weeks to be in increasingly short supply.

It was a call that the community has readily answered, according

Classes won't resume on May 4: Ford

From page 1

"The sad truth is our long-term care homes are quickly turning into the frontline in the fight against this virus. My top priority right now is getting the troops and resources needed at this front. We're going through everything we have at our long-term care homes and tomorrow (Wednesday, April 15) we will launch an enhanced action plan to fight COVID-19 in long-term care homes."

The plan, he said, will include more support and more resources where they are needed the most. Ontario needs to deploy "every available resource" to long-term care homes, including working with hospitals to address capacity.

"Thanks to our collective efforts, we have not seen the surge in our hospitals that we were so worried about," he said. "As a result, we have capacity within our health sector and I want available resources from our health system to be redeployed to those homes where there is a serious outbreak. We need to get hospital-based teams to help long-term care staff manage these outbreaks and I want to see specialized teams deployed into long-term care homes when there is a serious outbreak."

The Province, he added, would be issuing a new emergency order ensuring every employee in long-term care homes will only be able to work in one residence.

On Friday, York Region Public Health added Chartwell Aurora to the list of long-term care homes experiencing an outbreak of COVID-19.

Additional outbreaks have also been reported at Bethany Lodge, Eagle Terrace Long Term Care Home, Kristus Darzs Latvian Home, MacKenzie Place Long Term Care, Markhaven Home for Seniors, Southlake Residential Care Village, Sunrise of Unionville – Transitional Care Unit, Villa Colombo Vaughan, Villa Leonardo Gambin, and Yee Hong Ho Lai Oi Wan Centre.

By Tuesday afternoon, as the Ontario Legislature met to extend the Province's State of Emergency for a further 28 days, the number of Aurora cases of COVID-19 continued to rise.

At press time, York Region Public Health reported a total of 36 confirmed cases among Aurora residents.

Of these 36 cases, 30 are active, five are reported as resolved, with one fatality. One case involves a healthcare worker.

On the education front, Premier Ford confirmed that despite an announcement made nearly two weeks ago, students across Ontario would not return to classrooms on May 4 as planned.

"Students will not be going back on May 4," he said. "That does not mean the year is cancelled."

More details on continued school closures would be announced by the Ministry of Education "in the next couple of days," he concluded.

to Susan Mullin, President & CEO of the Southlake Regional Health Centre Foundation.

"We have had an awesome response from the community on the PPE drive," says Ms. Mullin. "People from nail salons to car production lines have donated needed PPEs, in particular the masks – and it continues to be the masks that are of greatest concern, but we have had generous gifts. We've had more than 5,000 gloves that are on our list of PPE to be donated, there's well over 12,500 medical and surgical masks, and it probably exceeds that, but we haven't had a count of everything yet."

"What has been nice about that is we have had people calling saying, 'I think you can find this through a connection of mine, tell me exactly what you need.' People calling and reaching out has been one of the most moving things about it."

Despite the significant community response, the need for all PPEs at Southlake continues, particularly the N95 masks which were, last week, at the heart of a trade dispute between the governments of Canada and the United States.

"Lots of businesses have reached out and the business community has been able to help us on the PPE drive," Ms. Mullin continues. "We have had donations from Seneca College's labs, which have donated products; that has been really helpful and it continues to be a priority. While the government is stepping up [with] the news that 3M will be allowed to export to Canada some of the N95 masks, which are the ones that are in particular short supply, it is good news they're coming to hospitals but until they are on my

People from nail salons to car production lines have donated needed PPEs, in particular the masks – and it continues to be the masks that are of greatest concern, but we have had generous gifts. We've had more than 5,000 gloves that are on our list of PPE to be donated, there's well over 12,500 medical and surgical masks, and it probably exceeds that, but we haven't had a count of everything yet

loading dock, I am not confident. We need to be able to see it to believe it is going to be available for our staff when they need it."

Southlake continues to look at the myriad donations of PPE that have rolled in so far. Much of what has been contributed is different from the equipment hospital staff used before the start of the pandemic. Medical staff, for example, are usually fitted for a particular size of mask, and, as such, strict protocols are in place to make sure items donated meet hospital standards.

"We have to do a lot of work to make sure that the donated masks meet the requirements and they are all ready and part of our contingency plan for us going forward," said Ms. Mullin. "We continue to encourage people who donate masks, in particular, we would be delighted to receive them. There are protocols in place and between our procurement

team and also our instruction control team... they are reviewing all of the products that are brought in that are not part of our usual inventory and making sure they meet standards, either that they have authentication that we can verify and we also have to assess them for fit on faces as well."

Outside of PPEs, there are other items members of the public can donate to make the fight a bit easier on our frontline healthcare workers, including hand lotion.

"It is really tough for people who are washing their hands dozens of times a day, so even little hotel-size bottles of hand lotion that are unopened are the kinds of things we're making available to our staff on an ongoing basis," says Ms. Mullin. "We continue to look for small, personal-sized bottles of hand sanitizer so nurses and other staff can use that at home to keep themselves and their families safe before they come back to the office."

The community's response to Southlake's call for monetary donations has also been successful so far, although needs continue to grow.

By Thursday of last week, nearly 630 individual donors had answered the call, helping Southlake raise close to \$1.5 million of their \$3.5 million in identified needs.

"We have funded one-and-a-half of the portable isolation tents that are being delivered this week, we have a few ventilators that have been fully funded, but there is another eight that need to be funded," says Ms. Mullin. "We are also purchasing PPE where we can find it on the market."

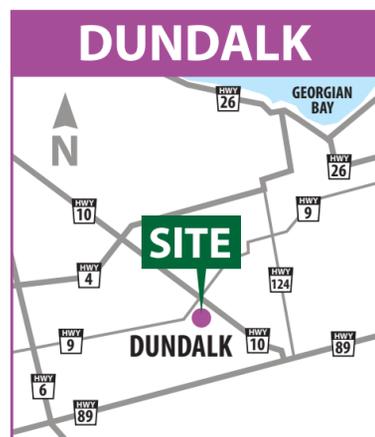
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Cultural Centre looks to “continue the connection” amid closure

Programs unlikely to continue in Church Street space for at least a year after quarantine lifts

By Brock Weir

When the historic Church Street School was closed along with all other municipal facilities in response to COVID-19, it was hoped that cultural programming would return to its storied walls sometime this month.

But, with closures set to continue until the beginning of May at the very least, it is unlikely that cultural programming will return to the building until 2022 in anticipation of redevelopment of Library Square.

“We have cancelled all of our workshops, classes and events until the end of May,” says Suzanne Haines, Executive Director of the Aurora Cultural Centre. “What that also means for us, given the Library Square project, is, when we come back together, we will be doing so in a different venue.

“It is very challenging to have those cancellations and know we’re going into this incredible phase of infrastructure building, which means we’ll not be able to invite our community back into this home that we have had for so long. But what we’re delighted about is these relationships that we have built and are ready to go. The reality is we love – and are completely supportive of – what the Town is doing on this infrastructure and are so grateful to have a home that we do get to work



Arts at Home Aurora is the Aurora Cultural Centre’s way of maintaining community connection during this time of physical distancing.

out of once we’re re-opened and we really want the community to feel that they can join us in these new venues when we’re ready to gather again.”

Although the new venues the Aurora Cultural Centre has been scouting for alternative programming locations for the duration of the build are yet to be announced, they are rolling out other ways for the community to stay connected with them during the

weeks and months ahead.

The Cultural Centre has recently launched a new social media campaign called Arts at Home Aurora (#artsathomeaurora), an initiative to encourage people to “think about creativity in their own way.” The Centre has done just that over the last couple of weeks, bringing some of their in-house classes online, but now they want to hear from you.

“This is about encouraging the community to think about where they are creatives and how they use their time,” explains Ms. Haines. “It can be reading a book, working on a piece of art, playing the piano, we’re encouraging the community to take pictures or videos of that and post them on social media, using the hashtag #artsathomeaurora. We’ll grab those and tag them as well because this is where people are looking to find those moments and, as adults, we need a little more encouragement.

“We tend to want that for our kids and look for those opportunities for our kids, but the bulk of the people we interact with in the community are adults and we know that we have an incredible creative community in Aurora. If you are working on a piece of writing or at home working on a guitar, whether you are students or not, we want to celebrate those moments of creativity through the hashtag.”

Since the closure, the Aurora Cultural Centre has been celebrating its tenth anniversary online by digging into the vaults and sharing memories of where they have been so far. But this social media campaign is a way to look to the future and make new connections in a challenging time.

“We would love to see what evolves out of #artsathomeaurora,” says Ms. Haines. “I think we will find there are artists that maybe we don’t know, or artists who want to participate with us in a way through this. I think that is an excellent connection we can make with people who are creating in our community.

“It is inspiring to see what is happening and have the connection with the artists that we do. Compassion is a big part of what we’re seeing, so people are creating to develop or support calm in their life; they are creating to connect with a group that either they’re already connected with or know they need support, building something that can be delivered and raise others up. I have been connected to the Aurora community for almost three years now and I would say that the people I have met certainly fit that bill. Now they are showing this real interest in diving into art streams that will support others, so it is that compassion and that generosity that is heartwarming and really builds community at a time when we can’t come together.”



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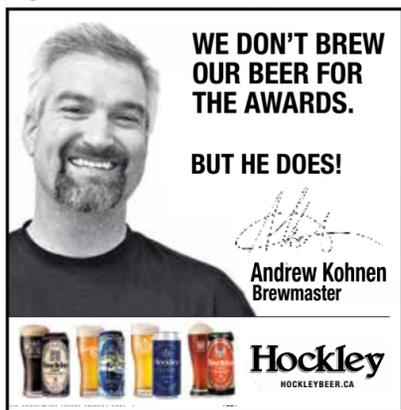
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Catering company adapts to new normal by making meals for families

“We are flying the plane as we build it,” says Food in Motion owner

By Brock Weir

As a catering company, Food in Motion has made its mark on the community providing top level service to social gatherings large and small.

But, at a time when social gatherings are on pause, the Vata Court-based business has had to “completely adapt overnight” to a new normal while finding ways to keep their business going, their staff employed while, at the same time, giving back to the community.

“I am flying this plane as I build it here,” says Food in Motion co-owner John Cosentino. “This is all brand new for me and I am learning every day. Because Food in Motion is a catering company and our business model is based around social gatherings, social distancing has kind of dismantled our business.”

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the company has shifted gears from a catering business to a restaurant focused on food deliveries

and curbside menus. Developing a completely new menu that was based on a family restaurant concept the Cosentino family developed when he was just seven years old, they’re preparing popular Italian-Canadian dishes like chicken parmigiana, veal scallopini, lasagna and other family-friendly fare.

“We have condensed our menu so it is very manageable as a two-person operation and we’re doing all the administrative work, all the deliveries,” he says, noting that he is seeing a particular uptake from couples, empty-nesters, and small families isolating together.

“Through this, I have had the chance to meet a lot of new people, which is awesome for whenever Food in Motion does return, whatever that is going to look like, whenever that is going to be,” says Mr. Cosentino. “People have reached out and people are really thankful that Food in Motion has adapted and we’re able to offer something besides fast foods and other things that are essential. That has been really heartwarming for us. I think the fact that this is so new to us and the fact that we’re being able to put this model as a restaurant/delivery pick-up service, we’re able to do it so quickly and overnight is rewarding for myself and the fact that people are



The Food in Motion team.

Auroran file photo by Diane Buchanan

actually ordering and we’re getting support from our friends, the ones that we see on a daily basis, just gives me the reassurance that things are going to be okay. There were a couple of days where it was really tough to breathe for a little while because I didn’t know if there was going to be a Food in Motion anymore.”

On Monday, Food in Motion announced they were looking at more ways to give back to the community by distributing homemade Italian-Canadian meals to frontline healthcare workers at Southlake Regional Health Centre. Individuals can go online to Food in Motion’s website to help make this program possible by donating \$12 to sponsor the cost of a meal which will be distributed each Thursday and Friday to those helping to fight the pandemic.

They hope to distribute up to 120 meals each week through this

initiative.

“We are so grateful for everything they are doing for us, so we just wanted to give back,” says Mr. Cosentino. “My cousin is a nurse and people are dropping off yogurt and NutriGrain bars, but there is something else we can do: Food in Motion wants to be able to arrange meals for the doctors and nurses. You will be able to go to our website to support our frontliners. You can donate one meal, which is \$12 and you can donate as many as you want. We’re going to cap off [donations] every Wednesday and then we will be able to make the meals Thursday and Friday morning and we’ll deliver them ourselves.”

For more information on how you can become involved in the initiative – and order some tasty meals from a local business for yourself – visit www.foodinmotion.ca or call 905-503-3462.



Rent is top concern for Business Continuity Task Force

By Brock Weir

Local small businesses are facing many challenges amid the COVID-19 pandemic, not the least of which is finding the means to pay their rent.

This was one of the primary concerns of the local business community when they convened virtually on Friday morning for the second meeting of the Aurora Business Continuity Task Force.

A joint initiative of the Town of Aurora and the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, the purpose of the Task Force is to “help find creative ways to assist Aurora’s small businesses” and now the first order of business is to help property owners and businesses communicate on a path forward.

“What we are constantly hearing is the same thing we have been advocating to the Province and the Feds for is rent, rent, rent. We’re hearing from tenants and we’re also hearing from landlords as well,” said Mayor Tom Mrakas immediately following Friday’s session. “We understand that while the businesses and the tenants are struggling through this unprecedented time that some of the landlords are in the same struggle, the same situation, so we’re hearing it from both ends, but what we’re also hearing is some are not responding. Some landlords are not responding to tenants’ calls, emails.

“Part of our discussion was if we can get a list of all those we’re hearing from who are not responding, I will be personally

calling each one of those landlords because, as I have said a couple of times now, this is unacceptable. Everyone’s situation is different and it is a case by case thing that we should be looking at but, at the same time, in the times we’re in right now, there is no excuse not to pick up the phone or respond by email and explain clearly what can be and what can’t be done – and if there are things the landlord and tenant can do together to try and help each other during this time.

“I am going to make it a priority of mine that any landlord that I hear of that is not responding to a tenant, I will be making that call to them.”

Beyond a phone call, however, municipalities have limited means of doing much else to bring landlords to the table, according to Ontario’s Municipal Act. What they can do, however, is a measure the Town put in place in March: providing a property tax break to commercial business owners – but only if they can prove that the break they are receiving is benefiting their tenants as well.

“If you want a deferral, you have to have a signed agreement that you’re going to be passing it along to your tenants, otherwise you’re not going to get a deferral from the Town,” says Mayor Mrakas. “What are we legally allowed to do? What do we have the authority to do? What are all the tools available to us, our solicitor, our CAO, our ELT team? Everyone is working on those things to be able to see what we absolutely can do and I can tell you that whatever

Continued on page 12

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Week of April 16, 2020



Canadian Horse Racing Inductees Announced

By Robert Belardi

Aurora, King and Caledon will see new representation in the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame's Class of 2020.

The Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame selects ten inductees each year to join a prestigious group of individuals and thoroughbreds.

King City native and thoroughbred horse "Play the King" from Kinghaven Farms, standardbred horse McWicked, owned by the owner of SSG Gloves in Aurora, Ed James, and Caledon resident Michael Keogh have been announced as the inductees, according to the Hall.

Linda Rainey, Managing Director of the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame, says the induction process is quite extensive.

"It's based on significant contributions to horse racing in Canada," she explains. "It's

voted on two committees for an individual to be inducted."

The nominating committee oversees all of the public submissions. People within this committee have historical knowledge of the sport, current racing knowledge, breeding and background knowledge. These votes determine who proceeds to the ballot.

Rainey believes there were 80 nominations per breed presented to the Standardbred and Thoroughbred Nomination Committees this year.

Ballots are categorized and sent off to the final group of voters who ultimately decide which inductees are named for the year -- all of whom, of course, hold notable records to entice voters.

Trained by Roger Attfield, Play the King has had an exceptional four-year career. When the horse was only four years of age, victory at the Toboggan Handicap

Owner of SSG Stables and SSG Gloves in Aurora, Ed James' Standardbred horse McWicked, is inducted into the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame.



Photo by Dave Landry

Contributed photo

(G3) in Aqueduct sparked a good run of form. Victories at Jacques Cartier, Vigil Handicap, Toronto Budweiser Breeders' Cup at Woodbine, Suffolk Sprint in Boston (G3) and Nearctic Stakes (G3) earned the horse the 1987 Sovereign Award champion as Canada's top, older male horse and champion sprinter.

In 1988, Play the King repeated as Sovereign Award champion with another championship at Woodbine, Nearctic Stakes (G3), the Breeder's Cup Sprint (G1) and Churchill Downs.

The second horse nominated from the local areas is McWicked from Aurora, owned by Ed James' SSG Stables.

Recently retired from racing, McWicked earned \$5.1 million during a race career that began in 2013 and included 40 wins in 110 starts while setting his lifetime mark of 1:46.2 at age 7.

During his career McWicked won four O'Brien awards as Canada's top Older Pacing Horse of the Year in 2018 and 2019 and overall Horse of the Year in 2018.

His 2018 bankroll of \$1.662 million made him the oldest horse to top North American harness racing's earnings

standings at the age of seven, and his \$5.1 million in career earnings makes him the richest pacing stallion in the history of the sport.

Finally, Bolton resident Michael Keogh, former trainer for the Hall of Fame builder Gus Schickedanz, has been racing since 1993.

In 2,689 starts, Keogh has amassed 330 wins and earning over \$21.5 million.

He is most famously known for winning the Queen's Plate twice in 1999 with Woodcarver, and again in 2003 with Wando who went on to win the Canadian Triple Crown.

Other Keogh trained horses include Sovereign Award-winners Mobil and Langfuhr. Early in his career Keogh was an assistant to Hall of Fame trainer Roger Attfield from 1986-1993.

During that time Keogh worked with one of his favourite horses, Play the King who coincidentally is also being inducted to the CHRHF in 2020.

Since its establishment in 1976, the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame holds 500 inductees. It is open to the public at Woodbine Racetrack in Etobicoke.

Realtors want to make a difference for budding athletes

By Robert Belardi

While enduring the COVID-19 pandemic, it might be important to note that the natural flow of society will return.

It is expected that restaurants, bars, retail stores and sports leagues will re-open everywhere at some point, opening the door for residents to have a reprieve from social isolation and physical distancing.

The question to think about is what will happen once everything does?

Specifically, for sports leagues, the answer is still up in the air. Leagues will return and while some families have had the bitter result of losing their jobs, the loss of income will still be felt.

That means the opportunity for a child to participate in a recreational activity might also be lost when things return to normal.

Aurora residents and Re/Max Real Estate Sales Representative Angie Vallelunga and Broker Mauro Bucci have made a concerted effort with Sport Aurora's All Kids Can Play Program, with the hopes to raise a total of \$25,000 in the process.

"We thought about the program in the fall because we were looking to support a charity in our community since we just moved to Aurora close to four years ago," Vallelunga told The Auroran.

Bucci, who is a member of Aurora Business Association (BIA), heard of All Kids Can Play from good-friend and General Manager of Aw, Shucks Mary Georgopoulos.

Mary has long been involved in the All Kids Can Play Program and connected the realtors with Laurie Mueller, the program's Executive Director.

Both realtors began this program in January as their third donation project and fourth since they began donating in 2009. They both currently donate money

in support of Children's Miracle Network Hospitals and Sick Kids. Previously, they donated to the Canadian Cancer Society. However, their intentions are now strictly on helping children.

"Basically, what we want is to help out our future and the kids are our future. We felt, having children of our own, it was important to help out kids in need," said Bucci.

Bucci says they were originally going to donate through the process of referrals. For every referral that is sent, \$500 is donated. In the long run, Bucci and Vallelunga discovered that wouldn't be practical because not every referral was out of Aurora and not everyone uses their services. So, along with the referral program, both agents have established another method of donating.

"We're also contributing through every sale transaction that we do. There is a portion of our income that will be donated to the program," Vallelunga said.

It's the same method used to donate to the other two charities and both agents wish to do the same for this one.

In 2019, All Kids Can Play supported approximately 60 children across the Town to play recreational sports. Bucci and Vallelunga want to double that, triple that, even quadruple that if it meant to help as many children as possible through this program, for families who cannot afford for their children to play.

"What we love about this program is helping the families that can't afford to really make their kids play in order to keep them active and healthy, which is extremely important since electronics are consuming too much of their time," Vallelunga said.

They planned on giving back and this is their means of accomplishing that goal.

To enquire about the program further, call 416-998-9891.

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School board working to get learn-from-home technology into students' hands

By Kinjal Dagli Shah

The York Region District School Board held its first electronic public board meeting last Tuesday. Members of the public were able to join in the webinar along with the chair and trustees.

YRDSB chair Juanita Nathan acknowledged that we are in unprecedented times due to the COVID-19 situation.

"This isn't our usual way of doing business but we are all learning together," she pointed out.

The focus of the meeting, as expected, was e-learning as well as tracking student progress. Trustees posed questions on how online learning and assessments will work, especially for graduating students.

As part of learning from home, most students and staff will engage in learning

that is not required in real time.

"This means they will engage in activities at different times of the day and evening to best suit their individual needs. Teachers will develop learning opportunities (e.g., tasks, assignments or projects) for students that may involve engagement both online and offline. Teachers will plan opportunities to assess student learning and provide feedback to students throughout the remainder of the school year. At this time, there is no requirement for teacher-led instruction with groups of students or classes online at the same time. Throughout all planning and programming processes, teachers consider the strengths and needs of students with Individual Education Plans," said Ms. Nathan.

It was also acknowledged that not all students have the technology they need to

access online learning resources.

"We are working to get equipment into the hands of our students and their families in a safe and efficient manner. Secondary students will begin to access YRDSB technology this week, with elementary students receiving technology starting next week," said Ms. Nathan, adding that they are filling requests for 18,000 devices for students and internet access to 1,200 students for the purposes of teacher-led online learning.

In keeping with the new learning methods, Grade 1 to 8 students will receive a final report card at the end of this school year while kindergarten students will receive the Communication of Learning Assessment information gathered prior to March 13 will be used to inform the information in these documents. Elementary students will continue to be assessed throughout the remainder of the school year to support their ongoing learning. For secondary students, who will also receive a final report card at the end of the 2019-20 school year, teachers will continue to assign learning tasks, projects and culminating activities that will be assessed to inform students about progress and marked for the purposes of evaluation.

"This year, midterm marks are only required for graduating students. Teachers will use their professional judgement and interpretation of evidence of student learning when determining a midterm mark for potential graduates. Under the

current circumstances, teachers are asked to use the full body of assessment evidence available to them based on work assigned up until March 13 to determine a midterm mark that reflects a student's learning and achievement to date," said Ms. Nathan.

An email detailing these announcements went out to all the YRDSB families the next morning. The email recognized that these are exceptional circumstances and learning from home can be very different for our students and families.

"We know parents and caregivers may be essential workers or working from home and not available to provide support for students. These are not normal times and as educators, we understand the challenges ahead. Our goal is to create online learning environments that are safe, equitable and inclusive, and support every learner, without penalty for circumstances beyond the control of our students. We will do our very best to support our students during this unprecedented time, and believe our students will rise to the occasion, presenting their best efforts," stated the email signed by director of education Louise Sirisko.

The YRDSB has developed some tips for families available on the Board website at www.yrdsb.ca/covid19.

Parents will also find additional information about community supports, learning and well-being resources and a list of frequently asked questions. The website includes a built-in translation tool that can translate content into over 100 languages.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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Finally, together, the Town of Aurora and the Aurora Chamber of Commerce will be consolidating the information received from all levels of government and disseminating the information in a streamlined way, providing key information and links to application forms. This information will be available on both the Town of Aurora and Chamber websites. Look for this in the next few days.

This is a time when we should all be putting our health first, but as businesses we should also be looking out for one another and preparing for the future. Now is the time to let us know if we can do anything for you, if we can help, we will, or we will advocate for what is needed. Stay safe.

Mayor Tom Mrakas
Aurora

Sandra Ferri
President,
Aurora Chamber of Commerce



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Museum goes digital to chart Aurora at Home

By Brock Weir

Your home is your castle, especially in a time of quarantine.

It might be hard for us to get used to for the time being, but it is nothing new.

From photography's earliest days, the home was often the backdrop for important milestones immortalized by this newfangled technology, but everything old is new again at the Aurora Museum & Archives.

As the Church Street School remains closed to the public in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Aurora Museum & Archives has gone digital, launching their new Aurora At Home Initiative, a new social media campaign that has its roots in tradition.

"We have adapted this project from our 2017 Snapshot Aurora campaign," explains Michelle Johnson of the Aurora Museum & Archives. "We have a huge collection of photos in our archive that show people on their front porches, on their front lawns, posing for a portrait. Some are formal, some are very informal, but they highlight the area and their outdoor living space.

"This neat phenomenon happened around the turn-of-the-century when photography became more accessible to the masses and technology developed so people could try their hand at being amateur photographers. They didn't have to go to a studio and, for various reasons, they took their photos outside.

"We thought this was an ideal time to encourage present-day Aurorans to try their hand at the same thing. It isn't a new activity and we have quite a precedent for it in our collection, but now this serves two purposes: it is something to do – and everyone is looking for something to do right now – and it is a way for a family or a person to kind of document this moment, their experience during the self-isolation aspect of COVID-19, and it helps the Museum to document this moment."

It has almost become cliché to say the times we're currently living in are unprecedented

but, in many ways, it is an undeniable reality. It is a moment in our collective history, and one the Aurora Museum & Archives wants to preserve for posterity.

"We continue collecting right up to the current day and documenting this pandemic through an Aurora lens is part of our mission and our mandate," says Ms. Johnson. "We need to find a way to have either digital or physical artefacts from this in our collection so we can do our part for future generations and show how Aurorans navigated this."

These artefacts can include the colourful lawn and window signs Aurorans have erected in a show of solidarity with our frontline healthcare workers, to the festive decorations residents used to fill their windows for the Town's Easter Window Decorating contest this past weekend.

But, until it is safe to collect those items or accept donations, the Museum is focused on the digital.

If you have a front porch or yard, the Museum encourages you to snap away and submit your photos to them via social media through the hashtag #auroraathome.

As not everyone has access to an outdoor living space, photos by your front door, or even inside for those who do not feel comfortable going outside at this time, are acceptable as well.

"Right now, what this project is capturing for us, is the community practicing physical distancing and the community in that moment of self-isolation with the household members," says Ms. Johnson. "This can be a photo of you and your household members, your own bubble, you and your pet – or even your collection of vintage video games you're playing obsessively. Whatever speaks to you in terms of how you're navigating this new reality of physical distancing and staying at home."

Aurora's archives are a "treasure trove" of content, but some photos in the collection don't have any context. Studio portraits, for instance, have been donated without any information of who is in the photo or the circumstances in which they

were taken. But the Museum is putting these images to good use, posting them online for a "Writing Prompt Wednesday" encouraging community members to use their imaginations to create short narratives on the stories behind the photos.

"It can be as long or as short as people would like, and we're encouraging people to tag the Town's social media accounts if they are comfortable posting it online – and we can hopefully showcase some of these literary creations down the road and

get people's imaginations going," says Ms. Johnson. "We don't want to inundate the public, but we want to promote these simple and neat activities that are open to people of all ages and all demographics. If people don't use social media, email is always an option as well."

For more information on the Aurora Museum and Archives, visit Auroramuseum.ca. Photo entries can be made by connecting with the Town on Facebook @townofaurora and Twitter @Town_of_Aurora.

Task Force looks to future

From page 10

is available to us, we will implement to ensure that there is a working relationship between the landlords and the tenants at this point. Beyond that, you need the Province and the Federal government come in and put in actual measures that can be implemented. Most of the things we can do is the advocacy part."

At the moment, no one knows just how long this pandemic – and Emergency Orders put in place – will last, but the Aurora Business Continuity Task Force is looking ahead to the future.

"We have talked about the here and now, but we have also talked about moving forward because we have to be proactive in our approach and look at once we get out of this, what is going to happen? How do we get our businesses back up and running?" said the Mayor. "The same as the Premier talks about, the economic recovery, how do we implement things that will help our businesses start to flourish again? We're going to start taking an approach to looking at beyond the current state and moving forward six months and a year from now and what we can do to put those things in place."

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Residents celebrate Easter with colourful window displays



The current COVID-19 pandemic forced the Town of Aurora to cancel its annual Easter festivities, but that didn't stop the Town from getting into the holiday spirit. In lieu of the traditional activities at the Aurora Seniors' Centre originally slated for Saturday, April 11, the Town encouraged residents across Aurora to decorate their windows for the holiday and share their creativity through social media. Taking top honours in the window decorating contest were (above) Frances, left, and Janine. Said Frances: "All artwork by the Wilson kiddos (ages 7-10). We had so much fun creating these. Each kid has a 'feature' piece plus eggs decorated by everyone." Additional entries: (1) Andrea, (2) Chrissie, (3) Juliana, (4) Vanessa, (5) Rosanna, (6) Kenley, (7) Cascindra, (8) Celest, (9) Britton, (10) Cindy, (11) Anell, (12) Rachel, and (13) Erin.

Photos courtesy of the Town of Aurora



Aurora Cares team aims to get meal programs, services for vulnerable back up and running

By Brock Weir

A task force established to help address the needs of Aurora's most vulnerable residents is focused on getting important services back up and running in whatever way they can.

As The Auroran reported last week, the Town of Aurora has brought together a cross-sector group of residents and community leaders to form the Aurora Cares Community Action Team aimed at examining the needs of vulnerable and at-risk residents and hammering out a plan of action during a time of unusual and difficult circumstances.

Meeting for the first time virtually last week, the group of twelve worked on a list of key action items for the next few weeks, including re-establishing important meal programs wherever possible.

Meal programs, such as the two offered by Welcoming Arms (Welcome Table and Martha's Table), have had to close their doors after trying different models of staying open while, at the same time, maintaining physical distancing.

"We're looking at the possibility of getting [these programs] back up and running," said Mayor Tom Mrakas following the group's inaugural meeting. "They had to shut down as places of gathering [and] have been unable to continue helping those that have come out to Welcome Table on a weekly basis, as well as the Welcoming Arms program. We're looking at 180

meals a week they provide and now that is 180 meals that are not available to those that were in need before this pandemic started, and there is probably much more of a need now."

As the Aurora Cares members bring their concerns forward, rising to the top of the list has been helping the homeless and those who are currently in precarious living situations. The group is looking to see what kinds of programs can be offered to those who are "living on that line," said Mayor Mrakas.

"We also talked about our seniors, our most vulnerable, and what kind of help and services are provided as far as making sure they get food, they stay active, [and] that their mental health is continuously being kept in a positive frame of mind. We know in this time you keep someone locked up in a room with nowhere to go, it is very easy to become depressed, anxiety starts to kick in, so those are some of the things we're looking at [is] how can we provide some programming? A lot of individuals and businesses have taken up the mantle and said, 'We'll pick up groceries for seniors and help out where we can.'

"Another part of that is we also want to create one list that kind of lists everything that is available within the Town so people that are feeling the pressure, feeling the stress and don't know where to turn, they will have a source that they will be able to have a better understanding of what is available to them, what they can do."

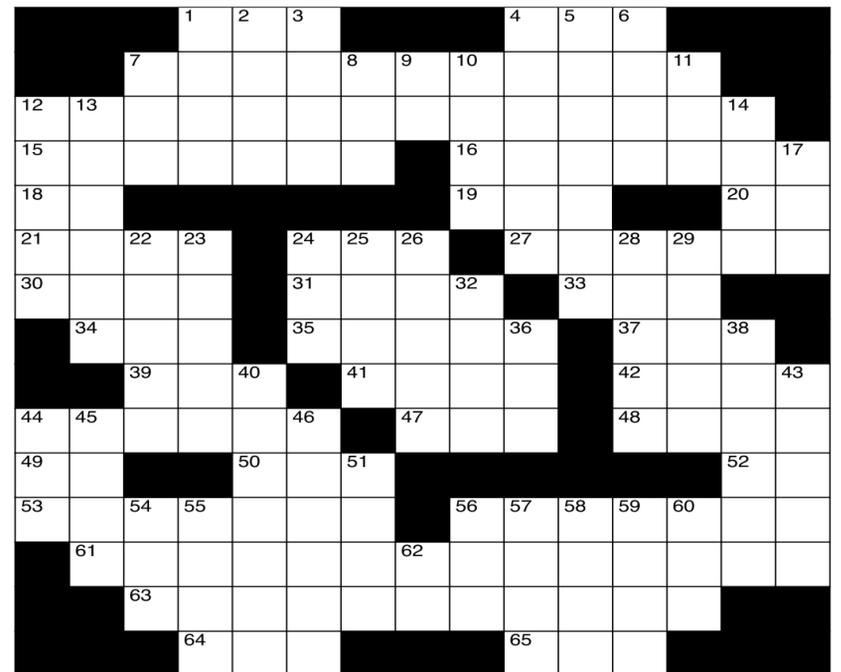
Initiatives like these are expected to move forward in earnest next week as

Council considers a motion from Mayor Tom Mrakas to redirect funds left over from last year's Mayor's Charity Golf Classic over to the Aurora Cares group to facilitate their work.

"The funds are supposed to be to

help those who are less fortunate and at need in the community," said Mayor Mrakas. "We just need to be able to shift it properly to the proper process. We're looking at getting those funds over so we can utilize that in the committee."

CROSSWORD



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. As soon as possible
- 5. Gateway (Arabic)
- 8. Doctors' group
- 11. Madder genus of plants
- 13. A team's best pitcher
- 14. Ancient Greek sophist
- 15. Go up
- 16. Neither
- 17. Bolivian river
- 18. Manila hemp
- 20. Comedienne Gasteyer
- 21. British School
- 22. Human reproductive organs
- 25. Surrenders
- 30. Dog with long, silky coat and drooping ears
- 31. Sun up in New York
- 32. Lead alloy
- 33. Eastern Asian plant
- 38. Rapid deployment force (abbr.)
- 41. Japanese warrior
- 43. Festivity
- 45. Interruptions
- 47. Nonsense (slang)
- 49. Data mining methodology (abbr.)
- 50. Fencing sword
- 55. French river
- 56. Global business conference (abbr.)
- 57. Afflicted
- 59. Con man's game
- 60. No (Scottish)
- 61. Jewish spiritual leader
- 62. Fish
- 63. Camera term (abbr.)
- 64. Impudence

CLUES DOWN

- 1. A continuous portion of a circle
- 2. Genus of seabirds
- 3. Infant's dining accessory
- 4. Native Americans from Arizona
- 5. Popular fruit
- 6. Poisonous plant
- 7. Scolded
- 8. Assists
- 9. Hand (Spanish)
- 10. Amazon product identifying system (abbr.)
- 12. Basics
- 14. Cain and ___
- 19. Malaria
- 23. Indicates particular shape
- 24. Respiratory disease
- 25. Central Standard Time
- 26. Imitate
- 27. Golf score
- 28. A place to lay your head
- 29. Three cards of the same suit
- 34. Not in
- 35. Human gene
- 36. Ancient Chinese philosophic concept
- 37. French river
- 39. Thinks up
- 40. Type of geological deposit
- 41. Helps little firms
- 42. Area units
- 44. A device to remove
- 45. Secret political clique
- 46. Polite interruption sound
- 47. Foundation
- 48. Clare Boothe ___, American writer
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Prejudice
- 53. Actor Idris
- 54. Resistance fighters
- 58. Speak disrespectfully of

Wellington rental development delayed pending parking information

By Brock Weir

A decision on a development of rental units on Wellington Street West is set to be clarified this month after nearby residents expressed concerns over on-site parking.

In the last General Committee meeting held before municipal facilities were closed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Council members signed off on a zoning bylaw amendment that could help pave the way for nearly 60 new rental units at 145 and 147 Wellington Street West.

The development calls for 53 new rental townhouse units to be built to complement the existing residential buildings currently on site.

At the time, Council voted in favour of the project in the belief that the project would have been subject to an appeal at the Local Planning Appeals Tribunal (LPAT) which might have sided with the developer, but a final decision was put on the backburner until Council could meet again.

The impact the infill development would have had on parking spaces for existing tenants was a common refrain at the March 10 General Committee meeting, and residents of the existing buildings continued to press these concerns to local lawmakers in the intervening weeks.

The project was delayed, this time formally and temporarily, when Council reconvened electronically last week.

"The concern of the residents who live in this development of Wellington Towers is the information they gave to us at the public meetings on the parking is not at all reflected in the report," said Councillor Wendy Gaertner. "There's great concern about that and the residents have asked that we go back and do some more work on this."

"We need to check out the parking figures. If we have a disagreement between the developer and the residents, I think we owe it to the residents to make sure the approval for a zoning bylaw amendment is based on accurate information."

Councillor John Gallo also said he was hesitant to move forward at this time as public input during these

electronic Council meetings is an issue yet to be hammered out and the public should be involved in the process.

"There is some new information and there may be some new information I am not even aware of because we're not able to give the public an opportunity to communicate with us," he said. "For that single reason I would want to defer it until we can get the [issue] in front of them [on] a proper Council agenda that the public is able to communicate with us and let us know their views."

Councillor Sandra Humfries said she too supported a deferral of the issue "only for staff to take a really good look at the parking strategy."

"I love the changes (the developers) have recommended and they have done a lot of good work, I don't want to discount that, but I would like staff to sit down with the developer and go back to the initial work that was done when it came to the Public Planning session," she said. "There was a lot of work with the property management team as well on how parking was arranged and I think it was sort of lost in that last presentation. Unfortunately, we got this information after the fact, so I would appreciate a deferral for staff to work with the developer to really understand conclusively what would happen with this parking arrangement and the people who have displaced parking be accommodated...as fast as possible."

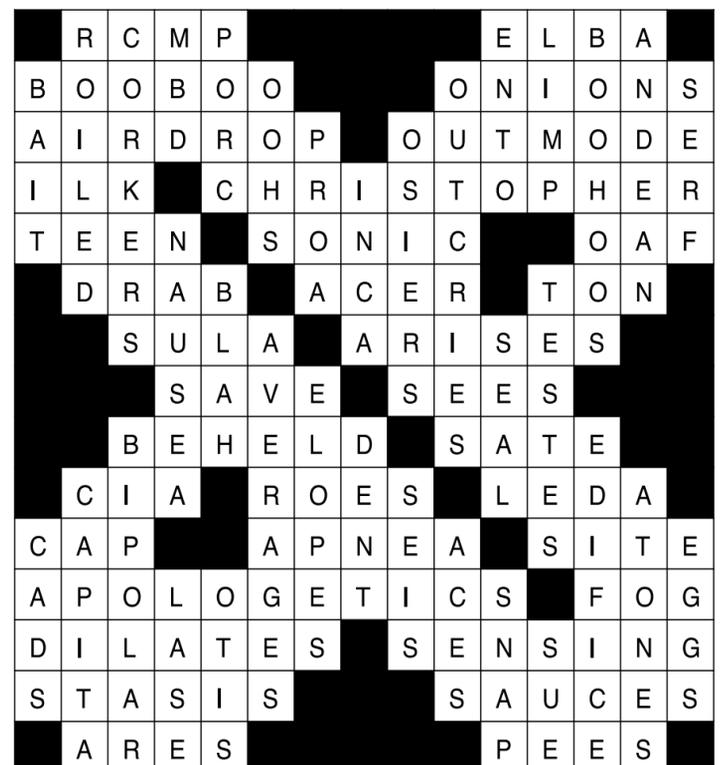
As all procedures under the Province's Planning Act have been suspended due to the Province-wide emergency, said Town Planner David Waters, responding to a question from Councillor Harold Kim, assured the body that deferring the matter one month would have little impact on the developer.

Councillor Michael Thompson agreed, but said a delay needed to be specific on the timeframe.

"We have a legal requirement to make a decision and if you don't support the parking numbers, [Council] has a right to say no and we'll let Starlight take it to LPAT and decide what's going to happen going forward. I don't like it being deferred open-ended like that."

A specific deferral to the next Council cycle ultimately received unanimous approval.

PUZZLE SOLUTION



Town prepared to levy fines for those not complying with emergency orders

From page 1

flatten the curve.

Under Provincial guidelines, the Town will issue fines to those who do not comply with the following emergency orders:

- No gatherings of more than five (5) people (inclusive of gatherings on private property but excluding family members who reside at the same address).
- Trespassing in areas that are closed to the public (parks, tennis courts, skateboard parks, sports fields, baseball diamonds, basketball courts, playgrounds, Sheppard's Bush and the dog park).
- Closure of non-essential businesses
- Price gouging on necessary goods such as hand sanitizers and household cleaners

"Individuals charged with an offence under the EMCPA (Emergency and Civil Protection Act)

will face fines starting at \$880," said the Town in a statement. "Failing to identify yourself upon the request of a Municipal Law Enforcement Officer conducting an investigation under the EMCPA will result in fines of \$1,250. Fines could also carry punishments of up to one-year imprisonment or a fine of up to \$100,000 for an individual and up to \$10,000,000 for a corporation.

"The Town of Aurora reminds residents to continue to stay at home, limit the number of people you come into close contact with, stay at least 6 feet apart from others when walking outside or in a grocery store and refrain from having social gatherings."

Compared to other municipalities, Aurora was late to the game in fining those who are not in compliance with the orders, but the Town moved into action just in time for the Easter long weekend.

"We took an educational approach at first and we wanted to do warnings, educating people as we saw them," said Mayor Tom Mrakas. "The worry

The Town of Aurora reminds residents to continue to stay at home, limit the number of people you come into close contact with, stay at least 6 feet apart from others when walking outside or in a grocery store

is that we need to ensure that people adhere to the rules and the guidelines that have been set by the Town, by the Province, so we can start to flatten the curve on this pandemic. It is not a joke, it is not a game, and we need everyone to realize how serious it is. We felt that with this long weekend we needed to say, 'We're not going to be just warning anyone anymore. Now you're going to be fined.' It is going to be strict enforcement and we needed to get the word out so people understand how serious this is."

While parks are closed, the Mayor stresses that this does not mean you can't use pathways through parks, as well as trails, for through traffic.

"As much as we encourage everyone

to stay home, and I think everyone should try as much as possible to stay home, we don't want to stop people from getting fresh air, going for a small walk, as long as they follow the proper physical distancing protocols of two metres. As long as they do that, they can go for a walk through the paths, through our trails that are still open.

"If they are misused, we will be put in that position where we absolutely will have to shut down everything. No one wants to do that. You hear it from the Prime Minister, the Premier and all the way down that no one wants to institute those kinds of measures, but if some continue not to listen and don't take this issue seriously, then those measures will have to be put in place. While I hope everyone does enjoy going out and getting some fresh air, I would remind everyone to try their best and try to stay indoors as much as possible and limit their exposure outside and only do what is necessary and get some fresh air when you can."



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Regional Council considers economic implications of COVID-19 measures

From page 6

food, retail and entertainment sectors employ approximately 16 per cent of non-broad-based public sector jobs in York Region.”

So, what can the Region do to help? The deferral of the water rake hike was just the first step.

Tax relief programs spearheaded by municipalities – such as the relief measures announced by the Town of Aurora last month – are a short-term solution, but the Region is also looking at

providing the nine municipalities under its umbrella with further financial flexibility.

“Council has currently approved an interim tax levy bylaw that sets the amounts payable by local municipalities to the Region on or before April 30, 2020 and June 30, 2020. For final tax levy, the instalment dates are typically September 30 and December 15. Typically, the Region interest would be payable, at statutory rate, on any portion of tax instalments not remitted to the Region by the due dates. As an immediate

measure, it is recommended that interest on tax levy instalments for 2020 from the local municipalities be waived for up to 90 days on any portion not remitted as a result of a local tax relief program related to COVID-19. However, local municipalities would be expected to remit to the Region any portion of property taxes they have collected on behalf of the Region prior to the due dates.

“The 2020 interim tax levy being requisitioned from local municipalities is \$567.3 million and will provide the

Region with sufficient revenues to fund its operations. If implemented and fully utilized, the waiving of interest charges for a 90-day period for each tax instalment would cost the Region approximately \$1.5 million in interest. If all tax instalments were delayed during the year, the cost would be \$6 million. However, it is expected that the actual cost to the Region should be much lower, as local municipalities are expected to remit any taxes that are collected to the Region.”

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In times like these we can't help but remember loved ones who have passed away.

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DEATH NOTICE

Walsh, Matthew Sarsfield Aloysius Ignatius

Walsh, Matthew Sarsfield Aloysius Ignatius: Passed away peacefully on Friday April 3, 2020 after a lengthy illness with cancer. Matthew Walsh of Aurora was born in Montreal, Quebec on October 30, 1930. Beloved husband of Elizabeth Snooks Walsh. Loving father of Matthew Walsh and his family Michelle Palmer, Katharine Walsh and Abe Walsh. Kerrie Oates (husband Donald) and their family, Bobby and Lisa Oates. Brenda Glover (husband Jim) and their family, Lynn, Corey and Kelly Glover. Joanne Walsh and her partner, Ruth Peden. Valerie Plourde and her family, Daniel and Matthew Plourde. Great grandfather of Damien Glover. Matthew was also deeply loved by Elizabeth's family Linda Millar (2013), Heather McKechnie (husband Jem) and Don Snooks (2015). He will be sadly missed by his grandchildren Sean Millar, Sheil Millar, Arwen McKechnie and Carley McKechnie. Predeceased by his parents Matthew and Margaret (O'Connor) Walsh and by his brother Robert Walsh. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date once social distancing is not required.

Arrangements entrusted to Peaceful Transition York and condolences may be forwarded through peacefultransition.ca

HELP WANTED

Think you can sell?

Come join a dynamic, fast paced, growing entrepreneurial company looking for young, enthusiastic sales representatives. A rewarding, lucrative opportunity for the right candidate.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Tour groups of students through houses and apartments to rent them out for the annual rental campaign.
- Plan, Prepare and Execute Advertising and Marketing Material for the annual rental campaign.
- Complete all necessary paperwork involved in lease signing and payment collection for newly rented units.
- Work with all current tenants in completing necessary paperwork for renewal units

EXPECTATIONS:

- Have a positive attitude
- Willing to work hard and enjoy rewards in a team environment
- Willing to take chances and learn from your peers

DESIRED SKILLS & EXPERIENCE:

- Sales Driven
- Work well in results based environment
- Goal Oriented
- Great Personal Skills
- Some Sales Skills Preferred but would be willing to train the right candidate
- Marketing and/or Communication education would be a great fit

COMPENSATION:

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EMAIL RESUME FOR CONSIDERATION: employment@londonprop.com



Freelance Reporter for Local Community Newspaper

Come join a dynamic, fast paced, growing entrepreneurial company looking for an energetic Freelance Reporter with a passion for community news. The ideal candidate will have a distinct willingness to cover local community events and issues.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

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

QUALIFICATIONS:

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



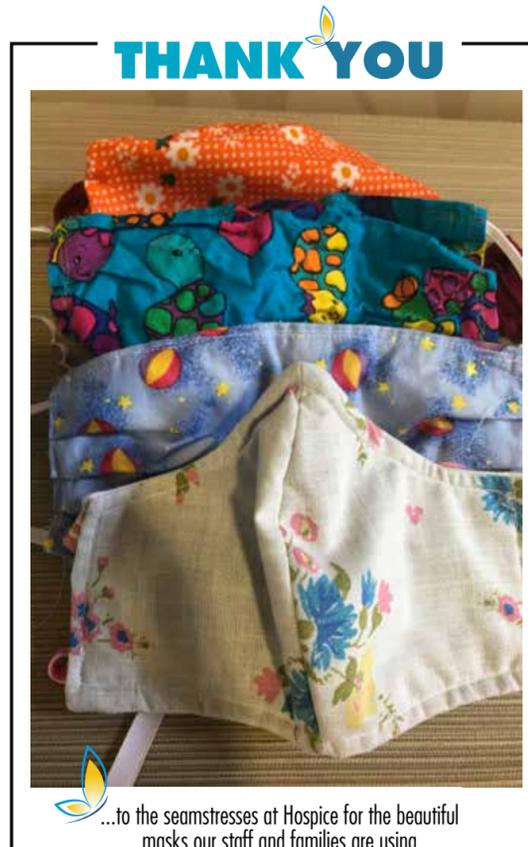
Let's Talk.

Interested and qualified candidates should forward their cover letter and resume to brock@auroran.com



THANK YOU

To all the **Health Care** Workers



April 19-25, 2020

is National Volunteer Appreciation Week

Margaret Bahen Hospice continues to offer that safe place of hope, care, comfort, and support.

COVID – 19 hasn't changed that, but we are having to depend more and more on our community. Thank you to those who continue to support our cause.

Hospice is supported by volunteers and it's fitting for us to acknowledge that **April 19-25, 2020 is National Volunteer Appreciation Week.**

Please join us in thanking all volunteers, for your relentless commitment to improving the quality of lives of the people across our Region.

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