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THE AURORAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 20 No. 32 905-727-3300 TheAuroran.com FREE Week of May 28, 2020 CMCA AUDITED

AT THE APPOINTED HOUR – Each evening since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the evocative sounds of the bagpipes have echoed throughout downtown Aurora. In the last few weeks, it has become an evening tradition as local Grade 9 student Roán Binnendyk offers his talents in a show of thanks to frontline heroes. For more, see Page 21.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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Outbreak at Chartwell Aurora shows signs of easing as resolved cases top 35

Walmart employee tests positive for COVID-19

By Brock Weir

The number of active cases of COVID-19 at Chartwell Aurora (Resthaven) has begun to ease, according to data released this week by the Region of York.

On Tuesday, the Region posted encouraging figures from Chartwell Aurora which is, at press time Aurora's only institutional outbreak of the virus.

By May 26, the long-term care residence was grappling with five active cases and 37 resolved cases of COVID-19, down significantly from 38 active cases on Friday afternoon.

Chartwell Aurora has experienced a total of 53 cases of COVID-19 since their outbreak was declared by the Region in April, with eleven deaths among residents.

Aurora-wide, there were 14 active cases of COVID-19 as of Tuesday with 74 cases marked as resolved. 13 residents, including eleven residents of Chartwell Aurora, have lost their battle with the virus.

The Region reports a total of 101 confirmed Aurora cases since the start of the outbreak. Of these, 53 cases are related to the institutional outbreak, 24 to close contact, 11 to local transmission, 10 to travel and 2 to workplace outbreak. A further single case remains under investigation.

Of Aurora's 101 cumulative cases at press time, 30 are reported amongst people

Continued on page 20

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Based on IMS Statistics, Aurora Offices

Property tax relief eyed for those receiving assistance

By Brock Weir

Residents who owed outstanding property taxes at the end of 2019 and are looking for relief from penalties in light of COVID-19 might have to prove their financial hardship.

Council this week is set to approve a new schedule of property tax due dates and penalties.

Taking a close look at the matter at

Continued on page 8

BACK IN BUSINESS – Kim and Emma offered hand sanitizer to patrons at the Aurora Farmers' Market on Saturday morning. Delayed due to the pandemic, the Market, a celebrated weekend tradition for many, re-opened at Town Park to farmers and food vendors, and an enthusiastic yet physically distanced crowd. For more, see Page 19.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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AURORA CARES COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM

During the current COVID-19 pandemic, we are still here for you.

ARE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW:

- In financial arrears?
- Unable to buy groceries?
- In need of emergency shelter?
- In need of mental health resources?
- Looking for ways to keep your children engaged?
- Looking for ways to volunteer or help in the community?

Learn about local supports available to you during this difficult time and how to get help when you need it.

Visit: aurora.ca/auroracares

If you are having an emergency, please call 911. The below contacts allow you to speak with a live agent to navigate community, social, health-related and government services. They can answer your questions and help you understand what services and resources are available and how to access them.

Access Aurora • 905-727-1375 • info@aurora.ca • aurora.ca/covid19
Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. • Extended hours on Tuesdays until 8:30 p.m.

Neighbourhood Network • info@neighbourhoodnetwork.org • nnetwork.org/covid19
Monday to Friday 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Community and Social Services Help Line • **Call 2-1-1**

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AURORA

Aurora Public Library resumes service with Curbside Pickup

By Brock Weir

Has COVID-19 stood in the way of checking out the latest bestseller, the latest movie release or the hottest video game rental from the Aurora Public Library? If you hold a Library card, everything is now just a click – and a curb – away.

On Monday, the Aurora Public Library (APL) returned to a new kind of normal, launching a curbside pickup of movies, video games and more. The new service will allow members to place holds on items currently on APL's shelves and, after providing the Library with your card number, have books, games, and other physical media popped by Library staff into your trunk to enjoy at home.

The new service is a significant expansion of the limited services APL has been offering the community since emergency orders shuttered their building at Yonge and Church – and, for members of the Library team, it is a welcome return to normalcy.

"This is something we were preparing for throughout the closure, knowing that it might be an eventuality with some stores like hardware stores offering curbside pickup," says Ashely Nunn-Smith, Manager of Content, Access and Innovation for the APL. "When the government announced last Thursday that we could start it, we were really happy to put the wheels in motion. We have brought some staff back to implement the service, our frontline staff started last Tuesday to prepare."

For the APL, seeing a flattening of the curve was the biggest hurdle in getting the curbside program in place.

"We wanted to see that happening before we put any of our staff or our customers at any more risk than we needed to," she explains. "Now that the Government has said we can slowly start to re-open things, we're in a good position and we have processes in place. Obviously, masks, gloves and quarantine for items [based on] how the virus can live on different services and all of those things are in place to make sure that our staff and our customers will be safe."

In order to take full advantage of the curbside service, you first need to have a library card – either a physical card, or an electronic card, an option launched at the beginning of the pandemic. With your library card number in hand, you can log onto APL's website at aurorapl.ca to browse the catalogue.

If something tickles your fancy, you can place a hold on a book, movie, or video game, and, if available, the item will be pulled for you by Library staff.

Once the item is secured, you will receive an email notification with pickup instructions.

Parking spots outside the Library will be numbered and the sign on your appointed parking spot will have instructions on how to text your unique check-in number to the Library and a staff member will come out with your holds and pop them into the trunk of your car.

"There is no physical contact between the staff and customers," says Ms. Nunn-Smith. "Customers will stay in their car to make sure everyone is safe – and you just need to pop the trunk. Now that we're at this starting-to-reopen stage, we can do these things knowing we're not putting anyone in harm's way."

Inside the Library, staff have been glad to be back, maintaining social distance while they get everything back up and running.

"We want to serve our customers and while we are still serving by offering virtual programs and all of our digital services, we wanted to have a fuller service," she says. "This is the first step in that direction as we gear up for an eventual return to normal. It's not back to business as usual, but it is a step in the right direction."

In the meantime, if you are looking for Library programming, Ms. Nunn-Smith encourages people to log onto their website or find them on Facebook to enjoy an array of virtual programming.

"We have done a series of Facebook Live escape rooms, writing contests, weekend writing prompts, virtual story times, read-alouds, book clubs and our staff are really putting a lot of work into translating what people might come to the physical library for into a virtual platform. I would just encourage people to go onto our website or social media and give some of them a try. They can see the smiling staff faces they're used to seeing in person through the computer!"

Aurora Public Library staffers Christine Kalan-Tidman and Mariana Tarcenco are pictured at the APL on Tuesday morning as they served patrons in the Library's new curbside pickup model.

Auroran photo by Ashley Nunn-Smith

Briefly

AURORA MAN KILLED IN INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT

A 51-year-old Aurora man is dead following an industrial accident in Vaughan. Investigators with the York Regional Police Major Collision Investigation Unit, working alongside investigators from the Ministry of Labour, are appealing for witnesses to come forward following the fatal accident. "On Tuesday, May 19, at approximately 4 p.m. York Regional Police responded to a report that a man had been pinned between two transport trucks at a trucking yard located on Kirby Road, near Keele Street," said Constable Laura Nicolle. "When Police arrived on the scene, they located a 51-year-old man from the Town of Aurora who was sadly pronounced deceased. "Any witnesses who have not yet spoken with Police are being asked to please come forward." Anyone with information is asked to contact the York Regional Police Major Collision Investigation Unit at 1-866-576-5423 x7704. Individuals may also call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-TIPS or leave an anonymous tip online at www.1800222TIPS.com.

FAMILY INJURED IN APPARENT DOG ATTACK

Two adults and two children were hospitalized Thursday with serious but non-life-threatening injuries following an apparent dog attack in the neighbourhood of Vines Place, near Bayview Avenue and Vandorf Sideroad. The attack took place around 8.45 p.m. YRP Constable Laura Nicolle says the family dog attacked four people in the home and the mother had to fatally stab the dog to get it to let go of one of the children.

TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC PLANNING MEETING

AURORA TOWN COUNCIL will hold a Statutory Public Meeting to receive input on a proposed Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications

Tuesday, June 9, 2020 at 7 p.m.

APPLICATION: The proposed Official Plan Amendment Application seeks to re-designate the subject lands as "Business Park – Special Policy Area 1" in its entirety; to add "Motor Vehicle Sales Establishment" and "Commercial Self-Storage Facility" as permitted uses; and to add and amend site specific policies. The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment Application facilitates the development of the subject lands in accordance with the proposed Official Plan Amendments; and recognizes site-specific requirements to implement the proposed development.

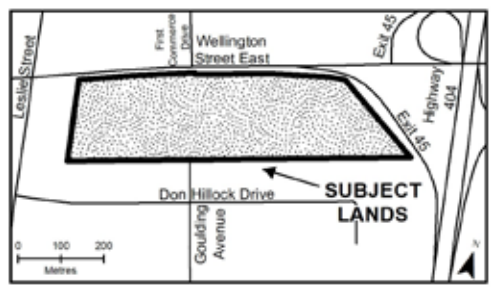
PROPERTY: 1623 Wellington Street East

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Concession 3, Part Lot 20

APPLICANT: 1623 Wellington Street Developments Limited

FILE NUMBERS: OPA-2020-02 and ZBA-2020-02

RELATED APPLICATIONS: SP-2018-05 and C-2020-01



PROCEDURAL INFORMATION:

At this time, the Municipal Offices are closed and meetings are being held electronically in accordance with recent amendments to the Municipal Act. Meetings will be live streamed at: **Youtube.com/user/Townofaurora2012/videos**. Delegations will be allowed in writing, by video conference and by phone. To delegate at a meeting, please visit **aurora.ca/participation** for further information. The Planning Report PDS20-040 will be made available the Tuesday before the Public Planning Meeting date on the Town's website, by visiting the Agendas and Minutes section, located at: **Aurora.ca/agendas**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Additional information and material regarding the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications is available for public inspection at the Town of Aurora office located at 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON, L4G 6J1. Please contact **Matthew Peverini** of the Planning and Development Services Department at 905-727-3123 extension 4350. Comments may also be mailed to the Planning and Development Services Department at the same address above, faxed to 905-726-4736 or emailed to **planning@aurora.ca** prior to the meeting. Please quote the File Name and Numbers.

INFORMATION ABOUT PRESERVING YOUR APPEAL RIGHTS:

If a person or public body would otherwise have an ability to appeal the decision of the Council of the Town of Aurora or the Regional Municipality of York, as the case may be, to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) but the person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Aurora or Regional Municipality of York, as the case may be, before the proposed Official Plan Amendment is adopted and the proposed and Zoning By-law Amendment is passed, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision.

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Aurora before the proposed Official Plan amendment is adopted and the proposed by-law passed, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the LPAT unless in the opinion of the LPAT, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

If you wish to be notified of the decision of the Council of the Town of Aurora, or the Regional Municipality of York, as the case may be, on the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments, you must make a written request to the Town of Aurora to the attention of the Director of Planning and Development Services.

If you have received this notice as an owner of a property and the property contains seven (7) or more residential units, the Town requires that you post this notice in a location that is visible to all the residents

PERSONAL INFORMATION COLLECTION NOTICE:

The Town of Aurora collects personal information in communications or presentations made to Town Council and/or its Committees under the legal authority of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter c.P.13, as amended. Pursuant to Section 27 of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, as amended, (the "Act") public feedback to planning proposals is considered to be a public record and may be disclosed to any individual upon request in accordance with the Act. If you are submitting letters, faxes, emails, presentations or other communications to the Town, you should be aware that your name and the fact that you communicated with the Town will become part of the public record and will appear on the Town's website. The Town will also make your communication and any personal information in it, such as your address and postal code or email address available to the public unless you expressly request the Town to remove it. Questions about this collection should be directed to the Town Clerk, Town of Aurora, 100 John West Way, Box 1000, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1 905-727-3123.

AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDING OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

The Town audio and/or video records Public Planning Meetings. If you make a presentation to Town Council or its Committees, you may be audio or video recorded. Pursuant to Section 27 of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, as amended, (the "Act") public feedback to planning proposals is considered to be a public record and may be disclosed to any individual upon request in accordance with the Act.

DATED at the Town of Aurora, this 28th day of May, 2020.

Town of Aurora 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1
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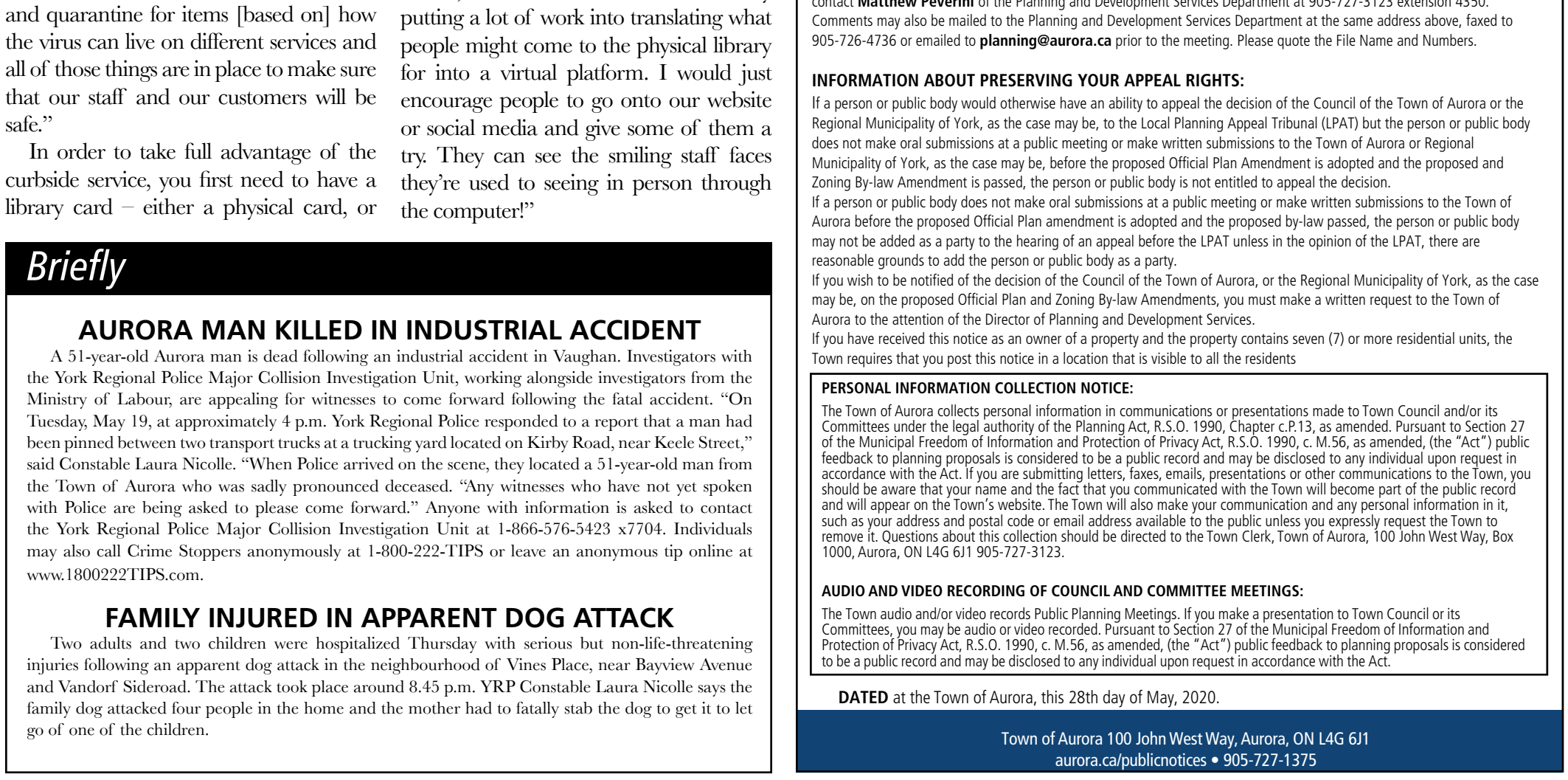


LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fuel our Frontliners provides meals to retirement and nursing homes

(Re: Catering company adapts to new normal by making meals for families, April 16)

We learned that Food in Motion was changing its focus from delivering homemade Italian-Canadian meals to frontline healthcare workers at Southlake Regional Health Centre to long-term care and retirement homes.

Christopher Rolko (pianist) has performed at long-term care and retirement homes with all recent bookings (including performances at all other venues) cancelled due to COVID-19. In addition to making every effort to support our local community, Chris and I wanted to find a positive way to support our awesome friends at these facilities.

We chose to work with Food in Motion in the cause to #FuelourFrontliners, targeting both retirement and nursing homes.

We are working with John Cosentino who, together with his team, does a fantastic job of creating, providing and delivering individual, gourmet meals and dessert to frontline workers.

Several locations have already received culinary delights, prepared and delivered with love, gratitude and thanks. Locations supported to date include Chartwell Alexander Muir, The Willows Estate and King City Lodge. Next in the line-up is Sunrise Aurora.

Sponsorship of the meals is the driving force for us to be able to reach out to the front-liners at long-term care and retirement homes.

A big thank you goes out to the individuals who have come forward and sponsored wholesome meals, which is such a heartfelt gesture. This whole undertaking would not be possible without their generosity.

To find out more about how you can become involved in the initiative, visit www.foodinmotion.ca or e-mail me at mjanet.marsh@gmail.com.

Janet Marsh and Chris Rolko
Members, Aurora Chamber of Commerce

Each day of shut-down is "nail in the coffin" for small businesses

(Re: It's time to re-open economy, May 21)

Mike Baker's thoughtful article was based on accurate data and raised many reasons why we need to reopen quickly.

Curves were flattened and our hospitals were not impacted anywhere near predicted.

Cases of COVID-19 will increase as restrictions are relaxed, but according to Dr. Scott Atlas, Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institute, the data shows that 99% of people will not have serious problems with this virus.

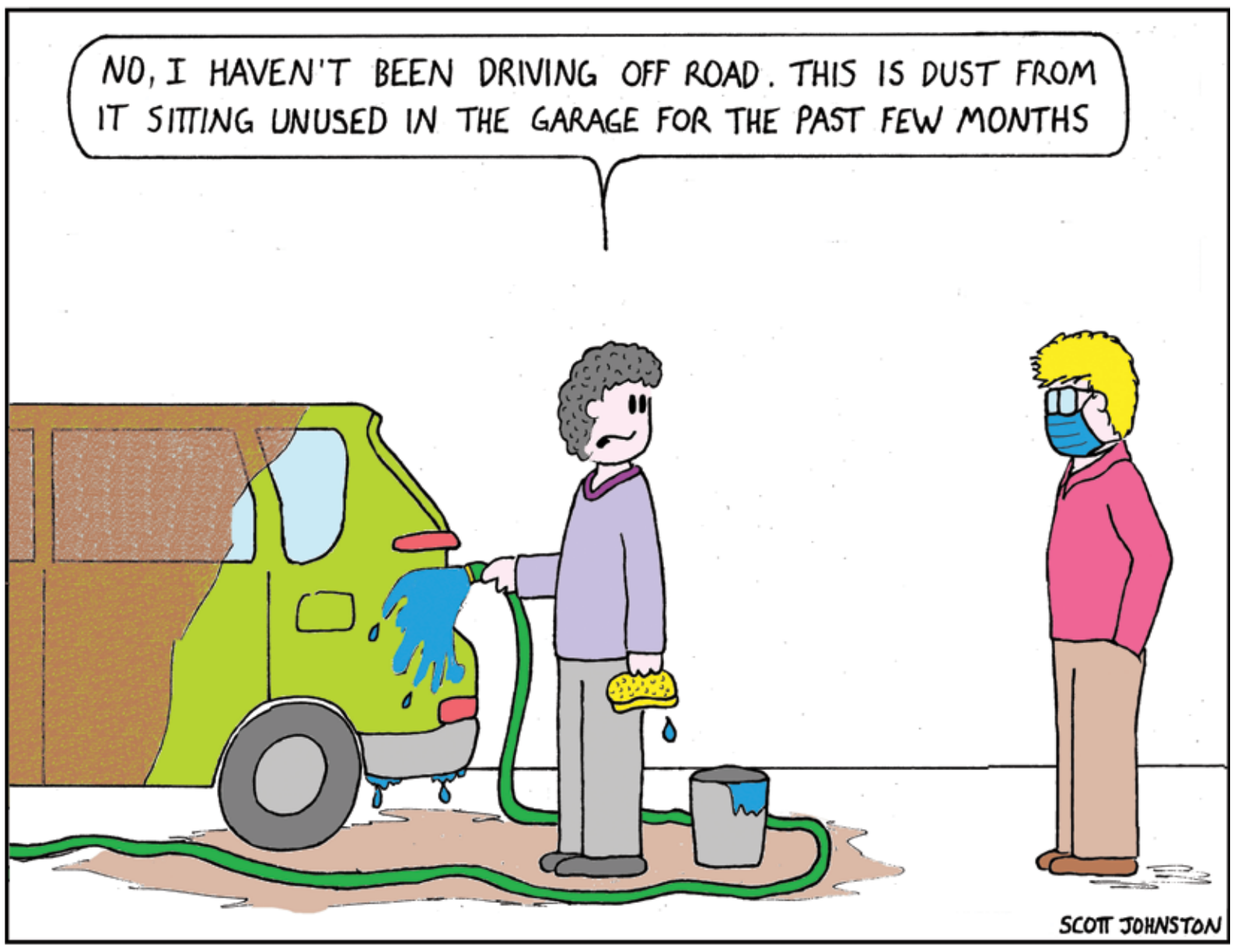
The fatality rate is extremely low for anyone under 60 years of age. To put this into perspective, data from around the world shows the fatality rate for them is less than or equal to the seasonal flu.

The risk of serious consequences to children is near zero worldwide. Approximately 70% of children are asymptomatic. Also, children appear to be less contagious than adults.

With the benefit of hindsight, there was no reason to close schools. They could have remained open while adding extra hygiene precautions as some countries did. Dr. Atlas also said. "There is no evidence to think that people in schools K through 12 have to be six feet apart."

Continued on page 16

Machell's Corners



Are we still in this together?

BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

We quickly found our place in line.

These places were hard to miss. Multicoloured happy faces, most scratched out in vivid sidewalk chalk showed us the way.

We hopscotched from face to face, each of them spaced two metres apart. The changing features of the faces underfoot denoted not only our sure progress towards the front of the line, but also that many artistic hands had been hard at work earlier in the day to make this particular aspect of physical and social distancing as cheery as possible.

It was hard not to catch a glimpse of people a few faces ahead admiring the handiwork as they got closer and closer to the tent – the first checkpoint in the morning.

I'm sure many of the people up ahead didn't know exactly what to expect when they reached that first obstacle – I know I certainly didn't – but we progressed closer and closer, masks secured, sure in the knowledge that the officials up ahead, individuals standing out from the crowd in their bright orange reflective vests and eye-catching masks knew what they were doing.

After all, this was a long time coming.

It was touch and go until almost the eleventh hour as organizers waited for word they had successfully met all their bureaucratic and health and safety requirements, but despite some uncertainty first thing Saturday morning, scores of individuals turned out for the first Aurora Farmers' Market of the season.

I don't know how early volunteers on the ground had to get out of bed that morning to mark their paces and get their hands chalky to ensure anyone stayed at a safe distance, but it was a job well done.

At the front of the line, we were met with a friendly greeting as we were asked to offer up our hands for a few spritzes of hand-sanitizer, a hot but necessary commodity.

After clearing a few more happy faces, another volunteer, clipboard at the ready, gave us the lowdown on what to expect. This was, after all, a new normal, and the previous rules of the game were now all but completely irrelevant.

Going slowly (everything is relative in this day and age) from booth to booth, it was clear from the smiles blazing across flesh-and-bone faces that everyone was thrilled to be back in this particular game. There were only a few huffs and puffs evident from behind clear plastic face shields, but those were a by-product of the blazing Saturday sun, belying that growing pains were inevitable but surmountable.

Most everybody I observed came armed with just a little more patience than they might not otherwise have, prepared to make adjustments to these new circumstances.

Market-goers maintained their physical distancing, farmers and other food vendors came up with innovative ways to connect with their customers, and some who missed the memo to leave their dogs at home before venturing out to the park, sat by the sidelines and waited patiently with their pups for the shoppers they came with rather than throwing tantrums about being slightly inconvenienced by the rules in place to protect us all.

Earlier in the week, there was a return to some degree of normalcy as businesses and the economy began revving up once again as emergency orders began to ease, but this was something else. Yes, it was a return to business, but it was a return to a beloved weekend tradition that so many of us hold dear.

I left the market feeling buoyed that everyone was rowing in the same direction, but that feeling quickly sank when I got home and was greeted by a social media feed of infuriating images from the City of Toronto of individuals flooding parks to enjoy the sun with friends without any regard for social distancing and a further slate of "yahoos" descending on Queen's Park to vent their spleens about God knows what.

While it took the City a full 48 hours to begin any sort of adequate enforcement of emergency orders, it was clear that in the previous two days, despite another steady rise in new cases of COVID-19 across the Province after nearly a week of downward trending, we're nowhere close to being out of the woods. Perhaps they were signs that the early sentiments of "we're all in this together" are sadly waning. At the very least, it was a clear slap in the face to the frontline workers, particularly doctors and nurses, who are doing their utmost to treat patients and prevent any further spread of the disease.

To some extent, the feeling of frustration is understandable. We're all frustrated at the present situation, of not being able to be with friends, family and other loved ones when we want, not being able to go out for a haircut when we want, sit down for a meal at a nice restaurant or make a quick impromptu grocery run without having to make sure we have everything we need to avoid bringing the virus home. But letting our guard down now only pushes our collective goalposts further and further away – and that's the last thing we want.

As we continue to look for ways to resume our routines, whether it is getting back to work or re-starting the beloved community traditions we used to take for granted, we all must remember to do our part.

Thankfully, most everyone who turned out at Aurora's farmers' market Saturday morning seems to be doing just that. If only the people who filled Toronto's Trinity Bellwoods Park over the weekend were as conscientious.

A RETURN TO "NORMALCY"

Mask secured, it was nice to see a return to some degree of normalcy Saturday morning as the Aurora Farmers' Market once again opened to customers.

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Aurora's Community Newspaper

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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.

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Publisher is not liable for slight changes or typographical errors that do not lessen the value of an advertisement. Disputes must be brought to the attention of the publisher prior to the following edition.

The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating…

The Old York District Football League

(Saturday, May 30)

In May of 1896, Aurora joined the York District Football League. The League played Association Football (Soccer) and was comprised of teams from Aurora, Kettleby, King City, Nobleton, Markham, Ellesmere, Woodbridge and Weston. On Saturday, May 30, 1896, Aurora played their first game in Town Park against Kettleby and won 6 – 0! The Aurora team would go on to win the league championship that year.

ARTS TALK

By Suzanne Haines
Executive Director, Aurora Cultural Centre

Post-pandemic Business Change

I'm constantly inspired by others.

I am very privileged to have a life with artists around me.

Every day I see them on social media, sorting out the world. I am listening, reading, interested, and meeting new people. I am hearing their take on the pandemic, wherever they are in the world, and I contemplate their context. And they are just people. They burst with their ideas to connect with the world. They reflect and persist and stand tall to speak their truths as they see it. They grapple with their future and I ache for their pains and struggles. I seek out those gathering, studying, and analyzing the firehose of data and history to choose the next right path as more information is available to us every day, each with its own implications.

I reconnect with past friends and colleagues; people in my producing world. Each also with their own voice and trying to sort out how we as an industry move forward in this new environment.

I agree that we need the arts. Some say more than ever. Maybe we always had them in the place we needed them, and now they are spotlighted because the distractions are gone. I struggle with pushing things online when I myself am not a creator. I leave that to the artists – you decide who gets to consume your art and how. Live performance was always intended to be live and it will be again. And what we do in this time will not diminish that. We will gather again as we have after other crises and find the joy, connection and comfort that we get through shared experience.

And then my circle moves closer, even though physically distant, there are the artists who join us at the Aurora Cultural Centre and those that support them; the donors, staff, volunteers and Board members. Every day I talk with our team of dedicated passionate staff who care deeply for the people in our circle. I have the privilege of talking to our artists, donors and Board. Others do the same and we share stories, in awe of what we get to experience in connection with these people. We also share how we are and what we need to feel safe and heard. And we know that the work we are doing is meaningful.

Yes, meaningful.

People are our business. How we grow, connect, transform, experience, feel and what we do matters to us and those around us. We celebrate every step people make to connect in these times where the ground keeps shifting.

And, lastly closer to home, I literally have them in my home. My son plays piano while I sit in my home office. Then my daughter practices and as I listen to them both, their personalities surge. My son strives to get it "right." Specific in his quest to play well and often and with precision. My daughter meanders, finding the notes she likes and discovering how they can string together to make a noise she likes, she despises, or that she thinks will make us laugh. She finds the calm enjoyment of play. And there's more but they are kids and resilient and they will find the places to giggle and breath as they move through this.

And so, in concentric circles I envelope myself with the warm and meaningful blanket of people who come with the best of intentions, who build and play, who give of themselves every day, naturally with their creativity and joy and fear and courage.

Thank you for being you and bringing forward what you offer to your world.

I hope you share it.

Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy

MP'S REPORT

Tony Van Bynen, MP
Newmarket - Aurora

Our government cares about looking after Canadians during the COVID-19 outbreak.

We are supporting workers and the Canadian businesses that employ them, with programs like the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) – which will help them keep their jobs.

We all know people who have been laid off, or are worried they might be. We also know of businesses – our favourite local restaurant, salon or barbershop – that have had to close due to public health regulations. These entrepreneurs have worked alongside their employees, building their businesses, and providing the jobs, goods, and services that our communities rely on.

Our government has created the CEWS to support those who have been hardest hit. This program helps employers keep their staff on payroll, rehire those previously laid off, ensure that workers can access an income, and position themselves to rebound when the outbreak has passed.

Retroactive to March 15, 2020, the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy can provide businesses a subsidy of 75% to cover an employee's weekly earnings, up to a maximum of $847 per employee, per week. This protects jobs for workers employed by businesses of all sizes, and across all sectors, including charities and not-for-profits.

Small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of our economy, and CEWS offers a much-needed lifeline. I encourage businesses in our community to apply so that you can stay strong throughout this crisis, protect local jobs, and get up and running once these hard times are over. Business owners can learn more about the program and sign up for direct deposits by visiting www.vanbynen.ca, or contact my office at tony.vanbynen@parl.gc.ca.

CEWS is part of Canada's overall COVID-19 Economic Response Plan. As the pandemic unfolds, this has been evolving and expanding to provide immediate relief to those who need it the most – while protecting jobs and our economy.

With the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), we reacted quickly and are continuing to help Canadians who have lost their source of income. With programs like the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) and the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) for small businesses, we are helping businesses keep their employees and pay their bills. And with the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), we are protecting the jobs that Canadians and their families depend on.

As we begin to reopen the economy, we must continue to follow our public health guidelines to remain open, and stay safe.

All levels of government are recommending non-medical masks or face coverings (if your health allows you to do so) where social distancing may not be possible.

Just as frequent hand washing, cough etiquette, and staying home when sick have become part of our routine, so too should wearing masks anytime we venture out where we might encounter groups.

Let's not allow a desire to return to life before the pandemic undo the progress we've made, and instead show even more willingness to do the right thing as we continue our journey forward.

That includes showing support for your local Aurora businesses.

We have seen a spirit of generosity, ingenuity and compassion from our business community. Their willingness to adapt, to support essential workers, and to step up as leaders is what makes our community a great place to live. The best way to show our appreciation is to remain diligent in our fight against COVID-19. Please stay safe, stay strong.

We can do this.

Lockdown Limericks

INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

Let's take a look at the past few COVID-centric months in Aurora through that well-known story telling device, the limerick.

Greetings
COVID-19 came with a blast
And spread unbelievably fast
With fear of this bug
Kisses, handshakes, hugs
Were quickly a thing of the past

We've Got This
The Town faced COVID with heart
When the impact of it did start
While harder than ever
We faced it together
Well... together, but six feet apart

Special Events Cancelled
COVID made events disappear
No Street Fest or Hoedown brought tears
But Canada Day,
And Home Show displays
They will all be better next year

Baking Craze
When COVID arrived all the stores
Saw flour bags fly out their doors
Baking fresh bread and buns
When the pandemic's done
We'll all weigh a little bit more

Sidewalk Shuffle
In order to maintain 6 feet
From those on the sidewalk you meet
One party must flee
Or risk injury
By moving out onto the street

Cooped Up
All this indoor time makes us pout
"How much longer til" we all shout
"We'll be once again
Outside looking in
And not stuck inside looking out"

Out in the Crowds
Going shopping's now such a task
Civility's all that we ask
Leave space in the aisles
And greet folks with smiles
That they'll know are under your mask

What's Next?
Bad weather this year's got us down
And COVID's brought nothing but frowns
Our luck has been nil
How much longer 'til
Murder hornets arrive in town?

Remember
Health care folks and service-type ones
We all need to thank them a ton
While now it's a breeze
The hard part will be
To keep it up when all this's done

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

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Should the Province launch a full public inquiry into long-term care?

Yes No Unsure

www.theauroran.com

Previous poll results

Do you agree with the Province's decision to keep schools closed through the end of June?

RESULTS TO DATE May 26, 2020	YES	NO	UNSURE
	100%	0%	0%

Ontario
Christine Elliott
MPP - Newmarket-Aurora
905-853-9889 1-800-211-1881
Christine.Elliottco@pc.ola.org
www.christineelliottmpp.ca

Getting Things Done

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

Strong, successful local businesses are the lifeblood of any vibrant community.

The Mayor's Aurora Business Continuity (ABC) Taskforce was created to look for creative and innovative ways to support our local businesses during these challenging times, in particular, as we take steps to reopen the Ontario economy. Over the past month, the ABC Taskforce has been working to develop strategies to support and help local businesses navigate the fast-changing regulatory environment that is key to successfully re-opening. As a first step, the Taskforce has developed a resource for businesses that expands on the Provincial guidelines for reopening to ensure that clear and concise guidelines are available to all our businesses as they prepare to re- open. We expect to roll-out the guidelines shortly. Secondly, the need for a Shop Local campaign promoting our local, community-based businesses – our stores, our restaurants, our services – will be essential to successfully jumpstarting our local economy. The ABC Taskforce is currently developing a targeted ShopLocal marketing campaign that is aimed at increasing awareness and driving people to our local businesses. But there is more work to be done.

In the coming weeks, our Taskforce will continue to roll-out supports for our businesses. We will continue to work together to develop the supports necessary for Aurora's business community to move from a state of just re-opening to one of a thriving, sustainable economy again. I also want to express my appreciation for the continuing support of Magna, Treasure Hill and Enbridge for sitting on the taskforce—and for their generous financial donations to help fund important stimulus activities. That's all for this week. As always if you would like to get into contact with me please feel free to do so anytime by phone 905-727-3123 ext. 4746 or by email tmrakas@aurora.ca and if you would like to sign up for more newsletters and Council updates, please let me know and I will add you to the growing list of Aurorans that are staying informed. I am here for you.

Contributed photo

York Region students come together for one-day food drives

By Kinjal Dagli Shah

While school closures remain in effect, the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) has come up with a way to involve families in helping their communities.

During the month of May, more than 65 YCDSB schools across York Region have been holding one-day food drives to support their local food banks.

On the school's designated day, special collection bins are placed outside the front entrance of the school by the food bank.

"Our schools have reached out to families to encourage them to take a wellness walk to their school, while physically distancing, to donate any food and/or personal hygiene items for those who need them in their communities. These collection bins are placed at the front of the school under their security cameras for added protection. The items are then collected by the food bank on the same day and placed under quarantine prior to being handled by food bank volunteers and for distribution," said Veronica Pang, Communications Officer with the YCDSB.

Our Lady of Grace Catholic Elementary School in Aurora held their food drive on May 6 but will continue to accept donations until the end of May.

Light of Christ Catholic Elementary School will be holding its food drive this week, while the one for Holy Spirit Catholic Elementary School will take place on May 27 and St. Jerome Catholic Elementary School's on May 28.

"We have received overwhelming support from our communities with other schools who have already held their food drives so far. For example, on the first day of the food drive in Vaughan, 110 barrels of food and personal hygiene items were collected from our schools," said Pang, adding, "Each barrel holds approximately 125 pounds which means a total of 14,000 pounds of food and personal care items were collected in one day!

"We are so proud of our school communities for truly demonstrating the YCDSB spirit of faith, kindness and compassion."

Relief fund helps women fleeing domestic violence "keep their gains"

By Brock Weir

The COVID-19 crisis has had a disproportionate negative impact on women across the country, including here at home in York Region.

Helping to address this problem is the Women's Centre of York Region, which has mobilized to not only ensure vital counselling programs remain in place online, but to also create a relief fund to help women working through challenging domestic situations continue their forward momentum.

According to Kelly Broome, Acting Executive Director of the Women's Centre of York Region, the Region has seen an increase in domestic violence cases of 22 per cent since the start of the global pandemic and the community needs to help now more than ever to "#helpkeephersafe".

The WCYR closed their offices at Yonge and Mulock on March 18. An organization which deals primarily with one-on-one and transitional counselling in areas of domestic violence, they had a very narrow time window through which to get virtual programs up and running.

Clients are often in situations where they could potentially be trapped with their abusers, notes Ms. Broome, and ensuring the women – and counsellors – had everything they needed to facilitate and participate in these virtual programs, including internet access, was a challenge.

"That was the immediate reason why we had to [establish the Relief Fund] because we didn't have the funds to provide laptops and things like that to our clients and it was very important that their care continued," says Ms. Broome. "At the time, none of the agencies in York Region were providing that kind of immediate support, so we launched the COVID-19 Relief Response Fund to mobilize and continue that care for clients."

The goal of the fund was to allow individuals within the community to sponsor a woman seeking out services from WCYR. Such services include one-on-one support, centred on telephone and web-based counselling; remote group programs on topics ranging from Making Changes, to Enterprising Careers, and Financial Empowerment; and connecting clients with community partners to ensure clients and their families are receiving the care they need.

"We had to adjust our entire delivery of programs literally in 48 hours to make sure that all of the gains these women, our clients, have achieved weren't lost [while allowing us] to take on new clients at the same time," says Ms. Broome. "The goal was trying to get monthly support towards a specific woman in your community so she can keep her gains, keep continuing with her program and, at the same time, support new women coming in.

"What we are hearing [in COVID-19] is that some who were in the process of dealing with some conflicts at home are now in the process of fleeing their home because in isolation… now you're trapped and you don't have the ability to seek counselling. There are all these stresses now on a family that was already stressed. When I say 'gains', often many of our clients are at a point in their lives when things are getting better and then this set them right back to square one and they had to start again."

On the positive side of things, WCYR have learned new things about technology, thus enabling the organization to do more one-on-one and group counselling virtually regardless of what the future holds for social and physical distancing and other emergency measures.

"Right now, we're in the process of looking at what Phase 2 looks like, which is re-opening," says Ms. Broome, adding they have the go-ahead to resume in-person one-on-one counselling as long as it is done safely, but their present location within an office building presents some challenges in bringing that to fruition. "Right now, we're focused on what that looks like, how we can make that happen, and looking to partners who have that established. The challenge most agencies have is getting monthly donors and that has been a real drive for us trying to get that monthly donor who will sponsor someone for a full year and, in that way, they will be able to plan their year of counselling.

"A lot of people who had moved from a situation where they were either under-employed, in poverty, low-income, adjusting their career or experiencing violence, they have been sent back to Square One. They have lost all those gains. That is the biggest piece that I think any agency, including the Women's Centre, is seeing."

To help support the Women's Centre of York Region's COVID-19 Relief Fund, visit wcyr.ca/response-covid-19.

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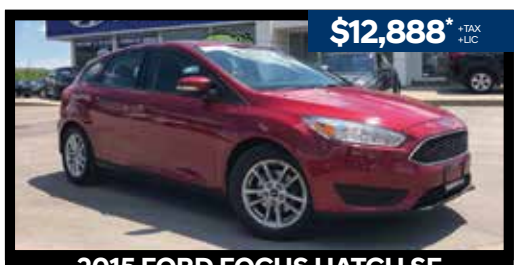
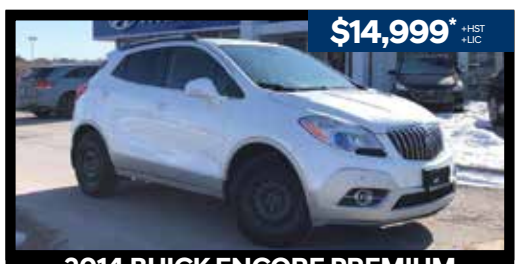


$12,888* +TAX +LIC
2015 FORD FOCUS HATCH SE
STK# 5141 | 58,411 KM | CLEAN CAR FAX
THIS ONE IS AUTO AIR ALLOYS AND
COMES WITH SNOW TIRES.

$13,999* +HST +LIC
2016 ELANTRA SPORT
STK# L5173 | 55,944KM |
A GREAT DEAL, ROOF, AUTO, AIR ALLOYS,
READY FOR FUN, CLEAN CAR FAX



$14,999* +HST +LIC
2014 BUICK ENCORE PREMIUM
STK# 220291 | 103,121KM |
AWD, LEATHER, ROOF, NAV,
REAR CAMERA, GREAT VALUE

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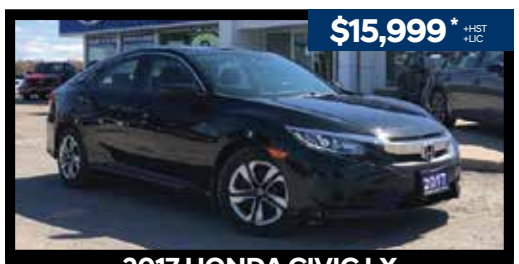
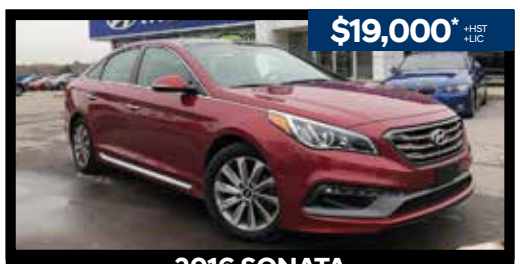
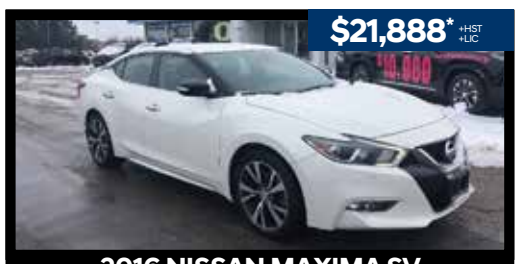


$15,999* +HST +LIC
2017 HONDA CIVIC LX
STK# L5198 | 66,648KM |
AUTO, A/C, ALLOYS, CARFAX REPORT



$19,000* +HST +LIC
2016 SONATA
STK# 5131 | 61,222KM |
CLEAN CAR FAX, TECH PACK,
HAS IT ALL



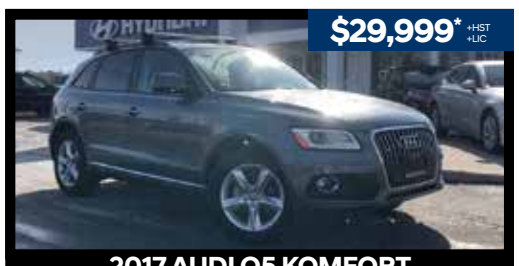
$21,888* +HST +LIC
2016 NISSAN MAXIMA SV
STK# 516511 | 47,334KM | HIS CAR JUST TRADED IN AND HAS PLENTY OF GOODIES , LEATHER , NAVIGATION . REAR CAMERA, BLIND SPOT SPORTY V6 POWER PLANT PLENTY OF FACTORY WARRENTY.

$26,888* +HST +LIC
2019 HYUNDAI TUCSON PREFERRED
STK# 5192 | 5,716KM |
AWD, POWER GROUP, ALLOYS EX-DAILY RENTAL,
CPO CERTIFIED

$27,088* +HST +LIC
2016 HYUNDAI GENESIS
STK# 5148 | 76,240KM |
AWD, NAVIGATION, 3.8 LTR, ALLOYS,
LEATHER, MOONROOF

$27,988* +HST +LIC
2019 HYUNDAI SANTA FE PREFERRED
STK# L5197 | 27,949KM |
AWD, 2.4.LTR, ALLOYS,
EX RENTAL CPO CERITIED

$10,888* +HST +LIC
2014 MINI COUNTRYMAN COOPER
STK# 221771 | 122,934KM |
ROOF, LEATHER, 1 OWNER, ALLOYS



$29,999* +HST +LIC
2017 AUDI Q5 KOMFORT
STK# 5189 | 41,011KM |
AWD, LEATHER, ROOF CROSS BARS,
CLEAN CAR FAX AND ONE OWNER

*PLUS TAXES AND LICENSE

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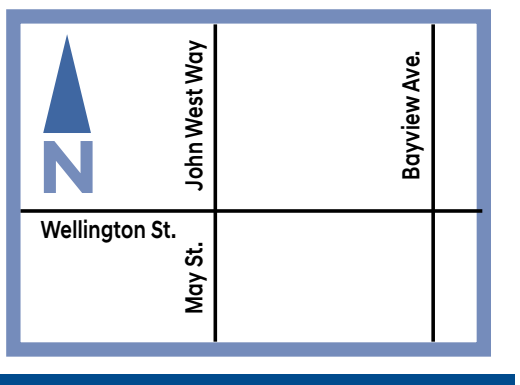

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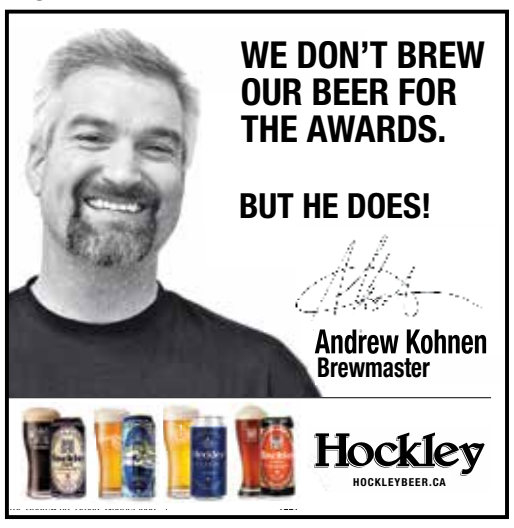

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Property tax relief eyed for those receiving assistance

From page 1

last week's General Committee meeting, local lawmakers gave a tentative green light for the final tax bills of September 15 and December 20, 2020, while continuing to charge the monthly rate of 1.25 per cent for penalties on taxes for the period of July 1 to December 31, 2020.

Going into last week's meeting, however, Council faced a staff recommendation to "approve a modest monthly rate of 0.25 per cent for penalties on taxes," an idea which was nixed at the table.

"Aurora's normal practice for charging penalties on late payments of property tax follows that which is set out in the Municipal Act [which] allows municipalities to charge a penalty of up to 1.25 per cent per month on unpaid tax accounts," said Town Treasurer Rachael Wainwright-van Kessel in her report to Council. "This reflects the same rate that is charged to the Town from the school boards and the Region for late payment.

"COVID-19 has created an economic situation where more property owners may not have the ability to pay their taxes in the near term. By keeping the rate at the existing level, the Town would likely see a surplus on this budget item which would be unfair as it would create a significant burden for property owners as they work to catch up on their property taxes during the economic recovery. So, while this rate is recommended for normal practice, in normal economic conditions, a lower rate or waiver of penalties on taxes is recommended for the rest of 2020."

Following this route, she added, would result in a negative budget variance of $1.054 million.

"The main risk [of lowering the rate] being those that can afford to pay their taxes on the installment date may wait until the end of the year to pay," she noted.

This was a caution that resonated with Committee as they voted to hold the 1.25 per cent interest in place, while giving the Treasurer and the Department of Finance discretion to make allowances on a case by case basis.

"I certainly support the rationale behind your recommendations, it is applied universally across the Town, [but] I am just wondering about those who were in arrears prior to the start of the year," said Councillor Michael Thompson. "I question whether or not they deserve these kinds of relief measures given they were already owing [money to the Town] and may have been owing for quite some time.

"I fully support relief measures for those who have been deeply impacted by COVID-19, but we do have some in Town who are in arrears for whatever reason, long before this situation arose. I am not sure we should be providing them with relief. However, if Council agrees, I am fine to give some discretion to the director so that if there is a legitimate reason why they are in arrears and it is somehow tied to the current situation, she can use her discretion."

Councillor Thompson's views received support from Councillors Harold Kim and Rachel Gilliland.

Speaking in favour of keeping the status quo and giving the Treasurer some leeway on a case-by-case basis, Councillor Kim said he was "of the strong belief we do provide relief measures" for those struggling as a result of COVID-19, but, for anything further, residents should have to "make their case."

"I think by giving carte blanche, no penalties, or little to none…why wouldn't people want to pay at a later date?" he questioned. "If people need some relief, they just approach the Town and we will be generous and compassionate on those grounds."

Added Councillor Gilliland: "I don't think this is a bad idea and I think that the delegated authority in this case would be something we should consider allowing staff to do."

She likened the idea of residents' stating their case to individuals applying for the Canada Emergency Benefit (CERB).

This comparison helped ease the minds of some Council members who questioned whether it would be onerous for staff to not only develop a criteria for who might need relief but process the requests.

The Treasurer agreed there would need to be a framework for she and her team to evaluate each case, and suggested that "need" be examined on whether the individual is receiving a "supplement for hardship from one of the upper tiers of government" such as the CERB from the Feds as a benchmark.

"At the end of the day, these are taxpayer dollars and we're helping out those who need the help, but if we have accounts that have been in arrears for a considerable amount of [time], I don't necessarily feel the same need to help them because they haven't necessarily been paying their fair share to the Town," concluded Councillor Thompson.

A final decision is expected to be ratified at Council this week.

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Multiple charges laid in string of tow truck industry crimes

Investigators with the York Regional Police Organized Crime and Intelligence Services have laid a number of crime-related charges in relation to violence, drug trafficking and arson related to the tow truck industry.

Police say "Project Platinum" revealed "several organized crime groups were working within the towing industry who have used violence and property damage as a means to gain control and territory within the industry."

On Wednesday, May 20, 2020, York Regional Police (YRP), with the assistance of the OPP and Toronto Police Service, executed 21 search warrants at residences and businesses in Aurora, Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Markham, Hamilton, Oakville, Toronto, and East Gwillimbury.

Three suspects were arrested and have been charged.

"The GTA has been the scene of violence between rival tow truck companies who have been fighting over financial profits from the towing of vehicles and the most significant source of profit, the frauds following the initial tow," said YRP Constable Andy Pattenden. "The competition for control of the towing market has resulted in murders, attempted murders, assaults, arsons, threats and property damage."

Aurora has experienced three tow truck arsons in recent months.

The investigation has revealed that rival tow truck companies "have been involved in defrauding insurance companies with vehicles involved in collisions and staged collisions," said Pattenden.

"The tow companies partnered with auto repair shops, as well as car and truck

Continued on page 17

Aurora Cultural Centre

Call for Board of Directors

Join the Aurora Cultural Centre volunteer Board of Directors and share your passion for the arts, culture and your community. Now in our 10th year, the Aurora Cultural Centre offers programming in live performing arts, visual arts gallery exhibitions and year round educational programs for ages 4 and up. Engagement in the arts is vibrant and growing in our community; join us, and bring your experience and knowledge to the Board.

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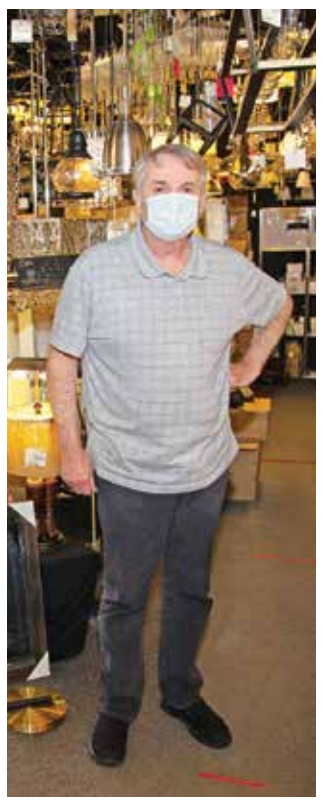
- Transferable skills for Board governance particularly in Legal, Contracts, Governance, Real Estate, or Human Resources.
- Personal attributes of benefit to the Cultural Centre e.g. active contributor, team player, personal network, problem solver, creative thinker, etc.
- Time and energy to contribute as a member and volunteer on committees, fundraising, special events and other activities.

For further information email info@auroraculturalcentre.ca

Please send a brief outline of your interest with a resume or CV by email to: info@auroraculturalcentre.ca by June 1 with a subject line of BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Please note that all candidates must be residents of York Region.
www.auroraculturalcentre.ca

Welcome back, customers!



With Phase 1 of the re-opening of Ontario's economy in full swing, Aurora retailers, services and other businesses began welcoming customers once again last week with new physical distancing and safety measures in place. (Top Row, Left to Right) Sohail of Allaura Medical Centre & Pharmacy. Denis of Aurora Tire & Wheel. Cathy and Elizabeth of The Chicken Place. Emma and Deborah of Oakridge Fashions. (Second Row, Left to Right) Russ, Alex, Sven and Pat of Aurora Home Hardware. Gord of The Light Spot. Ron of Topfire Fireplace & BBQ Inc. Jennifer of Cummings and Associates. Welcome back and thank you for your support!

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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Are you Aurora's next Teen Idol? Step up for virtual auditions

By Brock Weir

Do you have a passion for music?

Have you been spending your time out of the traditional classroom brushing up on your singing skills, finding hidden talents during virtual karaoke parties, or flexing your creative muscles as a songwriter?

If you're between the ages of 12 and 17, now is the time to showcase your talent through the 2020 Aurora Teen Idol competition.

The Town of Aurora is now accepting applications for the 2020 Teen Idol competition.

"If you are an individual vocalist, then this competition is for you!" says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora.

Free to enter, application forms are now available online through aurora.ca/canadaday.

2019 Aurora Teen Idol Nikita Riou, pictured, encourages aspiring singers to audition for the 2020 competition.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

Applications must be received by next Friday, June 5, and auditions will take place virtually on Wednesday, June 10, from 6 – 8 p.m.

Traditionally, Aurora's Teen Idol is crowned on Canada Day, after an afternoon of the Top 10 finalists performing for a panel of professional judges. As regular Canada Day celebrations in Aurora have been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the winner will receive a monetary prize and be invited to perform at a variety of community events once such events are allowed to resume.

"Even if you're thinking about it, just do it," encourages 2019 Teen Idol Nikita Riou. "It is a great experience, it is very fun, you get to perform for people, and that is very exciting. And you have nothing to lose! It's something to do, it is fun and, if you win, something great comes out of it. If not, you still get that great experience."

Looking back during her reign as Teen Idol, Nikita says she had many positive experiences, including performing at several of Town events, including Concerts in the Park and Ribfest.

Nikita secured the sash by performing from the Adele songbook, a performer the teen counts among her idols.

"Getting up there was a bit nerve-wracking for me, but it was very enjoyable and there were lots of talented girls there, so it was a fun experience," she says. "The final was amazing. Nothing makes me happier than performing and just to be there in front of the crowd and the judges singing my heart out was lovely. When I heard my name called [as the winner] I was overwhelmed! It was crazy and I am really thankful for that."

As a singer, Nikita says she's influenced by pop, alternative and classical music.

"I make music on the side and the style seems to come out as pop," she explains. "That is my preferred genre I hope to be performing for people in the future. Performing is definitely something I am looking into doing. I started a YouTube channel and I am trying to post more content there.

"I have sung for as long as I can remember and this is a career I want to pursue for sure. This is not going to be the end of it for me. Singing is all I want to do and performing and making people happy is all I want."

If you feel the same way, consider putting yourself forward as Aurora's 2020 Teen Idol!

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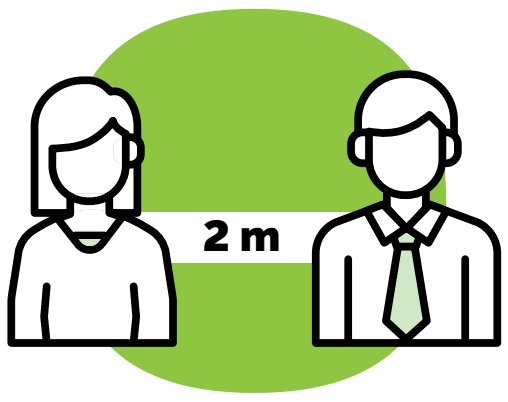

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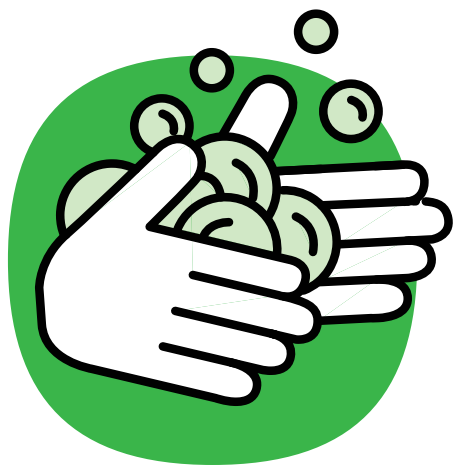

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Seniors' Centre Without Walls sees significant growth in keeping members in touch

Karie Papillion of the Aurora Seniors' Centre is one of a team of staff keeping local seniors connected during this challenging time.

Contributed photo

By Brock Weir

A new normal will likely contain more hybrid services for older Aurorans, according to the Aurora Seniors' Centre.

As businesses and services slowly ramp up once again, the Aurora Seniors' Centre is taking a look at just what this new normal will look like for them once they get the go-ahead to re-open.

"I think our new normal is going to involve more hybrid service offerings from the Seniors' Centre," says Karie Papillon, Adult Program Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. "We're going to have to maintain a high service level for people who are still at home. There are a lot of people who are really afraid, who are already in frail health, and we want to continue – once this new normal comes around and we're open again – a higher level of Seniors' Centre Without Walls for those people, whether it is for exercise, socialization, or keeping brains stimulated and active.

"We're not going back to the service level we had before where it was just two or three calls per week. We're going to have to maintain a higher service level and it is only fair to program them as well."

Since the Aurora Seniors' Centre and all Town facilities closed in March in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Seniors' Centre Without Walls program has become an increasingly vital life line for local seniors.

Prior to the outbreak, the Seniors' Centre Without Walls offered two to three calls per week. These calls often reached just a handful of seniors, with a "big call" consisting of 15 members.

This past week, however, service was such they were aiming for a minimum of ten calls over seven days, offering everything from fun and games to fitness and relaxation classes over the phone.

"Now, I think our 'small' calls average between 20 and 25 people and we had our first call that had over 50 people last week," says Ms. Papillon. "That one was one of our exercise classes and we're offering six exercise classes a week over the phone, including Chair Fitness. We want people to know right up front if you can't stand for the whole class, that's fine. It's a little bit of cardio with some light strength training. If you've got a band or some light weights, that's great. You can take the tie from your robe and use that as well. Even if you just do the motion without any resistance you are still creating movement for that muscle.

"Other days of the week, we offer Chair Stretch & Relax and that is to increase mobility, keep your joints loose and open, and we end with a bit of stress reduction and deep breathing. A lot of people are feeling anxious right now and if we can offer them the chance to relax at the end of the call, we're hoping we can help lower some stress levels."

Fun and Games calls now typically attract between 20 and 35 participants and often alternate between group questions intended to spur discussion and friendly quizzes and games.

Outside of the Seniors' Centre Without Walls program, Centre members are stepping up in other ways.

As The Auroran reported last week, woodcarvers who have previously used the Centre's work room as a place to flex some creative muscles, are now hard at work from home creating Comfort Birds for bereaved members of the community.

Online, Dave LeGallais, President of the Aurora Seniors Association, has helped launch Tales from Isolation online at auroraseniors.ca so seniors can share stories of what they are doing during this downtime, whether it is sewing masks, knitting, or, in the case of Mr. LeGallais, attempting home dog grooming with varying degrees of success!

"I have always known they were a creative bunch, and that they are smart and driven – and I think this situation has proved that," says Ms. Papillon of senior members. "We had a group of three ladies who sewed 70 masks for Resthaven (Chartwell Aurora) residents, we have some who are still making masks and delivering them to other members, but some of my favourite stories are the phone trees that are happening.

"We have members who call each other every morning to make sure everybody is okay, out of bed and checking on them. We have others who are calling in the evening just so they have a hello. (Seniors' Centre member) Alma Durkin also suggested we issue a challenge, which we sent out through email to our members, and her thought was if all our members – there are 1,600 members –all called five people once a week, nobody would be lonely."

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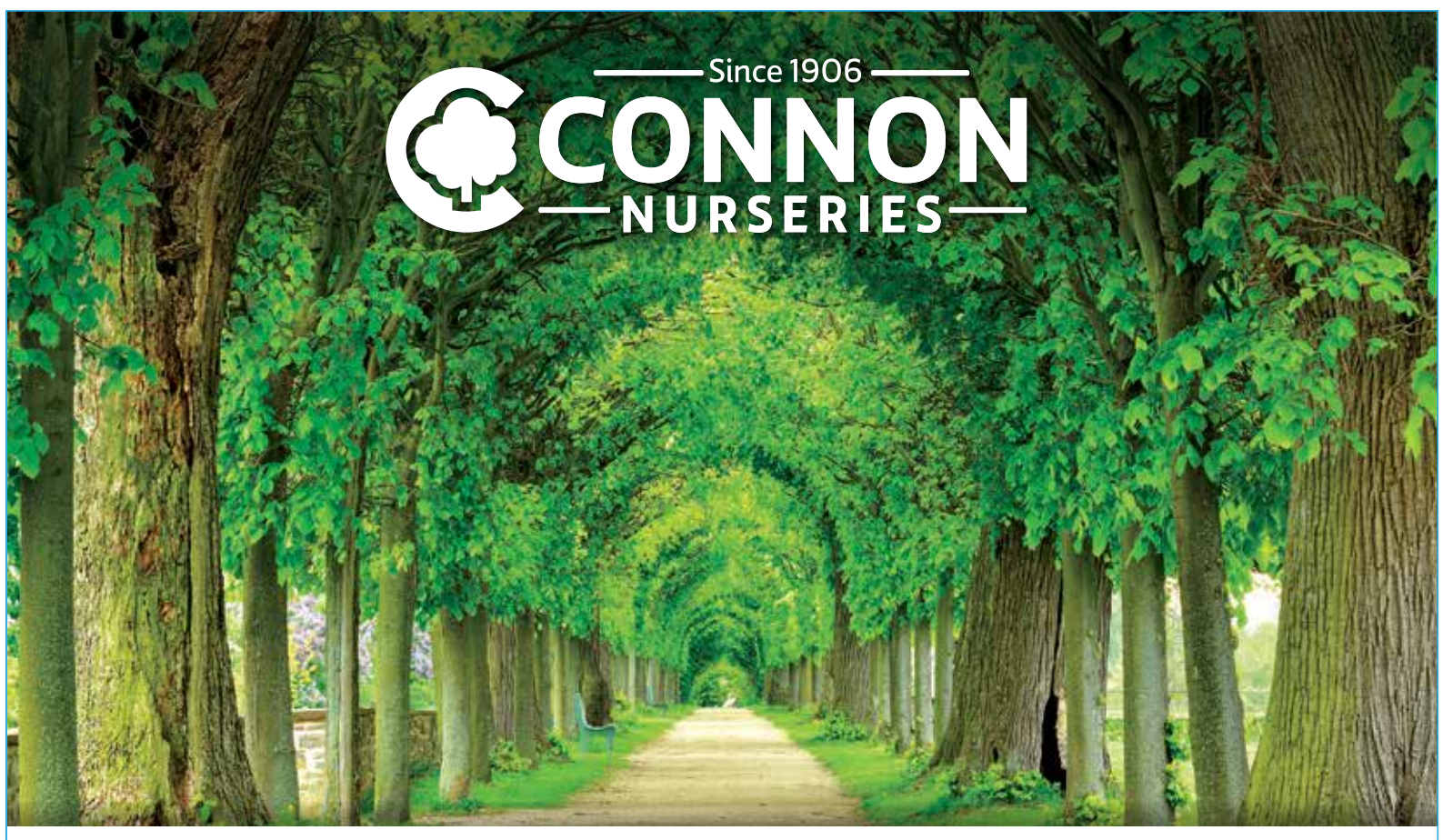

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Vol. 20 No. 32 905-727-3300 TheAuroran.com FREE Week of May 28, 2020 CMCA AUDITED

Robert Powers excited to be behind Tigers' bench

By Robert Belardi

When an athlete retires, you wouldn't be at fault of envisioning an athlete pushing 40 making an emotional farewell. After all, Peyton Manning retired in tears in 2016, following an illustrious 18-year career in pro football.

For athletes, it's unimaginable to leave the sport they love. For others, the prospect of an early retirement is a harsh reality. But, there's always a reason to retire, most of the time due to injury.

In a rare case, 25-year-old and former ECHL defenceman for the Newfoundland Growlers, Robert Powers just knew it was his time.

"There were certain, little details that just led me to believe that, it's my time," says Powers, the incoming assistant coach for the Aurora Tigers. "It's a little easier knowing that I'm coaching and that I'm in the game still."

Powers felt he had reached the apex of his hockey career. The Ajax native, has seemingly wanted to coach for some time.

Powers is no stranger to the Ontario Junior Hockey League, his four-year career awash in multiple championships.

He won the Frank L. Buckland Cup in 2011-2012 with the Stouffville Spirit and won the Buckland Cup again and the Dudley Hewitt Cup with the Toronto Lakeshore Patriots in the 2013-2014 season.

"I think there is definitely an advantage of having played in the league, especially, offering advice to players. I've been in their shoes, I've been in the league. I've been in the same division even.

"I want to give these players knowledge that I have now that I wish I had in junior."

Powers acknowledges this is a transition. This is going to be something new and he is willing to learn every aspect of what it means to be a coach. The league is different now than when he used to play.

When he called head coach Jim Wells Jr. and candidly spoke of his coaching aspirations, Wells was left ecstatic. He wanted a young coach and he got one. The young coach is incredibly thankful for the opportunity.

But why the Tigers? Of all teams to enter the league as a coach, Powers says the Tigers is one of the premier organizations in the league.

"They've always been one of the premier organizations in the league," he says. "They still are. Everyone has an off year. You're not going to judge a whole organization by the number of wins from last year's season. I know, from when I was in the league, it was a really tough place to play."

The Aurora Tigers finished 22nd in goals against last year. Powers will be handling the defensive side of the puck and will be looking to change that.

He says, he wants to nurture mobile, puck-moving defencemen. He says you have got to be able to make plays because the more you do, the more scouts and coaches will eye you.

Having been down the route from the OJHL to the NCAA, Powers went off to Robert Morris University to play hockey. Many players have the same aspirations as he does and he knows what coaches look for in players. He can teach his team what it takes to reach that level of scholarship and playing at a highly-competitive level with one simple notion to abide by.

"Take what you do well and do it better than everybody else on the ice, because that's what's going to get you somewhere," he said.

Off of the ice, Powers is a man who prides himself on helping others and giving back. At Robert Morris University, he began food drive programs and helped raise money to purchase extra school supplies. He helped minor hockey teams in the area raise money and offer free tickets to university games.

He is a huge sports fan, especially now that he is older. He loves to play golf and be active in his local community. Sports is his passion – as well as currently, raising two, five-month old puppies with his girlfriend Amanda.

He believes in setting an example. It's what he wants to show the players. Being looked up to and setting a prestigious image off the ice is just as important as on the ice. He's going to bring everything he has to the Aurora Tigers.

Canadian Premier League clubs launch mask campaigns

By Robert Belardi

Three Canadian Premier League clubs have unveiled branded face masks to uniquely support those in need in their communities.

The Halifax Wanderers, on May 8, were the first club to announce the production of masks which will be sold in support of United Way on the east coast.

According to the club, all funds will be going to the United Way's Atlantic Compassion Fund.

This charitable institution supports people in need of essential services, such as food and mental health support.

The second club to come forward and announce a deal has been struck is the local Canadian Premier League club York9 FC.

York9 began their campaign on May 11, noting sales will benefit Richmond Hill's Mackenzie Health Foundation's COVID-19 Response Fund. All proceeds from the sale of these masks will be donated.

York9's Managing Consultant, Angus McNab, said he is delighted to be offering these masks to fans.

"This is a great extension of our Health Care Heroes initiative and I'm delighted to be offering these masks to our fans. It is absolutely vital that we continue to follow the advice of government and medical experts, and these face coverings are an opportunity for us to both assist in protective measures and raise money directly to help support the fight against the virus in our community."

The third team to unveil masks of their own is Pacific FC in Victoria, BC.

Pacific FC has partnered with the BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association. Partnering with restaurants and working with the city of Langford, the sales from the branded masks will help 14 restaurants and other local food sources in the area.

All sales of branded masks for all three clubs will be shipped in early June. All masks will be sold at $19.99 each.

Amidst the charitable endeavours from all three soccer clubs pledging their assistance to organizations within their communities respectively, the Canadian Premier League season has yet to commence.

Soccer fans globally had the pleasure of watching the German Bundesliga this past weekend aired on Sportsnet, which all took place at an empty stadium.

Some notable games were the Revierderby between Borussia Dortmund and Shalke 04. Dortmund earned themselves a comfortable victory in Signal Iduna Park, defeating their bitter rivals 4-0.

Bayern Munich and Canadian international Alphonso Davies also returned to action against Union Berlin. Goals from Robert Lewandowski and Benjamin Pavard earned Munich a 2-0 victory.

Seeing the Bundesliga opened eyes across the world. The English Premier League wants to return to action soon and the Italian Serie A has reportedly agreed on a return date on June 13.

The Canadian Premier League is looking on how to get back on the pitch.

The latest proposition is reportedly, a single-site solution.

Canadian Premier League Commissioner David Clanachan told reporters, "We at the League office, are very interested in this idea of playing an event where we bring all the teams together and how that would work.

"We think that would be very entertaining for our fans across the country. We'll see how it works, and it will take a lot of work to get it done. Things are starting to move along now and we're excited."

This past weekend would have been the seventh match week in the year.

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Get up and move for Big Brothers Big Sisters of York

Virtual fundraiser gives kids a hand while highlighting youth mental health

By Brock Weir

We're all finding new ways to stay healthy and active at this challenging time, so why not get up on your feet and try something new while helping Big Brothers Big Sisters of York?

The Aurora-based mentorship organization, unable to hold their signature spring fundraisers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, launched Move for Mentoring last week to help more people in the community help local kids in need take part in vital mentorship programs.

Through Move for Mentoring, participants will challenge themselves – and each other – to be active and, with each activity, collect fundraising pledges to support children and youth.

"This is our first-ever virtual fundraising platform," says Suzanne Boucher, Fundraising and Events Coordinator for Big Brothers Big Sisters of York (BBBSY), noting Move for Mentoring is a joint venture between York and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel, inspired by a similar initiative carried out by colleagues in British Columbia.

"This fundraiser is encouraging all of our participants, all of our donors and all of our families to get up, move and challenge themselves and be active, especially at this time when you hear of the impact [the present situation] has had with children's and young people's mental health," Ms. Boucher continues. "We're hoping physical activity can be a positive change and, at the same time, fundraise for our new virtual mentoring program."

Big Brother Derek Trowbridge, pictured here cycling with cousins in Prince Edward Island, is cycling to benefit local Big Brother Big Sister programs in York Region, South Simcoe and Peel.

Photo courtesy of BBBSY

Move for Mentorship currently has a fundraising goal of $15,000, which will be split 50/50 between York and Peel, and just a few days since the initiatives May 19 launch, they were already more than a third of the way there.

To take part, you just have to sign up online through BBBSY's fundraising platform, set your own personal goal and collect pledges. It can be anything from doing a push-up for every dollar raised to cycling a kilometer for every ten bucks committed to the pot.

"We're trying to get people to push it and brag about it," says Ms. Boucher. "We want people to post photos and share videos of their Move for Mentoring journey, tagging us on social media and encourage other people to do it as well."

Similar to BBBSY events like Bowl for Kids Sake, which was also cancelled earlier this spring due to the pandemic, teams can sign up for Move for Mentoring. You can set your collective fundraising goal and, individually, your own personal activity goals to get your team across your chosen finish line.

"We have a Big Brother, Derek, who is an ambassador for the Challenge and he is already up to $500 in donations for doing mountain biking – a kilometer for every $10," says Ms. Boucher. "He is already making such a great impact, he has decided to get some of his family members to join him.

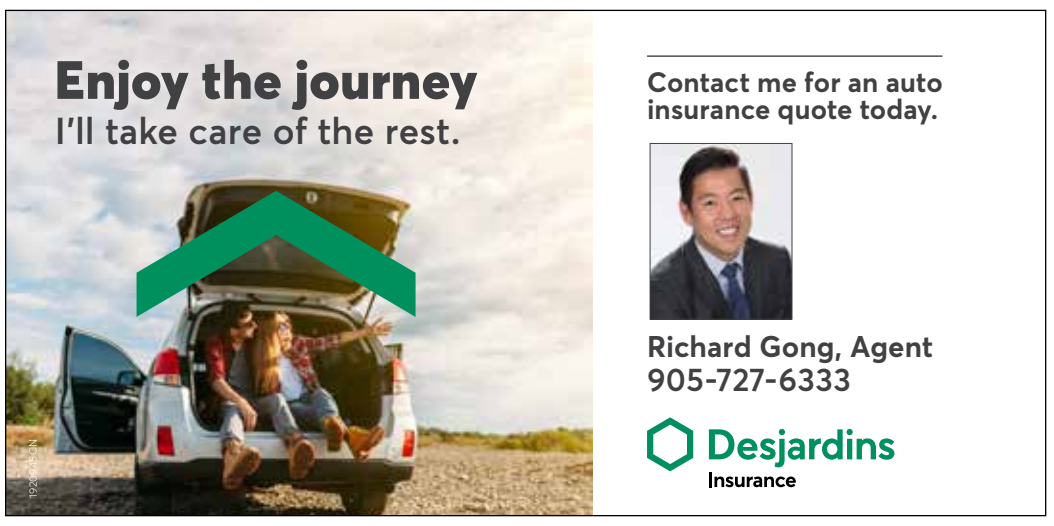
"As of right now, our main focus isn't just fundraising; it is really, honestly, to spread awareness of mental health issues that are happening right now for young people who are facing isolation. We want young people in York Region to realize the importance of physical health and how that can help them stay healthy mentally as well. In the grand scheme of things, this is going to be a positive event no matter the fundraising goal."

Given the early success of Move for Mentoring immediately out of the gate, BBBSY won't rule out raising that fundraising threshold. At the end of the challenge, which is slated to wrap on June 30, the organization is planning for a Family Move for Mentoring Week.

"What we're trying to do is get our families to show a fun activity they are doing together to get up to Move for Mentoring," says Ms. Boucher. "At that point, we're going to ask our donors and sponsors if they would like to pledge our families. They are not going to do any fundraising on their end at all, but we do want to show our community what our families are doing at home to move, and especially for the sake of our mental health.

"This is a huge success for us. We were absolutely shocked with how many participants have already joined up and how many supporters are already pledging our participants. It is going to be such a positive event that we're going to, if anything, push that goal up again."

To sign up for Move for Mentoring, whether as an individual or team, visit canadahelps.org/en/charities/big-brothers-big-sisters-of-peel/p2p/moveformentoring.



Aurora Community Tennis club re-opens at limited capacity

By Robert Belardi

The Aurora Community Tennis Club has reopened at a limited capacity, says volunteer president Kevin Gage.

Premier Doug Ford's recent announcement easing restrictions has enabled tennis courts to open for business, much to the excitement of the staff and the members of the public.

Gage told The Auroran a successful discussion was held between ACTC and the Town of Aurora to reopen. But, there are some restrictions his courts must abide by.

"The major one is the courts are only open for singles play only and that's a fairly big change," Gage explained. "We have house league two nights a week which is a mixed doubles house league. For more competitive players there's inter-county tennis and that is a doubles league as well."

ACTC can only allow a doubles if teammates are from the same home. Other guidelines suggest players handle the tennis balls at a bare minimum.

The clubhouse will not be open for members and public players to use.

ACTC shares a clubhouse with the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club. Players are also recommended to bring their own hand sanitizer.

As the club turns to an abundance of singles play, the facility can also host private lessons. Club pro Jordan Master is able to host private lessons with his clients.

Some members have previously paid in February and early March prior to the province's shutdown. Gage says a lot of public players have begun signing up on the first day. He has plenty of familiar faces around.

It is excellent news for a first-year committee. Gage says the entirety of his board members have been ready since taking over in September.

"We had made some interesting plans with Jordan Master as a new club pro this summer. We were looking forward to more events and that sort of thing. We've been planning for that through the winter and then of course everything got put on hold."

Gage adds that the committee is hopeful that more restrictions are alleviated as the summer goes along.

The ACTC, he adds, will be ready to host tournaments and social gatherings when the time comes.

For now, members can enjoy the courts whenever they wish. Gage also highlights the club has 24 public hours for non-members to use.

It is fairly informal at ACTC. Players come and go. The club entrusts that everyone enters the facility respectfully.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From page 4

Protecting older, at-risk people eliminates hospital overcrowding. The vulnerable with serious chronic conditions will need to continue taking extra precautions until a treatment or vaccine is available.

People are dying because other medical care was not getting done due to the COVID-19 projections. The data is missing on the increase in deaths from suicide, drug overdoses, together with mental health issues, elder, spousal and child abuse and long-term health consequences resulting from this economic shutdown.

Each day that we delay is another nail in the coffin for small businesses and our economy.

Shelley Wister
Aurora

Accessibility and heritage advocates prepare to advise lawmakers once again

By Brock Weir

Advocates for Aurora's heritage and making the community a more inclusive place to live will soon be able to weigh in once again on matters before Council.

Council this week is set to sign off on new measures which will allow members of Aurora's Accessibility Advisory Committee, Heritage Advisory Committee and Committee of Adjustment to resume their work in a virtual world.

Local lawmakers, following the closure of Town Hall due to emergency orders following the outbreak of COVID-19, resumed the business of the Town through virtual Council and Committee meetings. Now, given the success of the new format, citizen committees designed to provide Council with specialized and community-led input will be able to do the same.

"Staff are working with other municipalities to ensure that best practices are followed and all interested parties have the chance to provide comments to committee members and staff on matters for consideration," said Town Clerk Mike de Rond in a report to Council. "Staff are planning to hold statutory committee meetings in June. All other committees will resume a regular meeting schedule, whether electronic or in-person, in September.

"The state of emergency has given staff an opportunity to test and implement electronic meeting solutions, which could result in a recommendation that these meetings continue after the emergency. Staff are recommending that this period during the declaration of emergency be used to test and document the success of electronic Advisory Committee meetings and report back to Council regarding whether they are viable when the emergency is lifted. This is not to suggest that staff foresee a time where all committee meetings are electronic, rather this could become a practical back-up option that could be implemented quickly should an in-person meeting not be possible."

Yet, getting a mechanism in place to allow for virtual meetings is something that has long been advocated for by former members of these statutory committees, particularly members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Former Committee Chair Tyler Barker, for instance, uses a large electric wheelchair to get around. While serving on the committee, he often pointed out the difficulty in arranging his transportation to get to and from the monthly meeting at Town Hall, particularly in inclement weather.

A push towards electronic meetings invariably received pushback as such remote meetings were not previously allowed for under the Municipal Act, but these are unusual times and necessity has now proved to be the mother of invention.

As such, Councillor Wendy Gaertner last week questioned whether this can be a way forward once emergency orders are lifted.

"We tried to get the Accessibility Advisory Committee to be able to have electronic meetings because of the difficulty of some of their participants getting to the meetings," said Councillor Gaertner.

The Clerk noted that the situation is being evaluated.

"The Municipal Act amendments were to allow Council who, of course, make the final decisions, to meet electronically," he explained. "We have never tried an electronic meeting with a Committee and we think even when the state of emergency ends, in an emergency that is not a declared emergency by either the Mayor or the Premier, we could hold a meeting [such as in] a big winter storm and we could hold a meeting electronically going forward.

"We want to test this out. We want a report back to Council about how it all goes during this time before Council makes any final decision on whether electronic meetings are a last resort at this time."

Additional concerns were voiced by Councillor John Gallo who sought assurances from the Clerk that appropriate measures were being taken for Committee members who might not have the resources for computers and other necessary items to make electronic meetings possible.

Mayor Tom Mrakas noted that the Town's Community Cares Action Team, a group of citizens and community leaders brought together near the start of the pandemic to look at ways to help vulnerable members of the community, purchased ten iPads that will be "fully loaded" with the relevant apps that will be available to the Town after the pandemic for committees.

"We reached out to the members first of all to make sure everyone is okay," said Mr. De Rond. "We will have members of the committee who need to call in and she was okay with that. We have done some work on this already and we're proud of the results we've had with electronic meetings thus far and our number one goal is to make sure the members are comfortable and so far we have nothing to see we can't do that in a few days."

Aurora experienced several arsons in recent months

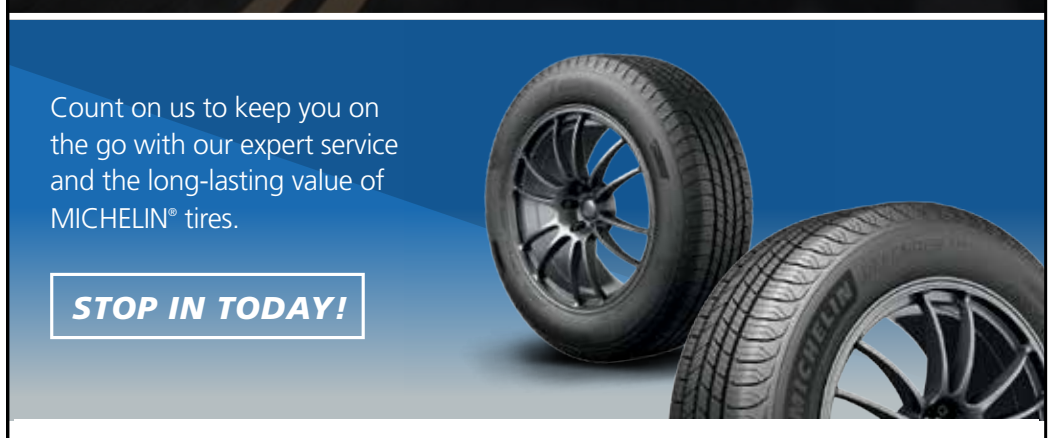
From page 8

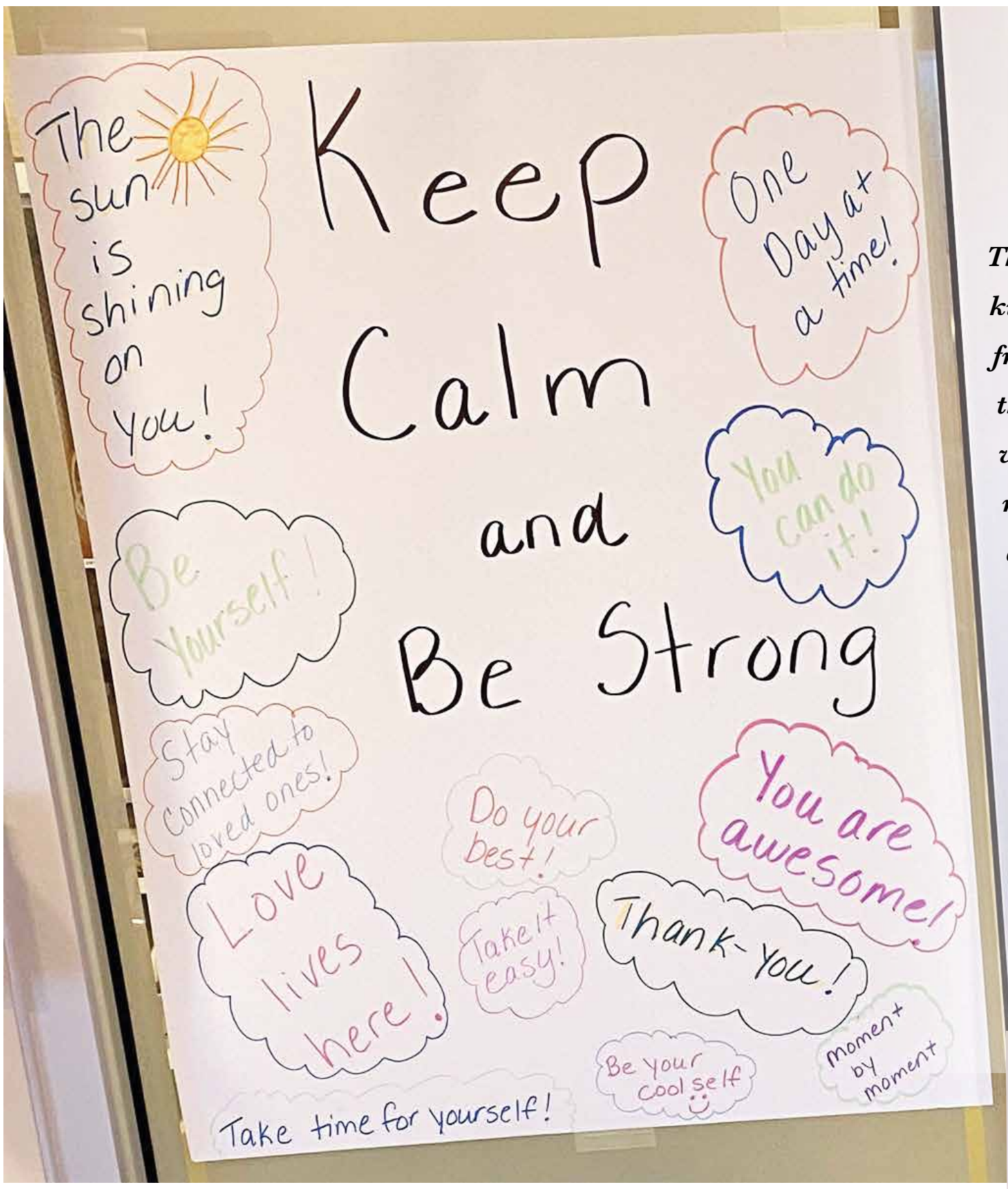
rental companies, to carry out their frauds. Insurance companies worked to mitigate the fraud and additional costs to the consumer and actively pursued legal action against various tow companies. One law firm, Carr Law, which had been located in the City of Vaughan and was hired by the insurance companies, became the target of violence, threats and extortion.

"As part of Project Platinum, on Thursday, April 30 and May 1, with assistance from officers in the York Regional Police Emergency Response Unit, warrants were executed in the City of Brantford and the City of Hamilton. Five suspects were taken into custody and have been charged."

Evidence seized in the search warrants include 11 tow trucks, 16 handguns, 13 shotguns, nine rifles, one machine gun, one air pistol converted to a .22 calibre pistol, one sawed-off shotgun, three high-capacity drum magazines, thousands of rounds of various calibres, two conductive energy weapons, brass knuckles, five kilograms of fentanyl, 1.5 kilograms of cocaine, 1.25 kilograms of crystal meth and 1.5 kilograms of cannabis, and more than $500,000 in currency.

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information is asked to contact the York Regional Police Organized Crime and Intelligence Services at 1-866-876-5423 x7818, or Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-TIPS or 1800222tips.com.





The understanding, kindness and acceptance from our residents and their limited, designated visitors during this time renews my hope everyday and reminds me of the love I am blessed to witness that exists all of the time no matter the life circumstance or challenges.

Love truly never dies

Written by Hailey, one of our nurses at Margaret Bahen Hospice

Working in Hospice and Palliative care as a nurse is a complete privilege and joy to me.

I get to work in an environment that is so filled with love, so filled with acceptance - it is beautiful to witness. It is never easy to have to say goodbye to a loved one no matter what. It is a time often filled with uncertainty, fear and grief. Grieving what should have been and what will no longer be. I feel many of us are feeling these emotions right now as together as a global community we face the challenges of COVID-19.

It has been difficult for us at Margaret Bahen Hospice as so much of what we do as hospice workers (and what we love to do!) is provide comfort, peace and a safe place to be vulnerable. To be human. This is often done through therapeutic physical connection and closeness that of course must be greatly limited at this time to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Another key theme that marks the hospice experience to me and that I so often see in practice is resilience, hope and above all else, love. Time and time again I have seen proven through my work how resilient the human spirit is and how hope; for a variety of different outcomes, and *love truly never dies*.

Together we are all battling through COVID-19 regardless of where we live or our specific situations, and together we will come through to the other side with our innate qualities of being human.

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A physically-distanced crowd flocked to Town Park on Saturday morning for the inaugural Aurora Farmers' Market of the 2020 outdoor season. A late start due to COVID-19 and ensuring all appropriate safety measures were in place, the first market was a resounding success. Although only open to farmers and food vendors at this time, local producers reported some of their fruit vegetable supplies couldn't keep up with customer demand! (Top) Councillor Sandra Humfryes, Council's Liaison with the Aurora Farmers' Market is pictured with Kelty and Kris of Willowtree Farm, who donned t-shirts with the slogan "Kiss My Asparagus." (Second Row) Signs led the way to the controlled entrance to the Market off Larmont Street, while smiley faces chalked onto the sidewalk marked standing places two metres apart. (Third Row) Volunteer Brian North provided information to customers while Brian and Marion relaxed on nearby bleachers after the morning shopping run. (Fourth Row) Nikki and Cathy Williams, Market Chair and owner of Catharina's Kitchen. (Fifth Row) Honey vendor Kerrie. (Bottom) Volunteers dispensed hand sanitizer for customers coming into the Market. Organizers hope the Market will be open each Saturday at Town Park through October from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Auroran photos by Brock Weir

BACK FOR BUSINESS

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	8	9	■	10	11	12	13
14				■	15					■	16			
17				■	18					■	19			
20				21	■	22			■	23				
■	■	■	24		25				26			■	■	■
27	28	29	■	30			■	31			■	32	33	34
35			36			■	37			■	38			
39					■	40			■	41				
42				■	43			■	44					
45			■	46			■	47			■	48		
■	■	■	49				50				51	■	■	■
52	53	54			■	55			■	56		57	58	59
60				■	61				62	■	63			
64				■	65					■	66			
67				■	68					■	69			

CLUES ACROSS

1. Common request
5. Department in France
10. Fungi cells
14. Famed inventor
15. Hillsides
16. Cold wind
17. La __ Tar Pits, Hollywood
18. Resembling a doddering old woman
19. Geological periods
20. Assists
22. Comedienne Gasteyer
23. Jewish spiritual leader
24. English soccer club
27. Body art
30. No (Scottish)
31. Clumsy person
32. Swiss river
35. Belittled
37. Luxury car
38. Single sheet of glass in a window
39. Monetary units
40. Supervises flying
41. Indian term of respect
42. Breezed through
43. The bill in a restaurant
44. Flower cluster
45. Moved quickly
46. Shooters need to do it
47. High schoolers' test
48. Split pulses
49. Salts
52. Breaking Bad actor __ Paul
55. Set ablaze
56. Semitic Sun god
60. Nervous system cells
61. Tourist destination Buenos __
63. A way to bind
64. Behave uncontrollably
65. Feels concern
66. Sportscaster Andrews
67. Subway dwellers
68. Astrological aspect
69. You may take one

CLUES DOWN

1. Swedish rock group
2. Serbian
3. Away from wind
4. Actor Oliver
5. Helps little firms
6. Intricately decorative
7. American state
8. Type of tumor
9. Midway between east and southeast
10. On a line at right angles to a ship's length
11. Fruit of the service tree
12. Grouch
13. Romanian city
21. Units of loudness
23. British Air Aces
25. Small amount
26. Hem's partner
27. Turkic people
28. Member of the banana family
29. Liam Neeson franchise
32. Expressed pleasure
33. Inward-directed part of psyche
34. Insurgent
36. Unhappy
37. Gateway (Arabic)
38. Fundraising political group (abbr
40. Well-known
41. Satisfies
43. '__ death do us part
44. Jailhouse informant
46. French river
47. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
49. Drenches
50. Clouds
51. Companies need to make them
52. Created from seaweed
53. One's school: __ mater
54. A type of act
57. Member of Russian people
58. Neutralizes alkalis
59. Monetary unit
61. Play a role
62. Midway between south and southeast

PUZZLE SOLUTION

A	S	A	P	■	S	O	M	M	E	■	A	S	C	I
B	E	L	L	■	B	R	A	E	S	■	B	O	R	A
B	R	E	A	■	A	N	I	L	E	■	E	R	A	S
A	B	E	T	S	■	A	N	A	■	R	A	B	B	I
■	■	■	T	O	T	T	E	N	H	A	M	■	■	■
T	A	T	■	N	A	E	■	O	A	F	■	A	A	R
A	B	A	S	E	D	■	B	M	W	■	P	A	N	E
T	A	K	A	S	■	F	A	A	■	S	A	H	I	B
A	C	E	D	■	T	A	B	■	R	A	C	E	M	E
R	A	N	■	A	I	M	■	S	A	T	■	D	A	L
■	■	■	S	I	L	I	C	A	T	E	S	■	■	■
A	A	R	O	N	■	L	I	T	■	S	A	M	A	S
G	L	I	A	■	A	I	R	E	S	■	L	A	C	E
A	M	O	K	■	C	A	R	E	S	■	E	R	I	N
R	A	T	S	■	T	R	I	N	E	■	S	I	D	E

Lions provide food – and thanks – to Chartwell's frontline staff

From page 1

80 years of age or over, 19 between the ages of 65 and 79, 10 between 45 and 54, eight between 35 and 44, 12 between 20 and 24, 3 between 5 and 19, and just 1 case amongst children 5 and under.

York Region Public Health has also confirmed a case of COVID-19 in a staff member who works at Walmart located at First Commerce Drive and Wellington Street East.

According to Patrick Casey, Director of Corporate Communications for the Region, the individual in question is self-isolating at home.

"The individual was not infectious while at work as their symptoms started May 20 and the individual's last day of work was May 17, 2020," Casey told The Auroran. "York Region Public Health conducted case and contact tracing activities to identify any other close contacts, including household contacts.

"When we receive a notification of a confirmed COVID-19 case, York Region Public Health's case investigation activities start quickly to determine possible source of illness and risk of transmission to other close contacts. We have dedicated teams investigating workplace-related cases to ensure contact tracing is completed as quickly as possible and infection prevention and control measures are/were in place at the business while the individual was working.

"York Region Public Health will continue to monitor this workplace to determine if there are any additional cases for 14 days after the last case was identified and, in this situation, monitoring will continue until June 3."

Members of the Aurora Lions Club delivered food to Chartwell Aurora last week. Pictured above are Lions Barry, Jim, Michelle, Pat, Terry, Sheila and Sudha, with Chartwell Aurora staff member Rachel.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

"HITTING PAUSE"

On Friday, Dr. Kurji, York Region's Chief Medical Officer of Health, said he was optimistic of trends, stating, "Many of our (long-term care and congregate living) outbreaks have come under control, although there are a few that are posting unusual challenges." By Monday, as numbers across York Region and Ontario saw an uptick over the weekend, he was more cautious.

"Our downward trajectory of cases seems to have hit a pause button," said Dr. Kurji. "When we look more carefully, it appears that the larger number of cases can be attributed to outbreaks in long-term care homes that have still not come under control. In addition, we are seeing an upswing in the number of outbreaks in workplace settings. The number now having gone to over 40."

The two most recent examples of workplace outbreaks in York Region are both in Vaughan, with 21 confirmed cases reported at the UPS plant on Steeles Avenue West and Aluminum Window Designs. 21 confirmed cases of COVID-19 were reported among UPS workers at the start of the week, two of whom live in York Region. Aluminum Window Designs is experiencing 26 confirmed cases, none of whom live in the Region.

A THANKS TO CHARTWELL STAFF

On Wednesday, frontline workers at Chartwell Aurora received a welcome visit from members of the Aurora Lions Club who provided meals to the heroes working day and night to keep senior residents safe during the emergency.

"The Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF), the charity arm of Lions Club International have donated almost $4 million USD as a response to the COVID-19 outbreak," said Aurora Lion Jim Bondy. "District A-16, which includes an area bordered by Halliburton to Oshawa and Markham to Keswick, has received a $10,000 USD Grant for support of frontline workers at long-term care facilities that have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 virus.

"The Executive of the District have divided this amount into the four Regions. Region 18, which includes Aurora to Stouffville and Markham to Maple, has been making deliveries of food, snacks, fruit and beverages to frontline workers at a number of long-term care facilities. We appreciate the dedication and efforts of all frontline and essential workers everywhere."

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Bagpiping to thank frontline heroes is nightly tradition for local student

By Brock Weir

Roán Binnendyk was set for the trip of a lifetime last week.

A member of the St. Andrew's College Pipes and Drums corps, the Grade 9 student had been practicing diligently to ensure he was pitch perfect ahead of performing overseas along with his fellow corps members for the King and Queen of the Netherlands to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Liberation of Holland.

But, due to the present global emergency, instead of performing for Canadian heroes who were also set to make the trip, he stood alone on his Gurnett Street porch, bagpipes primed, paying tribute to another group of heroes: the doctors, nurses and other essential workers fighting on the frontlines to keep us safe and healthy against COVID-19.

And he has been doing so since the early days of the pandemic.

In mid-March, inspired by individuals in Vancouver who come out of their houses each evening to clap and bang pots and pans to thank frontline healthcare workers as they change shifts, Roán decided to use his time and talent for a unique spin on the new tradition for heroes close to home.

"They were banging pots outside, sometimes playing musical instruments, just trying to connect with the community so [frontline workers] know everyone is still there," he said on Wednesday evening as neighbours came out onto their front lawns and porches for the evening performance – another new tradition. "I think the bagpipes are a strong instrument that might inspire people more than most. I think this has been a really great experience where I have helped other people maybe more than I can understand. Through music, I can bring people together in a darker time."

Roán first developed his interest in the bagpipes when he enrolled at SAC. He has been piping for just over five years and has been a dedicated member of the Pipes & Drums Corps for nearly two-and-a-half.

Inspired by how his nightly performances have resonated with his immediate community, Roán plans on taking the show on the road and is arranging to play the bagpipes outside of a several local seniors' residences in the coming weeks, including Chartwell Aurora (formerly Resthaven), which continues to grapple with an outbreak of the virus.

"This makes me so proud," said Roán's mother Susan. "There are people who are on the frontlines fighting every day to save people's lives and this is the least Roán can do. I wish personally I could do something, but, unfortunately, I am a vulnerable person so we don't even go grocery shopping. I am just really, really proud Roán doesn't even question going out here to play and the response from our neighbours has been fantastic."

One such response came from a neighbour from across nearby Rotary Park.

Steve Falk, a musician with the local band Soul Benefit, first heard the pipes from a distance soon after Roán began playing each evening.

"Once you've heard the bagpipes at sunset, you know you have to respond across that big, empty park," said Mr. Falk at the time, noting he responded to the call himself with a few notes on his trumpet. "We are not sure who is playing the bagpipes, but it feels like a call for a conversation. It's like someone saying 'Goodnight.' You just have to reply, 'You too.'"

Eventually, Steve was able to find the source of this evocative "goodnight" and was recently able to join in on a much closer – and still physically distanced – jam session.

"My mother is Scottish and I love the bagpipes, but I think with the response he has had I will always remember fondly this time for Roán," adds Susan.

As for Roán, he intends to keep the tradition going for the foreseeable future and hopes more local musicians, young and old, can join in – in their own spaces, in their own way.

"It helps more than you might think," he says. "People come out and give you great feedback and that makes you feel good. It's also a good way to practice and get outside. It's great to get out and see people interact."

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- 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

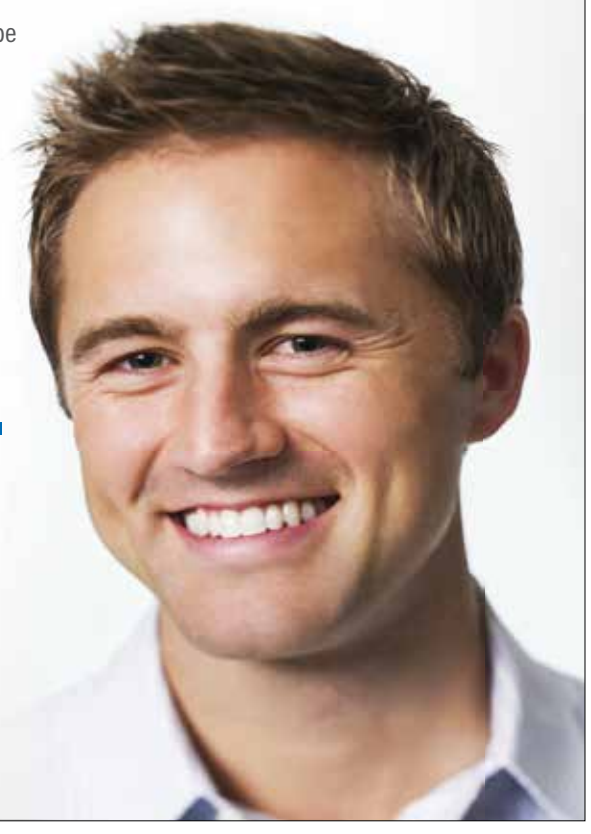
EXPECTATIONS:

- 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:
Base + Commission



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