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# THE AU 20 YEARS RAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 21 No. 33 905-727-3300

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FREE

Week of June 3, 2021



Local realtor Eric McCartney, accompanied by his dog Bro, celebrates being named Aurora's 2021 Citizen of the Year on Monday night during an impromptu – and socially-distant – gathering on his front lawn with friends. For full coverage of Aurora's 2021 Community Recognition Awards, see Pages 12 – 14.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

## Eric McCartney named Aurora's 2021 Citizen of the Year

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

From lending a hand to the St. John's Ambulance Dog Therapy Program, to countless hours spent ringing the bell for the Salvation Army Kettle Drive, to quietly placing benches along Aurora's trails in memory of area residents lost to COVID-19, realtor Eric McCartney prefers to do his work with little to no fanfare.

But the proverbial trumpets sounded loudly on Monday night

when Mr. McCartney was named Aurora's 2021 Citizen of the Year.

Mr. McCartney was honoured in a virtual ceremony on May 31, one which spilled over to an impromptu – and distanced – celebratory gathering on the surprised resident's front lawn.

Just moments earlier, he was hailed by Mayor Tom Mrakas for his contributions to the community.

"The Citizen of the Year Award exemplifies an individual's constant dedication, passion and enthusiasm for volunteering and making a difference in Aurora," said Mayor

Mrakas. "Volunteers are the heart of our community. Without the time and support from our volunteers, we as a Town would not be able to run as many programs, services and events for our community."

Among the volunteer work of Eric's highlighted at the ceremony include the Heart & Stroke Foundation, the St. John Ambulance's Dog Therapy Program, the Salvation Army Kettle Drive, the Canadian Red Cross, the York Region Real Estate Board, McDonald's McHappy Day, the

Continued on page 14



Between Saturday and Monday, the Aurora Community Centre was transformed into a pop-up vaccination clinic offering first doses of Pfizer to residents aged 12 and up, and, on Monday, second doses to residents 80+. Pictured before the arrival of Saturday's first patients are Robin McDougall, Aurora's Director of Community Services, and clinic lead Michael Adair.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

### Over 1,500 take part in Aurora vaccine pop-up as Ontario targets "two dose summer"

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

1,515 people – including 839 youth eager to receive their first dose – descended on the Aurora Community Centre between Saturday and Monday to get their first doses of Pfizer's

Continued on page 3

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# Nearly 1,800 take part in Aurora vaccine pop-up as Ontario targets “two dose summer”



Rojan Williams, 13, receives a dose of Pfizer at a family-friendly clinic spearheaded by Southlake and the Town of Newmarket on Saturday. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

From page 1

COVID-19 vaccine.

The Aurora pop-up was just one of several that took place across York Region as the Province encourages people over the age of 12 to get their first inoculations ahead of a targeted “two-dose summer.”

Ontario announced new vaccine targets on Friday as part of an accelerated rollout aimed at getting second doses in arms, starting with individuals 80 years of age and older beginning this past Monday, May 31.

“Team Ontario has shown what we can do when we have a steady and reliable source of vaccines,” said Premier Doug Ford in a statement. “Having made so much progress administering first doses, we are now in a position to begin delivering second doses for a two-dose summer. If we receive more vaccines from the Federal government, we’ll be able to accelerate our rollout further to offer more protection to Ontarians sooner.

By last week’s announcement, more than two-thirds of Ontario’s adult population had received at least one dose of a vaccine.

Now that individuals 80+ are eligible for their second doses, the Province has released a tentative plan to get second doses into residents falling into other demographics. Individuals 70+ can begin to schedule their second doses beginning the week of June 14, with vaccines for those aged 69 and under based on when first doses were received.

The tentative schedule sets the week of July 19 for people who received their first dose between April 19 and May 9; August 2 for first doses administered between May 10 and May 30; August 9 – 16 for individuals between the ages of 12 and 25; and the week of August 9 for people who received their first doses on or after May 31.

“Every dose administered means we are one step closer to the end of the pandemic, and I encourage all Ontarians to get vaccinated and continue following public health advice,” said Deputy Premier and Health Minister Christine Elliott.

Added Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region’s

Medical Officer of Health: “Getting residents fully vaccinated as soon as possible is a top priority for York Region Public Health. By starting to administer the second dose to this priority group (80+) two weeks earlier than expected, we anticipate being able to move to the 70-79 age group as early as mid-June. We are encouraging residents to continue to follow public health guidelines. We have come so far and we don’t want to waste the efforts and sacrifices we have already made to stop the spread of COVID-19. We know it is hard, but we ask for your continued patience as we make the final dash to the finish line.”

To register for your accelerated second dose when eligible, visit [York.ca/Covid19vaccine](http://York.ca/Covid19vaccine).

## POP-UP CLINIC FILLS UP FAST

There were several opportunities over this past weekend for people ages 12 and up to get their first doses across York Region.

On Saturday, Southlake Regional Health Centre and the Town of Newmarket held a socially-distanced festival-style event to bring families out while the Town of Aurora worked with the Province to transform the Aurora Community Centre into a three-day pop-up.

Originally slated to take place on Saturday and Sunday, the Aurora pop-up was extended by a day following tremendous uptake of the 1,200 appointments that were up for grabs between May 29 and 30.

The pop-up took place in eight tents set up in the Community Centre’s parking lot rather than inside the arena to allow for maximum flexibility.

“One of the nice things about the tents is we can design a system that enables us to essentially set up anywhere and it enables us to have a good work flow,” said clinic official Michael Adair just prior to welcoming the first patients on Saturday morning. “It enables us to transcend a particular location with all the equipment we need with a safe set up so we can register, vaccinate and observe people to ensure they are receiving their vaccine in the appropriate way and it enables us to do it in multiple locations.

“The most important thing for vaccines right now is when you can get a vaccine – get it. This is a great opportunity to get vaccinated and we thank everyone for coming out to this clinic or any clinic.”

The weekend event anticipated 600 people per day over three days, facilitated by 14 medical staff of nurses and paramedics and eight administrative support staff – including some members of the Town of Aurora team.

“We’re always welcome to additional clinics,” said Robin McDougall, Director of Community Services for the Town of Aurora. “We would be happy to host [another] if we can and I know the second dose will likely be somewhere downtown once again. We’re looking forward and we would be happy to host

another one. We certainly had a great uptake!”

With the shifting directives from the Province, residents over the age of 80 were able to get their second doses at the clinic on Monday as well.

## LOCAL STATS

As of Tuesday, June 1, Aurora has seen a total of 1,825 confirmed cases of COVID-19, 1,751 of which are now marked as recovered. Of the 27 active cases, all are attributed to local transmission, close contact, or unknown exposure.

701 cases have now been attributed to variants of concern, with 54 of them coming from a confirmed lineage.

There have been 47 fatalities attributed to the virus.

TOWN OF AURORA  
PUBLIC NOTICE

  
**NOTICE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION**

The Town of Aurora is in receipt of the following Complete Applications under the Planning Act:

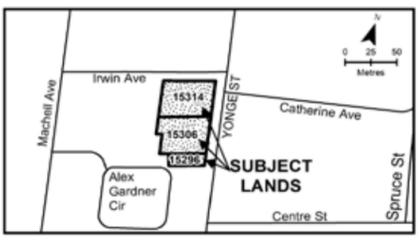
**APPLICATIONS:** The Town of Aurora has received complete applications for an Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan Approval. The purpose and effect of the subject applications are to permit and facilitate the development of a six-storey, 137 residential condominium apartment building on the subject property.

**PROPERTY:** 15296, 15306 and 15314 Yonge Street

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**  
Lots B and C and Part of Lot D, registered Plan 36 and Part of Lots 15 and 16, Registered Plan 246, Town of Aurora

**APPLICANTS:** Alive Developments Inc.

**FILE NUMBERS:** OPA-2021-03, ZBA-2021-03 & SP 2021-07



**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**  
Town Hall is currently closed to the public and additional information and material regarding the proposed applications may be requested by contacting the Planner for this file, **Stephen Corr** of the Planning and Development Services Department, at 905-727-3123 extension **4343** or at [scorr@aurora.ca](mailto:scorr@aurora.ca).  
Should you wish to provide comments, they may be provided by mail to the Planning and Development Services Department at the 100 John West Way, Box 1000, Aurora, Ontario L4G 6J1, by fax to 905-726-4736 or by email to [planning@aurora.ca](mailto:planning@aurora.ca). Please quote the File Name and Number.  
A Statutory Public Meeting to obtain input on the proposal will be scheduled in the future. Notice of the Public Meeting will be provided in accordance with the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13.

**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 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, 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 Zoning By-law is passed, before the Council of the Town of Aurora gives or refuses to give approval to the proposed zoning by-law amendment, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal unless in the opinion of the Tribunal, 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 Amendment, or the Council of the Town of Aurora’s decision on the Zoning Amendment, you must make a written request to the Town of Aurora to the attention of the Director of Planning and Development Services.

**PERSONAL INFORMATION COLLECTION NOTICE:**  
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 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.

DATED at the Town of Aurora, this 3rd day of June, 2021.

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**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

**Generational trauma requires a response rooted in generational accountability: Pflag**

For a second year in a row, we begin Pride Month with yet another reminder of the very real and historical impacts colonialism has on marginalized peoples across the country with the discovery of the remains of 215 children on the grounds of a former residential school in Kamloops, British Columbia. Positions from some community members that it is time to move on do not respect and recognize the generational impact policies like the residential school system have had and continue to have on Indigenous people.

Generational trauma requires generational accountability if we are going to work together to close the gaps of inequity which impact all marginalized groups. We stand in solidarity with the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation and everyone impacted by the discovery, with the families of the found and for those still waiting for answers.

Through Allyship, we can all embark on a journey to look within ourselves and discover what we can do in our day to day lives to understand and support marginalized communities. Five years ago this month, Black Lives Matter Toronto used their position of power as the honoured group in the 2016 Toronto Pride March to pause the parade and protest on behalf of queer communities of colour. It was only five years ago where this protest was met with outrage from within and outside the queer community - particularly from individuals who did not understand the politics at play. The demands were just, yet, the responses to their protest showcase how deeply rooted racism, bigotry and implicit biases are in our culture.

Pride is about protest through visibility, through community and through learning by listening to one another. It's about honouring our history and those who paved the way for progress to continue. Progress can only be achieved when all marginalized communities and our allies band together to acknowledge our differences and fight against the systems of oppression and ignorance which impact us all. We encourage you all this Pride Month to embrace your visibility, to share your stories and to celebrate as safely as possible through the many events taking place within the region.

We challenge us all to continue our shared journey of Allyship for all marginalized communities. We particularly challenge our elected officials at all levels for a swift and intentional response to the recent tragedy unearthed in Kamloops, BC to improve the lived-experiences of our First Nations communities across the country.

Generational Trauma requires a response rooted in Generational Accountability.

Tristan Coolman  
President, Pflag York Region



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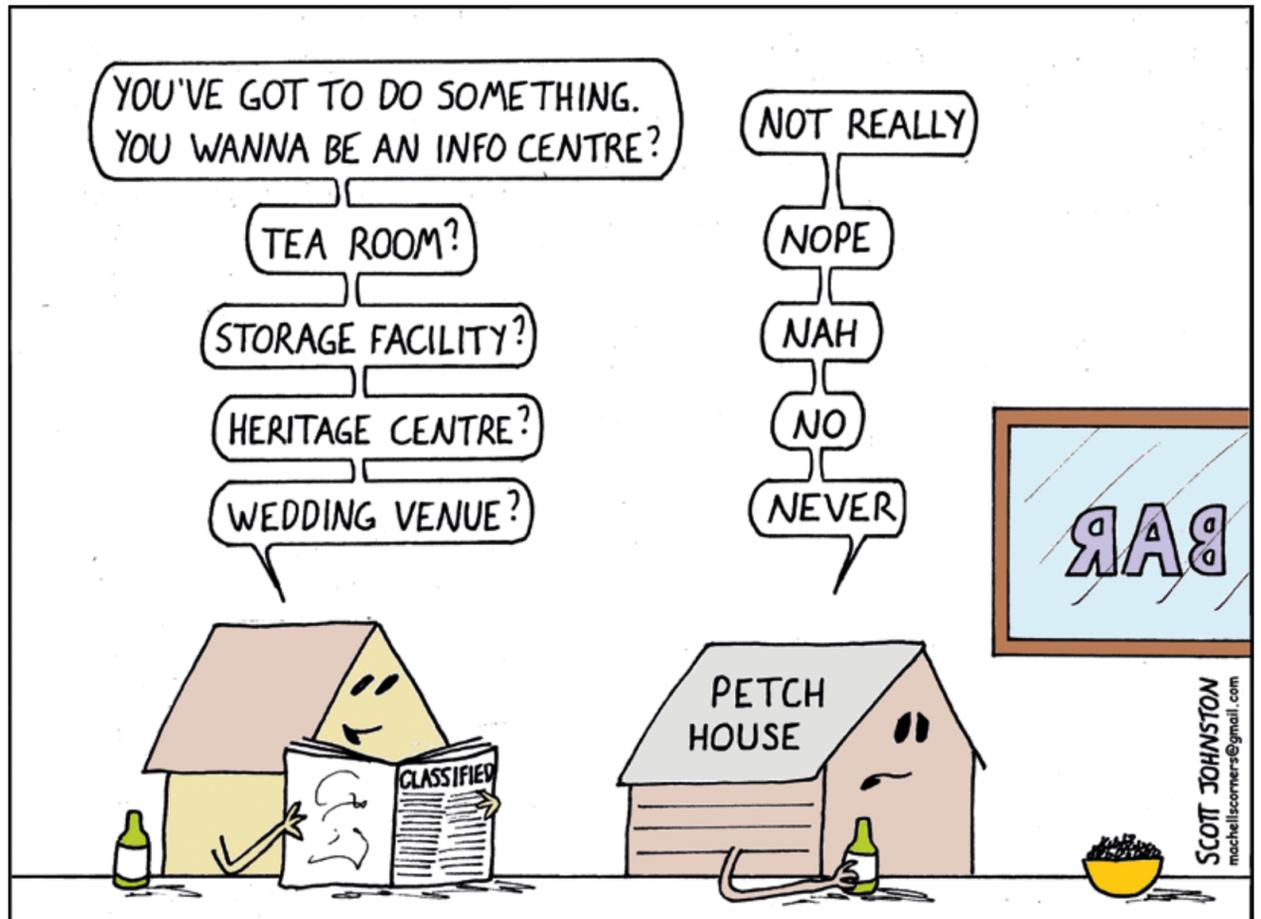


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Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

**Machell's Corners**



**A nation built on shifting sand**

This past week was, for some, if I can borrow a phrase from former U.S. Vice President and Nobel Peace Prize winner Al Gore, one of inconvenient truths.

As expected, the United States Senate, thanks to the usual suspects, moved to block an independent and bi-partisan commission into what lead up to the January 6 riots in Washington D.C.

Most of us plainly know what led up to the outright assault on a bastion of worldwide democracy. After all, we saw it unfold in front of our very eyes. But to take politics out of the equation and lay bare a backgrounder would, of course, put truth out there in black and white and certain quarters simply can't allow that to happen.

But, closer to home, a horrible punch in the gut.

The very same week, reports out of Kamloops, BC, confirmed the discovery of the bodies of at least 215 children, some as young as three, unmarked and forgotten in the grounds of a former residential school in the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation.

"This past weekend, with the help of a ground penetrating radar specialist, the stark truth of the preliminary findings came to light - the confirmation of the remains of 215 children who were students at the Kamloops Indian Residential School," said the office of Chief Roseanne Casimir in a statement.

Said Casimir: "We had a knowing in our community that we were able to verify. To our knowledge, the missing children were undocumented deaths. Some were as young as three years old. We sought a way to confirm that knowing out of deepest respect and love for those lost children and their families, understanding that Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc is the final resting place of these children.

"Given the size of the school with up to 500 students registered and attending at any one time, we understand that this confirmed loss affects the First Nations communities across British Columbia and beyond. We wish to ensure that our community members, as well as all home communities for the children who attended are duly informed. This is the beginning, but given the nature of this news, we felt it important to share immediately. At this time, we have more questions than answers."

The reaction to this horrifying announcement was swift, striking a chord with Canadians of all backgrounds from coast to coast.

"To honour the 215 children whose lives were taken at the former Kamloops residential school and all Indigenous



**BROCK'S BANTER**

Brock Weir

children who never made it home, the survivors, and their families, I have asked that the Peace Tower flag and flags on all Federal buildings be flown at half-mast," announced Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on May 30, with leaders from all levels of government, including mayors from across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, announcing their intentions to follow suit.

But what comes after the flags are hoisted once again?

What actions will be spurred in memory of the 215+ children in this instance and so many more who have been brought back into the public's consciousness after being consciously and methodically erased?

"This is the beginning," said Casimir, and there is no doubt about that.

The discovery announced last week only underscores what I suspect most of us have known all along: that we - the "we" being Canada writ large - are only at the tip of an unimaginable and bloody iceberg in knowing the full catalogue of horrors associated with the residential school system, not to mention the sheer number of children whose lives were irrevocably harmed.

Perhaps it will give Canadians concerned about the removal of Sir John A. Macdonald from our nation's \$10 banknote a moment to pause and consider our first Prime Minister's legacy in a larger context, beyond just the great strides he helped facilitate on our road to nationhood.

The same goes for those bemoaning the fact that celebrating the legacy of Egerton Ryerson, a prominent architect of the Residential School system, might not be considered as appropriate as it once seemed at the Toronto university that now bears his name.

Maybe, just maybe, it will spur our nation to collectively sit up and recognize truths - inconvenient or otherwise - that bely our fabled reputation as another bastion of freedom, justice and equality, and challenge some of the convenient not-quite-truths

that were spoon-fed to us in public school as part of another nation-building exercise.

"Our history in Canada is horrifying and until we acknowledge that and recognize the truth, we will continue upholding systems built on a foundation of racism, violence and harm without question," said the grassroots On Canada Project on Saturday. "That residential school only closed in 1978. The last residential school closed in 1996. This isn't some distant history that we are talking about. And Indigenous people continue to be oppressed in this country, the effects are very much felt in present day. We should be collectively grieving this atrocity as a country."

It certainly isn't some distant history. Some of those who lived under the yoke of this horror are still with us to share their stories. Some of those who were privy to the true extent of what was going on behind those walls are still living with the reality of their own truth in not stepping in to do something - if at all.

The architects of the residential school system might be long gone, but their actions, and the wounds they caused, are still living, breathing, present, in ways that continue to be revealed.

The most adamant against having an eyes-wide-open re-appraisal of our nation-builders and the systems they created still insist that looking back with the knowledge we have today is somehow an attack on our history and our achievements as a country.

They fail - and deliberately so, in my opinion - to recognize and acknowledge that history is a constantly evolving field and each new piece of information is a catalyst for reassessment.

For those individuals, the most uncomfortable truth of all might be the realization that we have placed many of our heroes on pedestals built on sand with very select blocks. One block not fitting the image can cause the whole thing to come crashing down.

I'm not in this camp. If you are, your idea of what makes up Canada - whether as a nation of individuals or a nation of nations - might be built on as tentative ground as those pedestals.

We're stronger than that. We are strong enough for some serious and difficult introspection and we will come out stronger on the other side.

It's not new, but it's an issue that keeps getting shoved to the backburner. We didn't need 215 more reasons to give the issue the attention it deserves, but now that we have them, how will we address it?

**THE AURORAN**  
Aurora's Community Newspaper

The Auroran Newspaper Company Ltd.  
15213 Yonge Street, Suite 8, Aurora, L4G 1L8

Main number 905-727-3300  
Fax number 905-727-2620

Founder Ron Wallace | Publisher Emeritus Rosemary Schumaker

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## The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating...

National AccessAbility Week  
(May 30 – June 5)

As we strive to increase access to the Museum and its collection, we are taking this opportunity to highlight the new accessibility options featured on our redesigned website, [auroramuseum.ca](http://auroramuseum.ca). Visitors are able to customize the site's appearance to accommodate for visual and cognitive impairments, assist with focus, colour and contrast, and even reduce flicker to prevent seizures. To access these features, look in the bottom left corner for the circular "person" icon shown here.



## Senior Scape

Christina Doyle

*Tidied all my papers. Tore up and ruthlessly destroyed much. This is always a great satisfaction.*

– Katherine Mansfield

Have you woken up one morning and said to yourself, "That's it, today is the day I am going to get organized?"

How many hours can you recall of spending time looking for things? Scary, isn't it? I personally have wasted a lot of energy and emotion looking for the overdue bill, the misplaced invitation with the directions, or the registration form for a class that was to begin in the afternoon.

If you don't have a plan for keeping track of your personal papers, then put on some nice music, a cup of tea and just do it! You can take several boxes and decorate them even with fabric. One could be for paid bills, another could be for receipts and still another for financial records. Today, start a paper chase around your home, searching for every stray piece of paper you can find. Go through each paper and separate them into categories. If you don't have boxes, large plastic Ziploc bags will do, too; at least you can see quickly what is inside each bag. Think of all the time you have wasted when you didn't know where something was when you needed it most.

Next, remember when your momma said, "Go clean your room, pick up your clothes, your room is a disaster?" Well, now that you're an adult, take a moment and look at what might be causing you difficulty in organizing your home.

Do you feel a headache coming on? Well, its time to get organized. I remember sharing my own story of cleaning out my basement after way too many years and the feeling of a huge peace of mind and contentment after we got rid of so much stuff.

Why in the world was I holding on to things that really just took up space? Well, according to the experts in organizing a home, some of the common problem places are kitchen cabinets, refrigerator disorder, unreachable items on top shelves, and too many coats in the front closet, a jam-packed bathroom vanity or medicine cabinet, and dangerously stacked bookshelves.

Give away, donate or throw out unneeded "stuff" and think about having someone help you re-arrange your furniture so that you can comfortably walk around your home safely.

There is help if you need it, such as CHATS or call the Seniors' Center and see if they can refer you to someone who can help you.

They say "home is where the heart is", you may likely feel that every item inside of your home is associated with a meaningful memory. If you feel like decluttering your home is forcing you to part with items you hold dear, remember that belongings are just intangible things, and that removing them from your home will never erase the memory they represent.

Just remember, please, that a clutter-free home will keep you safe so that you can remain in your home as long as you choose to do so. The point behind any type of organization throughout your home, condo or apartment is to help reduce the amount of stress in your life.

Continued on page 19

## Beyond Partisan Politics – A Duty to Govern

Members of Parliament (MPs) are elected to carry out the business of the country, whether it be part of the government's executive branch as Ministers, as backbenchers in the governing party or as members of the opposition. Regardless of their specific responsibilities all MPs have a role in "governing" – and governing is much more than merely passing laws. Governing ranges from the effective delivery of federal programs and services, to the policies and approaches that foster our economic and national security, to ensuring that those entrusted with leading the charge embody the values of honesty and integrity that Canadians expect. Any attempt to characterize the questioning, challenging or review of these critical elements as "partisan" or "petty politics" must be vehemently rejected. Replaced instead with "that's a reasonable question...why won't the government provide an answer?"

In the midst of this pandemic, a number of reasonable questions remain outstanding, glaring in the government's failure to provide any answers.

### COVID-19 Response

Canada lags significantly behind the US and the UK in fully vaccinating our population. Further, the vaccine manufacturers prescribed three weeks between first and second doses, but Canada has authorized four months between doses without any supporting scientific evidence making us the only country to do so. The legitimate questions: Why has Canada not been able to secure the same level of vaccine doses in the same timeframe as our peers? How does the government know that Canadians won't suffer any adverse



## MP'S REPORT

Leona Alleslev, MP

Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

effects from vaccine doses being administered at any period greater than three weeks?

### COVID-19 Economic Recovery

Canadians need to look no further than our neighbour to the south to see that economically we are failing to keep pace with our peers. The US has already experienced record air travel and allowed for the broad opening of restaurants and businesses, and large event gatherings. The US government has provided a clear plan and guidelines for how, when and under what conditions their country will reopen. The Canadian government has not. Every minute that Canada lags behind the US in opening will have severe and long-lasting effects on our economic recovery. The legitimate questions: What is Canada's re-opening plan? When and under what conditions will Canada re-open the border with the US and other countries?

### No Accountability for Abuse of Power

Under this government, incidents of unchecked abuse of authority at the highest levels have been reported. Allegations of serious misconduct at the highest levels in the Canadian Armed Forces, where the Minister,

Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister and a Clerk of the Privy Council were made aware, but did nothing to resolve them, and have not been held accountable for their failure to act. A toxic work environment in the office of the Governor General resulted in her abrupt resignation, but how that occurred remains unanswered. Ethics investigations and violations of the Prime Minister and a number of his Ministers surrounding the WE Charity and Aga Khan without any serious consequences. The removal of a Minister, Jody Wilson Raybould, for standing for what is right in the SNC Lavalin issue while those who unlawfully pressured her to break the law have not been held accountable. These are merely a few examples.

Each of these incidents on their own are severe and should have been addressed decisively but taken together they represent a pattern of behaviour that must not be ignored. At their core, they are all an unchecked abuse of power at the highest levels. Ministers, Governor in Council appointments and senior public servants are entrusted with every aspect of running our country. If they fail to do so honourably every Canadian value is at risk. The legitimate questions: Why has no one been held accountable in any of these cases and if this is what we know – what don't we know? How many other Ministers and senior government officials are abusing their authority – unchecked?

These are serious questions that strike at the heart of how our country operates and what we stand for as a nation. The government's attempt to diminish the severity by characterizing them as petty partisan politics, rather than providing comprehensive answers is an abrogation of their sacred responsibility to govern.

## Small Town Aurora?



## INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

Every now and then a fresh wave of distress hits the good people of Aurora and much hand wringing ensues when someone suggests that we may no longer be a small town.

It really depends on how you look at it.

The latest angst instigator has been the word that the Town's population will be about 85,000 in 2051. That's up from today's figure of somewhere just north of 60,000, so an increase of about a third, or twenty-some thousand people.

To provide some perspective, 85,000 is about the current number of people in Victoria, the capital of BC, and far more than the current capitals of New Brunswick and PEI.

Can you call a provincial capital a small town, no matter what its population? Perhaps, but it seems a bit of a stretch.

So, what number is the upper limit for a small town? There's no easy answer to that one, either.

Many sources cite small towns as having only a few hundred, and no more than 800 residents.

My observation of Aurora being described as a small town is that it's one of those "60 is the new 40" things, where the benchmark rises as the subject ages, or in this case, as the population grows. We were a small town when our population was a sizable 25,000, but somehow we were still small when it

doubled to 50,000, and is on its way to doubling again.

Population statistics aside, I expect when people envision small towns they think of houses with unlocked doors, main streets lined with bustling mom and pop stores, residents who know everyone else by name, where the big infrastructure discussion is the proposed traffic light at the main intersection, and a visit to any big box store requires a significant road trip to a larger municipality.

I'm not sure that accurately describes a Town soon to be divided into 6 wards, with average property values of \$1.3 million, at least eight large supermarkets, and whose latest project is a \$60 million plus upgrade to an existing fairly recently-completed multimillion cultural development.

Another thing associated with small towns is that they tend to be isolated spots on the map. Here in Aurora, the green spaces that once defined our

borders are thinning rapidly, especially towards Newmarket and Oak Ridges, as development continues the urban advancement of the GTA northwards, particularly along Yonge Street.

So, I think from a size, population and infrastructure perspective, the ship suggesting Aurora is still a small town has not only sailed, but is far over the horizon.

But apart from sizable population and development numbers, there's another way of looking at small towns, and I think this is the lens through which some people are optimistically peering.

Small towns exhibit a "small town feel".

This is seen through residents getting to know their neighbours, supporting small businesses, volunteering, respecting the environment, exploring the events and activities that the Town and its local groups have to offer, being involved in the community, and having a positive mental outlook.

We may not be able to prevent thousands of people from moving into Aurora over the coming decades, and the resulting crowds, infill developments and increased traffic, but if we can embrace and support the above ideals, we may just be able to hang onto that small town feeling for a little while longer.

Feel free to e-mail Scott at: [machellscorners@gmail.com](mailto:machellscorners@gmail.com)

## THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Should Aurora consider designating a trail as off-leash?

Yes No Unsure

[www.theauroran.com](http://www.theauroran.com)

PREVIOUS POLL

Should Aurora consider Town-wide WiFi?

RESULTS TO DATE	YES	NO	UNSURE
June 1, 2021	21%	79%	0%



**Congratulations to the following award winners:**

- Carol Bartlett
- Doug Bond
- Colin Campbell - Campbell Real Estate Team
- Kate Greavette
- Sheena Griffith
- Max Le Moine
- Lowell McClenny
- David Pilkey
- Pine Tree Potters' Guild
- Jay Saveall - Green Side Up Contracting
- Jane Snape
- Nancy Scott Stanley
- Don Stubbs
- Turtle Tias
- Alex Van Hermert
- Katie Williams

.....

**Congratulations to  
★ Eric McCartney ★  
2021 Citizen of the Year**

**Special Thanks to the  
Community Recognition Awards  
Advisory Committee**

- Mayor Tom Mrakas
  - Erin Cerenzia - Chair
  - Brian North - Co-Chair
  - Diane Buchanan
  - Paul Martin
  - Elaine Martini
  - Jo-anne Spitzer
- .....

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Jennifer Milford, a Personal Support Worker for CHATS (Community & Home Assistance to Seniors) is among the honourees featured in the Portraits of Giving 2021 Exhibition. **Photo by Karen Merk**

## Portraits of Giving's Class of 2021 honours frontline workers

**BY BROCK WEIR**  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Jennifer Milford knew from an early age the heroic work undertaken every day by our frontline workers.

As a young girl, she watched with marvel as nurses went the extra mile caring for her middle sister, who was diagnosed with leukemia aged just 13.

"I wanted to be like them," says Milford. "I wanted to help them and do what I could to make their lives better, longer and healthier."

These formative experiences led to a career as a personal support worker at CHATS (Community & Home Assistance to Seniors), and now as one of the honourees in Portraits of Giving's 2021 photographic exhibition.

An initiative of Richmond Hill photographer Karen Merk, Portraits of Giving has honoured community leaders for the better part of a decade. The travelling exhibitions pay tribute to those who have gone the extra mile in giving back to their communities, in turn making them a better place.

This past year, however, has been extraordinary and the resulting exhibition is extraordinary as well, paying tribute to several of our frontline heroes who have stepped up in the face of the global pandemic – people just like Jennifer.

This year's exhibition honours 14 individuals and teams, including Aurora resident Kristen Dajia who was honoured for her work with the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame, and former resident Andre Crawford who was singled out for his long-time work with the York Regional Police, including a term as Deputy Chief.

"It is certainly an honour, but most importantly it recognizes the role and value that personal support workers and other frontline workers bring to community supports and enabling, in our case, older adults to continue to live in their own homes as long as possible," says Christina Bisanz, President & CEO of CHATS. "This kind of initiative really profiles the dedication, compassion and professionalism of frontline workers in supporting the clients in the way that they do."

"The fact that Jennifer was nominated is a testament to the appreciation and

gratitude that our clients have towards a number of frontline staff and Jennifer has demonstrated a particular commitment. We are very proud of Jennifer and what she does day in and day out in providing support and caring for her clients."

For Jennifer, working with CHATS and providing care to her senior clients isn't just a job, it is a passion.

Over the course of the global pandemic, Ms. Milford says she has seen attitudes shift towards frontline workers, particularly gratitude for the work being carried out each and every day.

"We have a diversity of clients where we go in and help them shower, go in and make their meals for the week, and sometimes it is just social support – someone to come in and visit them because they basically have no family or, in the pandemic, families can't get in to see them," she says. "It is supporting families by giving care to their family member so that they can live alone, go in grocery shopping, or just get away for a little bit and have some time alone."

"We have seen hostility against us because our clients are frustrated and they want to go out and see their family members. We get the brunt of it, but, on the other hand, we also get the benefit that they are happy to see us and we try to give them a little extra TLC while we are there in place of the family. We need more PSWs and we need more that care and are not just there for the job and the paycheck but for the clients as well."

In addition to Ms. Milford, Ms. Dajia, and retired Deputy Chief Crawford, additional honourees from York Region's nine municipalities include Raj Sethi (Lifetime Achievement), Deb Kelly (Newmarket), Susan Applebaum & Delmanor Staff (Richmond Hill), Dr. Barb Winslow (King Township), Nisha Punja, Evan MacDonald and Sophia Kotsopolous (Markham), The Longo's Team of Rocco Agostino, Saverio Cipollone, Reno Palermo, and Frank Sangirardi (Vaughan), Mike, Laurie and Crystal Carriere (Georgina), Angel Freedman (Stouffville Chamber of Commerce), Michael Lavee (East Gwillimbury), Shanun Godward (Fire/Paramedic Services), and Naila Varawalla (Young Adult).

For more, visit [merkphotography.com/portraits-of-giving](http://merkphotography.com/portraits-of-giving).

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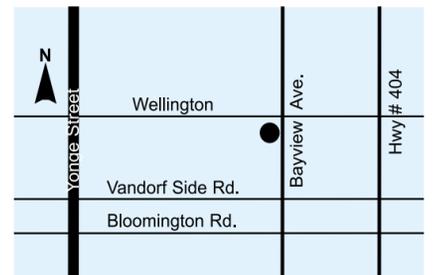


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## Town-wide wi-fi access program to be examined

**Proposal, if approved, would look at models of making wi-fi available across Aurora**

BY BROCK WEIR  
 EDITOR  
 LOCAL JOURNALISM  
 INITIATIVE REPORTER

Municipal staff have been tasked with looking at various models to implement wi-fi access across Aurora.

Council last week gave the green light to a motion from Mayor Tom Mrakas asking for a report back on the possibility of introducing subsidized wi-fi service across Aurora, stating the need for a connected community is greater now than ever before with people working and learning from

home.

“We have seen a lot of residents where they don’t have access to internet and we’re seeing more and more that the internet and broadband in general shouldn’t be a luxury, it should be a necessity,” said Mayor Mrakas. “To me, this is a necessity, this is a service that our residents need, and I think especially moving forward it is something we need to provide.”

While the “ultimate goal” would be to provide Town-wide wi-fi access, there are some steps that can be taken along the way, he added, referencing municipal facilities and outdoor properties like parks.

“Far too many times I have heard stories of...children that are now doing online learning where they are having to get into their parents’

car or walk over to their nearest coffee shop and sit outside with their computer so they can connect to wi-fi and get their work done. To me, that is unacceptable. I think as a Town our responsibility is to make sure everyone has equal access and with more things being online, from filling out medical forms, to documents, to doing your bank statements...more needs to be done in providing basic wi-fi service for our residents as a necessity.”

While the idea received a mixed reception at the table, Council members agreed that, after raising several concerns, a report into the possibilities was a good step forward.

Councillor Wendy Gaertner, for instance, said she “loved the idea” with regards to learning, banking, and other basic needs, she asked that further information on “security implications” be included in the report. Councillor Rachel Gilliland also sought assurances that whatever the Town came up with wasn’t “doing double duty” with initiatives explored by other levels of government – and the report included implications on the taxpayer.

“Are you saying you want us, the taxpayer, to be subsidizing wi-fi for the people in our Town who can’t afford wi-fi?” she asked, with Mayor Mrakas responding it is about “providing a service level that our residents would expect.”

Councillor John Gallo also said he was prepared to support the motion, but said there were a lot of unanswered questions that needed to be addressed before he could support any concrete program.

“I want facts and statistics because, if we’re trying to solve a problem, I want to make sure we’re solving a problem that exists...and if this is the best solution to solve that problem,” he said. “There is no question that in today’s day and age, it is a necessity, but I need to understand the issue and whether or not this is the best way to solve [it]. If we do this, [does this mean] everybody cancels their wi-fi at home and logs onto the Town? I don’t think we have the answer to that, but I am looking forward to seeing what comes out of it and what other municipalities are doing.”

For Councillor Harold Kim, in

addition to the above-mentioned concerns, it was a matter of cost. A report coming forward should have various options, including price structures and options for public-private partnerships.

“Whenever we talk about wi-fi, the first thing that comes to mind are services to low-income and under-served populations of our municipality,” he said, also noting that Town-wide wi-fi could bolster civic engagement. “In this day and age of the pandemic where people use and need internet not only for education but also for medical reasons, to talk to one’s family doctor, the internet has become very sensitive in terms of a much-needed integral service.”

Just before the unanimous vote, Mayor Mrakas said it has long been mentioned at the Association of Municipalities Ontario and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities that wi-fi is no longer a luxury; as a necessity, he said it is something that should be provided by a municipality if it is cost-effective and “makes sense from a financial standpoint.”

“We provide services to our residents,” he said. “This is another service. It has become more apparent that it is a need, then it becomes more apparent it is a service we need to take a hard look at how we can provide this service to our residents so all residents have access.

“I think what we’ll come to learn is this is not about providing access for people to stream shows, watch movies, or any of that... this is to provide access so people can read news, submit forms online, and [perform] just basic web browsing and messenger apps so they can stay connected. Ultimately, the more engaged, the more informed our public is and our residents are, the more active and the more knowledgeable they are and the better off we are as a community. That is our ultimate goal: to make sure our community is the best community. This is what we’ll achieve by moving forward in this direction. I am looking forward to getting answers to all of the questions you have provided today and have staff come back to us [with answers and] we can move forward in a positive direction.”

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# Find your rainbow, voice at virtual York Pride Fest

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Pride Month is now underway in York Region following the launch of the second-annual Digital Pride, hosted by York Pride Fest.

The celebration got underway with a launch party on June 2, featuring an impressive line-up of artists showcasing various styles of drag, dancing and more – but, if you missed it, there are plenty of further opportunities to get in on the fun.

On June 9, young 2SLGBTQ+ participants will have the chance to have their voices “heard loud and clear” through a conversation on real lived experiences.

“Youth within the Greater Toronto Area and York Region will share real fears, constructive criticisms, and their feelings on the ever-changing landscape in our communities,” say organizers. “With a Federal Election fast approaching, we want you to speak up and be heard. This is the time to be unapologetically truthful, to spark change, and make strides to raise awareness on ongoing issues in our community. Some topics that will be up for discussion will involve: homophobia, transphobia, racism, mental health, education, work and many more important things that affect how we grow, work and play in our communities. This program will accomplish this through various techniques such as music, poetry, dance, spoken word, debate and art.”

A “Topsy Planting Event” will take place for the 19+ crowd, which melds mixology with a bit of gardening.

“Have you ever wondered why the plants in your house don’t last? It’s because you’re not having enough fun while planting!” say organizers. “You might think gardening isn’t fun or easy, but the truth is – well, we’ll just have to show you how fun it could be.

“With a little dedication and determination, you can grow so many cool and tasty things in your backyard. Join us out back as we take four total strangers on a tipsy journey through the magical garden of pride. This wild adventure involves making special mixed drinks from herbs right out of your garden, interactive challenges that will keep you on the edge of your seat, and some important life lessons about nurturing the things that matter.”

This activity will require the purchase of an “experience kit” sold through Yorkpride.ca with proceeds benefiting programs that support 2SLGBTQ+ camp programs.

Experience boxes, this time for kids ages five and up, will also figure into the “Colour Me Rainbow” event slated for June 14, an event which organizers say will become “a pride classic for years to come.”

“See what happens when young creative minds get into crafts, storytelling and singing. The show will feature culture around respecting others, hands-on activities, and using your voice to be heard through the format of music, dance, and stories. Put your parents to bed early, get into the cookie jar and celebrate with us. Hosted by kids, for kids – no parental permission required!”

For more, including activities in the second half of June, visit YorkPride.ca.

Check next week’s edition of The Auroran for more ongoing programs.

# Beaver trapping nixed in favour of dam removal, Council decides

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora will discontinue beaver trapping, a method to maintain the flows of local water courses and stormwater ponds, in favour of dam removal.

Council made the decision last week following a motion from Mayor Tom Mrakas – and concerns from members of the public.

In his motion, Mayor Mrakas called on staff to discontinue trapping and instead follow dam removal “as it is the only humane option available to the municipality at this time,” while also exploring alternate ways to manage water levels.

“For me, it comes down to one simple point: what we’re doing right now is directing staff to discontinue any return to trapping and while we discontinued it, if it is necessary, that we implement dam removal and during that time we work with the Conservation Authority (Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority – LSRCA) on how we can explore alternative water level management controls to ensure it is in compliance with the ECA (Environmental Compliance Approval).

“We need to make sure it is done

properly, that there are safeguards in place that not only protect our infrastructure but do it in a way that we can ensure the safety of [the beavers]. I think ultimately we have had those conversations that no one wants to see beavers get trapped, but further to that, we need to have a conversation as well about expertise.

“Not only did I speak with the Conservation Authority, I have also spoken to experts, whether [from] York University or some other professors as well. They stated too that when it comes to the Ministry of Natural Resources and their philosophy as far as beavers cannot be trapped and transported... they say that it is not feasible, ‘you can’t do that, that it shouldn’t be done.’ A lot of people are saying that that philosophy is outdated and that [it] needs to be revisited and looked at. This is some of the work staff need to do through the Conservation Authority, working in partnership in how we can get to a place to ensure our infrastructure remains safe while we have a proper mitigation strategy.”

It is, he said, a short-term strategy and a long-term plan will need to be hammered out by municipal staff, the LSRCA, and the Ministry of the Environment.

Councillor Wendy Gaertner agreed

with the Mayor’s position that this was not an issue that was unique to Aurora and said she too hoped revised guidance would impact all of York Region’s “Northern Six” municipalities.

“It is not just the pond at St. John’s and Bayview; sadly, this is a general problem with our ponds,” she said. “We do have to realize the reason the Province is involved in this is because there are very strict technical parameters that are required in order to do what the ponds are supposed to do, which is protect people, property and infrastructure. They serve a very important function. It is not an easy fix [but] this is a start.”

Councillor Rachel Gilliland also said this was a good start in being “a little more proactive.”

“I am also happy to hear [that] this is a short-term strategy because we really don’t know what the result of this will look like,” she said. “There are other municipalities in North America where they have taken different measures...and the consequences might be different. I am really interested to see what the outcome is [and] I would really like it to be a positive one. Let’s see what staff come back with and hopefully an alternative method will work... just to move the needle forward.”

Continued on page 10

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# Off-leash dog trail considered by Council

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

If you've enjoyed walking your dog along Aurora's trails but have wished for the chance to let them off-leash for a run, you might soon have some options.

Council last week unanimously voted in favour of a motion from Councillor Wendy Gaertner calling on staff to investigate a pilot project designating one trail and park in Aurora as off-leash during designated times.

"It has been exceedingly difficult to find land in Aurora to accommodate off-leash dog parks," said Councillor Gaertner in her motion. "It may be viable and effective to permit off-leash use of some trails and parks during dedicated times."

Although her fellow Council members

expressed concerns over safety as well as potential environmental impacts moving forward with the vision, they agreed that, at the very least, it was an idea worth exploring.

First out of the gate to support the motion was Councillor Rachel Gilliland who said she "fully supported" off-leash dog park and trail areas, noting this was an issue previously addressed by Council. Councillor Sandra Humfryes also offered her support, stating that some other municipalities have gone down this road and it has proved successful.

"I think the key there is an understanding which trails [are designated so the public] when they walk in there is clear signage and everyone knows what they are walking into," said Councillor Humfryes. "There have to be some real thought processes. Sometimes trails adjoin, there are different

sections to take. You have to be careful and have one that will, perhaps, go from one end to the other that doesn't cause any of those surprises or issues of concern."

A similar view was offered by Councillor Harold Kim who said communication needs to go hand-in-hand with any future policies for dog-owners and others who use the trails for exercise and recreation respectively.

"I am open to seeing what options staff come back with," he said.

From a safety perspective, Councillor Michael Thompson raised several issues.

"Every once in a while, we see emails from residents who walk the trails and talk about getting almost runover by bicycles and different incidents happening on the trails," he said. "I do have a little bit of a concern with regards to using the trails as off-leash or runway tracks for dogs and other pets. If residents are feeling they are not always safe walking the trails, I would be concerned with the dogs as well. The park is less of an issue for me than the trails, but I want to make that comment in advance [of a report]."

Trails over parks were also more of a concern for Mayor Tom Mrakas who said that dog owners who walk their pets on leashes already experience issues from off-leash pets on trails, regardless of whether or not it is allowed.

"When you're looking at the safety of your own dog, I think there are some concerns," he said. "Even from the safety perspective, we have to look at the

connectivity of our trails. The thing that makes our trails so amazing is they connect from one end to the other. If we were to take one section and basically remove it for certain periods of time, maybe some people will say, 'I don't want to go in there at that time.' If they walk the trail, they have to move out, walk the roads, and get back into another area to enter back [into the trail system]. You lose that connectivity. I think that is a little bit of a problem, but I would like to see what staff bring back and where they could go with this and see if it can be achieved."

Staff members didn't wait for a report to weigh in, however, with Director of Operations Al Downey suggesting several factors possibly getting in the way of making an off-leash trail a reality.

"There are numerous complications with regards to this motion that would affect wildlife, so we need to do some consultation," said Mr. Downey. "It's a bylaw issue we need to address and make sure we are compliant with the bylaw or what amendments we would have to make to the bylaw. It's a little more complicated than just picking an area and saying, 'Let's try that out.' Once you allow an animal to leave the trail and go into the woods, we have no idea whether or not that animal is going to be protected, so there are concerns with regards that we do our very best that as long as you are on the trail it is safe."

Mr. Downey estimated it could take up to three months for a report to come back to Council.



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## Beaver trapping nixed in favour of dam removal

From page 9

In voicing his support for the motion, Councillor Harold Kim said it has been mentioned that what might work elsewhere might not work in Aurora – and vice versa – but all methods are worth exploring.

"I am glad we have this motion here that we can more definitively confirm whether alternative methods will work

and if staff can procure an expert... so we would know definitely what our next step is," he said. "Hopefully it will be about preservation of life and we can do this expeditiously and there will be a long-term solution, but I will wait for the report to come back to see what our options are."

The motion was approved unanimously.

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Week of June 3, 2021



## Former Villanova Student off to Macclesfield F.C.



Celeste Gordon (far right) pictured here with Michelle Obama and Celeste's mother Shernett Martin during the former First Lady's book tour event back in 2017. **Contributed photo**

By Robert Belardi

When Celeste Gordon was just five years old, her father would kick around the soccer ball with her. Her interest was soon evident. She loved the moves and the tricks. The competition is what drove her into the game. But what she had developed along the way was an immense amount of talent and proficiency on the field.

"I was the leading scorer on my teams when I was eight. I scored 50 goals in the entire season. I grew to love it so much," Gordon said.

The 17-year-old Vaughan native and former Villanova student officially committed to Macclesfield F.C. in Cheshire, England on Victoria Day. She will be attending the University of Central Lancashire.

When she began in Vaughan's system, eventually moving over to the Woodbridge Strikers rep program, Gordon had everything coaches wanted in a forward. She had an innate ability to not only just find the goal, but she was well adept in finding open gaps between defences on the pitch.

The indefatigable forward, knew exactly how to play the position and watching and idolizing the country's top players had a part to play in that.

"I idolized Canada's women's national team when they won in 2012 Olympic Games. Neymar was my favourite player growing up, as well as Christine Sinclair. I looked up to these people, I watched them every day to learn new tricks and develop my game."

At the age of 13, Gordon went into Provincial level of soccer in the province on the cusp of also attending Villanova for high school.

Following a short term at Villanova and competing in their soccer program at the school, the young Gordon made the move to Everest Academy in Grade 10.

She worked with future NCAA athletes in the program and, with fellow students, would train to become stronger both physically and mentally.

The principal of Everest Academy, and father of New Jersey Devils P.K. Subban, Karl Subban was an excellent mentor for Gordon in her experience at the school, according to her mother Shernett.

Gordon was also chosen in 2017 as one of the few girls in York Region to have the opportunity to meet Michelle Obama at the Economic Club.

Gordon was one of 12 girls in the GTA who showed great interest in uplifting Black girls in the world. She reached out to the organizers and received 11 tickets to attend Obama's book tour event at the time.

It was at Everest that Gordon joined North Mississauga's U-21 in League 1 women's program in 2019. Over the course of the rest of her high school career, Gordon would play high-level soccer while also maintaining a 3.5 GPA. Pre-COVID-19, she was also asked to try out for the Jamaican national women's team.

"Playing for a national team has always been my dream. My coach in Mississauga recommended to get my paperwork started and see where it takes me. We chose Jamaica because that's my heritage. Both of my parents are born there," Gordon said.

Unfortunately, she couldn't pursue the opportunity. COVID-19 shut down the world and Gordon never had the chance to join Jamaica.

"I really want to get to the national level. Whether that is Canada or Jamaica. I feel that when I do go to England, more opportunities will come and I will be able to pursue that. I've been playing competitively since I was nine years old."

Gordon chuckled when asked if she had to choose to represent Canada or Jamaica in the future. If it came down to that, she speculates she would choose Canada in that situation.

Up until now, having received 12 scholarship opportunities worth over \$200,000, deciding to join Macclesfield F.C. didn't come easy. She made her choice over Bluefield State College in Virginia and Florida Memorial University.

"Soccer is really big in the U.K. Being around that environment will really motivate me. They also have really great coaches there, some that coach with Manchester United. I feel like with their knowledge my game will improve," Gordon said.

"The campus is beautiful. The women's program is just starting up and with me being a freshman I can add a lot to the team. They have strong academic programs as well."

Gordon is expected to report to Macclesfield in the Fall.

She would like to thank her parents, her

coaches, her classmates and her teammates for amplifying her experience and motivating

her to be a better person every day.

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# Tireless volunteers honoured at

**BY BROCK WEIR**  
 EDITOR  
 LOCAL JOURNALISM  
 INITIATIVE REPORTER

The last 15 months of the global pandemic has underscored the importance of volunteers stepping up to lend a helping hand.

They have volunteered with seniors to ensure bodies and minds stay active, used their creative talents to benefit community organizations, and even put in the hours to help critters safely cross the road.

On Monday night, they were honoured as community builders at Aurora's 2021 Community Recognition Awards.

Held virtually for the second year in Aurora, the ceremony was streamed online and hosted by Mayor Tom Mrakas, who paid

tribute to the value volunteers bring to the community.

"This past year has no doubt been tough," he said. "The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every single one of us, but it has also been a year where community members have come together to provide support, kindness and much-needed help to everyone. This year has been a long year requiring a lot of stamina and resilience, which Aurorans have demonstrated daily.

"Volunteers, through their dedication, creativity, kind hearts and passion have created a model for others to follow. Our volunteers ensure that we can take care of each other and still be able to look forward with hope that Aurora with its small-town charm will continue to be strong and innovative as we

work together building our beautiful future."

Individual awards were handed out for senior volunteerism, environmentalism (Green Award), contributions to arts and culture, community leadership, for being a good neighbour, improving community safety, for being models of good business, and, in the case of Max Le Moine, putting himself forward as a youth volunteer.



Accepted by Flo, et al.

## GREEN AWARD – TURTLE TIAS

The Green Award is presented to individuals, businesses or community organizations that support the protection, preservation, sustainability or conservation of our natural environment. This year's award goes to a group who have been working on the ground to improve the environment one turtle at a time.

"The Turtle Tias, comprised of five dedicated residents – Pippette Eibel, Wendy Kenyon, Flo Leava, Rebecca Prins, and Maricella Saucedo – have devoted countless hours of volunteer work to protect the snapping turtle and painted turtle populations in our community. The group places nesting cages around Town to ensure the safety of turtle eggs after a female snapper has laid her clutch, protecting against predators and other harmful elements. The cages are regularly monitored by the group to ensure they are not disturbed by animals. The hatchlings are directed away from busy streets towards the safety of the nearest wetlands. The wellbeing of the adult female turtles and their hatchlings is critical. The group successfully released well over 400 hatchlings, and their impactful work continues to make a difference for the environmental welfare of our Town."

## YOUTH VOLUNTEER AWARD – MAX LE MOINE

Le Moine is this year's recipient of the Youth Volunteer Award, an honour presented to citizens up to the age of 18 who have made significant contributions to their community and serve as a positive leader.

"Max is an extraordinary young person who understands the value of giving back to the community through volunteering," reads Max's citation. "Max was a valued member of the 5<sup>th</sup> Aurora Scouting Group, a sideperson at Trinity Church Aurora, [and] a Best Buddy at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School. He is also a member of the Town of Aurora's Accessibility Advisory Committee. No matter the role, Max always has a smile on his face and is eager to lend a helping hand with his insight or creativity. Max is an exemplary member of our youth community and demonstrates every day that there is no limit to what one can achieve when you are passionate about the work at hand."



## SENIOR VOLUNTEER AWARD – JANE SNAPE

"Jane is a vital part of the Aurora Seniors' Centre, continuously volunteering her time with the Aurora Seniors Association (ASA). Whether she is coordinating pickleball or on the court as a coach, leading the puzzle delivery program, in the kitchen, or at the reception desk, Jane is always willing to help with a friendly smile. During the pandemic, Jane has continued to provide her unwavering volunteer efforts to older adults and seniors in our community. Jane is a valued member of the ASA Re-Opening Committee, where her role is to actively conduct research into COVID-19 protocols, draft operating procedures and acts occasionally as committee secretary. Outside of the ASA, Jane also made face masks for distribution to family and friends and donated nearly 100 masks to the Aurora Seniors' Centre. Jane's cheerful attitude, skills, and work ethic make her a pleasure to be around and an exceptional volunteer."



Accepted by Guild President Hazel McPhee

## ARTS & CULTURE AWARD – PINE TREE POTTERS GUILD

Each year, the Arts & Culture Award is presented to an individual or group that has enhanced the community through the support or promotion of culture, music, visual, performing, or literary arts. This year's recipients, the Pine Tree Potters Guild, have helped mold the community with each ball of clay thrown on their wheels.

"For more than four decades, the Pine Tree Potters' Guild has been an instrumental part of the Aurora Arts & Culture Community. The Guild frequently contributes to cultural events and arts programs such as The Queen's York Rangers' Recognition Tile Project, the Royal Canadian Legion's Raise the Roof campaign, and assisting local Boy Scouts and Girl Guides to earn their required badges. As a fundraising entity, Empty Bowls Aurora has been delivered by the Pine Tree Potters' Guild since 2010. In support of a wide variety of local charities, most recently Aurora's Welcoming Arms and Inn from the Cold, handmade bowls are filled with soup from local chefs for community members to enjoy. To date, the Empty Bowls

Continued on page 13

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# Community Recognition Awards

From page 12

Aurora program has raised over \$200,000 for those in need. The Guild and its members continue to strive towards the advancement of arts and culture in Aurora.”



**COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD  
KATE GREAVETTE**

Aurora’s Community Leadership Award is presented to those who have “significantly enhanced” the Town through their contribution, commitment and leadership in charitable giving, civic engagement, community events or community spirit. This year’s recipient, Kate Greavette, has worked to underscore the issue of food insecurity both here in Aurora and across York Region.

“Kate inspires members of the community with her passion and commitment to take on a leadership role wherever and whenever she is needed. Through her work with the York Region Food Network, Kate has taken the lead to provide a healthy, accessible and sustainable food system to families and individuals in Aurora. Through the pandemic, she has raised public awareness on several issues impacting our community through creative programming, outreach, and advocacy initiatives. Kate has supported Big Brothers Big Sisters of York and other community partners by providing interactive cooking nights and sharing her creative input on a number of mentorship programs. Kate utilizes her platform to showcase what it means to be a good leader and continually give back to those in our community who need it most.”



**GOOD NEIGHBOUR AWARD – DAVID PILKEY**

In any community, good neighbours stand out from the crowd – and the Town’s Good Neighbour Award is presented to someone who embodies that spirit. This year’s recipient, David Pilkey, embodies this spirit with a musical note.

“David has been a good neighbour to so many Aurora residents for decades. He has played an instrumental role in our community by sharing his musical talent and always being there for those in need. Through his years of volunteerism at Aurora United Church, David has performed during services and has been an active participant in the choir and other large ensembles. David’s live performances became a staple of community church events such as the Out of the Cold Breakfast. His kind-heartedness for those young and old, long-time residents, or those new to the community, was undeterred as he always finds the time and energy for others. David is always there to offer a ride to and from an event or meaningful conversation, if the situation calls for it. David’s understanding of the needs within our community makes him an exemplary good neighbour.”



**COMMUNITY SAFETY AWARD – NANCY SCOTT STANLEY**

“In her role as crossing guard, Nancy always goes above and beyond to ensure the safety of students and every member of her community who crosses her path daily. No matter the weather, Nancy is there with a smile on her face to greet each of her neighbours by name and wish them the best for the day ahead. The simple act of kindness is cherished by parents in the neighbourhood, as it has become an invaluable part of their walk to school routine. Nancy’s actions have developed a high level of trust and instills confidence within each family knowing she always has their safety and best interests in mind. Nancy exemplifies kindness and selflessness to ensure our communities feel protected.”



**GOOD BUSINESS AWARD – COLIN CAMPBELL (CAMPBELL REAL ESTATE)**

The Good Business Award is presented to businesses that have shown a commitment to “assisting Aurora’s economic prosperity, corporate responsibility, and community involvement” through the support of charitable causes, events, or programs.

“The Campbell Real Estate Team, led by Colin Campbell, gives back with a great deal of compassion and love for our community. In 2019, the team, in collaboration with Curtis White and the Aurora Superstore, initiated two programs: The Back Pack Initiative and Feeding Families for the Holidays. Looking out for those who were less fortunate, both of these programs were geared towards providing families and individuals with items that some may take for granted. The Back Pack Initiative provided backpacks and essential school supplies for students [for] them to succeed in the classroom. The other program, Feeding the Families for the Holidays, donated turkey dinners during the holiday season. Both of these initiatives surpassed their initial targets and the Campbell Real Estate Team hopes to continue this trajectory into the future.”



**INCLUSIVITY AWARD – JAY SAVEALL**

“Jay Saveall is President of Green Side Up Contracting and over the past year has showcased his community spirit and desire to give back to his hometown. He has made significant monetary donations in support of community initiatives, which makes Aurora a more

accessible and inclusive place for all. Jay donated \$7,000 to Welcoming Arms to increase the accessibility of meals the foundation provides. At Green Side Up Contracting, Jay has incorporated a ‘give back strategy’, where \$500 from each project of \$10,000 or more is set aside to be donated to food banks in each of their respective communities. Through their generosity and kind acts, Jay and Green Side Up Contracting continually aim to make Aurora a better place to live.”

*Next Week: Long-standing volunteers step into the spotlight.*



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2021 Citizen of the Year Eric McCartney is celebrated by great-nieces Amelia, Eliah and Marina.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

## Eric McCartney named Aurora's 2021 Citizen of the Year

From page 1

Toronto Real Estate Board, the Aurora Artists' Studio Tour, the Ontario Real Estate College, and the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, [Eric] has been passionate about helping his neighbours with grocery shopping, driving them to appointments, shovelling their driveways and putting out their garbage," Mayor Mrakas continued. "He has provided assistance at COVID-19 vaccination clinics and recently purchased numerous commemorative benches along Willow Farm Trail, one of which is in memory to the people who died from COVID-19 and to the dedicated healthcare workers who are there to care for them.

"Eric's compassion, dedication, commitment and vision for our Town is inspiring. His continued efforts have made a positive impact on our community. Eric has a network of strong supporters and neighbourhood connections that are always eager to be in his presence. Thank you, Eric, for serving our community and generously giving your time to Aurora. Your passion for everything about Aurora, especially during this pandemic year, serves as a reminder to provide hope and support for others through adversity and times of trouble. It will also inspire our local residents to give more, do more, and help others in our community and within our social circles. Your work in Aurora is truly indicative of your love for this Town and our residents."

His contributions to the Aurora Chamber of Commerce were recognized by Sandra Ferri, the Chamber's President & CEO. She praised him as one of their "go-to" volunteers" who "continually offers his time and help without any hesitation."

"Eric has volunteered for a number of years at the Aurora Chamber Home Show – assisting vendors during their set-up and tear-down – and on more than one occasion when the weather had not been ideal, he always showed up with a smile and ready to help. He has also supported the Aurora Chamber Business Excellence Awards for many years, spending time reviewing nomination submissions and interviewing businesses.

"Eric is someone that can always be counted on – whether it is standing in a snowstorm assisting our Home Show vendors or being outside in the hot sun assisting our street festival vendors!"

His work with the Aurora Studio Tour and the community at large was also celebrated by Tour co-founder Christine Valentini who hailed Mr. McCartney as "a truly extraordinary fellow."

"Eric is a passionate, efficient, and knowledgeable advocate for community service and is undoubtedly one of the most helpful, socially-conscious and caring persons we know," she said. "For many years, while walking his dog, he adopted three parks in our neighbourhood and regularly ensures that they – and the boulevards and walkways – are

kept safe and litter-free. With his dog, Porter, he was a St. John Therapy Dog volunteer with over 1,000 hours of donated time, as well as OSPCA and CHATS until Porter died. Now, he is patiently training his new dog, Bro, to take to Porter Place (shelter) and walks the neighbourhood daily with him. He shovels snow, looks after homes, picks up medications and food for others who are unable to do so for themselves and watches over our neighbourhood like a hawk."

Added Councillor Harold Kim: "The main attribute that impresses me the most about Eric is his love of people and community; his desire to speak on behalf of people who cannot speak or are afraid to speak up for what is right. Eric is not intimidated by anyone. He will take on anyone and any corporation that is causing the problem or is holding up the solution.

"His skills do not end with committee

and community volunteer work. He also projects a warm, cheerful attitude in our meetings and wherever he goes. I have seen him resolve conflicts with remarkable patience and admirable tact. In the community, he goes out of his way to help people in need by organizing charity drives each year, and participating in the Therapy Dog Program. He loves people, works hard, and always tries to lift the spirits of those around him."

This was a sentiment Mr. McCartney shared with The Auroran after receiving the award.

"When I am asked to assist with different things, I do my best to and I think it is personally important just to be kind and thoughtful to anyone you meet," he said. "If they need assistance – or the community – do what you can. We want this pandemic over with, so let's pitch in and do what we can."



### Getting Things Done

Mayor Tom Mrakas

Last week at Council, we had a few motions for approval, including investigating Town-wide WiFi and reviewing the proclamation policy, which all passed unanimously.

I would, however, like to focus on the motion regarding discontinuing beaver trapping.

This motion was important, as we know almost all municipalities currently employ beaver trapping as a last resort to remove a beaver from a stormwater management pond when all else has failed. The issue with the ponds is beavers, as we all know, are hard workers, they get things done! They begin by building a lodge and then begin to work on building a dam. This truly is beautiful and we all love to watch wildlife in their environment, but building a dam in a stormwater management pond leads to flooding and may cause extensive damage to the infrastructure.

This is something that as a municipality we could not allow to happen as it could put residents' homes in the area at risk of flooding.

So, we need a solution that balances the protection of Town infrastructure and protects against flooding, while ensuring no harm comes to our wildlife. And while the motion immediately discontinues any trapping and implements a dam removal strategy, this is a short-term solution.

As fast as the Town removes the

dam, the beaver works just as fast to build it back. So, staff will be working with LSRCA, as well as consulting with experts in this field, to seek alternative measures such as flow devices that would manage beaver activity and would operate in accordance with the respective Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA).

As I mentioned at the table, this is not an issue that is unique to Aurora. Every municipality in the region struggles with how to humanely address mitigation of potential infrastructure damage due to beaver damming. This work that we as a Town have started will be the beginning of an overall change in how Lake Simcoe watershed municipalities address beaver management. Now that our Town has brought this issue to the forefront, LSRCA will be moving forward with the development of a technical guidance document that will address this issue for all municipalities in the Region.

I am proud that our Council passed this motion unanimously. Once again Aurora is leading the way in change that is positive. A long-term humane solution to beaver damming that will ensure people, property and infrastructure are not at risk of flooding.

And as always, if you have any questions please feel free to contact me directly anytime 416-543-1624. I am here for you.



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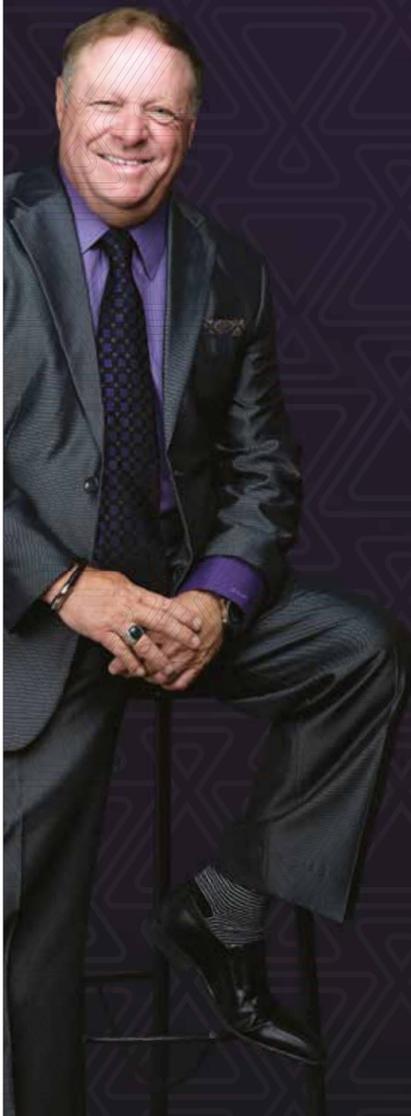
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# “LORI WAS THE MOST AMAZING PERSON I EVER KNEW.”

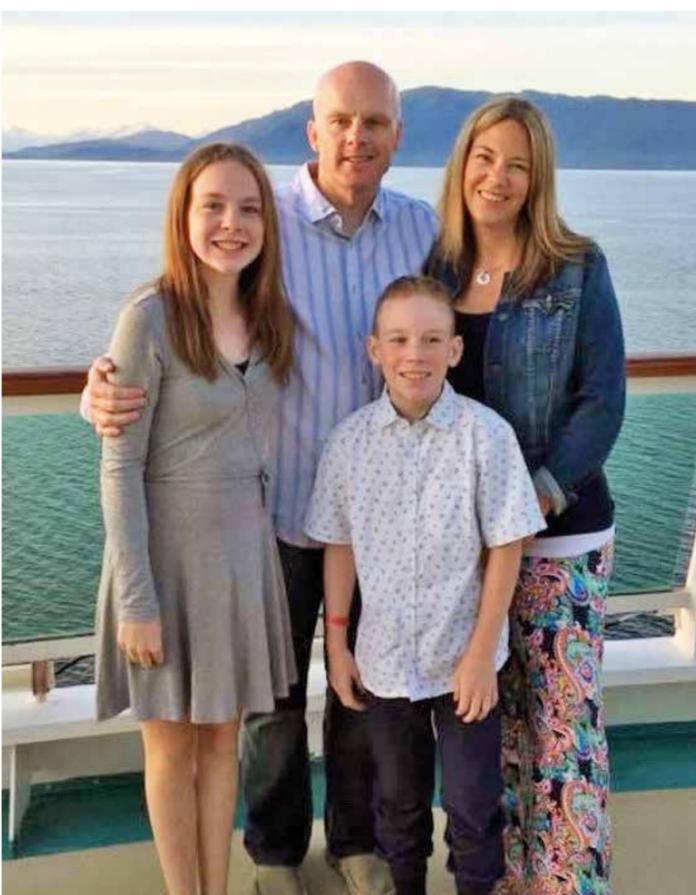
My kids and I will always draw strength from the care and comfort their mom experienced in her last days. My wife Lori was only 44 when she died last fall, leaving me and our two children devastated. Lori and I met at teachers' college in New Brunswick and quickly knew that we wanted to spend our lives together. We had no idea that this would only mean about 22 years.

**Lori was the most amazing person I ever knew.**

Lori was a passionate educator and brought such enthusiasm and energy to her classroom. She helped me to be a better teacher; not only with my own grade 8 students, but also with our children: Grant, 14 and Emily, 16.

Lori was diagnosed with cervical cancer in September 2016 following a routine checkup. Her doctors recommended a grueling 28 rounds of radiation followed by 24 rounds of chemotherapy and 4 rounds of brachytherapy. **They were confident that this intense treatment would rid her of the cancer cells so that she wouldn't need to worry about this ever again.** Lori attacked treatment with the same passion and energy she'd always had. After a full day of painful treatment, she'd be up at the crack of dawn to take Grant to hockey practice or Emily to riding lessons. **Family was everything to Lori. Our family of four banded together to support Lori through her tough treatment and we were ecstatic when she received a clean bill of health in November 2017.**

Although the doctors said she was cancer-free, Lori continued to experience pain. **She knew that something wasn't right.** In December 2017, Lori underwent a procedure that showed what she knew all along – the cancer had spread to her major organs. The doctors told us that additional treatment would only mean added time and that her condition was no longer curable.



Our family motto is: We can do hard things.

Lori continued to live her life to the fullest. **For the following year, Lori continued to create memories at every turn as she managed her health.** Things seemed to be going okay until March 2020 when she developed multiple infections and her kidneys started to fail. It was at that time that we started to talk about hospice.

Lori heard about Margaret Bahen Hospice from her support group and we learned about their bright, warm and welcoming environment. It's not the dark and dreary place we thought a hospice would be. We saw that this is a place where we would be treated like family.

We moved in on a Monday in August. Once she was settled into her room, Lori looked at me and said **“This is it. This is the place where I feel comfortable and in my gut; I know that this is the right place for us”.** She was right. They made us feel at 'home'. On our second night, the staff hosted an ice cream party and came around to make sure Grant and Emily got their sundaes. Everything from the freshly baked goods from the kitchen to the warm blankets from the dryer to the beautiful outdoor gardens; made us feel at ease during one of the most difficult times of our lives.

**As hard as it is to watch your wife slipping away from you, I took comfort in knowing that she was never alone.**

The staff at Margaret Bahen Hospice made us feel like family and knew just how to make a difficult situation more comfortable for our kids, whether it meant encouraging us to bring our dog for a visit or having a staff member sit with Lori while I took a shower. Nothing was ever a bother. **The staff made us feel 'at home' and through their kindness showed us that good memories can be made, even during end-of-life care.**

Today, Grant, Emily and I do our best to take care of each other. They have Lori's caring and curious personality. I see so much of her in them already and I'm thankful for that.

As hard as it is to talk about Lori's death, which is still so fresh in my heart, I'm sharing our story with you because I know that Lori would want to continue helping others. **I hope you will consider a gift in support of Margaret Bahen Hospice to ensure this wonderful place is there for everyone who needs it.**

Sincerely,

Paul Banfield

*P.S. Lori would be over the moon if she knew that her story made an impact on the Hospice she loved so much. Thank you for your generosity today.*



To read more about Lori and Paul's story, visit our website: [www.myhospice.ca/pauls-story/](http://www.myhospice.ca/pauls-story/)

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# Environmental concerns raised by residents in Official Plan review

BY BROCK WEIR  
EDITOR  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As Aurora develops its blueprint for growth and development through 2051, it is an opportunity to get tough on protecting the environment, according to residents.

Last week, residents George Skoulikas and Wendy Kenyon, members of the Henderson Forest Ratepayers Association, delegated to Council calling for stricter environmental protections as part of the Town's revised and updated Official Plan (OP).

According to Mr. Skoulikas, the pressure for urban growth needs to be "balanced against the protection and enhancement of the Town's Natural Heritage System."

"The Provincial Policy Statement and Growth Plan both call for environmental protection, including lands within urban and settlement areas," he said. "Nothing in these plans says that every piece of settlement area should be developed. Climate change is real. We need healthy ecosystems for clean air, clean water, and resilience against the effects of climate change."

The OP, he said, needs "stricter and clear" policies when it comes to ensuring proper buffers to prevent edge effects in these areas, as well as environmental protection zones that are respected and enforced "from the threat of encroachment."

Enforceable policies, he added, need to be in place for tree protection.

"We lose thousands of trees to residential developments each year – an estimated 750 trees have already been removed on the Shining Hill Development along St. John's Sideroad and another 1,450 trees proposed to be removed by the new Shining Hill development to the East. That's 2,200 trees removed from two proposed developments.

"The Growth Management Plan has identified approximately 7,100 units either approved, proposed or in future plans, to accommodate future population growth. How many thousands of trees will be removed to accommodate these developments?"

He also took aim at "offsetting" being included as an option when it came to natural heritage.

"This greatly concerns me since it is the concept of a trade-off of accepting harm on one's natural heritage system that is counterbalanced by beneficial actions elsewhere on a like for like basis," he said. "This practice rarely works. One cannot take the biodiversity and complex ecosystem of one area and replicate it elsewhere. Through empirical data, this practice is recognized in the industry as being extremely controversial and it rarely produces net gains."

Ms. Kenyon underscored these points through the lens of habitat protection.

"Aurora's seen a lot of change since the last OP review. We know that development can bring about many positive things, new housing, jobs, parks, vibrant communities," she said. "Carefully done, this can all be achieved in balance with nature. Sadly, however, this delicate balance is already being lost. For wildlife, including Species at Risk, development usually means loss of habitat and foraging opportunities and immediate displacement. This affects not only wildlife but also humans. We hear reports on our local Facebook pages of the unsuspecting dog walker confronted in the street by a wandering coyote; a displaced deer darting into the road. The bottom line is that the need to maintain a balance between development and habitat protection ultimately affects us all.

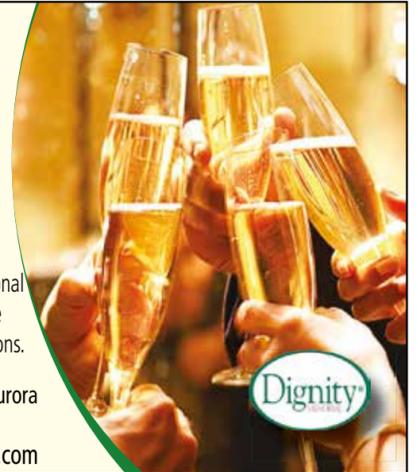
"I'm very concerned about the potential inclusion of 'offsetting'. It's extremely controversial and doesn't address the immediate loss of habitat and connectivity. To give you an example, the realignment of Tannery Creek on the Shining Hill development is an exciting restoration project but, at the same time, it first requires the immediate removal of sensitive wildlife habitat. One has to ask what's going to happen to all the species that currently use this wetland. Offsetting hopes that wildlife will simply pack up and move to the new location. However, it's unfortunately not that simple. For example, in the case of Snapping Turtles, they're not 'wired' to relocate

as their habitat is imprinted in the first few years of their life. The loss of even a few adults can destroy an entire local population."

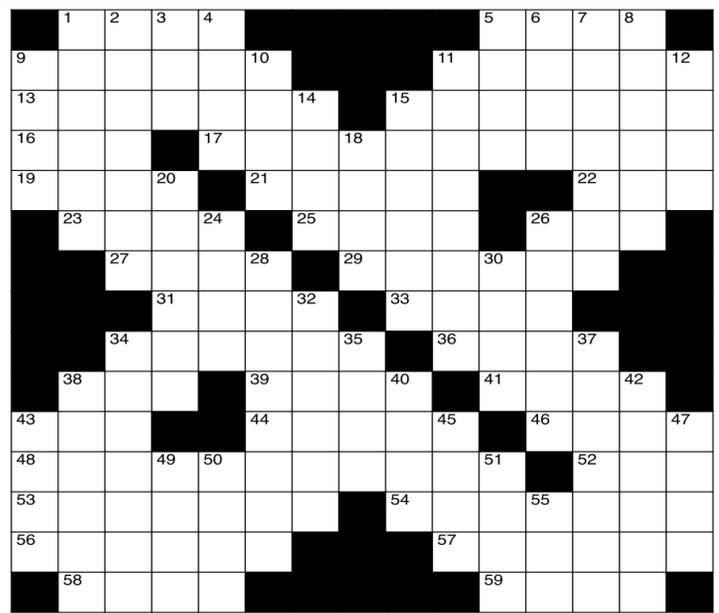
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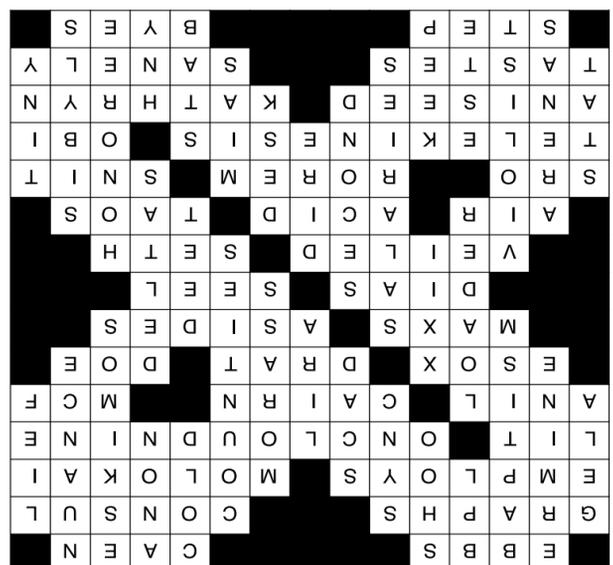


### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Partner to "flows"
- 5. French industrial city
- 9. Diagrams
- 11. Diplomat
- 13. Hires
- 15. Hawaiian island
- 16. Set aflame
- 17. Very happy
- 19. Blue dye
- 21. Small terrier with short legs
- 22. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
- 23. Northern pike genus
- 25. Expression of annoyance
- 26. Female deer
- 27. Casella and Kellerman are two
- 29. Actor's lines to audience
- 31. Days (Spanish)
- 33. Close a person's eyes
- 34. Cloaked
- 36. Comedic actor Rogen
- 38. It's all around us
- 39. Neutralizes alkalis
- 41. Native people of New Mexico
- 43. No seats available
- 44. Famed "Air Music" composer
- 46. Fit of irritation
- 48. Psychic phenomena
- 52. Knicks' first-rounder Toppin
- 53. Seed used in cooking
- 54. "WandaVision" actress Hahn
- 56. Samples food
- 57. In a lucid way
- 58. Stair part
- 59. Adieus

### CLUES DOWN

- 1. Type of moth
- 2. A Christian sacrament
- 3. It lends books to Bostonians (abbr.)
- 4. Turn away
- 5. Impersonal
- 6. Shortly
- 7. Indigenous Alaskans
- 8. Subtle difference of meaning
- 9. Sicilian city
- 10. Put in harmony
- 11. Administrative divisions
- 12. As happily
- 14. Horse mackerel
- 15. Muddy or boggy ground
- 18. Monetary unit of Italy
- 20. Construction site machine
- 24. 22
- 26. Tracts at the mouths of rivers
- 28. Earnings
- 30. Insect repellent
- 32. Runner-up
- 34. Musician
- 35. Serious or urgent
- 37. Esteemed one
- 38. Where rockers play
- 40. Work furniture
- 42. Greek prophetesses
- 43. Quantitative fact
- 45. Missing soldiers
- 47. Minute
- 49. This (Spanish)
- 50. Maintain possession of
- 51. Assault with a knife
- 55. Holiday text message greeting



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**SATURDAY, JUNE 5**

Come out to Town Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. for the Aurora Farmers' Market. With strict COVID-19 protocols in place, the Market vendors are excited to welcome residents and customers once again. For more information, visit [theaurorafarmersmarket.com](http://theaurorafarmersmarket.com).

**THURSDAY, JUNE 10**

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**SATURDAY, JUNE 12**

Come out to Town Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. for the Aurora Farmers' Market. With strict COVID-19 protocols in place, the Market vendors are excited to

# THINGS You Ought To Know

welcome residents and customers once again. For more information, visit [theaurorafarmersmarket.com](http://theaurorafarmersmarket.com).

**SATURDAY, JUNE 19**

Come out to Town Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. for the Aurora Farmers' Market. With strict COVID-19 protocols in place, the Market vendors are excited to welcome residents and customers once again. For more information, visit [theaurorafarmersmarket.com](http://theaurorafarmersmarket.com).

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23**

The Aurora Historical Society's Speakers Series continues virtually this evening with The Bachelorette New France: Bigamy, Incest, Witchcraft and Murder from

7 - 9 p.m. In the 1630s, New France faced a problem: It was populated mainly by men. Join researchers Dawn Kelly & Carol Ulford virtually at the AHS June Speaker Series event for "The Bachelorette New France: Bigamy, Incest, Witchcraft and Murder" where they will tell the fascinating stories of the Filles a Marier and Filles du Roi - the young women encouraged to immigrate to New France in the 17th century to help grow the colony. For more information, including tickets. Visit [aurorahs.com](http://aurorahs.com) or call 905-727-8991.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 26**

Come out to Town Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. for the Aurora Farmers' Market. With strict COVID-19

protocols in place, the Market vendors are excited to welcome residents and customers once again. For more information, visit [theaurorafarmersmarket.com](http://theaurorafarmersmarket.com).

\*\*\*\*

The Aurora Historical Society will host a "Strawberry Tea at Home" from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Break out your fascinators, it's tea time! Treat yourself to a strawberry-themed afternoon tea to celebrate the start of summer. Indulge in freshly baked desserts from local Maple Teahouse and Bake Shop, farm fresh strawberries, a beautiful assortment of teas, and more. While enjoying your goodies, get steeped in the history of tea with a virtual presentation by Lianne Harris, History & Culture Specialist. Tickets are \$31.50 per person and include a Dessert and Tea package as well as the Zoom link for the presentation. Package pick-up is Saturday, June 26, between 10 a.m. - 12 noon. The online portion of the event will take place from 2 p.m. - 3 p.m. For more information, including tickets. Visit [aurorahs.com](http://aurorahs.com) or call 905-727-8991.



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# Former OJHL player wins SPHL MVP

By Robert Belardi

Former Villanova Knight (now the Brampton Admirals) in the OJHL Mason Baptista has taken home the Southern Professional Hockey League MVP award.

Baptista says this is a great award; however, winning the final game of the season would have been nice to go along with it.

"I was honestly so upset after losing the final so it wasn't something I was thinking about until two or three days before. I thought Logan Nelson, a buddy of mine, he finished with the most points," Baptista said.

"Realistically it's a nice award. It's a great award to get. But at the end of the day we didn't win the last game of the year and I thought that was more important. It is a nice recognition of all the work we did during the season."

Baptista joined the SPHL Macon Mayhem during the year from the Rapid City Rush in the ECHL.

"I picked up the Rapid City gig because they needed that veteran spot. But when it didn't work out, I came home and regrouped. I knew the coach, Kevin Kerr, I was a player coach with him. He said, 'Hey man, just come down. There's only five teams; there's a lot of east coast guys playing down here.'"

"I was hesitant, but then I said this was the right opportunity. Otherwise I'm not going to be playing."

Baptista recorded 43 points (17G, 26A) in 38 games played with the club. The Mayhem lost to the Pensacola Ice Flyers 4-2 and 4-1 in the finals.

Next season, Baptista is expected to join the Worcester Railers as a player coach.

Since he was 16-years-old, Baptista has always been an advocate for coaching the sport. He would join hockey camps as a coach in the summer to help people improve their game.

Around the same age, he began making his mark with the Vaughan Vipers in the OJHL and then the Villanova Knights. As captain in 2010-2011, Baptista recorded

84 points (25 G, 59 A). He went on to play at St. Norbert College Div. 3 program before entering the ECHL afterwards.

Now, running his own business with his wife called BapsHockey, his intention is to educate others and prevent other players from making the same mistakes that he did.

"I personally think I would have had a lot more success at the junior level if I wasn't so busy comparing myself to others. It will happen. It's a tendency I didn't even notice and I look back on that and that's what BapsHockey embodies is trying to get players to avoid making the same mistakes that I've done and try to give them the best chance to get them that division one or division three scholarship."

Baptista and his wife, who are spending the summer in Green Bay, WI, will be hosting a lot of online classes. The program he sets up provides players the skills to think and react with speeds at an NHL level.

To get a hold of the North York native, head to Bapshockey.com for more information.

## SENIOR SCAPE

From page 5

After all, having a place for everything and everything in its place can give you peace of mind and greatly reduce those last minute "Where did I put my keys?"

Now, aren't you glad we had this talk? So, grab your garbage bag and enjoy pitching! You can thank me later!

### HAPPENINGS AT THE SENIORS' CENTRE

As you know, the Seniors' Centre is still closed and will be until it is safe to open with a few programs, probably sometime in the Fall. Many seniors are now completely or partially vaccinated, and that is very encouraging. In the meantime, the Seniors' Centre Without Walls is still operating. If you are interested in participating in SCWW, the telephone number to call is 905-727-3123 ext. 3614.

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

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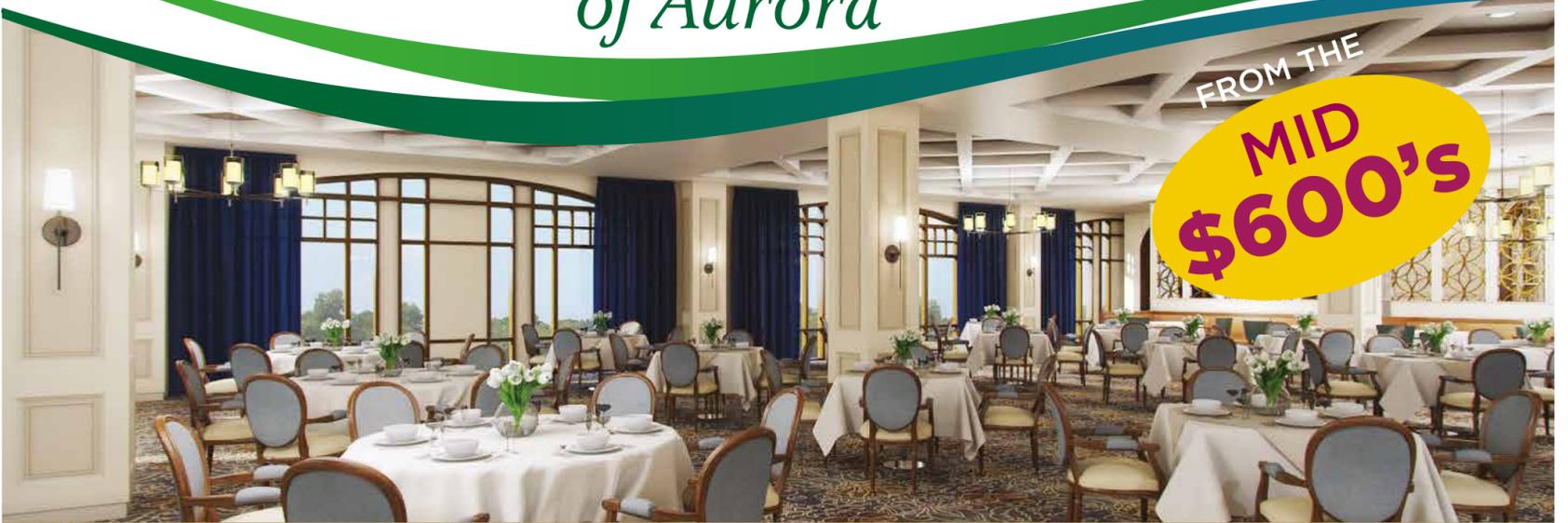
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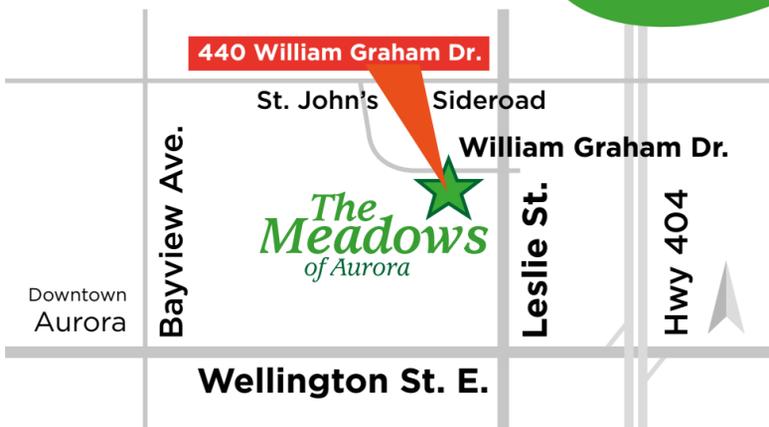


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