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THE AU 20 YEARS RAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 21 No. 34 905-727-3300 TheAuroran.com FREE Week of June 10, 2021 



Every Child Matters: "It's about finding a way to make it right"

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Saying "sorry" doesn't cut it unless it is followed up by "meaningful action."

These were among the powerful words delivered at Town Park on Sunday evening at a socially-distant vigil by the Aurora Black Community in vigil following the discovery of 215 Indigenous children in unmarked graves on the grounds of a residential school in Kamloops, British Columbia.

On June 6, dozens of residents came out to Town Park, many donning orange shirts, a symbolic act of raising awareness of what happened within the residential school system, to mourn the tragic loss recently uncovered and help chart a path forward.

"We're here today to commemorate those 215 children that were dumped in a mass grave like garbage – that hurts a lot," said Traditional Anishinaabe Grandmother Kim Wheatley, who is Turtle

Traditional Anishinaabe Grandmother Kim Wheatley of Turtle Clan, who carries the Spirit Name of "Head or Leader of the Fireflower" leads the community in a show of solidarity following the discovery of the remains of 215 Indigenous children in unmarked graves on the grounds of a Kamloops residential school. Organized by the Aurora Black Community Facebook group, the observance took place Sunday evening at Town Park.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

Continued on page 10

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TOWN OF AURORA Notice Board



Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Thursday, June 10	7 p.m.	Video conference	Committee of Adjustment
Tuesday, June 15	5:45 p.m.	Video conference	Council Closed Session
Tuesday, June 15	7 p.m.	Video conference	General Committee
Wednesday, June 16	7 p.m.	Video conference	Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Racism Task Force
Wednesday, June 16	7 p.m.	Video conference	Aurora Public Library Board
Tuesday, June 22	6:15 p.m.	TBD	Audit Committee
Tuesday, June 22	7 p.m.	TBD	Council
Wednesday, June 23	7 p.m.	Video conference	Environmental Advisory Committee

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

What's Happening



Celebrating Canada and Aurora's History

JUNE 26 TO JULY 3
Interactive Virtual Shows | Community Challenges
Gaming Tournaments and more!

Canada Day Festivities JULY 1

Aurora Farmers' Market | Community Mosaic
Virtual Entertainment and more!

Pre-registration required for some activities.

COVID-19 safety protocols

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What's Happening



Online Skylight Gallery Exhibition Artist: Robert Hinves

For the month of June, Aurora's Online Skylight Gallery is featuring works by artist Robert Hinves in a series called "Historical Look at Ontario Landscapes". The artist enjoys creating paintings that speaks both to himself and to others about the beauty that exists in Ontario landscapes. During his travels around Ontario, Robert has found many fascinating locations that have significant historical value. The artist draws inspiration from these encounters and creates incredibly detailed work; even capturing the eerie energy he must have felt while exploring. Robert works predominately in pen, ink and watercolour, generating a more vibrant look with each piece he creates. The works Robert creates emit feelings of quiet solitude and curiosity.

View this online gallery at aurora.ca/skylightgallery.

Aurora Farmers' Market & Artisan Fair Temporary Road Closure

There will be a temporary road closure at the Aurora Farmers' Market and Artisan Fair as part of the Canada Day festivities.

Road(s) to be temporarily closed:

7 a.m. to 2 p.m. – Wells Street from Mosley Street to fire hydrant on **Thursday, July 1, 2021.**

For more information, please contact Shelley Ware, Special Events Supervisor at 905-726-4762.

What's Happening



Summer Camps 2021 Program Guide

Summer Camps are coming to Aurora! Our Summer Camps 2021 Program Guide is now available for online viewing.

For full details please visit us online at aurora.ca/recguide.

Register online at aurora.ca/eplay.

Recreation at Home

It's easy to stay actively engaged at home with our Recreation at Home webpage. There are activities for all ages.

For more details, please visit aurora.ca/recathome.

Club Aurora Virtual Group Fitness Classes

Join us for a Group Fitness Class in the comfort of your own home by pre-registering for one of our exciting virtual classes.

Learn about our virtual programs and view the schedule online at aurora.ca/fitness.

Seniors' Centre Without Walls (SCWW)

Seniors Centre Without Walls (SCWW) is a free program, providing community outreach to seniors and adults via telephone and Zoom.

Check out the monthly schedule online at aurora.ca/scww.

Bookings Now Open

Second-dose COVID-19 Vaccinations
Now Available for Individuals who
received first dose on or before

APRIL 18, 2021

Appointments required.
Book online at york.ca/ovid19vaccines



The Town of Aurora will open a temporary cooling centre when the Region of York issues a heat warning.

The cooling centre will be open from **10 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

Monday to Sunday at the Aurora Community Centre lobby (1 Community Centre Lane), when a heat warning is advised.



Splash pads are open

Splash pads in Aurora are now open! Nothing beats the heat like a trip to the splash pad and there are plenty of options around town!

Locations include:

- Town Park (49 Wells St.)
- Ada Johnson Park (60 Hartwell Way)
- Trent Park (140 Thomas Phillips Dr.)
- Stewart Burnett Park (1344 Wellington St. E)
- Edward Coltham Park (95 William Graham Dr.)

Splash pads are open daily from **10 a.m. to 9 p.m.** We ask that all residents respect physical distancing guidelines and to sanitize their hands before and after using the amenities. Visit aurora.ca/splashpads for more information.

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YONGE STREET

2021 | moving forward



York Region is improving Yonge Street from Davis Drive to Green Lane, in the Town of Newmarket and Town of East Gwillimbury.

The next phase of utility work is starting June 2021. Impacts to travellers may include lane reductions, sidewalk closures and bus stop relocations.

For more information visit

york.ca/YongeStreet

Accessible formats and additional communication supports are available upon request



Step One of Ontario's new re-opening plan in effect this Friday

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Businesses will once again be able to re-open their doors, following a decision made by the Province on Monday to accelerate its four-step plan towards a return to normalcy.

Originally slated to take effect next Monday, Ontario is bringing Step One forward to 12:01 a.m. on Friday, June 11, following a continued downward trend in new cases of COVID-19.

"Thanks to the ongoing success of Team Ontario's vaccine rollout and the ongoing improvements in public health trends, we are able to enter Step One of the Roadmap and begin to safely and cautiously lift restrictions," said Premier Ford in a statement on Monday. "The only reason we're able to do so is because of the enormous sacrifices made by individuals, families and communities across Ontario.

As we begin to enjoy the benefits of the first step in our roadmap like meeting friends on a patio or visiting your favourite local store, please do so safely by continuing to follow all public health guidelines."

So, what will be open by the end of this week?

Non-essential retail will be opened at 15 per cent capacity with no restrictions on the goods that can be sold. Essential and other selected retail will be permitted at 25 per cent capacity, again with no restrictions on the goods that can be sold.

Outdoor dining will once again be open to four people per table with exceptions for larger households, and indoor religious services, rites or ceremonies, including wedding and funeral services, will be allowed at 15 per cent capacity.

Outdoor social gatherings and organized public events will be permitted with a maximum of 10 people. Outdoor fitness classes and group personal training will be allowed for groups of up to 10,

along with individual/team sport training at the same limits.

Day camps will be allowed to operate with appropriate safety guidelines in place and overnights at campgrounds and sites, including Ontario Parks can be booked again.

Although Ontario initially targeted hitting Step One on June 14, it hinged on hitting vaccine milestones: 60 per cent of adults with at least one dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine. As of June 6, 72 per cent of Ontarians 18+ had received their first dose.

"Before entering Step One, the Province also needed to see continued improvement in key public health system indicators," said the Government of Ontario. "During the period of May 25 - 31, the Provincial case rate decreased by 35.1 per cent. As of June 6, the

number of patients with COVID-19 in ICUs is 497, including 31 patients from Manitoba, as compared to 687 two weeks ago. The Province's situation is currently exceeding the best-case-scenario presented in recent modelling, which indicated the Province would reach below 1,000 new daily infections by June 30, 2021. The Province expects these trends to continue over the coming days before entering Step One."

Added Health Minister Christine Elliott: "Thanks to the tremendous efforts of every Ontarian, beginning June 11 we will be able to cautiously lift public health measures in the settings we know are safest. While this is exciting news, as we move to enter Step One... it remains critical that all Ontarians continue to follow public health advice and roll up their sleeves to receive the vaccine."

Accelerated vaccine schedule brings second doses to 70+

43-year-old woman is community's 48th loss to virus

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Ontario continues to accelerate the eligibility for individuals looking to secure their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

On Friday, following a decision made Wednesday by the Region of York, all Ontarians born in 1951 or earlier, as well as those who received their first doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines on or before April 18, were eligible to book their second doses.

Helping to speed things along are 4.7 million doses of Pfizer expected to arrive in Ontario this month, with a further 3.54 million doses in July.

"This reliable and increased supply of vaccines has allowed the Province to rapidly expand access to vaccines in all public health units and through various channels, including mass immunization clinics, hospital clinics, pharmacies and primary care settings, providing convenient access across Ontario," said the Government in a statement.

The new schedule took effect on Monday morning at 8 a.m.

Those who received their first Pfizer or Moderna shots on or before April 18 are now eligible to book an appointment for a mass vaccination clinic.

"Beginning on June 4, 2021, these groups are eligible to receive their accelerated second dose appointment through pharmacies and primary care settings participating in the vaccine rollout. In addition, individuals

who received their first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine and are opting to receive either a second dose of AstraZeneca or a mRNA vaccine can now schedule their second dose appointment at a participating pharmacy."

Previously, the Ontario government tentatively scheduled 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.

AURORA STATISTICS

A 43-year-old woman is Aurora's 48th death attributed to COVID-19.

Her death at Southlake Regional Health Centre was announced by York Region Public Health on Wednesday, June 2, after she lost her battle on May 28. She first tested positive for the virus on Sunday, February 21, and experienced the onset of symptoms on April 19.

Her exposure to the virus is attributed to close contact.

As of Tuesday, June 8, Aurora had seen a total of 1,829 cases of COVID-19, 1,769 of which are now marked as recovered. Of the 12 remaining active cases, 11 are attributed to local transmission, close contact, or an unknown source, and 1 to workplace outbreak.

YOU'RE INVITED!

From the comfort of your own home, find out York Region's plans to continue providing safe, cost-efficient and reliable water and wastewater services to residents, businesses and communities. Visit our third and final Water and Wastewater Master Plan Update Online Open House to explore recommended infrastructure projects to meet the needs of our growing communities.

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JUNE 24 TO JULY 8, 2021
YORK.CA/WATERPLAN

Please let us know if you require accommodations to participate. An accessible version of this notice and Open House materials are available upon request. To submit questions, comments or to be added to the project mailing list, please contact:

Laura Alpi, Project Liaison
The Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket

P: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 73029
F: 905-830-6927
water@york.ca

2021 WATER & WASTEWATER MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Online Open House #3

York Region is updating its Water and Wastewater Master Plan through the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment master planning process. The Master Plan update will identify long-term infrastructure projects for future water and wastewater servicing needs to 2051. Feedback gathered through this Online Open House will help shape the final report to York Regional Council in early 2022.

DID YOU MISS OUR PREVIOUS OPEN HOUSES?
Get caught up at york.ca/waterplan

Personal information submitted (e.g., name, address and phone number) is collected, maintained and disclosed under the authority of the Environmental Assessment Act and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act for the purpose of creating a public record and for and consultation purposes. Personal information you submit will become part of a public record that is available to the general public, unless you request that your personal information remain confidential.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Gifts are nice, but being able to remain in your home is best of all

Thank you for featuring Brock Weir's May 7 article, "Can't find the perfect gift for mom? Consider 'adopting' a mom in need." As Board Chair at Shine Through the Rain Foundation, the story of moms like Sophia needed to be told.

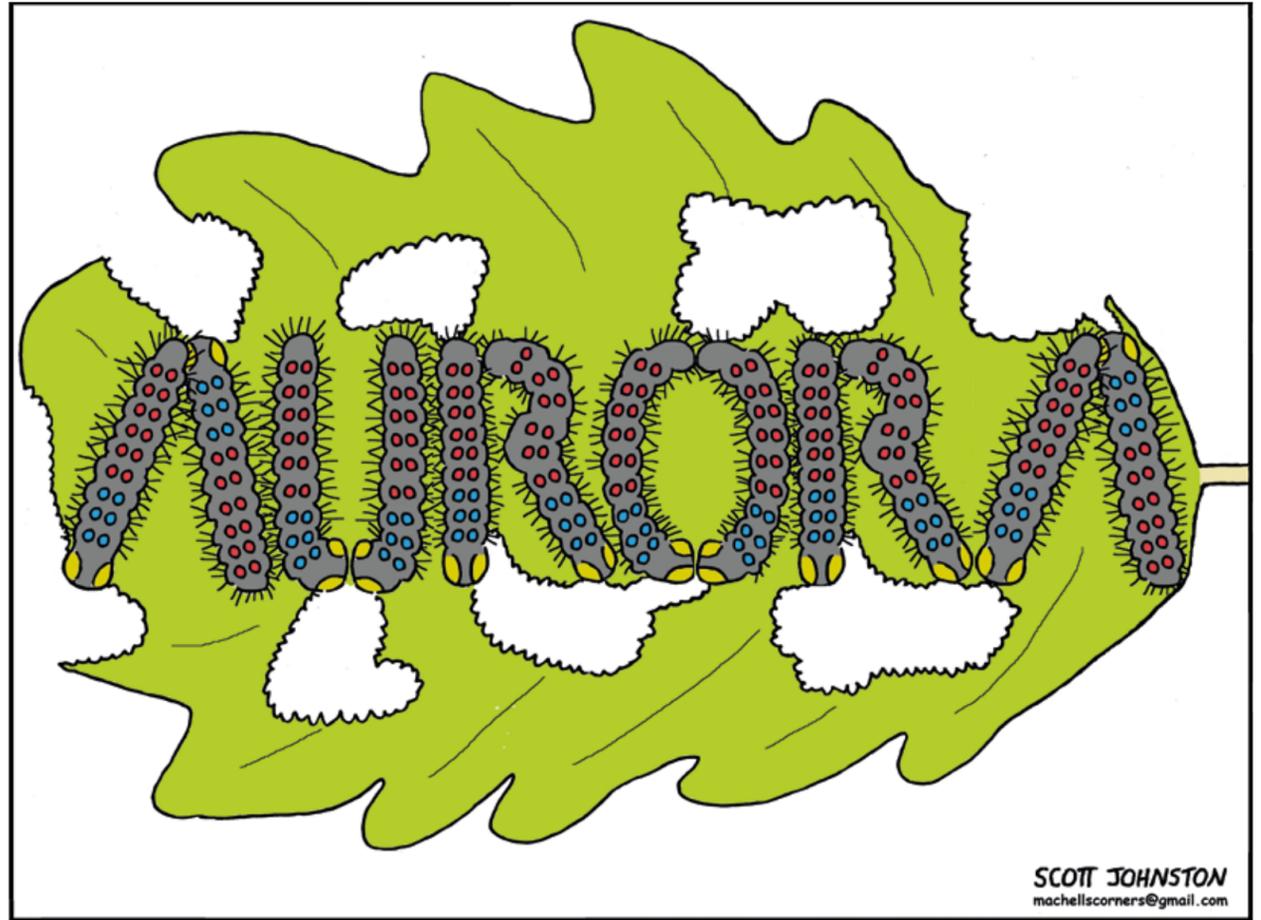
Brock's article captured the unfortunate reality that patients and their families can face when diagnosed with life-threatening illnesses like cancer. With unexpected increased medical expenses and loss of income, it is easy to fall behind with the cost of everyday living, and many face disconnected utilities and eviction. They also have a hard time affording groceries and hospital parking costs. We appreciate you featuring this story and now, even more patients will know they can turn to Shine Through the Rain Foundation if they are diagnosed and in need of emergency financial assistance.

While gifts are nice, the greater wish is to be able to remain in your own home to focus on recovery.

As catastrophic health expenses are a reality, we appreciated the generosity of your readers who collectively provided close to \$1,000 for mothers in lieu of other Mother's Day gifts. As our fundraising continues throughout the year, we can continue to help more patients in desperate financial situations. If anyone needs our assistance or would like to donate, please visit www.shinethroughtherain.ca, shinethroughtherain.ca/donate-now, call 905-477-7743 or email info@shinethroughtherain.ca.

Jim Anderson
Chair, Shine Through the Rain

Machell's Corners



Answering Calls to Action

Since the discovery of the remains of 215 Indigenous children in the grounds of a Kamloops residential school, reaction from coast to coast, from First Nations and settlers alike, has been one of horror – but also of raising questions about what happens next.

Some were looking for words from the Prime Minister and the Pope to act as the next stone on a path to healing, but were undoubtedly left disappointed when their words offered little more than what has already been said.

"The sad discovery further raises awareness of the pains and sufferings of the past," said Pope Francis on Sunday. "May the political and religious authorities of Canada continue to collaborate with determination to shed light on that sad story and humbly commit themselves to a path of reconciliation and healing."

"These difficult moments represent a strong appeal for all of us to move away from the colonizing model and also from the ideological colonization of today, and walk side-by-side in dialogue, in mutual respect, and in the recognition of the rights and cultural values of all daughters and sons of Canada."

While the Government of Canada said the Pope's words were not enough, the Prime Minister offered some of his own just a few days earlier to mark the start of National Indigenous History Month.

"The recent, distressing news... is a painful reminder that the impacts of residential schools are still felt today," said the Prime Minister. "Sadly, this heartbreaking discovery is not an exception or an isolated incident. Over decades, thousands of Indigenous children were taken from families and communities, and everything was stolen from them. We must all unreservedly acknowledge this truth and address these historical and ongoing wrongs so we can build a better future."

"The government continues to work with Indigenous peoples to build a true nation-to-nation, Inuit Crown, government-to-government relationship – one based on the affirmation of rights, respect, cooperation, and partnership. We must continue to learn about and support various existing governments, laws, and traditions that govern Indigenous nations to help Indigenous peoples build capacity to implement their vision of self-determination."

While Mr. Trudeau noted investments made to "close gaps in housing, health and education" for Indigenous communities, the simple fact is it is not enough. One only needs to look as far as the lack of clean water in many Indigenous communities as well as lack of mental health care in the face of soaring suicide rates and other markers.



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

We saw several demonstrations take place over the past weekend in solidarity with our Indigenous peoples – some organized by First Nations individuals themselves and others by settlers – each with an individual message under a unified umbrella.

Images and videos depicting the topping of the statue of Egerton Ryerson from the Toronto university which currently bears his name might be the ones that stick in our collective consciousness from the last few days, but others had a simple message for everyone:

"We ask you to step forward and do something in solidarity with us," said Traditional Anishinaabe Grandmother Kim Wheatley of Turtle Clan, who carries the Spirit Name of Head or Leader of the Fireflower. "We need Canadians to become familiar with the TRC (Truth & Reconciliation Commission). It gave you 94 calls to action, something to do. If you haven't read it, I encourage you. It's free. Learn what was suggested in there because we knew this time would come. This is one of many discoveries that are going to turn up across the country."

The calls to action should be, at minimum, required reading to both spur action and also the asking of very important questions that need to be posed to the elected officials we task with providing the answers.

If you're a settler, finding some way to have a positive impact on reconciliation can seem like an overwhelming task, but it doesn't need to be.

Contained within the Calls to Action are several things individuals and governments can do to forge a better path ahead, including developing age-appropriate curriculum so students can learn what is so vital to know about residential schools, treaties and the historical and contemporary contributions Indigenous peoples have made to Canada.

That just one example offered by the Commission.

The development of youth programs with appropriate government dollars to deliver programs and services on reconciliation, along with the development

of a national network of such groups to share best practices, is another.

Business leaders have been called upon to go into "meaningful consultation" to build "respectful relationships" with Indigenous peoples before going forward with economic development projects; to ensure that Indigenous peoples have equitable access to jobs; and provide education for management and staff on the realities of Indigenous history, including residential schools, for intercultural skills, conflict resolution, human rights and anti-racism policies.

Not exactly re-inventing the wheel. But the gears in our governmental machinery move slowly – and needlessly so.

Was a Commission required to call on the Feds to acknowledge that Indigenous rights include language rights?

How about to recommend all levels of government to "enable residential school survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system" by waving the costs currently in place for the name-change process?

Or that sustainable funding just might be needed to address the "physical, mental, emotional support, and spiritual harm" caused by ripping children from their families' arms to be placed in the residential school system?

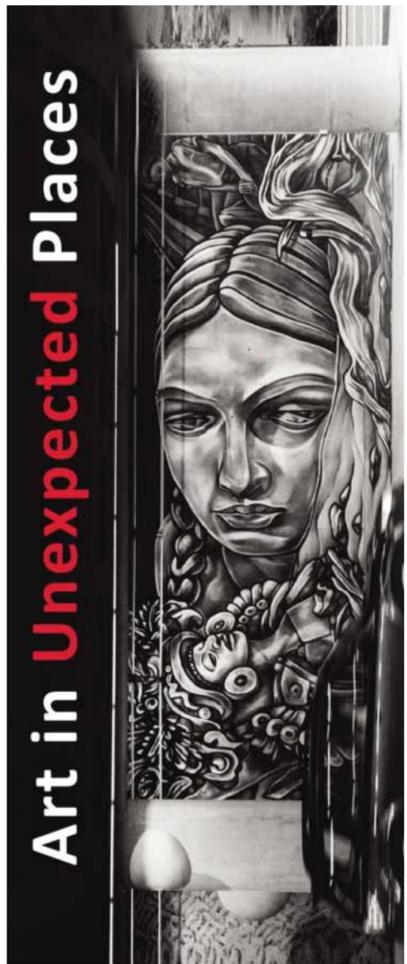
Or that Indigenous healing practices might just have a place in determining the best health care path for Indigenous persons, should they request it?

Had the Calls to Action regarding education, calls that were not new to the TRC list, been heeded some time ago, the Commissioners might have had significantly less work cut out for them with education begetting action.

Perhaps, with sufficient education programs in place, vocal demonstrations over First Nations communities still being without a reliable supply of safe drinking water, not to mention tragically high suicide rates in these communities, would have been as loud and prominent as those related to getting fuel from Alberta's oil sands from Point B.

At the very least, a 10-minute read of the 94 Calls to Action – a lengthier read time if you choose to delve deeper, and you should – will indeed make you better equipped to ask questions, make informed decisions on the governments you want to represent you, and even inspire your own ideas on how, if I can borrow an expression born out of the pandemic, to build a nation of nations better.

For more, visit trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf.



PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Street art enhances our experience of a place. Whether it is urban graffiti, sculpture or yarn bombing, public art interrupts our daily routine, surprising and delighting passersby. This year's One Book Aurora photography contest, hosted by The Aurora Public Library and The Aurora newspaper invites your photos of art in unexpected places.

For rules and guidelines, visit onebookoneaurora.com

Send submissions to brock@lpcmedia.ca
Contest deadline is
Friday, October 1, 2021.

THE AURORAN

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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada



To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to brock@lpcmedia.ca
Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating...

Iced Tea Day!

(June 10)

With the mercury rising and the days getting longer, we're all searching for ways to stay cool. While tea had been a hot drink for centuries, the iced tea we are familiar with was popularized at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. This canister of tea, labelled for the local Bon Ton Grocery Shop (79.2) would not be out of place at the time, and maybe an Aurora resident dared to try chilling the resulting brew. Refreshing!



Every June, Ontarians across the province celebrate Seniors Month. I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to Aurora's seniors for their incredible contributions to our community and our province. I have been very fortunate to meet many of the wonderful seniors in our community over the last few years. They are bright, compassionate and full of wisdom.

That is why it was such a pleasure to host virtual announcements for our local seniors' associations in Aurora and Newmarket earlier this year. Our government is investing \$14.3 million in Seniors Active Living Centre programs across the province, including over \$108,000 in combined funding for the Aurora Seniors Centre and Newmarket's Seniors Meeting Place. This funding will be used to support their efforts to address the impacts of the pandemic and help our seniors safely stay connected during the pandemic. Thank you to everyone who has worked hard to develop innovative programs to keep our older adults safe, active and connected.

I would also like to congratulate 108 Health Promotion Association with their successful application to the Seniors Community Grant program. This is the first time 108 Health Promotion Association received funding from this provincial program, and I know this \$25,000 grant will assist in teaching their 2,000 senior members how to use social media so that they can benefit from an



CHRISTINE'S CHRONICLES

Christine Elliott, MPP
Newmarket-Aurora

online social life during COVID-19.

I know that this past year has been difficult for many members of our community, especially our seniors, but thanks to the collective efforts of Ontarians, including those who live and work in Aurora and Newmarket, we know there are better days ahead.

On May 20th, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, our government released its Roadmap to Reopen, a three-step plan to safely and cautiously reopen the province and gradually lift public health measures. Based on the provincewide vaccination rate and key public health indicators, this Roadmap represents a path out of the pandemic.

Based on the provincewide vaccination rate and continuing improvements in key public health and health system indicators, our government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, will move the province into Step One of its Roadmap to Reopen at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, June 11,

2021. This was a true Team Ontario effort and we are incredibly thankful for the enormous sacrifices made by individuals and families in our Newmarket-Aurora community and in communities across Ontario throughout the pandemic.

While this is exciting news, it is critical that we continue to follow public health advice and roll up our sleeves to receive the vaccine.

We know that vaccines are the way out of the pandemic. I am pleased to share that with the majority of adult Ontarians having received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, our government is now accelerating second doses. Eligible Ontarians can book their accelerated second dose vaccination appointment sooner through a variety of channels, including the provincial booking system, York Region's booking system, participating pharmacies and select primary care providers. I encourage everyone in our community to get vaccinated as soon as you are eligible to ensure maximum protection against the virus.

We are on the path towards brighter days, and I assure you that things will get better. If we all do our part by following the public health measures and getting vaccinated, we will be able to enjoy a safe and happy summer.

For questions related to any provincial matters, please reach out to my constituency office at 905-853-9889, and for daily provincial updates, visit my website at www.christineelliottmpp.ca.



Time Travellers Diary

By Jeremy Hood, Museum Assistant,
Aurora Museum & Archives

Dial Three for Hillary

As a globe-trotting Time Traveller and citizen of the modern world, I've become accustomed to instantaneous communication. Even though most people carry with them smart devices of all kinds, I still see them punching in 10-digit numbers to speak with their friends and family, place food orders, make appointments, and the like. I felt like I needed to experience what life was like on the edge of instant and distant communication, so I entered "Telephone" into the Temporal Contextualizer and prepared to follow the early development of the phone call in Aurora.

My first stop was one I had seen before: I recalled a prior visit to 1878 that I had made to the Mechanics' Hall, where I witnessed an early demonstration of a telephone device to a crowd of impressed onlookers. Even without a network, and with limited application, the telephone had great appeal.

The Machine brought me to the early 20th century, when Bell Telephone Co. had established a presence in Town, and the technology began to impact business. In 1903, the bank operated by later-mayor J.M. Walton advertised their ability to phone down to Toronto. Dr. R.M. Hillary was the first, in May of the same year, to advertise his Aurora telephone number in the paper for the public to call.

His advertisement had been a staple of the front page for years and it now bore an additional simple line: "Telephone No. 3" – I don't imagine that it rang very often!

While sleeping in my hovering machine one night that July, I was awakened by lightning striking a pole nearby, entering the telephone network. Cries of woe rose into the morning when people awoke to find their phones' internals burned and melted by the surge of electricity.

Perhaps this demonstration of the fragility of this new technology scared some away, but not everyone.

L.A. Willson, Veterinary Surgeon, advertised his telephone on the front page as well, starting in March of 1904; his number was a mere "24." The next month, the Bell Telephone Co. announced that there were 39 lines in the Town with more on the way. The small count of phone numbers reflected the slow adoption by public, possibly related to the high cost, still \$20 for a private line by 1905. There was as yet no dialing: calls were routed by operators, mostly women, from a centralized location which was not open 24 hours.

It was the same group of medical early adopters who saw an opportunity and took the initiative to have their phone lines linked by special arrangement directly to the exchanges in Kettleby and Vandorf, permitting after-hours direct calling in case of an emergency, be it for an animal or human.

By April of 1904, four doctors in the area, including Dr. Hillary and Willson the veterinarian, had formed their own kind of early emergency phone system, although any late calls would likely be pulling the men from their slumber.

We have come a long way from the arrival of the telephone to the futuristic screens we now employ, but I feel that people will never stop trying to speak with each other from afar, even if only for ordering pizza...

Toronto Maple Leafs – some things don't change (sigh)

As a long time, suffering Toronto Maple Leafs fan, last Monday night's loss in Game Seven to the Habs hurt...a lot.

It also reminded me of another very painful Leaf loss, which occurred back in May 2013.

At the time I worked for a company that developed and constructed large natural gas fired generation projects and large-scale wind energy projects both in the U.S. and Canada. My bosses resided in Silver Spring, Maryland (just outside Washington, D.C.) and in Braintree, Massachusetts (just outside of Boston).

All of the U.S. employees were huge hockey fans and, as you can imagine, there was no shortage of "smack" talk between the offices when it came to hockey.

I was used to receiving e-mail commentary from different members of the company state side whenever the Leafs were playing the Boston Bruins or the Washington Capitals.

What follows was a partial transcript of the e-mail exchanges between my various U.S. based colleagues and myself during game seven of the Leafs / Bruins series as well as some supplementary commentary on the morning after:

Gary was our company President. Sean was our Senior Vice President, Renewables, and Rob was one of our wind development managers.

I would not call the following exchanges all that insightful, but it was entertaining when you juxtaposition the e-mail exchanges with the timing of key events during that third period and overtime.

Leafs up 2-1.

Gary @ 8:58 PM: "What, no trash talking? Come on guys, we can do this!!!"

Leafs now up: 4-1.

Gary @ 9:09 PM. "Ok, maybe not... Bruins will be golfing tomorrow. Congrats."

Sean @ 9:26 PM: "Well they may actually just be standing around the golf course."

Robert @ 9:32 PM: "I hope we see some



FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE

Stephen Somerville

changes this off season. I was an Islander fan but now I guess I'll pull for Ottawa."

Boston just scored to make it 4-2.

Robert @ 9:34 PM: "Wow!"

Stephen @ 9:35 PM: "My heart is going to stop"

Boston ties score at 4-4.

Sean @ 9:40 PM. "Good last few minutes. Next goal wins. Stephen start shining the clubs - the Bs finally showed up to this series."

Stephen @ 9:41 PM: "Even when we were up 3 I was scared - Kessel will pot the winner in OT!"

Overtime. Bruins win.

Gary @ 10:05 PM: "Holy sh-!"

Sean at 10:05 PM: "Woooooohoooooohoooooohooooo"

Sean @ 10:06 PM: "Stephen - I will give the Leafs credit, they almost delivered"

Stephen @ 10:07 PM: "I was still nervous but I thought we would win when we were up by three"

Robert @ 10:12 PM: "That was one of the greatest comebacks I've seen. And Toronto came to play but the bs just decided to hit the gas at the end. Tough series."

Stephen @ 10:16 PM: See the attached (which was a picture of my T-Shirt that reads – "Stanley's Coming To Town (with a Leaf Logo on it) - I bought this in 1992 and it has been in my drawer for the last nine years - I was going to wear this for the second round - back to my drawer it goes - big sigh"

Sean at 10:30 PM: "Don't worry Stephen, you can wear it after the Bs win the cup and Dougie Hamilton brings it back home to Toronto for a visit."

The morning after (Tuesday May 14).

Stephen @ 7:20 AM: "I had this really bad nightmare last night - the Leafs were up 4-1 with about 13 minutes to play and I was getting ready to design the Stanley Cup Parade route past our Toronto office, then the Bruins tied the game and won it in overtime - thank god it was just a very bad and horrible dream - better luck next year guys - I hope the Bruins like playing golf - regards – Stephen"

Sean @ 8:33 AM: "Sounds like a terrible dream...one you only want to have every 9 years or so."

Stephen @ 9:08 AM: "I was wondering why it was fairly easy to get tickets on line this morning for round two."

Gary @ 9:30 AM: "By the way, I retract my congrats statement, that was in bad taste..."

Then Sean e-mailed me a picture of Phil Kessel carrying a set of golf clubs over his head around the ice.

Stephen @ 10:49 AM: "Touche!!! Ouch!!! Thanks for worrying about my delicate psyche at this critical time!"

Robert @ 10:50 AM: "Hey I didn't send it to you on purpose. Sean is the one twisting the knife!"

Stephen @ 10:55 AM: "Just kidding - I will be fine and will fully recover from this...in about eight years!"

Funny, in looking back I thought I could not feel any worse about my Leafs than that night in May 2013, but, sadly I was wrong

As someone put it, Leaf fans are the NHL equivalent of the Chicago Cubs!

Oh well, there is always next year!

Stephen can be contacted at stephengsomerville@yahoo.com

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Should Aurora consider designating a trail as off-leash?

Yes No Unsure

www.theauroran.com

RESULTS TO DATE

June 8, 2021

YES
43%

NO
57%

York's Digital Pride kicks off with poignant tribute to 215 children lost in Kamloops



The Town of Aurora has launched a bylaw vehicle wrapped in the colours of Pride month and the message "Love is Love." Here with the vehicle at Town Hall last week are, clockwise from left, Mayor Tom Mrakas, and Councillors Harold Kim, Rachel Gilliland, Wendy Gaertner and John Gallo.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

- Accepting others.
- Being yourself.
- Family.
- Community.
- Activism.
- Passion.
- Expression.
- A safe place.
- Stronger together.

These are the various ways York Region's 2SLGBTQ+ community express what Pride means to them, and this is the message they conveyed Wednesday night at the start of York Pride Fest's Digital Pride celebrations.

York Pride kicked off their online celebrations on June 2 with this celebration of expression, but the joy of Pride was tempered by the stark realities of injustice.

"The discovery of Indigenous children found in Kamloops has shaken Canada to its core," said host Tera Gillen-Petrozzi of Big Brother Canada, introducing a

land acknowledgement from Anishinaabe Ojibway Grandmother Kim Wheatley of the Shawnaga First Nation. "We must recognize this. This is a conversation that cannot be ignored. The best way for York Pride to kick off this event is to show love and support for our Indigenous peoples."

Lived experiences were the key to this week's Pride commemorations with a conversation for 2SLGBTQ youth intended to be a forum to sound off on the issues that matter.

"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."

Continuing through next week, Virtual Pride will offer trivia nights on June 16 and 28 from 7 – 8 p.m. and, on June 18 from 7 – 9 p.m., a comedy night for the 19+ crowd.

"Put your knowledge of 2SLGBTQ+ history, entertainment and fabulous facts to the test," say organizers. "Hosted by local drag queens, this night is bound to keep you on the edge of your seat with

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

three rapid fire rounds of live trivia. With three top prizes to give away, you won't want to be late for this party! Simply set up the live stream on your computer and go to kahoot.it on your phone to join in the quizzical experience.

"Viewer discretion is advised (for comedy night)! This June, we showcase three local comedy artists encouraging them to represent their personal stories through a new level of sass, humour, and attitude on the Digital Pride stage. Not only will this be an opportunity to relate with each other, but also create the perfect environment to read each other in a fun and playful way. The night will also feature special performances from a local renowned 2SLGBTQ+ Canadian icon, who is full of humour and has some wild performance skills. Since we are all in quarantine, I guess we will only be making inside jokes for right now. So, grab your drinks, laugh a little, and join us for a comedic night unlike any other."

For more, visit yorkpridefest.ca.

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Briefly

TOWN, AURORA YOUTH SOCCER TO OPERATE SPORTS DOME

The Town has partnered with the Aurora Youth Soccer Club to operate the Aurora Sports Dome, which was recently purchased by the municipality. The Industrial Parkway North sports facility will be operated in a hybrid model with some operations undertaken by the Town and the balance by the Club. The Club is the largest single user of the Dome. The Town will manage facility bookings, including rental rates, while the Club will be responsible for the day-to-day management. "This hybrid model allows us to achieve operational and financial efficiencies while retaining surplus revenue that can be put towards future capital needs," said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. "Ultimately, this ensures that we can keep our commitment to the community that the Dome will have no impact on the tax rate." Added Club President Roy Cohen: "Our Club's goals are directly in line with what the Town intends for the Dome. We are looking forward to continuing our mission to provide safe, accessible programming to the children, adults, and families in our community."

GREEN PARTY CANDIDATE SELECTED

Local business owner Vicky McGrath will carry the Green Party of Canada's (GPC) banner in the riding of Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill in the next Federal Election. The owner of Here to Help Home Care Services, who has previously run for local Council, says her agenda as a Federal candidate is to support local businesses, seniors, and the environment. "As Canadians, we are fortunate to live in this beautiful country of natural features and the GPC is the only party that holds the natural environment as fundamental to their agenda."

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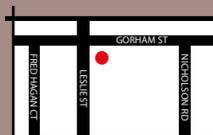
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Southlake's Virtual Run surpasses goal with \$311,631 raised for hospital

BY BROCK WEIR
 EDITOR
 LOCAL JOURNALISM
 INITIATIVE REPORTER

The final numbers are in and the community has once again risen to the challenge of supporting Southlake Regional Health Centre.

On Thursday, the Southlake Regional Health Centre Foundation announced a final tally of \$311,631, well surpassing their initial fundraising goal of \$175,000 for what was their first four-week-long virtual challenge.

The virtual challenge, a new and necessary twist on the Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake, an event which has a nearly-20-year history in this community, first as

the Hartwell Challenge, took place from April 12 through May 9, giving participants the freedom to set their own health and wellness goals.

More than 590 people and 56 teams took part.

"At a time when each of us is being challenged in ways we never would have expected, it is heartwarming to see our communities rally behind our participants, and ultimately Southlake," says Jennifer Klotz-Ritter, President and CEO at Southlake Foundation. "As a key annual fundraiser for Southlake, this event raises vital funds for new and replacement equipment and technology that is critical to deliver patient care. These needs have grown even greater throughout the

COVID-19 pandemic.

"We have heard so many inspiring stories from participants and teams on why they worked so hard to reach their fitness and fundraising goals. We were so grateful they were by our side, helping Southlake deliver leading edge care close to home. Perhaps the most awe inspiring were the 132 Southlake staff members, making up 14 hospital department teams who actively participated and fundraised. Every single person at Southlake is working tirelessly under unprecedented circumstances. That they still rallied to support their hospital demonstrates their selfless, dedicated nature."

Joe D'Addario, President and Co-Founder of Nature's Emporium,

which was once again title sponsor for the event this year, was equally enthusiastic about the results.

"This four-week event, focusing on health and fitness goals, staying safe and supporting community needs was perfectly in sync with our values at Nature's Emporium," he said. "We have proudly participated as the Title Sponsor of the Run for Southlake for nine years, and while this was a very different experience, the way our communities rallied to support Southlake either by joining the fun or sponsoring Run participants, was every bit as inspiring as if we had been able to have a huge public event. On behalf of the Nature's Emporium family, thank you."

AND THEY'RE OFF!



Cycle Aurora is now underway and participants – including Ben, Katie, Andrew, Matthew and Rick – flocked to the Aurora Farmers' Market on Saturday morning to pick up their free gear to make the event as successful as possible. Cycle Aurora is a new initiative in partnership with the Region of York encouraging residents to get active, explore their community, and support local business. For more, visit aurora.ca/cycleaurora.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger



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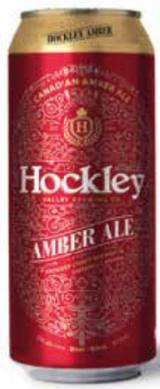
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BUSINESS & FINANCE



Costs to replace skate park continue to rise, with Councillors balking at new price tag

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As the skateboard park at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex continues to deteriorate due to poor construction, the cost for a suitable replacement is ballooning.

Last week, Council considered three possible new locations for a reconstructed skate park after approving \$600,000 for its replacement in 2019. As of last week, however, the price tag now hovers at \$1.195 million, leading to tough decisions by Councillors.

The present skate park was constructed at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC) in 2014 as part of an expansive renovation of the facility spurred by the development of a youth centre within its walls. Problems with the finished product were evident soon after completion with cited causes including improper drainage and insufficient rebar used in the concrete.

“Following the approval [of the reconstruction costs in 2019], staff developed a survey to engage the users regarding the skate park facility to explore the use of amenities and potential improvements to enhance the

overall experience,” said Parks Manager Sara Tienkamp in a report to Council. “Improvements included lighting for safety in evenings, shade structure and water bottle refilling station.

“Preliminary cost estimates from the consultant for the reconstruction exceeded the allotted budget funding significantly. Replacement of concrete surface was estimated at \$550,000, not including the removal of original concrete, drainage works, and additional amenities required by users.”

Although staff presented the Aurora Community Centre, Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex and Stewart Burnett Park as possible new locations, discussions last week focused mainly on the rising costs.

“My feeling is to take the [original] \$600,000 and to figure out how to fix it and not a penny more,” said Councillor John Gallo. “I struggled with the \$600,000 after we already spent what we budgeted at \$800,000 and now know how that ended. There is no way I would accept anything more than that. I want it fixed. I want it for the community. I am not interested in improvements like lights. Maybe they can come at a second time, but my view is not a penny more than \$600,000 and staff figure out how to do it.”

Councillor Michael Thompson agreed there is more work to be done on this, stating it is “disappointing” that figures continue to rise.

“There needs to be further explanation on why the costs have ballooned,” he said. “We hired a consultant, they did bore holes, extensive testing... if you go back and read that report, they seem to infer when they identified the costs that it was for demolition and reconstruction and all of that, and that is where that \$600,000 figure came to. Yet, when we went out and got a further consultant there was a big variation.”

Staff, he said, should be tasked with going back to the drawing board to make amendments to the plan to make sure it fits with what was previously budgeted for.

“I don’t want to just fence off the skate park and not have it be used,” he concluded. “I think it is a good asset to have, I think it is well-used, and I

I think it is a good asset to have, I think it is well-used, and I certainly would like to find a way to make this work.

certainly would like to find a way to make this work. Similar to Councillor Gallo, I have an issue with the price tag at this point and I would like to have some options or discussions, or some creative thoughts around how we can get this price down and get it to re-open again, or at least get it safe again, so the issues are fixed and it can be used for generations to come.”

Councillor Sandra Humfries said she agreed that it was now getting “concerning” but said that “young adults need this area.” Similarly, Councillor Wendy Gaertner said the question is whether or not Aurora wants to provide a skateboard park for youth.

“We said we wanted to and we did,” she said. “It is not the [youth’s] fault it didn’t work out. It is really well-used and it is certainly important that the kids have it this year, and we’re treating them a bit like second-class citizens. I would like this to operate at least for the summer. We have kids who have had a tough time with a lot of excess energy. It is not even for the kids who use this skateboard park, their friends come, they sit, they don’t behave badly from what I have seen. It is just a very wide-open, easy to monitor, safe place for kids to hang out.

“I am okay with opening it for the summer and seeing what we can do to just keep it going. If it costs more than \$10,000, it costs more than \$10,000. If that is our choice, we have to make sure it is in somewhat good repair for the kids. I want the kids to have a skateboard park and, frankly, I’m always a penny-pincher, but if it costs us much money, it costs us much money. I think to take it away from them would be a really bad idea.”

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Off-leash dog park planned near Hallmark lands

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

With work already underway on a new baseball diamond complex on the Hallmark Lands near Vandorf Road and Industrial Parkway South, players might need to contend with a few barks in the decade ahead.

Council is set to earmark lands adjacent to the Hallmark lands for a new off-leash dog park.

Part of Aurora's 10-year capital plan, the new dog park would be built on the site of a municipal tree nursery on Engelhard that is close to trails and parking.

The Engelhard Tree Nursery was one of three options presented to Council at last week's General Committee meeting. Other potential locations included a tree nursery on Edward Street and a further plot on Industrial Parkway South adjacent to the Aurora Community Garden.

"The Engelhard Nursery location will provide a natural park experience for users and their pets with potential for multiple access points," said Parks Manager Sara Tienkamp in a report to Council, noting the proposed parcel is just over 10 hectares. "The land includes varied terrain made up of grassland, woodlot, level plateau/slopes, therefore it is not the best use of land for a nursery. The potential off-leash park location would be left natural with mowed trails and woodchip footpath through the woodlot.

"While it cannot facilitate a parking lot, it can provide for multiple access points from Engelhard Drive, Vandorf Sideroad, and potential access through new trail development to Sheppard's Bush/Tim Jones Trails. The Engelhard Access point is very close (150m) to the Hallmark Lands and the new parking lot for the park, which would allow for parking."

On Council's first sweep of the proposal, the Engelhard location was the one that rose to the top. But its proximity to trails was seen as both a positive and negative for lawmakers, with a firm drawback being a lack of on-site parking.

"I certainly see the value with regards to the first one and its association to woodlot and trails, but for myself I am not necessarily sold that access to the trail is a positive thing," said Councillor Michael Thompson, stating he preferred the two other options.

Offering the opposing viewpoint was Councillor Rachel Gilliland.

"It makes total sense to me," she said. "I love that there is a trail that can be integrated, multiple ways you can enter it, a trail component, the terrain is a little bit different and it... is nice to walk on without it being a boring square, for lack of a better term. It is not in a residential area, where we're getting a lot of push-back [on other off-leash proposals]. You guys had some limited options to present and I think this is great. It is a nice green space area that people can enjoy walking in safely and gives the service [that people need]."

Councillor Harold Kim also stated he was in favour of the Engelhard location because it is land that would not otherwise be used for commercial or employment purposes.

But a note of caution was put on the table from Mayor Tom Mrakas who said that nearby residents and businesses should be consulted on potential traffic impacts.

"We have a whole subdivision there that used to be the Timberlane Athletic Club and that whole subdivision is there now on the south side," he said. "If we reached out to them to let them know... to see if there is any feedback to those residents. I do foresee some issues along Vandorf and that is my only concern. I see a lot of people coming and parking on Vandorf and just leaving their car

there, getting out and going to the gate that is the most easily accessible one and I can see that happening down the road. I think we need to be cautious of that.

"I think it is the best setting but I think there are some flaws to it that could cause some issues and some problems down the road. I think we

need to be mindful of those issues and see if there is anything we can do to rectify those issues as we continue to move forward through this process. Let's get as many people as engaged as possible in the area so we can have a full understanding when this comes to budget and we decide to move forward at a quicker speed at that time."

YRDSB won't hold distanced graduation gatherings following extended school closure

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Ontario students won't finish off the 2020-2021 academic year in classrooms.

The Province announced last Wednesday that remote learning will continue Ontario-wide for the remainder of the school year.

In making their decision, the Government cited the prevalence of the B.1.617.2 COVID-19 variant to keep schools shuttered for a few more months, and efforts to "support a safer summer and return to in-person learning in September."

"At a time when our top priority is putting the third wave behind us so that we can safely enter Step One of our Roadmap to Reopen, we can't risk increased cases and potential downstream impacts on hospitals and ICUs," said Premier Doug Ford in a statement. "Making this tough decision now will allow kids to safely enjoy camps and outdoor activities this summer, and a safe return to school in September."

Data presented by the Province indicated that if schools re-opened now, Ontario could see an increase of "six to 11 per cent" in the number of new daily COVID-19 cases, and going forward with a re-opening would "threaten Ontarians' hard-fought progress in beating the third

wave and could delay the safe return to many summer activities for kids, including day and overnight camps, sports leagues and public pools."

"While this decision was not made lightly, it has been done with one aim: protect the summer for families and deliver a stable and safe September for students," said Minister of Education Stephen Lecce. "We are looking forward and taking action by getting all education workers and students vaccinated with both doses ahead of September, while investing an additional \$2 billion to ensure students and staff are safe."

It wasn't all bad news last week for students hoping for a return to the classroom.

The Government announced it will allow school boards to invite graduating classes to small outdoor celebrations to celebrate their achievements, but this idea was nixed Monday by the York Region District School Board.

"With the safety of our students and our staff as our number one priority, we have planned for virtual graduations this year in June," said the Board in a letter to families. "This decision was based on the need to make decisions in a timely manner and the guidance of York Region Public Health regarding the predicted conditions and the stay-at-home order.

Continued on page 15

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Show of Solidarity at Town Park following discovery of residential school victims

From page 1

Clan and carries the Spirit Name “Head or Leader of the Fire Flower”, who led Sunday night’s event. “Those children were as young as three years old. The government said they didn’t take children that young, but their bodies are there.”

Sunday, she said, was not about the government per se, rather it was to honour the children, their families, and their nations.

“We’re still here and we ask for your compassion at this time. But more than that, we ask you to step forward and to do something in solidarity with us. This is not just a story – these are children; children who were denied the right to go home to their parents,” she continued.

The night of solidarity was an example of the community stepping



(Above) Participating in the event, led by Kim Wheatley, were members of the Aurora Black Community Facebook group, the Town’s Anti-Racism and Anti-Black Racism Task Force, the Aurora Museum & Archives team, and more. (Below) Wheatley, a member of Turtle Clan, who carries the Spirit Name of “Head or Leader of the Fireflower”, delivers a poignant message to the crowd. **Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger**

forward to do something.

It was spearheaded by Shruti Kalyanaraman, a member of the Aurora Black Community Facebook group.

As a “rainbow mother,” Ms. Kalyanaraman says when she learned about the discovery in Kamloops, she was taken back to 2013 when she lost her own child. She had the closure, she says, of burying her child, but that was not afforded to the parents of the children discovered this spring.

“We were all devastated,” she says of the Aurora Black Community membership, “simply as moms, if no one else. I just wanted to reach out to my community, which has been very inclusive... on how we could grieve together. You can see the response – so many people have come here to support each other, here on a Sunday night. I am sure this will all help us grieve.”

The thread of grief was a thread woven into Ms. Wheatley’s poignant

words.

“I want to give thanks to the fact those bodies were found because it gives us time to repatriate them in the way they should have been in the first place,” she said. “It gives us time to honour and remember them. It gives us time to validate those families who said, ‘My child is missing.’”

“It is not about finger-pointing; it is about finding a way to make it right. We need to do that together. Even if you feel that you, as a single person, don’t make a difference, that is not true. You are all grains of sand on the beach of change and we need you. I am so, so happy to see the number of people here today.”

“It is 2021. The last residential school closed in 1996. It is not very long ago. The laws to keep our children in residential school are unique to us. Sorry doesn’t cut it unless you follow it up with some sort of meaningful action. We got a public apology about this, but we haven’t received the help we need to date from the Federal Government, Provincial Government, or from individuals like you. It costs money to dig up a body. It costs money to have forensics determine who that child is, who they belong to, and take them back to the communities they belong to. We

need your help with that. We need your help with things like therapy, and I know communities can step forward in that way. We’re waiting to see when that can happen.

“It is not about money; it is about righting a wrong that shouldn’t have happened.”

There are no words, she added, to help Canadians understand how it feels, but a good step forward is becoming familiar with the 94 recommendations that came out of the final report offered by the Truth & Reconciliation Commission.

“It is strange to [all of a sudden be] standing her realizing that I am talking about our traditional ways in an open way, that I don’t have to look to whether I am going to be arrested or get a ticket or go to jail. That was the way it was not so long ago,” she concluded. “In the 70s, they were still arresting us. In the 80s, they were still arresting us. We’re in 2021 and I feel pretty brave standing up here all by myself with my medicine (tobacco), my feather, speaking the truth. Feeling like I am being heard by all of you in a way that truly matters. That is really important to me. We have been silenced for centuries and we have offered nothing but kindness, love, care, respect.”



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Week of June 10, 2021



Former Central York Panthers forward commits to Queens University



Sophie Hudson

By Robert Belardi

Maple native and former Central York Panthers forward Sophie Hudson confirmed on May 20 she

will be attending Queens University next year.

Hudson will be a part of the university's hockey program while studying both math and engineering, a discipline special to Queens.

Hudson weighed out multiple options before confirming her decision to remain in the country.

"I had a bunch of other offers from schools, mostly in Canada. Before this past year I was deciding if I wanted to go to the United States and play in the NCAA. Ultimately, with COVID and a lot of uncertainty with eligibility with girls having to endure gap years due to lack of spots, I ended up choosing to stay in Canada," Hudson said.

"My sister goes to Queens. I have gone to visit her many times and when I went I met with the coach and he showed me around the facility and the campus. I thought that was the place to be."

Growing up, Hudson initially began dancing along with her older sister. As she continued pursuing her love for dance, her younger brothers came of age to be enrolled in hockey.

She watched in the early hours of the morning her brother skate and practice. She knew she wanted to be enrolled in it, too. She skated with her brother's team a few times; however, she joined the Aurora Panthers (now Central York) shortly after to play the sport full-time in a girls' league.

Hudson most notably idolized one of Canada's most prolific hockey stars in Hayley Wickenheiser. She even took it upon herself to write her name on the back of a standard team Canada sweater.

"I wanted to be able to wear her number," Hudson laughed.

"I was walking around with a taped 'Wickenheiser'; I don't think I even spelt it right. It was the best I could get."

As Hudson continued to work on her game and as she approached the bantam years, she made an appearance for the Mississauga Chiefs in the PWHL scoring a goal in her lone spell.

She stayed within the Mississauga Chiefs program honing her craft and eventually moved to the Toronto Aeros Midget AA program under head coach Dave Gwyn. When Gwyn left the program most of the girls on his team followed and they all met up with the Durham West Jr. Lightning. There she knew what the best part of her game is.

"I'm able to be the biggest person on the ice. It's difficult to push me off the puck because of how tall I am. It's tough to do that without a long reach," Hudson said.

"The best part of my game is playing below the goal-line in the offensive zone with the puck. Just to stand in front of the net and be able to be in tight and pull the puck around the goalie. I think that's how I scored most of my goals last year," Hudson said.

Hudson says she needs to work on stops and starts in the defensive end. She loves playing on the penalty kill and blocking shots as well.

She says she can't wait to get to Queen's and go to university with her sister, who is at the university now.

York United sign on four new players

By Robert Belardi

York United have brought on four new players ahead of the club's official roster for the upcoming season that was unveiled last week.

Brampton native Jordan Faria, Toronto native Terique Mohammed, Mexico native Osvaldo Ramirez and Dominican Republic player Gerard Lavergne were all announced to the team via Instagram.

Faria, a 20-year-old midfielder who has made international appearances with Canada is also a Toronto FC Academy product. With Toronto FC academy, Faria participated in 32 games scoring seven times. With Toronto FC II in the USL, Faria appeared in 32 games scoring twice.

Mohammed, a 21-year-old defender who grew up in Scarborough, carries over quite the resume coming to York United.

Another one of Toronto FC Academy's graduates, Mohammed was a part of Toronto FC III and II teams before joining FC Edmonton on loan in the inaugural season of the Canadian Premier League. He later joined Dundalk F.C. in Ireland this past year and saw a loan spell to Athlone Town before securing a move back home with York United.

Mohammed has also appeared for the national team at the U-17, U-20 and

U-23 levels.

The 22-year-old Santo Domingo native Gerrard Lavergne will be a player with senior national team experience in the midfield. So far, Lavergne has made 10 appearances with the Dominican Republic national side since 2018.

He began his pro career with Cibao in the Dominican Republic from 2015-2018. Following a few spells with other local clubs, he landed a deal in 2021 with FC Tucson in the USL League One. Now, he officially signed with York United with a club option for 2022.

The final player who also has a club option for 2022 is Osvaldo Ramirez. The 24-year-old forward made appearances for Cancun FC and Liga De Expansion MX before signing with York.

With the roster being finalized and announced, there are a total of 18 Canadian players on the team and five international players.

Most of the roster remains the same as Michael Petrasso and Dominick Zator returned from their loan spells in Europe.

York did send off other players on loan for the time being seeing off Sebastian Gutierrez, Lisandro Cabrera, Mateo Hernandez and William Wallace to other clubs.

Last week, it was announced that Winnipeg, MB will be the bubble location for this 28-game schedule this season.

York United will take on Cavalry FC on June 27 at 5 p.m. EST.

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Better access to youth mental health supports only a pedal away for Aurora mom

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As a sister, she has seen the impact mental health programs can have on the individual.

As a mom, she has seen how the challenges of COVID-19 have impacted youth.

As a cycling enthusiast, Judy Brunton, joined by her sons, is once again preparing to hit the road for the Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region and South Simcoe.

This Sunday, June 13, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) York Region and South Simcoe will officially kick off their virtual Mental Health in Motion fundraiser, one which encourages people to run, walk and ride – at any time, any place – to raise money for youth mental health programs.

“A staggering 75 per cent of all adults report the onset of their mental illness in adolescence,” says Rebecca Shields, CEO of the CMHA York Region and South Simcoe. “Now more than ever, it is critical we provide youth with accessible and robust mental health supports at this pivotal point in their lives. We are so grateful to our donors, participants and supporters, especially Staples Canada, who have the foresight to see the dire effect the pandemic is having on everyone’s mental health, particularly our youth, and are stepping up to make a difference.”

Ms. Brunton saw from an early age the difference mental health programs can have on youth after her sister was diagnosed with a mental health challenge in her late teens and is now in her 40s.

“She got amazing care when she was a youth from the program,” says Ms. Brunton, who is preparing to embark on the 20k ride with her kids. “I am doing this in honour of her because I want the youth in our area to get as much support as they can – as she did when she was a youth.”

Ms. Brunton has been a top supporter of the CMHA over the last decade,

raising money for the organization in many ways beyond the ride, including marketplaces when health restrictions allowed.

Given our present circumstances, she is particularly keen to get on her bike once again when youth are facing more challenges now than they ever have before.

“At the beginning and around the middle [of the most recent waves], it was horrible because the youth couldn’t see their friends, they couldn’t graduate properly. They had to stay inside all the time and if they already had mental health issues to begin with – just being youth stuck in the house, if you don’t have mental health issues, it can get to you. It can bring on depression and anxiety because you’re not allowed to see your friends or leave. It is not the same as seeing friends over a computer as it is in person.

“I want to do as much as I can for MOBYSS (the CMHA’s youth mental health bus, which provides on-site programs for youth where they are, such as schools). Right now, the buses aren’t running, but the youth get help from the MOBYSS team virtually or over the phone. It will definitely help them. They will need as much support as they can get from professionals because not all youth have supportive parents or family who understand what is going on with them because there is still a huge stigma surrounding mental health. I am just glad money goes to that because we have to get them the help when they need it.”

Registration for the CMHA’s virtual Mental Health in Motion event is free and flexible with residents being able to choose how and when they get involved, whether it is riding 5km, 10km, 20km, 100km, or choosing your own adventure.

The kick-off takes place this Sunday, June 13, at 9 a.m. at cmhainmotion.ca.

“We need the money to help youth because if you don’t help the youth now, we’re going to lose them tomorrow,” says Ms. Brunton. “If they don’t get the help, suicide comes



Hitting the Road – Aurora resident Judy Brunton is going all in for the Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region and South Simcoe’s Mental Health in Motion challenge. The virtual fundraiser gets underway this Sunday with an online kickoff. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

on quite quickly and we could lose them instead of helping them thrive and grow. The money helps the youth in more ways than you can imagine. Donate, donate, donate because the youth need us now!”

Market Brewing company opens 9-hole frisbee golf course

By Robert Belardi

On the eve of the province of Ontario beginning alleviating restrictions, Market Brewing Company in Newmarket announced on June 2 the launch of their frisbee golf course on site.

Located at 17775 Leslie Street Unit #4 in the back of the plaza, Manager Piers Simpkin says this was put in motion at the beginning of the stay-at-home order.

“It was when golf courses and outdoor amenities were able to be open. Us, being creative thinkers here, we have the space in the back and I was running down a list and frisbee golf was still able to be open and run,” Simpkin said.

Then golf courses were shut down and province was in a weird period. But recently, as the province continues to slowly reopen, Simpkin took note of the mental frustrations people have endured throughout this time and hopes this will provide them a much-needed reprieve.

“This is going to be a great thing for the community. Also get their kids out to try it. Everyone can throw a frisbee, mental health, give a new challenge [a try] that you haven’t done before. These were some of the

points we were trying to push with this.”

With the entire property being licensed for distribution of alcohol, patrons will have the availability to purchase beer while playing frisbee golf. To do so, you must call in between holes six and nine and a beverage will be brought to you.

Players will pay their tabs at the end of the game and if they wish they can purchase more beer to take home. The price to play for four people is \$10. A sanitized frisbee will be provided for your own use and will be cleaned after use for others to play with.

With the opening of this frisbee golf course and while Market Brewing celebrates their fourth anniversary, Simpkin adds citizens in the community can rent out the outdoor volleyball court on campus as well.

Simpkin says he hopes to run an outdoor volleyball league beginning in July should everything run smoothly with the reopening. He is also considering a competition that might be of interest to everyone.

For more information on frisbee golf you may reach Simpkin directly at

psimpkin@marketbrewingco.com.

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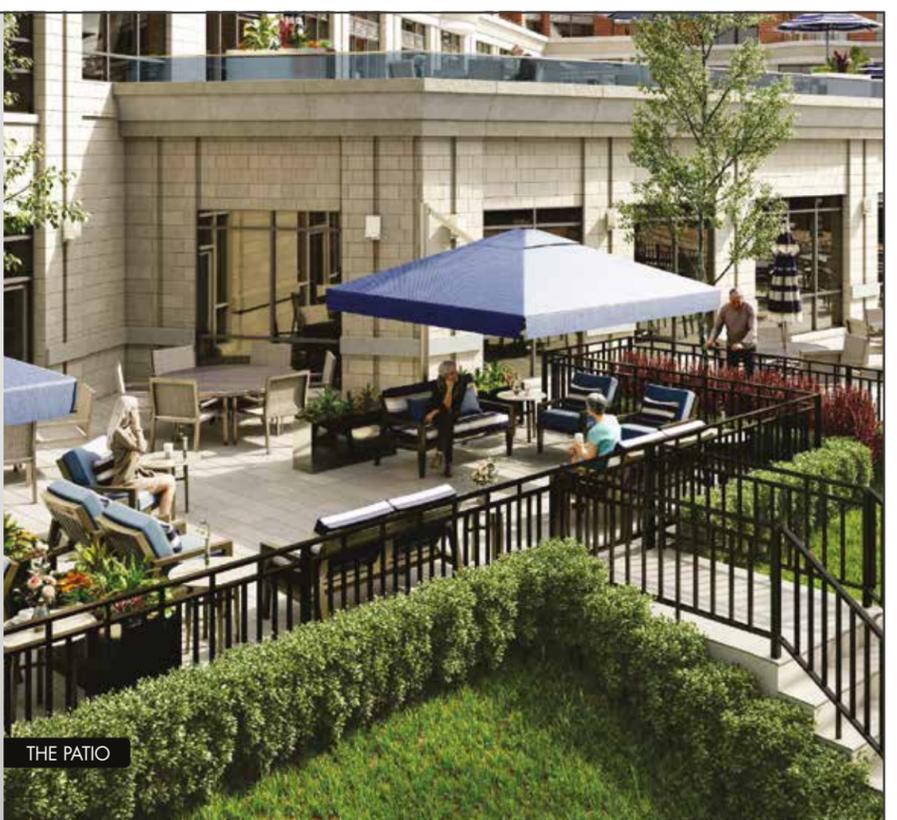
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“Town Square” is Council’s preferred name for Library Square development

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

It has been dubbed “Library Square” for nearly 40 years, but the \$60 million downtown revitalization project could be officially re-named “Town Square” as early as the end of the month.

Town Square was one of four contenders to be presented to Council, sitting at the Committee level last week, following public consultation. Other candidates included Church Street Square, Constellation Square, and Aurora Junction.

A final decision could be ratified as early as June 29.

Through a public poll, Town Square came out on top with over 800 votes, according to Library Square project manager Phil Rose.

While Council members have given “Town Square” a tentative go-ahead, it wasn’t without question, with some lawmakers saying the name was “basic” and there might be better options out there.

“In 2018, when we had gone to the public with Place Speak, the concept of what was envisioned for Library Square and designs were pretty much in its infancy, a completely different take,” said Councillor Rachel Gilliland. “Things have evolved and changed so much since then, but now that plans are in place and we have a fulsome understanding of what it’s supposed to represent, perhaps going to the public and getting [input] that maybe internally we never thought of – it is a really, really big project and it would behoove me to go back to the public and get some more feedback.

“I really feel we can do better. I find [the name] very basic and not overly special, but that is my opinion. I like the idea of...going to the public and getting some names. I don’t really see it as a rush.”

From the perspective of Mr. Rose, however, there were some time-sensitive elements, not the least of which was having a name in place sooner rather than later to help with capital fundraising, including securing donors and sponsors to complete the project.

“We want to be able to say, ‘You’re giving money to...’ whatever the name of the facility is, rather than you’re giving

money for a facility that has yet to be named,” said Mr. Rose. “It does give us an advantage if we have a name for a facility when we seek sponsors.”

One of the options on the table is the idea of a name for the entire facility, he said.

“For example, if we have a prospective sponsor...if we were to give that out as a naming right, it would combine nicely with the final name for this facility. We would love to be able to have a name that can go out with a bit more confidence, but at the same time, it is not something that would put the brakes on the capital campaign.”

Councillor Michael Thompson said he was “comfortable” going back out to the public for further potential names as long as it didn’t hinder the capital campaign, as did Councillor Gilliland who contended there was enough information on the table to push forward with fundraising.

“You’re selling the idea, the concept of the design, I think we have plenty of design, concept and inspiration [put forward] to get potential people to philanthropically donate, if that is the model we’re going for,” she said. “I just don’t see that that is a challenge.”

But, regardless of the capital campaign, the “Town Square” name had its supporters, including Councillors Sandra Humfries and Wendy Gaertner, with the latter stating the proposed name just missed the mark and should include the word “Aurora”.

“I think we want this to be a destination, and by calling it just ‘Town Square’ it could be anywhere in North America,” said Councillor Gaertner. “I think ‘Aurora’ needs to be in there somewhere.”

Town Square was also the preferred option for Mayor Tom Mrazak, although he expressed similar sentiments to Councillor Gaertner’s.

“Aurora Town Square speaks to exactly what it is and the majority of the public picked it. They like it,” he said. “[They can say] ‘See you at AT Square’ or ‘See you at ATS.’ I think it is catchy, it speaks to what it is, it speaks to the fact we are a Town and we’re small with big city amenities. I think it is all wrapped in there. I think if we were to change it to anything but ‘Library Square’ that is probably the only name I would be okay moving to.”



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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 welcome residents and customers once again. For more information, visit theaurorafarmersmarket.com.

information, visit 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.

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 Ullford 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 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.

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 or call 905-727-8991.



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Getting Things Done

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

Last week at General Committee (GC), Council discussed the renaming of Library Square.

This has been a long discussion dating back to 2018 where the Town undertook numerous steps to find a new name for Library Square, engaging with residents, stakeholders, and Council.

From the multiple consultations, a shortlist of four names were brought forward for Council consideration: Town Square, Church Street Square, Aurora Junction, and Constellation Square.

However, there was one name that was head and shoulders above the others when it came to feedback from the Public and that was Aurora Town Square. Fully 49.4% of respondents favour it. The next closest at 23.5%.

I believe Aurora Town Square is the perfect name for the reimagined Library Square. It speaks to what it is – the heart of a revitalized downtown core, a focal point for community gatherings in this great town of ours.

Aurora Town Square is a name that speaks to the small-town charm Aurora has but with big city amenities such as those that the Square will provide. It will be at the centre of future growth as our core continues to revitalize. This area will house our Library, our Museum, the Cultural centre with arts and music, a new multipurpose space that can be used for theatre, music, conferences, lectures, and an outdoor space that will be a gathering place for all to visit the many facilities and the many local businesses.

Schools closed for remainder of academic year

From page 9

While we recognize that virtual ceremonies do not fully replace the face-to-face graduation celebrations, we want to assure you that schools are working hard to ensure that virtual graduation ceremonies will be special and honour each of our graduates and their achievements.

“Following the provincial announcement, we appreciate that there are many questions now about face-to-face celebrations. The Ministry of Education has indicated that they will be sharing further direction with school boards shortly. Once we have received that direction, we will review it carefully, taking into account that any on-site, face-to-face recognition of our graduates will need to consider a number of factors. This will include engaging with York Region Public Health for their direction as we must ensure that we continue to prioritize the safety of our students, families, staff and communities.

“We understand the challenges the pandemic has presented for our students, and it is our hope that our virtual graduation ceremonies will still provide our graduating students with an opportunity to celebrate their achievements.”

Given all that this will encompass, the name Aurora Town Square is truly an appropriate name for it. This is an exciting time for our Town. What a great way to celebrate our Downtown by naming the key investment that has kicked started the revitalization of this area after our Town itself!

While the recommendation was just received at GC, I am looking forward to Council making a decision on the final name for the Square later this month. That's getting things done!

See you all at the Aurora Town Square (fingers crossed!) Fall 2022!

If you have any questions about this update or the meeting that took place, please contact me by email tmrakas@aurora.ca or by phone 416-543-1624.

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Let's Talk.

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EXPECTATIONS:

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

DESIRED SKILLS & EXPERIENCE:

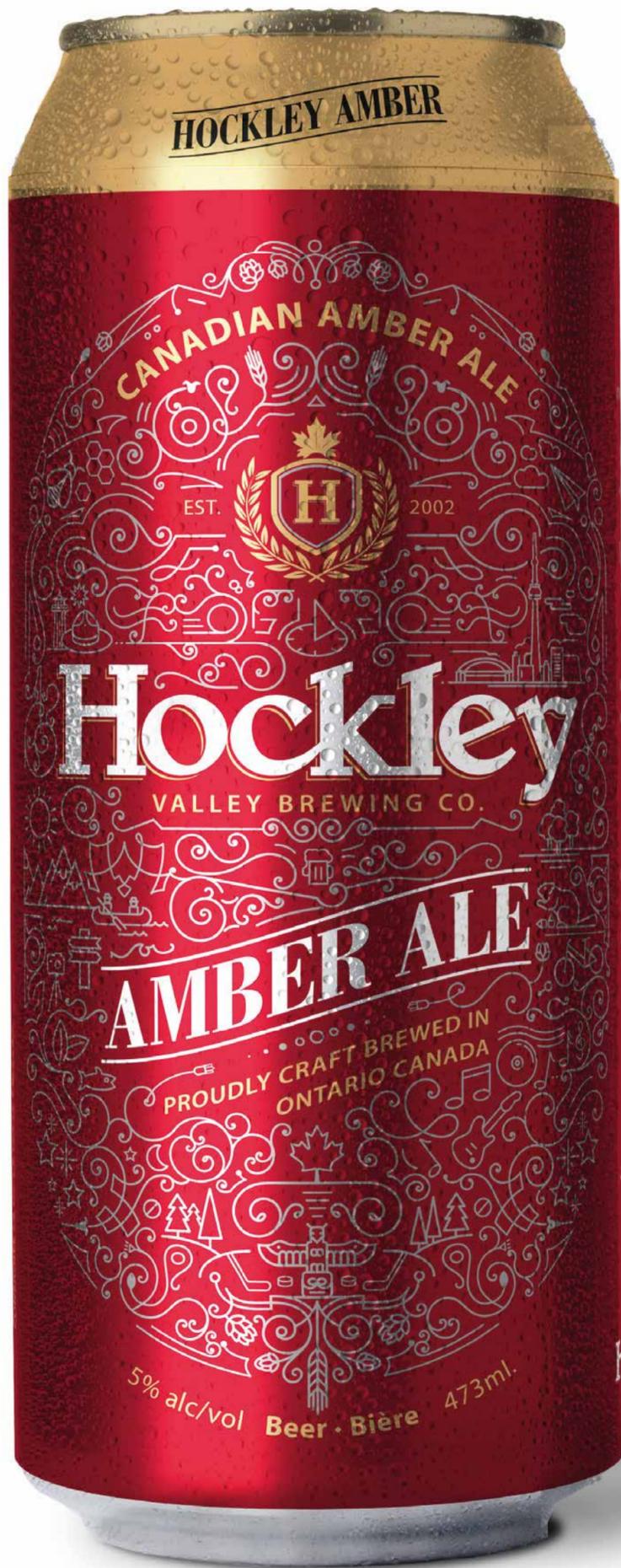
- Sales Driven
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- Great Personal Skills
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United Church "ready to rebuild" after parkland break from Council

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

It has been seven years of uncertainty for Aurora United Church since a fire devastated its venerable place of worship. Now, they're almost ready to put shovels in the ground at their spiritual home at Yonge and Tyler Streets.

Sitting at the Committee level last week, Council waived \$68,500-worth of cash-in-lieu-of-parkland fees being faced by Aurora United Church (AUC) ahead of the rebuild, a waiver which will remain in place until there is a change of use on the property.

Cash-in-lieu (CIL) is money developers are required to pay to the Town for the acquisition/building of parkland needed as a result of growth.

As AUC is slated to be rebuilt in conjunction with a multi-storey 150-unit retirement home on the north end of the property, the developers of the residential portion of the development will still be on the hook for \$166,500.

"Recently we were informed that we are required to pay a CIL for the sum of \$235,000, of which \$68,500 is the portion payable by the church," said Brian North, Chair of the AUC Rebuilding Committee, in a letter to municipal staff. "It is my understanding from past discussions that when a new, not replacement place of worship was built on Leslie Street that this cost was

waived for them.

"It is unfortunate the position we find ourselves in, but it is my belief that our rebuilding will have no change in affecting the parklands within our Town, we are the same congregation requiring new bricks and mortar."

Staff agreed with Mr. North's position and put forward the appropriate recommendation to Council, citing the CIL waiver for Northridge Community Church, which was constructed by the Salvation Army on Leslie Street, just north of Wellington Street East.

"I am comfortable doing it for the church," said Councillor Michael Thompson. "It is clear the only part we're deferring is the portion that would be associated with the church. The development is intertwined to a certain degree, but this is strictly just for the church and not for the retirement residence."

Councillor Harold Kim said he too was in favour of deferring the AUC's portion of the CIL bill.

"The church existed before and they are just rebuilding what was already there," he said. "Certainly it would be a just reason to defer the CIL. It is a place of worship and a congregation for many decades [providing] great service for the Town."

Mayor Mrakas agreed.

"We have done it with the Salvation Army [and] I have no problem doing it here," he noted. "Taxpayers will collect that money when the use changes.

This is a way we can continue to make sure that... a historic building in our Town gets rebuilt and comes back to the Downtown Core."

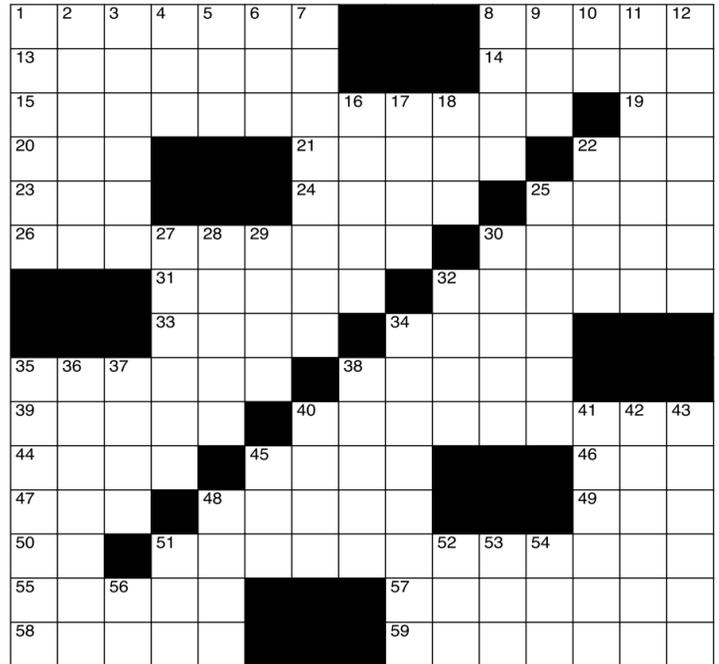
The former home of the Aurora United Church was demolished in 2014 after being gutted by a fire just prior to that year's Easter observances.

Since then, the AUC has shared

space with Trinity Anglican Church at Church and Victoria Streets.

Extensive archaeological work has taken place on the site in the intervening years, including the excavation of more than 100 early settler graves, remains which are set to be reinterred together at Aurora Cemetery in due course.

CROSSWORD

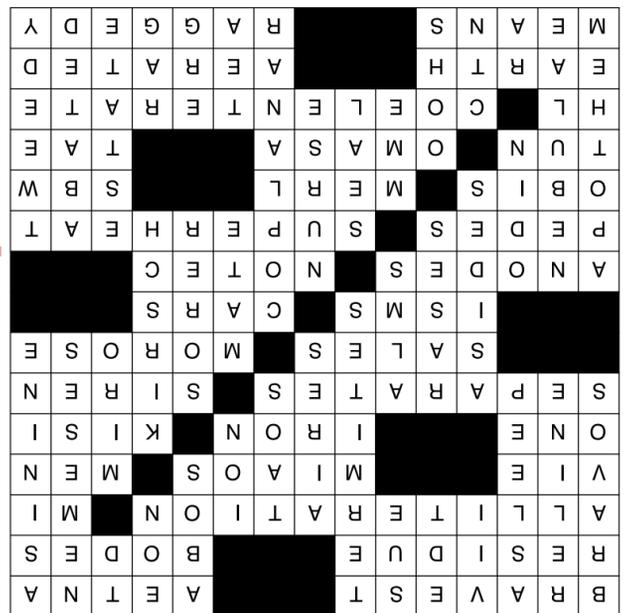


CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Most courageous
- 8. Insurance giant
- 13. Small trace left behind
- 14. In a way, signals
- 15. The same letter or sound at the beginning
- 19. The Great Lakes State
- 20. Engage in a contest
- 21. Drinks served to celebrate a birth (Spanish)
- 22. Manpower
- 23. Undivided
- 24. Strong, magnetic metal
- 25. People of Tanzania
- 26. Sorts
- 30. Cop car accessory
- 31. Trade
- 32. Sullen and ill-tempered
- 33. Distinctive practices
- 34. Motor vehicles
- 35. Electrodes
- 38. Polish river
- 39. Human feet
- 40. Make very hot
- 44. Toppin and Kenobi are two
- 45. Blackbird
- 46. One point west of due south
- 47. Large beer
- 48. Third stomachs
- 49. Rare Korean family name
- 50. Hectoliter
- 51. Aquatic invertebrate
- 55. Where we live
- 57. Poked holes in
- 58. Partner to ways
- 59. ___ Ann

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Expressions of approval
- 2. Replace the interior of
- 3. Not awake
- 4. Roman numeral 7
- 5. Sun up in New York
- 6. Institute legal proceedings against
- 7. Bugs homeowners don't want
- 8. Maltese-Italian composer
- 9. Very long period of time
- 10. Touchdown
- 11. Agents of downfall
- 12. Complacently or inanely foolish
- 16. Argentina capital Buenos ___
- 17. County in New Mexico
- 18. An electrically charged atom
- 22. New Zealand conifer
- 25. Type of brandy
- 27. Comments to the audience
- 28. Tears down
- 29. Gifts for the poor
- 30. More painful
- 32. Good friend
- 34. Lying in the same plane
- 35. Line in a polygon
- 36. Clouds of gas and dust
- 37. Norse god
- 38. Health care pro
- 40. Close tightly
- 41. One's holdings
- 42. Became less intense
- 43. Wilco frontman
- 45. Woman (French)
- 48. Expresses delight
- 51. TV channel (abbr.)
- 52. Beverage
- 53. Unit of work or energy
- 54. Cleaning accessory
- 56. Dorm worker



PUZZLE SOLUTION

Combatting seniors' isolation a mission for Aurora woman



Jules Masset

Contributed photo

While the program is still in its early stages, Ms. Masset says her ultimate goal is to have the program across Ontario and has reached out to the Provincial Government, and particularly the Ministry of Long-Term Care, with a pitch that she's still waiting to hear back on.

"I want to help seniors today and not in five years' time," she says.

Should the program move forward to the next level, its implementation could be reasonably straightforward. All that would be required in reach residence, she says, is a single point person to facilitate the senior with the device – whether it is a phone or an iPad – to make that connection through platforms like Facetime and Zoom.

"Some seniors are technology-challenged, so some do prefer just using the phone, and that is something that we offer," she says. "On a virtual platform, you get that face-to-face interaction that we haven't been able to get on a regular basis for the past year or so, and seniors who are actually living alone in residential homes – which is a huge issue – some of them don't even have wi-fi or internet. People can basically purchase a one-time call or they can purchase on a monthly or yearly basis – it all depends on whether it's for a corporation (such as a for-profit long-term care residence).

"When I was a volunteer at Mackenzie Health for almost three years, it is unbelievable how much seniors open up and welcome that conversation. There may be a little bit of reluctance [to reach out], but it is like therapy or anything like that: you've got to have that connection with the person you are speaking to on the other end of the phone.

"The new normal is really driving the need for technology and I believe that as we move forward you're going to find that technology is going to be used far more than it is today. The seniors we have today can be a little technology-challenged, but in another 10 years from now, when we go to that next generation of elderly, we're all using iPads, we're all using iPhones, and I think it is definitely the way of the future. It is important to recognize that loneliness is one of our greatest public health issues, not just here but globally."

For more information on the Let's Chit Chat program, visit letschitchat.ca.

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Social distancing and limited access to retirement and long-term care homes has left many seniors feeling more isolated than ever before – when sometimes all they want is someone to talk to.

That is an issue identified by Aurora resident Jules Masset and one she is looking to address through the recently established "Let's Chit Chat!" Virtual Program for Seniors.

Let's Chit Chat is a program designed to "enrich the lives of seniors" through virtual care in retirement and long-term care residences.

The intent is to connect seniors through computers, tablets, and just even over the phone to provide social interaction on a one-on-one basis.

"Originally, this was created for those who are in long-term care homes and the idea is because with COVID and all of the restrictions and rules, people can't actually go in to visit anybody, whether in retirement homes or long-term care homes," says Ms. Masset. "Here, everyone stays safe and you can still have those important social interactions with seniors.

"All of last year, I was working part-time in a retirement home in Newmarket and I was trying to figure out creative ways in how I could support and help seniors because I was seeing firsthand how much the loneliness was impacting them from a health standpoint. By December of last year, I came up with Let's Chit Chat and launched it in February."



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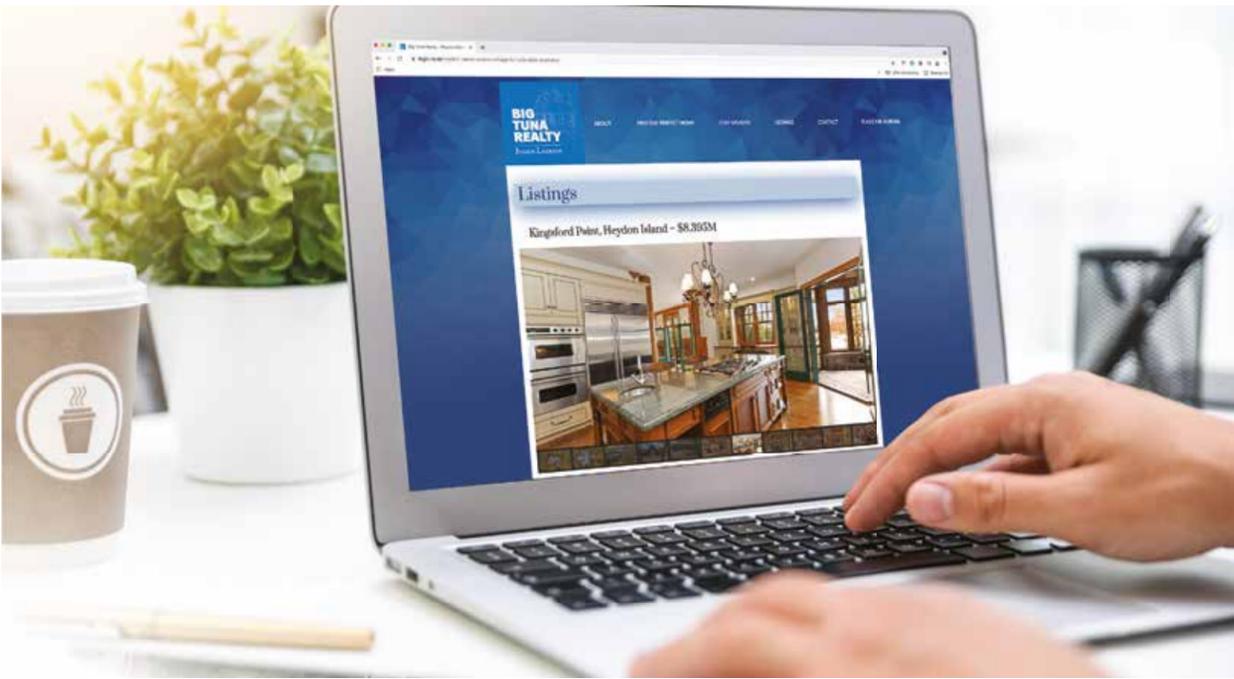
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Urban or rural, your new home is covered

(NC) The pandemic has changed many things in our lives, including where we choose to live. Many of us who see working remotely as our future have decided to look farther afield for a place to call home.

As long as you stay in Ontario and buy a new build, there's an extremely good chance your home will come with a mandatory warranty provided by your builder and backed by Tarion, the regulatory agency that administers new home warranties.

Here's a quick breakdown of how you're covered:

DEPOSIT PROTECTION

If you're looking at a freehold home (that is, where you fully own the house and the lot it's built on), your deposit coverage depends on the home's selling price: \$600,000 or less, and you're protected for up to \$60,000; over \$600,000, and you're protected for 10% of your deposit to a maximum of \$100,000.

If it's a condominium you're after, your deposit must be placed in trust as per the Condominium Act, and you have a further \$20,000 in protection under the new home warranty.

COMPENSATION FOR WRONGFUL DELAYS

Depending on the terms of your purchase agreement, your builder may be allowed to extend your closing date provided they follow the right procedures. If they don't, you may be entitled to compensation. Compensation under the warranty is \$150 per day to a maximum of \$7,500. It's intended to cover additional living expenses and other costs you incur as a result of the delay.

SEVEN-YEAR WARRANTY AGAINST DEFECTS

This warranty on work and materials starts on the day you take possession of your new home (or occupancy of your condominium) and is divided into three coverage periods.

In the first year, you're protected against defects throughout the home, including violations of Ontario's building code and unauthorized substitutions of materials written into your agreement.

Your two-year warranty covers plumbing, heating and electrical systems, as well as water penetration through the basement foundation or other parts of the home. Finally, you are protected against major structural defects for seven years.

Find more warranty information and resources for new home buyers at tarion.com.

www.newscanada.com



By Julien Laurion
The Big Tuna of Real Estate

Dear Big Tuna - My husband and I recently came into a bit of money, not a lot, but enough to improve our home a bit. We are long-time residents of Aurora and are also considering downsizing in a couple of years. What improvements do you recommend that would best optimize our new money?
Sincerely, Flower Lover

HI FLOWER LOVER, that is a great question! So without getting too specific since every home and budget is a bit different, there are some upgrades that will help you maximize the return on investment (ROI). Furthermore, these are not foolproof since some upgrades people choose to do to a home can be subjective. For example, pools... Some people love them and others hate them and feel they are a waste of money. A pool is something you install for you and your family, not the next buyer. However, there are some areas that you can focus on that do help both in enjoyment and resale.

A great place to start would be with a minor bathroom renovation. What's minor? Well, it can be as simple as changing the bathroom fixtures, painting, upgrading the lighting, changing the vanity and in some really dated homes remove the carpeting... so minor projects are smaller projects that do not require a lot of work. A minor bathroom renovation will generally provide you with about 102% of your ROI, versus doing a major renovation

(removing walls, making the room larger, changing the location of shower etc.) will yield about a 93.2% ROI upon resale of your home. The loss in ROI is because moving walls and making the room larger can be expensive.

Two other big ROI improvement areas to consider are landscaping and outdoor entertainment spaces. Upgrading or improving the landscaping of your home typically will provide you with a 100% ROI. Also, adding or improving a deck or patio space will approximately have a 90.3% ROI upon the resale of your home. These are also good renovation options since they do not really inconvenience you inside the home while they are underway.

Saying all this, the statistics I quoted are based upon average finishes, and no matter what room or area you decide to spend your money on, remember, you can always spend more than needed and not get all your money back. It can be a balancing act at times.

Flower Lover, if you are concerned with ROI rather than your enjoyment factor and if you're not working

with a Realtor who can help advise you (hint, hint call me), you could always go online and look in your neighbourhood to see what homes in the price point you hope to sell for look like and see how you differ. I always tell my clients to consider the next buyer when we are preparing a home for resale. Unique and extravagant is not always the best option!

Julien Laurion AKA Big Tuna is a local Real Estate Sale Representative with Royal LePage Your Community Realty in Aurora. I am a real estate agent who has expertise in both Real Estate and Renovations and has been involved in this community for over 20 years. If you have a question for my monthly article or if you are considering buying, selling or leasing a home please feel free to call or email me directly at (416) 402-5530 or julien@bigtuna.ca or by alternatively visiting my website www.bigtuna.ca or Facebook page @bigtunarealty

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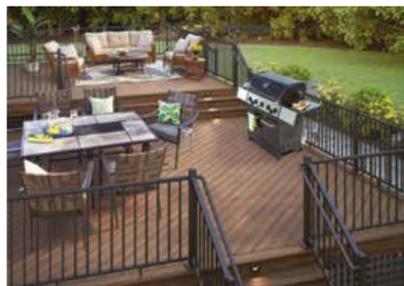
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RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS

6 WAYS TO DESIGN YOUR DREAM BACKYARD

(NC) With more time spent at home, designing a space that feels like a mini getaway is increasingly important. Whether you're looking to move your dining experience outside or wanting to create a calming retreat, here are six ways to achieve your dream backyard:



SPLURGE ON PATIO FURNITURE

If your patio furniture is looking worn and tired, it might be time to consider investing in quality items that will last for seasons to come. Select pieces that are both functional and timeless. When styling the sitting area, try a large sectional. Not only will it create a more intimate atmosphere, but it will also provide ample space for lounging. Use throw blankets and decorative pillows for colour and texture.

EXTEND THE SEASON

Patio season can be enjoyed much of the year if you play your cards right. For the ultimate makeover, add a firepit or outdoor heater, so you can keep spending time outdoors when the nights begin to cool. It's even better if you can stay cozy while you stargaze.

CONSIDER SHADE AND PRIVACY

A custom-made gazebo or pergola helps keep an outdoor space shady and cool and makes for a stunning feature. Whether you want to tackle a DIY project or are looking for help with installation, Home Hardware's backyard project packages can provide you with blueprints, quality materials, expert advice and everything you need to get the job done.



ENHANCE YOUR OUTDOOR DINING

Elevate your dining experience with a trendy new pellet grill that allows you to sear, bake, roast and smoke. This will give the chef in your house the perfect excuse to whip up some classic burgers or a wood-fired pizza. Wood pellets are available in a variety of flavours, like apple, hickory, maple, oak and more, so you can experience gourmet food from the comfort of your backyard.

AMP UP THE AMBIANCE

Don't forget to add some atmosphere with lighting and the right finishing touches. String lights are a must-have for making a space feel bright and warm as the sun goes down. Adding greenery and florals to your patio or deck space will also infuse charm and

privacy. Consider going with tropical plants to bring a touch of the Caribbean to your home.

LET THE GAMES BEGIN

Enhance that getaway feeling by adding entertainment to your backyard. Take games night outdoors with Bolaball — a family-friendly game that's perfect for people of all ages. If you're in the DIY mood, you can also make a bean bag or washer-toss game. These simple additions will keep the whole family having fun all season long.

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5 best *outdoor living* space ideas



(NC) After being forced to spend more time inside this year, it's important to make any outdoor space in our home an oasis for enjoyment.

Whether you have a tiny condo balcony, a spacious backyard or something in between, draw inspiration from these ideas to create a relaxing space.

1 DEFINE YOUR AREA Add some charm and outline visual boundaries for your outdoor space by setting up a trellis, laying down an outdoor rug or

installing a pergola. This will set the tone and let you introduce some style and personality with bold colours, distressed wood and graphic patterns.

2 CREATE DIY DINING SPACES One of the top outdoor living trends is dining al fresco, which lets you bring the patio experience home. Instead of buying a dinette set, why not DIY your own with repurposed materials? For a larger space, create a table using wine barrels and wooden boards. If you have a small balcony, upcycle a vintage lamp base and thrift store tabletop for a cute bistro table. Finally, consider adding mismatched chairs to finish off this eclectic look.

3 PLAN YOUR ENTERTAINMENT Whether you're hosting a small gathering or decompressing on a weeknight, you can elevate the ambiance with sound.

From compelling podcasts to indie rock to chill electronic, a SiriusXM streaming subscription is a great way to find exactly what you're looking for, or discover something new. Broadcasting outside is easy with the app, which is compatible with virtually any connected device including your smart speaker, phone or computer.

4 TRY A GARDENING TREND Bringing plants, flowers and other greenery into your outdoor space can instantly boost your mood and help you feel more connected to nature. A vertical garden is a great option if you have limited real estate — simply hang pots or planter boxes on a wooden pallet that leans against a wall. You can also try xeriscaping, an alternative to traditional gardening that uses drought-resistant plants and careful plot design to conserve water.

5 ADD SOME WARMTH Make sure your outdoor living space incorporates ways to keep warm during those chilly summer nights or shoulder season weeks. Outdoor firepits are a popular choice, you can find DIY tutorials online to build your own with some stones. If you can't have a fire in your balcony or yard, some cozy blankets and pillows can do the trick. Learn more about music, podcasts and entertainment programming at siriusxm.ca.

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3 outdoor living trends for the ultimate deck

(NC) We all want to enjoy the warm weather in a comfortable and stylish space. Whether you have a cottage, a small balcony or a spacious backyard, consider these low-maintenance trends when transforming your deck and outdoor living space.

1 COMBINE INDOOR AND OUTDOOR STYLE Many of us are bringing the indoors outside by making the outdoor space an extension of our home. Before starting your backyard design, consider the colours presently in your home as a foundation for your outdoor choices. By pulling inspiration from your interiors, you'll create a consistent look and feel and have an additional, cozy space for lounging.

2 GO MAINTENANCE FREE When renovating your deck this year, consider a maintenance-free approach by investing in materials that are not only long lasting, but also beautiful. Composite decking has become increasingly popular because of the longevity and sophistication it offers. Voyage composite decking from Home Hardware is both functional and fashionable.

The mineral-based composite is designed for use on ground and near water, making it the perfect option for a deck, dock or around the pool. The deck boards are available in different colours and widths, allowing you to add design flair to your deck, just like you would to the floors inside your home. It's also virtually maintenance free, requiring no protective stains or sealants and resistant to moisture, insects and sunlight.

3 PLAY WITH CURVES One of the biggest design trends for decks this year is curves. Gone are the days when decks are thought of as traditional planks with vertical and horizontal lines. Deck architecture is now a combination of many elements, pairing stunning curves with vibrant borders to create a beautiful outdoor feature. When developing the design for a curved deck, composite decking is the perfect way to achieve a unique look.

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We bought a house but we have no idea where to start when we move in to maintain it, do you have any pointers?

Every home is different and yet key home maintenance advice may be similar for many homeowners and investors. Searching online is a great way to get tips on basic how-tos, for specific step-by-step how-tos and videos. Additionally, the Home Reference Book from Carson Dunlop is a valuable resource tool used by home inspectors across North America. When in doubt, call a licensed and recommended professional to assist, assess, estimate or complete repairs needed.

- 1 Check and clean gutters and eavestroughs, ensure they are free from debris, and that water is draining away from the home from the downspouts.
- 2 Check and replace furnace and air conditioning filters and date them as a reminder of when they were last changed; these can be checked on a monthly basis to ensure they are in acceptable condition.
- 3 Spring ahead and fall behind. When the hours change it is a recommended time to replace batteries in smoke detectors and test them to be sure they are in working order. A smoke alarm must be located on every floor of the home. Ensure carbon monoxide detectors are also present and in working condition. It would be prudent to buy new dual units upon move in for added peace of mind.
- 4 Planning the gardens may be an exciting part of spending time at home, but ensure the drainage and sloping of your lot grading leads water away

from the house. Additional topsoil, fertilizer and water may be required to achieve ideal conditions. End-of-season sales may be the best opportunity to save money on all types of plants.

- 5 Beware of dryer fire hazards. It's not enough that you clean your dryer filter after every load of laundry. Dryer manufacturers recommend you vacuum out the area that contains the lint filter once per month. Additionally, manufacturers suggest periodic cleaning of the vent that leads from the machine to the outdoors. Recent studies show a spike in home fires caused by a lack of maintenance on drying machines, and the lint debris can become highly flammable.
- 6 Seasonally check the roof for wear and tear and maintenance requirements, and check again after storms. It's ideal to be proactive versus reactive due to damage caused by old shingles, weathered and damaged material, leaks, etc. Check the underside of the roof in the attic for signs of mold from improper ventilation or water seepage.
- 7 Critter alert; aim to keep critters away from damaging the home. Many will persist to enter tight attic spaces for shelter and cause havoc when simple screening, chimes screen covers, vent covers and general maintenance of the home may keep critters at bay.
- 8 Clear out debris from window wells to avoid leakage or flooding. Plastic domes can be installed to keep the area free from moisture.

- 9 Powerwash and reseal wood decks, doors, fences, gates, railings and latticework as necessary.
- 10 Sand, prime and paint home exterior surfaces to suit preferred style needs and wants and don't be afraid to add pops of colour to the front door at the very least for an unexpected way to welcome guests.
- 11 Seal the driveway if necessary. Asphalt can be low maintenance but still requires some attention, pay attention to the winter freeze and spring thaw wear and tear signs on patio stones and other hardscaping materials to avoid tripping hazards.
- 12 Irrigation systems on automatic timers save time and effort keeping the yard green however each year the units require maintenance to test all sprinkler heads and zones to ensure they are all working at full capacity and with efficiency. Be mindful that water bill usage may increase in the warmer months, and a screened rain barrel may be a solution for water conservation.
- 13 Replace screens on doors and windows to keep the bugs, and animals out in order to enjoy the fresh breeze weather permitting.
- 14 BUGS AWAY - be sure to rid the yard of any standing water which can attract a large number of mosquitos. Clear excess water from swimming pool covers early and when water collects. Inspect

wood for signs of termites and call in pest control professionals if needed. If trees show signs of being attacked by other pests collect or photograph the tree or a leaf or the pest itself and show a local garden centre specialist so that a treatment plan can commence to avoid further destruction.

15 The simplest way to add curb appeal is by raking away all debris, power washing and blowing away debris, keeping the property clean by trimming back trees and shrubs. Planting well-chosen annuals, perennials and shrubs to complement the home while adding a welcoming boost to the landscape. Maintain the lawn with cutting, seeding, fertilizing, and using a grass trimmer. In winter shovelling, sanding, salting and managing ice and snow collection will further add to the enhancement of the home.

- Written by Connie Power

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A healthy lawn can increase the value of your home

(NC) Thinking of selling your home this summer? Did you know that curb appeal increases the value of your property and helps speed up the process? A big part of the outside appearance is related to your lawn and garden.

But lawns and gardens require care to thrive. Pesticides are one tool that help protect lawns by keeping weeds and other pests under control. Health Canada regulates every pesticide in Canada to ensure they can be used safely, and not pose harm to human health when used as directed.

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**RESALE
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3 EASY WAYS TO CREATE A

calming **space AT HOME**



(NC) Most of us are spending more time at home than ever before. With our spaces being used for both work and living, they should be as comfortable and calming as possible. Create a peaceful sanctuary in your home with these three easy tips:

SPEND TIME DECLUTTERING

The adage "messy room, messy mind" rings even truer when you're home all the time. It's hard to feel relaxed when there is chaos in your space. Before you tackle the clutter, determine how much time you have. The last thing you want to do is run out of time and end up with an even bigger mess than you started with.

Consider dividing your space into manageable sections so you can declutter during the dedicated time. Clear and organize the clutter by donating, selling or keeping. Donate what you don't need to a local charity, sell online using a social media platform and re-organize the items you want to keep. Don't forget to clean and dust the new space you've uncovered.

PLANT POWER

Not only can plants help cleanse stale air and eliminate harmful toxins in a room, they can improve the aesthetic

of your space. Consider a little greenery to turn around your everyday mood. Don't have a green thumb? Choose potted plants or florals that are easy to care for, such as succulents or snake plants.

COLOUR YOUR WAY TO CALM

A fresh coat of paint in the right colour goes a long way towards creating a soothing space where you can relax. Design a peaceful retreat with calming hues such as whites, greys and creams. Try Beauti-Tone Paint's Essential Whites Collection, which features a palette inspired by fresh sea air, rays of sunlight and sandy beaches.

To visualize your favourite shade before you buy visit BeautiTone.ca.



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Real Estate Market Update – Aurora



Sellers Market into the Sunshine

Home prices held strong through May in Aurora at an average home price for all home types of \$1,247,210 there were 134 homes sold through the Ontario wide COVID-19 Stay-at-Home Order within the 31 day period. There were 201 homes placed for sale, and 152 overall remained available for purchase, June 1st, 2021. Typically Sellers yielded 103 percent of their asking price within an overall time frame of 20 days that the property was on the market for sale.

The least expensive condominium apartment sold for \$560,000 while the most affordable freehold townhome was sold for \$768,000. A total of nine homes sold above \$2 million, and the highest home sale was \$3,300,000. When we remove the highest and lowest sale in May and across all of 2021 the special note is that the resulting number is the same \$1,165,000 the current median home value for the year in Aurora for all home types.

Reviewing the action of Buyers there was a 238 percent increase over last May. Month over month there were 29 percent fewer homes sold which is understandable as prices remain high, and affordability has been called

into question again as lenders announced tightening pre-qualification rates by a marginal number commencing in June 2021.

Year to date, the market in Aurora is 127 percent stronger in 2021, with 709 homes that have sold thus far and vaccinations now being given from age 12 and older to a strong majority across Aurora, York Region and beyond in hopes of safer times.

– Written by Connie Power

Connie Power Manager / Sales Representative
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*The statistics provided herein were obtained from the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board, Market Watch Report for May 2020, 2021 and the Regional Housing Market Tables, York Region, Aurora for May of 2020, 2021.

***Not intended to solicit those currently under a real estate contract.

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RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS



Quick tips to refresh your medicine cabinet

(NC) Warmer weather means it's the perfect time to deep clean your home or refresh your wardrobe for the warmer weather. But when it comes to your medicine cabinet, what should stay and what should go? Here are some easy tips to spruce up your medicine cabinet and get the most out of your products.

CHECK YOUR EXPIRY DATES

When was the last time you checked the expiry dates on the items in your medicine cabinet? The expiry date listed on a cosmetic product means it's good until that date if the product is unopened or never used — but once you've opened the packaging, its shelf life starts winding down. As a rule, your products are only good for about a year from when you open them, so check their best-by dates, especially for products at the very back of your cabinet.

SAVE SPACE WITH MULTI-PURPOSE PRODUCTS

Bathroom storage space is often limited, so purchasing multi-purpose products — like a toothpaste that prioritizes gum health, gently whitens teeth and fight cavities all at once — is ideal and lessens the need to buy multiple products. The new Colgate Renewal Gum Revitalize toothpaste features a specialized formula that helps reverse early gum damage and reduces bleeding and inflammation for healthy and revitalized gums.

RE-STOCK YOUR CABINET BY SEASON

The moisturizers and beauty products you use in winter are often too heavy for your skin in spring and summer. The air is dryer in winter, requiring a heavier-duty moisturizer to compensate. If your skin is feeling oily as the weather warms up, switch to a lightweight facial moisturizer and foundation made for your skin type. And don't skip this step if your skin is naturally oily — you still need a good daily moisturizer to keep your skin hydrated, supple and balanced.

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Japanese minimalism meets Scandinavian chic for 2021's top home trend



(NC) Make your home a sanctuary by inviting a fusion of global styles into your space with the increasingly popular “Japandi” aesthetic. Rooted in a longing for a sustainable, serene but lived-in look, this is set to become your new design philosophy.

Create your dreamy yet stylish oasis by embracing this design approach using tips from Sharon Grech, Benjamin Moore colour and design expert.

FIND SERENITY THROUGH COLOUR

Create harmony at home by choosing a soothing palette of earth-inspired neutrals. These rich neutrals will help bring balance to the sleek lines of Scandinavian-style furniture.

“To successfully find balance in this stylish fusion and bring calm to your space, avoid cool tones and bright shades of white. Instead, opt for colours like Muslin OC-12 or Jute AF-80 that will transform your space into a comfortable oasis,” recommends Grech.

BE INTENTIONAL, NOT MINIMAL

Japandi design is about achieving a livable balance between aesthetics and everyday life. Decreasing clutter and being mindful of your furniture and décor choices are key. Although this style focuses on open, clean spaces, you don't have to say goodbye to everything.

Instead of trying to be minimal, be thoughtful about editing your space — keep your treasured pieces and give them room to shine, and use storage pieces (like storage ottomans and baskets) to keep out-of-season items out of sight. Do some good and donate anything that no longer works.

CREATE SOOTHING INTERIORS WITH SIMPLICITY

Japanese and Scandinavian design styles complement each other, as they both embody simplicity and comfort. Their shared aesthetics come together to create a style that is both easygoing and sophisticated.

“Try using a paint like Regal Select in a matte finish to give your space an effortless appeal and achieve a stylish balance of elegance and tranquillity,” advises Grech. “Choosing to paint in a matte finish embodies a restful sense of ease.”

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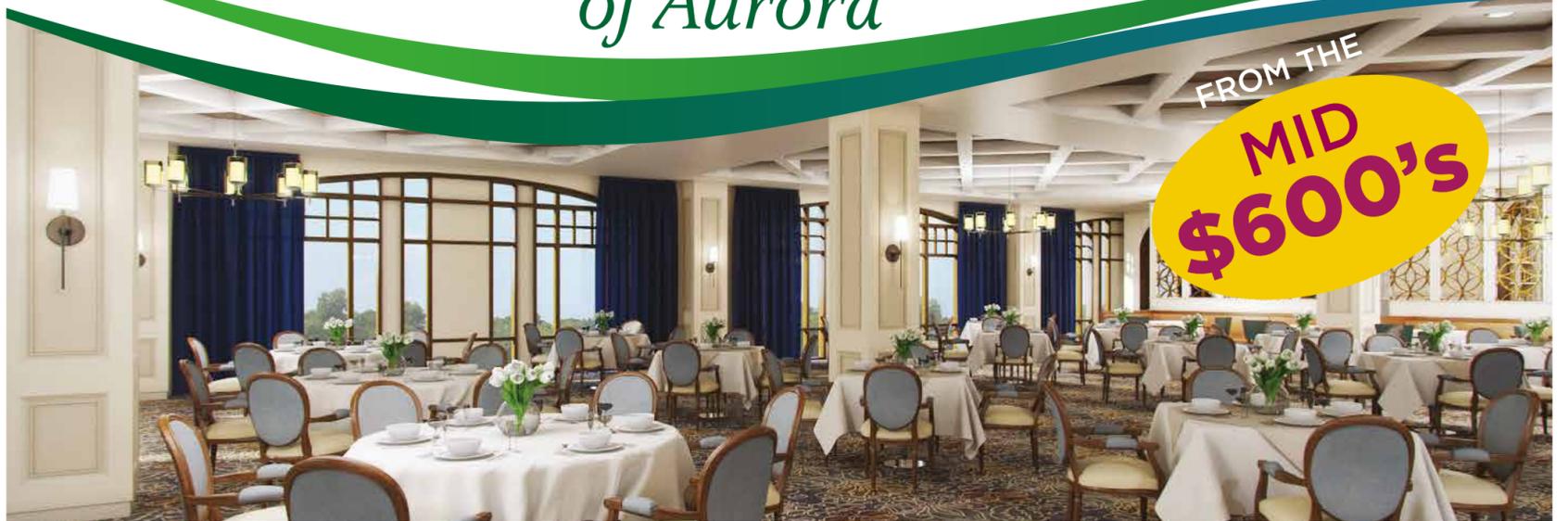
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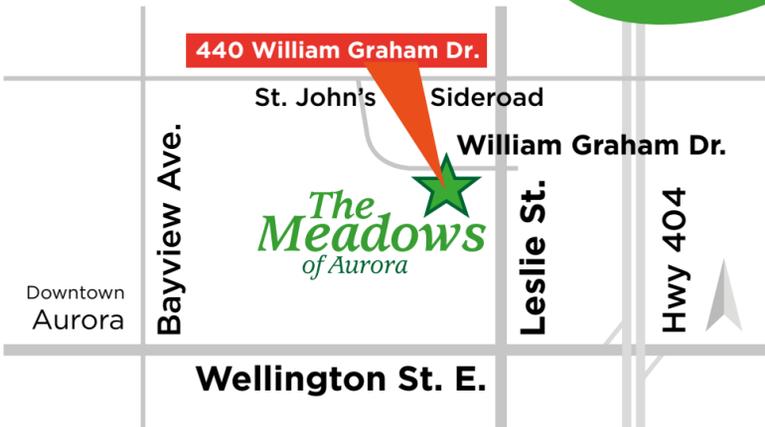
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The flavour for all your summer meals, yuzu



(NC) Look again, that's not a lemon, it's a yuzu! This citrus fruit is bright yellow, round and slightly smaller than an orange. The taste is between that of a grapefruit and a mandarin orange — tart but very sweet scented.

While the fruit itself is almost never eaten on its own, the zest and juice are used countless ways in foods and drinks. Yuzu has a very strong flavour, and depending on your usage, very little may be needed to pack a punch. In drinks, a little goes a very long way, and just a drop in a cocktail is often enough. It also has infinite applications in sweet recipes, where it's best used like an essence. Try adding a couple of drops to your custards, jellies, ices and meringues and you won't regret it. This summer, President's Choice Insiders Report has a great range of yuzu products for anyone looking to try something new, including this indulgent, dairy-free riff on ice cream cake. It's made with tangy-sweet yuzu citrus and blueberry sorbet, layered on a coconut-graham crust and topped with zesty blueberry-lime sauce.

Yuzu Blueberry Sorbet Cake

Prep time: 20 minutes Cook time: 15 minutes Serves: 12 Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups (375 mL) graham cracker crumbs
- ½ cup (125 mL) unsweetened medium shredded coconut
- 5 tbsp (75 mL) coconut oil (solid or liquid)
- 1 tub (946 mL) PC yuzu citrus and blueberry sorbet
- 3 cups (750 mL) frozen wild blueberries
- 1/3 cup (83 mL) granulated sugar
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) cornstarch
- 1 tsp (5 mL) grated lime zest
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) fresh lime juice
- ½ cup (125 mL) coconut chips

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Toast graham crumbs and shredded coconut in nonstick skillet over medium heat, stirring often, until light golden; about 5 minutes. Transfer to bowl. Return skillet to medium heat; add coconut oil and cook until melted (skip this step if using liquid coconut oil). Stir into graham crumb mixture.
- 2 Mist 9-inch (2.5 L) springform pan with cooking spray or grease with coconut oil. Lightly press graham crumb mixture into bottom of pan (do not press up side of pan and do not pack mixture firmly). Freeze 30 minutes.
- 3 Let sorbet stand at room temperature until beginning to soften, about 20 minutes. Scoop sorbet into springform pan over crust, smoothing top; return to freezer.
- 4 Meanwhile, bring frozen blueberries and sugar to a boil in small saucepan over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to maintain a gentle boil; cook, stirring occasionally, until blueberries are softened and liquid becomes a bit syrupy, about 5 minutes. Stir cornstarch with lime juice in small bowl; stir

into blueberry mixture. Return to a boil, stirring constantly; remove from heat. Stir in lime zest.

- 5 Transfer blueberry mixture to a large heat-proof bowl. Refrigerate until slightly cooled, about 20 minutes. Pour blueberry mixture over sorbet, gently smoothing top. Return to freezer until well chilled, at least 1 hour.
- 6 Run small paring knife around inside edge of springform pan; release and remove side of pan. Tip: If cake doesn't easily release from pan, dampen a kitchen towel with warm water and wrap it around base and side of pan to slightly melt the edge just enough to release.
- 7 Transfer to serving platter, removing from base. Sprinkle with coconut chips. Tip: Run your knife under warm water before slicing, wiping blade with a damp cloth between cuts. Try this: Serving this cake outdoors? Freeze your serving platter and plates before using to keep the cake from melting too fast.

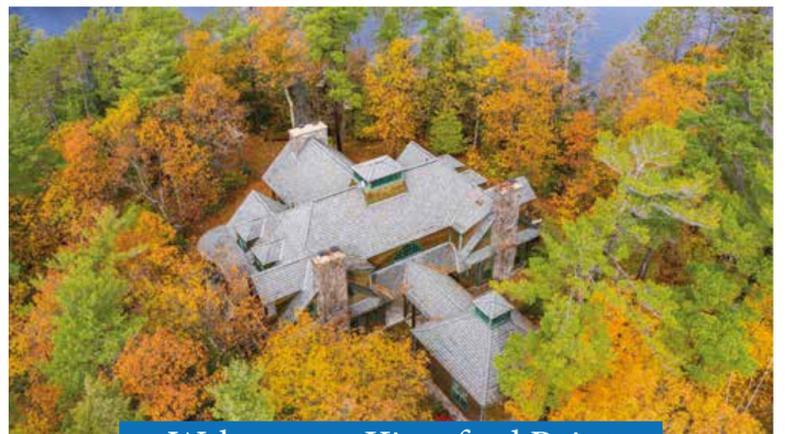
Nutritional information per 1/12 of cake: calories 390, fat 15 g, saturated fat 11 g, sodium 190 mg, carbohydrates 63 g, dietary fibre 3 g, sugars 33 g, protein 3 g.

Tips to kick your kitchen fatigue

(NC) You've likely never spent more time in your kitchen than you have over the past year — and let's be honest, it's exhausting. Paired with trying to manage the changes in our day-to-day lives while attempting to maintain some form of routine, it can be especially daunting to answer the age-old question of "what's for dinner?" Fortunately, it doesn't always have to be so difficult. As we continue to juggle working from home along with the end of the school year and everything else we've got going on, here are some simple tips to help you get out of your rut and kick your kitchen fatigue. Meal planning doesn't have to be hard. Taking 30 minutes out of your day to plan meals for the week can take away a lot of the stress that comes with cooking. Start by looking at your local grocery flyer for cost-saving inspiration. If you need a few meal ideas, try using Pinterest to find creative recipes. Meal plans also don't have to be written in stone — show yourself compassion and shift meals around depending on how you're feeling. If you end up ordering in every now and again, don't sweat it. Bring the getaway to the dinner table. Dreaming of the perfect vacation? While you may not be able to board that flight, why not discover new flavours and get the whole family involved? Pick a destination and a traditional dish, add the ingredients to your shopping cart and enjoy food from different cultures as you learn something new. Take your meal outside. Barbecue season is in full swing, so turn off the stove and get outside. Try a meatless Monday on the grill with grilled halloumi and veggie skewers. Or, marinate chicken in a mixture of lemon juice, olive oil and fresh rosemary and garlic and serve on a bed of grilled zucchini, eggplant and peppers. Convenience isn't a crime. Taking the easy way out can sometimes be seen as a failure, but with all the convenient, ready-to-go options available, it's okay to lean into what works best for us. Pick up a ready-made rotisserie chicken to serve with a fresh sum-

mer salad or a meal kit to make weeknight dinners a breeze. It's okay to ask for help. If you're not sure where to start, connect with a registered dietitian at your local Loblaws for some helpful tips and recipe ideas. Offering many ways to connect, you can try a free 15-minute initial nutrition consultation with a dietitian or check out a webinar with a variety of helpful topics. Learn more at loblaws.ca/dietitians.

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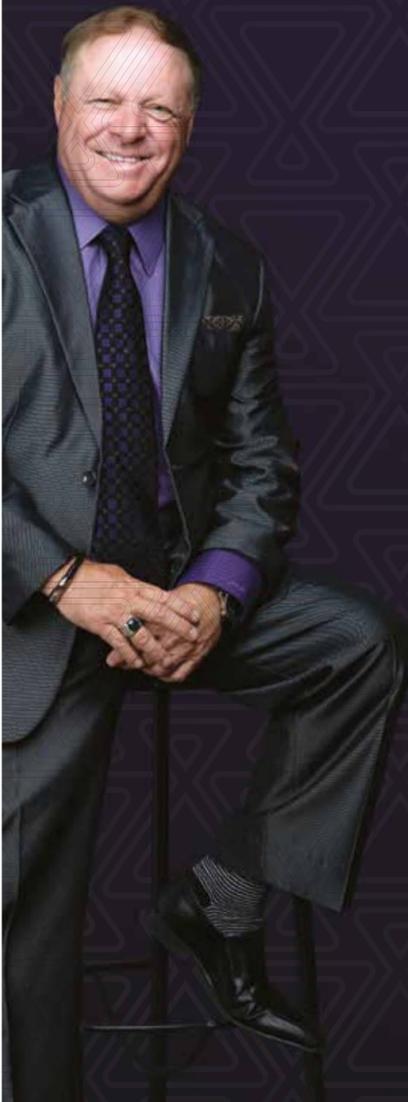
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