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Aurora's Community Newspaper

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Week of July 14, 2022



SAFETY FIRST

Aspiring firefighter Carlos caught up with Hunter and Ben as the Central York Fire Services staff promoted fire safety at the Aurora Farmers' Market on Saturday. Now in its 20th anniversary season, the Aurora Farmers' Market will be marking their milestone this Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Town Park. For more, see Pages 3 and 13.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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Communications outage impacted emergency services, highlighted gaps

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Just a few weeks ago, staff and leaders at Southlake Regional Health Centre held a mock Code Grey, a drill to go over the critical steps needed to keep things running smoothly in the event of a significant infrastructure failure.

The practice stood the hospital in good stead on Friday when they, along

with most of the rest of the country on the Rogers telecom network, were left offline in a major service outage.

On July 8, customers across the country were largely disconnected following what Rogers described as a “network system failure following a maintenance update.”

The outage not only left people unable to use their phones, television and internet, but without a means to use their bank cards at businesses,

access their money at ATMs, or call for emergency services.

“We know how much our customers rely on our networks and I sincerely apologize,” said Rogers Communications President & CEO Tony Staffieri in a statement. “We’re particularly troubled that some customers could not reach emergency services and we are addressing the issue as an urgent priority.”

Continued on page 19

Cultural Centre project will transform Bell boxes into works of art

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists will soon be hard at work collaborating on a new exhibition set to be installed in Aurora – and, to take it in, you might only have to go as far as the end of your street.

The Aurora Cultural Centre and the Canadian Mental Health Association

Continued on page 7

CONCERTS IN THE PARK – Aurora's popular Concerts in the Park series kicked off its 2022 season on Wednesday evening with George St. Kitts. Concerts will continue at Town Park each Wednesday through August beginning at 7 p.m. For more, see Page 14.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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COVID's seventh wave comes as hospitals continue to struggle with capacity

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Ontario is settling into its seventh wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Numbers are rising along with hospital admissions, says Dr. Barry Pakes, York Region's Medical Officer of Health.

"We're in our seventh wave of COVID-19 [and] the levels of COVID-19 in our wastewater, which are the best markers we have of COVID-19 in our community are markedly increased in York Region as well as Ontario," said Dr. Pakes on Monday. "These levels have been increasing over the last few weeks and most significantly in the last week. This is due to the more transmissible BA.5 variant and it means that COVID-19 is circulating at high levels. Not yet as high as the previous wave but high and still increasing."

"Unfortunately, we also saw an increase in hospitalizations and severe illness related

to COVID-19. We know that this additional burden on hospitals comes at a time when we cannot afford it with hospitals already very much overburdened with their usual work, as well as the COVID backlog and persistent staffing changes across healthcare and public health."

The best way to "make a difference" is to continue with masking and stay up-to-date on vaccinations, he added. Increases in third and fourth dose coverage can make a difference for everyone, he added.

"For many York Region residents, it has been many, many months since their last dose and for many this was their second dose," he said. "Now is the time to get your third dose or your booster dose. We know that COVID-19 vaccine is fundamentally a three-dose vaccine. It requires three doses for high and sustained protection against COVID infection and most importantly against severe infection. We also know that immunity wanes over time, so even if you have had COVID already you can get it again and the vaccine can make a difference not only for you but in someone you might spread it to as well."

"Even if you had COVID-19 this winter, the BA.1 variant, or even more recently, you can get reinfected. Though BA.5 is not known to be more severe than the other variants, I have actually been surprised at how ill some acquaintances and colleagues have been with BA.5. We do know no matter how severe your illness is, having COVID-19 increases the risk of long COVID."

"If it is like other waves, we expect this wave to last seven to eight weeks. With this heightened level of transmission of a new variant, we need to be extra cautious and respectful of people who are vulnerable or immunocompromised."

FIRST MONKEYPOX CASES IN YORK REGION

Last week, the Public Health department reported the first local cases of monkeypox in York Region.

The two first cases, they said, were not connected to one another.

"Human monkeypox is a rare infectious disease and the risk for most people in the

community is considered to be very low," said Dr. Pakes. "York Region Public Health continues to monitor the situation and follow up with all close contacts of the two cases, who have both been isolating appropriately."

Monkeypox is caused by a virus that does not spread easily between people. When it does, it spreads through prolonged close contact such as between household members or during intimate contact (e.g.: skin-to-skin contact, sex). It may also spread through contact with contaminated materials, such as bedding or laundry, or from contact with body fluids, such as the fluid from monkeypox sores.

Common symptoms of monkeypox infection are:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Exhaustion
- Swollen lymph nodes

New rash or sores/lesions (typically appear a few days after other symptoms, beginning on face, around genital areas and/

or extremities)

"These symptoms are common among many diseases and having symptoms does not necessarily indicate a monkeypox infection," said the Region. "Anyone who may have come in contact with a suspected or confirmed monkeypox case and is feeling unwell – or has symptoms that could be consistent with monkeypox – should isolate and contact their health care provider."

Like other diseases that spread through close contact, people can lower their risk of being exposed to monkeypox by avoiding close contact with those who are unwell, practicing good hand and respiratory hygiene and practicing safer sex.

Monkeypox vaccine clinics will be offered to people who may be at higher risk of infection and who meet eligibility criteria set by the Ontario Ministry of Health. Vaccines for the general population are currently not recommended.

For information on vaccine eligibility, booking and clinic information, visit york.ca/monkeypox.

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Police investigate "Indecent act" near Case Woodlot

York Regional Police is seeking public assistance to identify a man following an indecent act in a public trail system in the Town of Aurora.

"On Saturday, July 9, 2022, around 6 p.m., officers responded to a report of an indecent act in the Case Woodlot trail system, located in the area of Mahogany Court and McClellan Way," said Constable Maniva Armstrong in a statement.

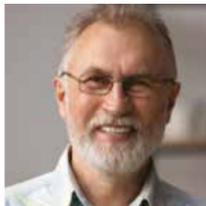
"The female victim was sitting on a bench along the trail when a male suspect came out of the forested area naked. The male approached the victim and committed an indecent act before running southwest into the forested area towards Highview Public School park area."

Investigators are releasing an image and a video link of the suspect and appealing for public assistance to identify him. The video can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/b4j0UKd1fBo>

The suspect is described as male, White, clean shaven, and between the ages of 55 and 65.

He was wearing a baseball cap and boots.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the York Regional Police #1 District Criminal Investigations Bureau at 1-866-876-5423, ext.7141, or call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-tips, or leave an anonymous tip online at www.1800222tips.com.



The Town of Aurora is now recruiting for customer focused individuals to work in a variety of temporary positions for the Municipal Election on **October 24, 2022**.

Who can apply

In order to be eligible to work in a temporary election position, you must fit the following criteria:

- 18 years of age or older
- Legally entitled to work in Canada
- Applicants cannot be a candidate or the spouse, sibling, parent or child, or grandparent, grandchild of a candidate running in the October 24, 2022, Municipal Election
- Applicants cannot volunteer for a candidate running in the October 24, 2022, Municipal Election
- Customer service and/or election official experience preferred
- Fluent in English (knowledge of other languages an asset)
- Access to reliable transportation
- Ability to work well both independently and as a team; and,
- Availability to attend a mandatory 2-hour training session, between October 10 and October 19, 2022

Please note:

- All selected candidates must attend a brief, 5-to-10-minute electronic interview to determine their suitability for employment; and,
- Applicants must be able to work long shifts (12+ hours on election day)

How to apply

Interested individuals are asked to go to aurora.ca/electionemployment to view the complete job postings and complete an online application form. All applications must be received by **July 31, 2022**.



Give Where You Live campaign brings in more than 26,000 pounds of donations as food banks look to maintain momentum

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A campaign by York Region food banks urging residents to “Give Where You Live” brought in 26,750 pounds of non-perishable food donations – and more than \$3,000 in cash to support the community – and participating organizations are looking to keep the momentum going.

Between June 15 and June 18, food banks serving Aurora, Georgina, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan came together for the springtime food drive.

The aim of the inaugural Give Where You Live campaign was to underscore to people in the community that their donations are distributed within their own communities to help fight food insecurity.

As residents more than answered the call, participating food banks would like to keep the issue of food insecurity top of mind as the summer days eventually turn to back-to-school season.

“Give Where You Live was an idea late in the making by the various food banks, so we weren’t able to give it as much publicity as we might have under different circumstances, but as usual Aurora stepped up and did a great job of making donations and we were well-served,” says Allison Stuart, Chair of the Aurora Food Pantry.

“It will be very helpful because, as we go into the summer, we have fewer

donations, fewer food drives, fewer team events and that sort of thing [to hold food drives] and it is always great to have unexpected contributions of food. In addition, over the summer, we prepare snack bags for kids that are going to be going to school, so it is still useful to help fill those bags as well.”

Some of the donations received during the first phase of Give Where You Live which will be especially useful for these kits were juice boxes, which Ms. Stuart stresses are much different than “drink” boxes because not only do kids love them, they also provide some nutritional value.

“We’re really proud here in Aurora of just how generous Aurora residents are,” she continues, adding that this generosity also extends to north Oak Ridges. “People keep us in their minds and that is always fabulous.”

Representatives of the area food banks will be meeting this week to discuss strategies and events going forward. Ms. Stuart says everyone is “enthusiastic about continuing to demonstrate our collective commitment” and reiterate their emphasis “of supporting people in your neighbourhood, where you live, and knowing if you’re a donor you’re supporting people locally who are struggling.”

As the affordability crisis continues, food banks like the Aurora Food Pantry have seen significant shifts in demand, including people who have never before experienced food insecurity, as well as newcomers to the community, including

refugees from Ukraine, who are trying to get back on their feet while navigating an often-complex system.

“Most times if people haven’t come to us on their own, meaning they took the initiative, it is because they’re working either through government agencies and that sort of thing and they will suggest they get in touch with the Food Pantry,” says Ms. Stuart. “If they need some additional help and we can’t provide it because we like to stay in our lane and try and be the best we can be in our lane, the first thing we do – and we do this for every new client – is give them the ‘York Region on a Limited Budget’ booklet. It’s an amazing booklet that covers all the various kinds of services – everything from people in vulnerable situations, who to contact, shelters, food outreach, where you can get free meals like the Tuesday breakfast

at the York Region Food Network, dinner at [Welcoming Arms] and the booklet is done through York Support Services Network. We’re getting a fair number of people who are in the relative peace of Canada from Ukraine and they have a significant amount of general support but sometimes they need a reference.

“We’re able to certainly meet the needs of all our clients, which is great – not so great that folks need our services, but, if they do, we’re here for them and we’re here for them because the people in the community choose to support us. We get no ongoing funding or anything from a government agency, so every time someone donates something they’re having an impact in their community.”

For more on the Aurora Food Pantry, including a list of current needs, visit aurorafoodpantry.ca.



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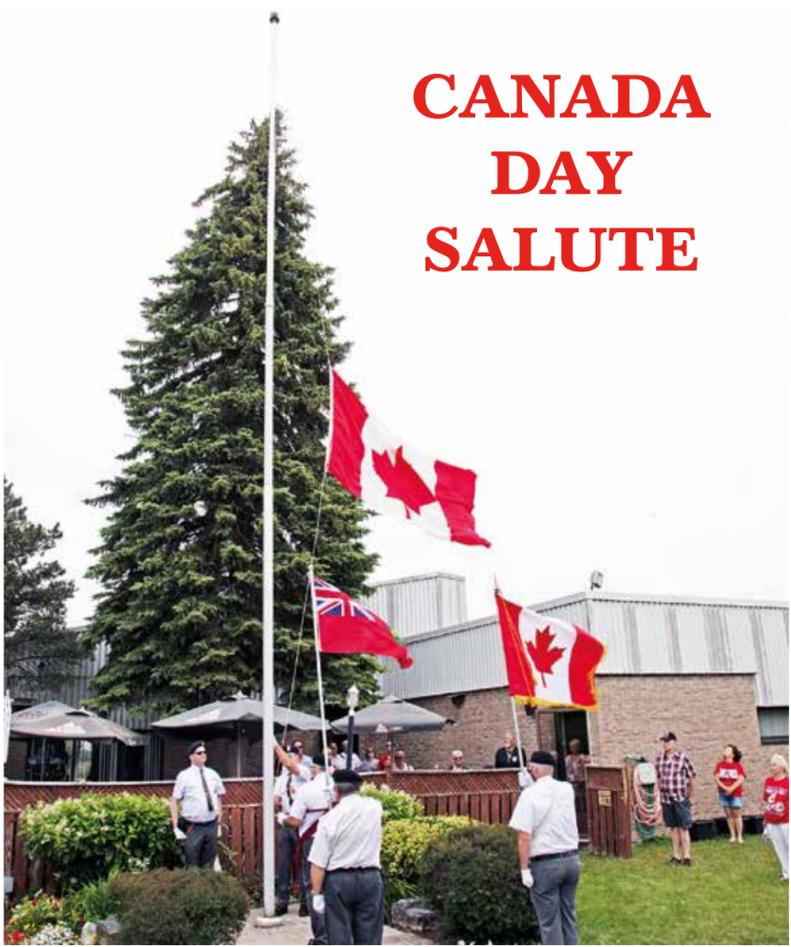
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CANADA DAY SALUTE



The Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion celebrated Canada Day in style at the start of the month with a special flag-raising ceremony outside their Industrial Parkway North location.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reader supports calming measures on Wells Street

Thank you for your recent article regarding traffic calming on Wells Street.

I live at the south end of Wells Street where drivers really pick up speed. It is particularly dangerous when children are being picked up or dropped off by school buses. Most residents reverse into their driveways as backing out can be very treacherous.

At least one stop sign between Metcalfe and Cousins would definitely help. Two, perhaps at Harrison and Kennedy Street East, would be even better! Harrison and Connaught are close together and where I live would still provide drivers with a good stretch to pick up speed.

Thanks again for raising awareness of this issue and soliciting feedback.

Colleen Mcdonald
Aurora

Take back the 407: reader

Instead of spending \$6+ billion (Doug Ford initially stated that the highways would cost the taxpayer \$6 billion) on new highways, which we all know will blossom to more than twice that cost, let us put that money into public transit.

We can only see the success of other cities and regions in the world that have spent money on public transit, it works and the jobs provided by public transit will be long-term and not the short-term of highway construction.

We need more trains and more buses. Let us put the money there and the effort to make it work.

Lastly, we need to find a way to take back the 407, end the tolls, and make it available to everyone. This highway was supposed to do what Doug Ford is claiming the 413 will do but it isn't because it's too expensive for most people.

Iain Scott
Newmarket



PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

In "Swimming Back to Trout River" music and its riveting power connects the characters through space and time. Capture the power of music and performance in this year's OBOA photography contest.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

There are two categories: youth (ages 14 - 17), and adult (ages 18+) Images may be digitally altered Photographs must be high resolution for print.

Winning photographs will be published in The Auroran. Winners will be announced at the OBOA Grand Finale on Saturday, October 22. APL employees/Board/judges and their immediate families are ineligible to win.

Please send submissions to brock@lpcmedia.ca
Contest Deadline: Friday, September 30, 2022

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Machell's Corners



"We're living in the electric age. All you need to do is flip a switch"

As Friday wore on, I couldn't help but think of an old I Love Lucy episode as I tried to get creative in getting what needed to be done...done without some of the necessities in doing so.

In this particular episode, Lucy and Ethel, fresh from washing a plethora of dishes in the kitchen while their husbands refrained from lifting a finger in the comfort of the living room, square off with Ricky and Fred about how easy each other has it thanks to the wonders of modern-day conveniences.

The women have it easy, the men argued, because with the advent of the automatic washer and dryer, refrigerator and so forth (apparently not a dishwasher) all they needed to do to complete their domestic drudgery was "flip a switch."

Naturally, those who had been doing the drudgery disagreed and what followed was a battle of the sexes scenario to see who could do without "modern conveniences" the longest. Want to go grocery shopping? Bake your own bread and churn your own butter. What to get rid of overnight stubble before heading off to work? Don't even think of the safety razor. Or even water hot from the tap, for that matter.

So, as one of our largest telecom giants left a significant chunk of the country offline last week, in many respects it seemed like we had collectively been thrown back to that fabled period so gag-worthily known as "a simpler time."

Although, as a newspaper editor, there's precious little one can do to finish the day with a straight razor or a butter churn.

My day usually begins with a terrible habit: reaching for the phone left beside my bed, contrary to all sensible advice on getting a good night's sleep. It's not kept there for the purpose of scrolling endlessly through a social media platform, although I freely admit to falling in that trap...well, more times than I care to admit, it's a matter of starting the day catching up on the news that may have happened overnight.

And, if the last two-and-a-half years has taught us anything, it's that a lot can happen around you when you're charging up for the day ahead. Case in point, when I went to bed Wednesday night, Boris Johnson was still clinging to power as the UK's Prime Minister. By the time I opened my eyes the next day, he'd already announced his resignation upon the selection of his successor.

The next night brought the very sad news that former Japanese Prime



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

Minister Shinzo Abe had been the victim of an assassination attempt. As the Friday morning sun woke me up, I reached over, braced, to find out whether the attempt had been successful and found – nothing. Back to the ol' radio to, unfortunately, learn his tragic fate.

No data, no wifi, and, without a traditional landline, no connection to the outside world.

People often boast about taking the bold step of "cutting the cord" as far as cable television is concerned, but I'd wager those boasts don't extend to having the fragments of the cord cut out from beneath them.

Personally, I have no shame in admitting to feeling a bit claustrophobic not having information as readily at my fingertips, a gentle reminder that I all too often take this privilege for granted. Finally, the lightbulb went off. I was able to connect again at the public library – along with, it seemed, most of our neighbours. Thank goodness for such a resource!

When I was able to connect, albeit temporarily as I had to head back to the office where the traditional land line was keeping me grounded, I had time to think about the breadth of our collective situation.

Taking in feedback from other residents gathered at this electronic watering hole, their days were negatively impacted in just about every way, from kids and parents trying to communicate and coordinate, people looking to get money out of their banks, depending on which service their financial institution subscribed to, people unable to tap their card on their afternoon Tim Hortons' run as their debit and credit systems were knocked offline, and the list went on and on.

As the dust continues to settle this week, it will be interesting for all the wrong reasons, to see the full impact of the outage on residents and neighbours alike.

Just how much money did businesses lose by being forced to go back to a cash only system? Just how big of a hit has consumer confidence taken, knowing that when one system goes down, for instance, they may not be able to access their hard-earned money? Most importantly, just how many residents have been impacted in long-term and even permanent ways, with emergency calls being very difficult to make?

If there is a silver lining to be had here, and, when it comes down to it, I'm always looking for them (sometimes to my own detriment) maybe it's the starkness of Friday's reminder of just how reliant we are on technology and, compared to other nations, a dearth of providers we call upon to keep things humming.

Maybe it is also timely reminder of how vulnerable we are in this situation and a wake-up call for the powers that be that more needs to be done to protect it.

While technologies we enjoy offered me, with some out-of-the-box thinking, some creative workarounds to get the job done with a traditional landline and a laptop and phone connected wirelessly to precious little else than our office printer, it has also set us up for a situation that when things grind to a halt, it's more impactful than ever.

The speed at which we live our lives today is unique to this snapshot in time.

It's much faster than it was 20 years ago and it will likely, for better or worse, be much slower compared to 20 years hence, but it is always nice to live in the here and now.

Our early settlers in what was once Upper Canada in 1837, for instance, went about their business, including the business of government, for several months not knowing that across the pond King William IV had died and they were now living in the Victorian Era.

By the time of Queen Victoria's death in 1901, the news reached our shores in mere minutes thanks to the telegraph, an invention which drastically shaped the era that had just come to a close.

Nowadays we live in an instant world – of news, of information right at our fingertips, and even of food and gratification. How odd it feels when the instantaneousness we've become used to suddenly grinds to a halt.

While it is nice to disconnect, even for just a little while, it is only nice when it's done on your terms. Or, in the case of Lucy, Ricky, Fred and Ethel, when fifty smackers are on the line...adjusted from 1952 to account for inflation, of course.

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Aurora's Community Newspaper

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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... Waving the Flag!

We all know the internationally iconic Canadian flag, which was officially adopted in 1965. The familiar red and white design was just one of several proposed, and was based on the Royal Military College's flag, but with a single 11-pointed maple leaf. This alternate flag (2015.11.215) is known as the "Pearson Pennant" as one-time Aurora resident Lester B. Pearson promoted this design in 1964 during his term as Prime Minister. The blue is meant to represent "from sea to sea" and the trio of leaves is reminiscent of the arms of Ontario and Quebec. Which would you have chosen?

Each year we are required to sit as members of the Audit Committee to hear a report from our external auditors concerning the financial statements for year end and the audit plan moving forward.

On Tuesday, June 28, Council had representatives from BDO Canada present the 2021 Audit as well as the 2021 financials.

As always, our audit was a clean audit (meaning no financial irregularities of any kind); but even better than that, it was great to hear from our auditors that our Town is in such a strong financial position – our capital assets continue to grow, as do our liquid assets which are at a very healthy \$90 million.

We have continued to invest in our Town's capital assets while at the same time maintaining a budget surplus and the extensive services our residents expect; an extraordinary demonstration



GETTING THINGS DONE

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

of our collective efforts to build a secure, strong fiscal position for our community. Everyone from Staff to Council working together over this term, have done a tremendous job managing our financial resources. As a result, our Town is in a financial position that is the envy of many municipalities. All this while maintaining, over the course of this term of Council, the lowest four-year tax rate in 20 years!

This Council continued to make record investments in our community, improving the services that are provided and growing our community appropriately – from a new gym to be built at the SARC to the new Town Square in our downtown.

These are assets that will benefit our Town for generations. I'm proud of Council for continuing to push forward, bringing the future to the present all while remaining fiscally responsible.

Once again, showing that this Council strives to provide the best services at the best possible price and will continue to do so as we move forward.

This doesn't happen by accident; this happens because of the team working together for a positive future in our Town. That's how you get things done.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me by email tmrakas@aurora.ca or by phone 905-726-4746. I am here for you.

Top 10 reasons why I love Aurora

Twelve years ago, your writer produced a column entitled, "The Top Ten Reasons why I love Aurora". I then updated this a few years back.

With the further passage of time, I think it is appropriate to refresh my list.

In my previous columns on this topic I had listed Volunteers as #6 and the Santa Claus Parade as #2, but I have now switched their spots.

The reason for doing this is based on my experience from the other night.

I walked down to Machell Park and it was such a welcoming sight to see. Unlike during my walks over the last few years when the park was empty, where yellow police tape draped the children's playground and Town Notices were visible that no one was to use either soccer or baseball fields, this time there were tons of children playing soccer and baseball and utilizing the playground area.

There were also a huge number of parents either watching the games, or acting as coaches or assistants or referees.

I stood there for 15 to 20 minutes and watched the different games and practices and it was fantastic to hear all the laughter; when just a year ago on this very field there was silence.

It made me feel as if - slowly (because of the COVID variant that it out there) – that life was getting somewhat back to normal.

With all due apologies to David Letterman, here are the Top 10 reasons why I love Aurora;

10) Aurora has an abundance of parks and green spaces. There are also some magnificent trails that our family takes advantage of.

9) Aurora Chamber Street Festival – the combination of forty-thousand people, the atmosphere, the food plus usually fantastic weather is usually a



FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE

Stephen Somerville

great way to spend a June afternoon.

8) Our family is blessed with having fantastic neighbors. We have also developed many friendships with fellow members of the Aurora Leisure Complex.

7) The size of Aurora and its proximity to other communities is just about right. We are close enough to Toronto for those of us who travel to work but also far enough away to maintain that "small town" feel. Aurora is also not so small that it is a "one horse town", as there are plenty of things to do.

6) The Santa Claus parade is for me symbolic of our smalltown nature. Nothing beats having the parade at night, even better if there is a light dusting of snow on the ground and if the air is not too cold. It is an absolute joy seeing all the families lined up along Yonge Street waiting patiently for Santa. It is a "must attend" event for our family.

5) The Auroran – It is important that we have a newspaper that is dedicated to our community by dealing with only local issues. The community events calendar contained within The Auroran is an important piece of keeping us informed on local activities. I also like the fact that a lot of editorial space is reserved for reader feedback; this is one of the key reasons

for the success of the newspaper. I have changed my mind on some issues as a result of various letters to the editor.

4) The mural on the wall of the building located at the corner of Yonge and Wellington is something entirely unique to our community. I would like to see something similar done, but showing people places or events that are either unique or originated in Aurora, at other locations as you enter or exit the Town.

3) War Memorial - for your writer, the Cenotaph is a place of reflection, solitude and introspection. The valor and selflessness of the fine men memorialized there is most humbling. In its entirety, the two structures are a simple and regal monument to the fallen.

2) Volunteers – I am struck by the impressive nature of volunteerism that goes on around us here in Aurora. Many local groups support events such as the Street Festival, the Aurora Home Show and the Halloween Event. It is also great to see the number of children playing organized soccer, baseball and hockey in Aurora and they would not be doing so if not for the volunteer coaches and administrators.

And still the number one reason why I love Aurora is...my wife Julie. She was raised and has lived most of her life in Aurora. And besides, if I don't install Julie as the number one reason, I will never hear the end of it!

Additionally, I would have to equip the tool shed in the backyard (which would henceforth become known as my new sleeping quarters) with carpeting, cable television (including the Golf Channel and CPAC) bar fridge and a shower!

Stephen can be contacted at stephengsomerville@yahoo.com



Welcome to Library Land

By Reccia Mandelcorn

When I visit my daughter's home in east end Toronto, I love watching the people who stop by her Little Free Library in her tiny front yard. It was one of the first ones in her neighbourhood. She commissioned it from two girls in Grade 12 who built it as a school construction project. Throughout the day, people stop by to see what serendipitous reads they can find – or to drop off a book they hope someone else will enjoy. Sometimes there is a theme running through the donations; feminist critique, Canadian poetry or mystery thrillers. And it makes you wonder which neighbour is moving or downsizing to make room for new books.

I have since seen many similar structures popping up in front lawns in Toronto and most happily, recently in Aurora. Some are quite elaborate in construction with ornate designs, some are miniatures of the owner's residence, and some even have two floors; one for children and one for adults.

To establish an official Little Free Library, you can apply for a charter sign. This means that for a small charge, your library will be recorded by the organization and put on their map. You'll receive a metal nameplate and book giveaways, plus be part of an international community of book lovers. But you can also go indie and simply create your own.

Avid readers love public libraries because there is no limit to the abundance of books to enjoy on any subject or in any genre you could ever want. And it's all publicly funded. But book lovers also want to own their own books to keep forever or to enjoy until their shelves need to make room for new books. Space is definitely a challenge for a true bibliophile.

APL's OneBookOneAurora community initiative adapted the concept of the Little Free Library to get as many people reading and discussing the same book at the same time. This year's selection is "Swimming Back to Trout River" by Linda Rui Feng, a beautifully written exploration of family, art, culture, immigration and love. Every summer, we put out a little free library with multiple copies of the book. These do not have to be signed out, but we ask readers to read and return the book for the next reader to enjoy. In mid-July, we will be expanding the initiative by placing a little free library at the Aurora Seniors' Centre.

Library Land exists in many shapes and sizes. What is common is a shared love of reading and a belief that books should be accessible to everyone regardless of their ability to pay. And as we come to understand the importance of the environmental three R's, what can be better than passing the books you've purchased on to another reader? Besides – it's a great way to meet your neighbours.

What I've been reading:

- Cascade by Rachel A. Rosen
- The Spectacular by Zoe Whittall
- When We Lost Our Heads by Heather O'Neill
- Little Known Monsters of the 21st Century by Kim Fu

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

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Did you adopt a pet during the pandemic?

Yes No

www.theauroran.com

RESULTS TO DATE

July 12, 2022

YES
0%

NO
100%

There are moments in time that are reawakened by a smell, a colour or a sound that instantly transport you back to something that fills your heart and floods your mind with memories.

I see those memories like pieces of paper floating in water. They seem transparent and just about to disintegrate but then something in the way you are looking at the images or words suddenly connect and you can see this image with clarity.

This happened recently with me as Canada Day celebrations were taking place all over the Country.

I was troubled by the lack of sensitivity for First Nation, Metis and Inuit realities. It just seemed like so much salt being poured on the wounds of the rightful “land owners” with almost zero recognition to the massive land theft.

We as nations never gave up our rights to the land and we as communities live in grossly impoverished conditions on the postage stamp-sized lots referred to as “reserves” seeking out tiny little bits of self sustenance based on our ancestral practices of hunting, fishing and foraging. All the while burdened by the constant impositions of colonial laws that do not honour treaty rights.

Ignorance abounds with the Ministry of Natural Resources issuing tickets to numerous Indigenous harvesters who are forced to defend themselves through a colonial court system that does not understand Treaty rights in many instances. These Indigenous victims, as a direct result of ignorance, are forced to become

teachers in the Canadian courts of law explaining what Indigenous rights are and why they have not broken colonial law because they are following Treaty laws...ugh!

I have witnessed unhealthy leadership placed into positions of power within First Nation communities who leverage the colonial unbalanced views of traditional harvesting practices and harm their own people because they too have been so brainwashed into a leadership practice that is NOT Indigenous or connected to ancestral values and teachings.

There seems to be no middle ground. The Court of Law in this country is making tiny steps on the so-called road to reconciliation, but is it really? True resource protections do not exist! If they did, old growth forests would be protected, for time immemorial, and waters would not be garbage depositories for large cities and the earth would not look like sponge toffee with underground holes dug deeper and deeper into her body.

Talking about the earth and human infringements is a constant in many of my writings because I truly believe the Earth is OUR Mother. She sustains us. She should never have been assigned a dollar value in any sense of monetary ownership because



WALKING THE SWEETGRASS ROAD

Kim Wheatley
Traditional Anishinaabe Grandmother

The Carrot

she offers everything to all who exist in Creation without bias. Her true worth could be embraced through the process of balanced harvesting practices, non-commercialized farming practices where pesticides (earth killers) do not exist and in eradicating species at risk completely which is directly tied to environmental degradations by human commercialized greed.

Comparing our current ways of living on the planet to pestilence is not a stretch by any means. We as a race of beings bring destruction for so much of life on this planet by eradicating natural home environments for other parts of non-human creation that need places of belonging uninterrupted by human interference.

I cannot help but compare this to the theft of Indigenous homelands across the world and right here in Ontario. All Indigenous people in this province have been forced off their homelands and required by law to try to buy it from those who stole it and never paid for it in the first place. How is this seen as just and fair treatment for the rightful title holders of these lands across the country?

When Indigenous people across this vast country ask for land back or protections of those lands there is an uproar. I personally do not believe we should have to buy one square inch of our own land. It's ours!

We never gave it up...it was stolen and that is a simple, factual truth. While most Canadians participate in land ownership and take their money to secure those lands in the colonial court of law, there is zero space or thought for “land back” to Indigenous people.

Forced removals and theft of lands should require contemporary fair reimbursements to Indigenous People to address homelessness, housing shortages, and population growth of all Indigenous communities. There is plenty of Crown land that could be given to Indigenous people. The Queen could and should do this, but will that ever happen? The growing movement of “Land Back” is suggesting this as a palatable solution here in Canada. Settler nations are very nervous about having to give up “their” lands so why not support this movement and put pressure on the Queen of England? Or how about all the Churches give up the lands they occupy to address the cultural genocide they participated in? Most churches own acres upon acres of land that could support true acts of restitution for the endless harms committed against Indigenous Nations across the country.

One thing is for sure: Change is needed now and something has to give.

The Town of Aurora is proud to be taking steps to renew and strengthen its relationship with Indigenous communities and residents. As part of this commitment, in partnership with The Town, The Auroran is providing this space to Anishinaabe Traditional Grandmother and Cultural Consultant Kim Wheatley to share insights, storytelling and teachings with the Aurora community.

Aurora's Deputy Mayor position will be taken in turns, Council agrees

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

In the new term of Council, the position of Aurora's Deputy Mayor will be taken in turn by the six Council members elected by the community this October.

As The Auroran reported last week, the position of Deputy Mayor in Aurora has traditionally been held by the top vote-getter amongst the field of Town-wide Council candidates. But, as Aurora adopts a ward system this fall where one Councillor is elected by—and represents—one of six neighbourhoods or “wards”, the old method of choosing the deputy is not possible.

Various methods were considered by Council at last week's General Committee meeting, including Council appointing one member from amongst themselves to hold the position, either by Council motion or “some other electoral process”, and leaving the appointment process in the hands of

the 2022-2026 Mayor.

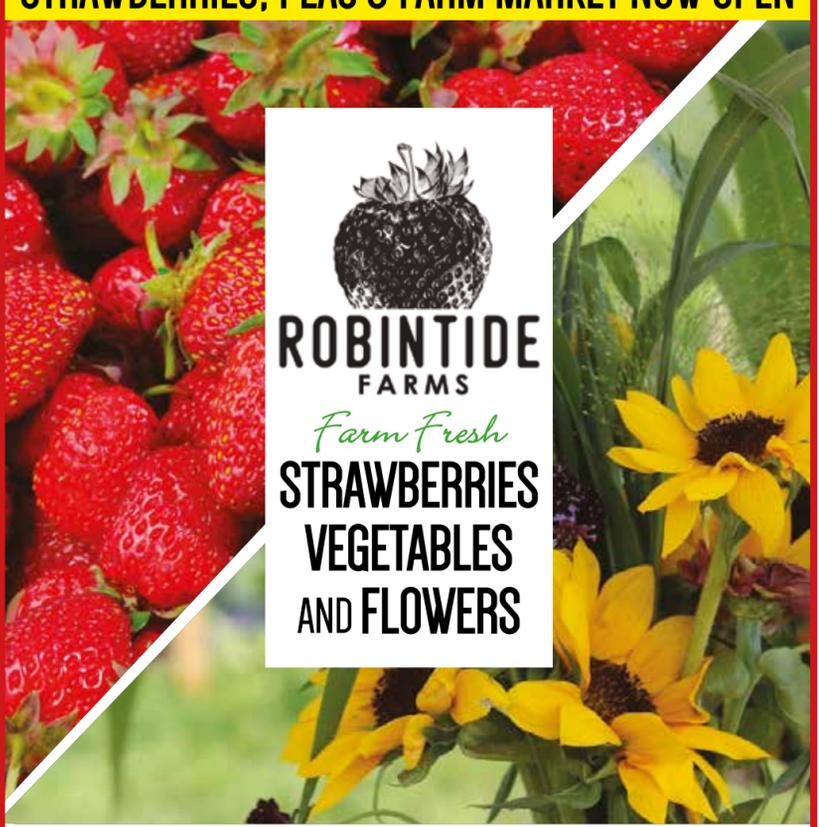
The suggestion from staff that the six new Council members take it in turns ultimately won the day on a vote of 6 – 0, with Councillor John Gallo not present at last week's Committee meeting.

“The appointment of the Deputy Mayor, or whether that position exists at all, varies depending on the municipality and often the circumstances of the municipality,” said Town Clerk Mike de Rond in a report to Council, noting that communities that have a Regional Councillor in addition to their Mayor representing the community in the upper tier, often make the Regional Councillor the Deputy Mayor.

“The most common approach for municipalities using a ward system, where a Deputy Mayor is not elected, and the only member of the upper-tier Council is the Mayor, is to rotate the position amongst the elected Councillors. This method is employed by fellow York Region municipalities

Continued on page 17

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Indigenous artists and CMHA art therapy programs coming together for initiative

From page 1

of York Region and South Simcoe (CMHA-YRSS) have teamed up on a new art initiative that will transform nine run-of-the-mill Bell telephone boxes into art pieces, responding to Call to Action #83 from the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Report: Indigenous and Non-Indigenous artists to undertake collaborative projects and produce works that contribute to the reconciliation process.

Each of the nine boxes will be allocated to one Indigenous and one non-Indigenous artist, who have been subject to an application process, inspired by themes developed in consultation with Indigenous artists.

"This project was initiated by Charlene Wong, who is with the CMHA," says Samantha Jones, Gallery Manager for the Aurora Cultural Centre. "We're seeing a lot of eagerness for artists to get involved. The themes have been developed in conversation with Indigenous artists and [some of these include] Aurora being a meeting place, with trade routes and cultural connections – Aurora's Indigenous history is a place as a crossroads; Truth & Reconciliation; language, history and connection to the land; elements of

working in harmony; and other themes on Indigenous culture and history. The themes were developed with Indigenous artists and our Outreach Coordinator, Glenn Marais, was definitely a powerhouse in developing them."

Nine themes have been developed in total, one for each of the Bell boxes.

The selected boxes cover the length and breadth of Aurora, with a box on St. John's Sideroad being the northernmost "canvas" and one at Henderson Drive anchoring the project in the south.

"I think the CMHA clients will see themselves as part of the community," says Ms. Wong, an occupational therapist with the organization. "Part of my role is to help people become a part of the community and part of that is contributing and being seen and heard."

Ms. Wong says she was inspired to bring this idea to the Cultural Centre after seeing similar boxes in Toronto. It is, she says, "an opportunity to really create and bring joy" to the world around us.

"This is kind of what we need. It's like being in a house without art – it doesn't truly feel like a home until you add colour and life. The artists

I hope to see as part of this project and to be at the table tend to be people who might not have the same access to having a voice that is heard within our community. Art is about empowerment. This is a way for people to become part of the community, to become contributors, to be someplace [where they] can be seen and heard and just shift from being a client or a taker of services to becoming an artist.

"I think it is also important in times like these to have that diversity of voices, to have these moments where we're kind of caught off-guard and are surprised and curious as to these installations."

When all is said and done, Ms. Wong says she wants the public to be "aware of the many voices that we have within our community."

"I want people to enjoy, to have something that is surprisingly joyful to emerge in their spaces, too. I want people to feel a part of something as well. It's been so long since we have had this sort of thing happen, where we start to feel we're coming together again, and be curious and to have that feeling of connectedness.

"I hope we have something interesting that brings us together, brings us to think together, to celebrate together, and to reflect. We need more moments of wonder."

The boxes will be painted between August 23 and September 1, with

responsibility for maintaining the boxes thereafter being taken on by Bell Canada.

"I think there are going to be a lot of opportunities for discussion [around the art pieces] especially because the themes of the boxes are so specific," says Ms. Jones. "The expectation is that on each box it is going to be a painted narrative to initiate discussions and the boxes are in pretty popular areas of Aurora so they will get a lot of traffic. It will be a place for idea-sharing and discussion.

"We also have a few programming ideas in the works. We expect to have a map that people can take if they're going for a bike ride around Town visiting each phone box – almost like a gallery tour!"

Applications for the 2022 Aurora Bell Box Murals project closed June 30 and each artist accepted into the program will receive an honourarium of \$400 for their completed work (\$800 per box) and artists will be required to provide their own paint and supplies – with the exception of white metal primer, which will be provided to contributors free of charge.

Bell Box Murals is an initiative undertaken by the telecom company since 2009.

Since the program's inception, more than 450 murals have been painted in over 40 communities throughout the Southern Ontario and Quebec.



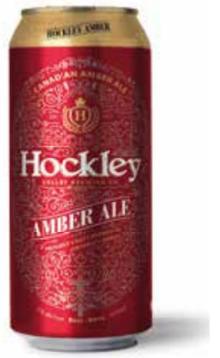
SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH – Vince's Market celebrated and supported the work of the Canadian Mental Health Association – York Region & South Simcoe (CMHA-YRSS) at their Sharon location last week by hosting the MOBYSS bus. MOBYSS is the CMHA-YRSS' mobile mental health unit serving youth in York Region and South Simcoe. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**



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New Regional Official Plan raises environmental concerns

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

York Regional Council last week adopted its proposed new Regional Plan, a blueprint for area growth through 2051.

Designed to meet growth targets set by the Province, it will account for more than two million more residents of York Region over the next three decades.

The new Official Plan (OP) updates policies on building complete communities, promoting affordable housing, and designating employment lands.

“We are very proud to put forward a new Regional Official Plan,” said Regional Chair Wayne Emmerson in a statement. “We could not have accomplished this significant milestone without the support of our municipal partners, stakeholders and the public who participated throughout the process. Current and future York

Region residents and businesses are at the forefront as we plan our neighbourhoods and communities. Engagement with all stakeholders has been vital to the process to ensure existing needs are met, while planning to accommodate future growth.”

While Regional Council approved the proposed OP, which has been submitted to the Province for final approval, it was not a unanimous decision with Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas joining his counterparts in Newmarket, King and Georgina voting against the plan.

“I voted against it because I was wearing my Regional hat and some of the amendments that were put forward at the last minute looked at expanding the urban boundaries to include some of the Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenbelt land – some which would be in Vaughan and Stouffville – and, to me, that is unacceptable and shouldn’t be allowed,” said Mayor Mrakas,

noting that, in his view, the Regional OP will have little impact on Aurora itself when compared to surrounding communities.

“There was a bit of a procedural process issue that came up at the last meeting, that I disagreed with how it was handled, but ultimately you go with what the Clerk and the Chair say is the correct way to continue moving forward. You respect the decision and you move forward even though you disagree with it. Ultimately, you have a dozen-plus amendments that were put forward at the last minute and when you look at it, you say, ‘While I agree with quite a bit of the overall plan moving forward there’s just too much there from an environmental perspective that is not the right thing to do for all of our communities. The amendments just don’t grow our communities in a responsible or appropriate way. Ultimately, it will destroy our communities. It’s something I feel very strongly and I know some of my colleagues felt just as strongly about it as well and we needed to vote the entire plan down because of that.’”

Advocacy organizations Environmental Defence and Stop Sprawl York Region also stated their opposition to the plan including parts of the Moraine and Greenbelt.

“After a complex series of last-minute motions and closed-door sessions last

Thursday that made it difficult for Councillors – let alone residents – to discern what was being debated, York Region appears to have presented Minister of Municipal Affairs Steve Clark with an unlawful OP that purports to mark four protected Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenbelt properties for destruction. No other municipal government has done this since the Greenbelt was created in 2005.

“Municipal governments do not have the power to remove protections from Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine land. However, the surprise move seems calculated to entice the Minister into approving York Region’s Official Plan and using provincial powers to remove Greenbelt protection. This would break the provincial government’s clear and oft-repeated promise that it ‘won’t touch the Greenbelt, we won’t build on the Greenbelt.’”

Added Irene Ford of Stop Sprawl York Region in a statement: “All of it is beyond what York Region needs to meet the population and employment minimums mandated by the province. Will the province approve an Official Plan that was endorsed in a way that makes a joke of York Region’s procedure bylaw, possibly their code of conduct, is not in provincial conformity, and can’t be endorsed by York Region professional planners?”



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Henderson area residents worried over new LCBO location

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Plans to re-locate downtown Aurora’s LCBO location from its long-tome home at Yonge and Brookland to the Metro plaza at the southwest corner of Yonge and Henderson Drive has left area residents concerned about traffic and displaced business.

The LCBO, which has been off Brookland for decades, is expected to move to the Metro plaza in units currently occupied by a dollar store, a pet food store and a dry cleaners.

The potential move of a high-traffic business like the LCBO south on Yonge Street has led to myriad concerns from neighbours, including the impact the move will have on independently-owned businesses currently in place as well as on making an already busy intersection and street even busier.

Linda Dickens, who has lived in the area for more than 10 years, describes residents’ feelings as “shock and horror” at the prospect of a business like the LCBO moving into a plaza “embedded in the neighbourhood.”

“The location is not really off Yonge Street like in the Brookland location,” says Ms. Dickens. “It’s turning into a neighbourhood where there’s a lot of elderly people and children getting off of school buses, etc., in that location. It is also a matter of the displacement of businesses that have served the community.

“Another concern is where the driveway is located. It’s a busy residential area. The parking lot is already super-busy with just the grocery store and the stores that are there. I don’t know how frantic it is going to get with a liquor store.”

These concerns were echoed at last week’s General Committee meeting

by Councillor Wendy Gaertner who questioned whether there was anything the Town could do to address residents’ concerns.

“People are saying all kinds of things about what’s going to be going on in that plaza,” she said, asking municipal staff for further clarification in time for this week’s Council meeting. “People are starting to get worried because they look at this as a neighbourhood shopping centre and they’re not pleased about an LCBO.”

Mayor Tom Mrakas said that the relocation of a business like the LCBO to the earmarked location is permitted under current zoning and the property owner is allowed to make that happen without permission from the Town.

“The word is sadness,” Councillor Gaertner continued. “I think it is true that a lot of people walk over and they consider these to be family-centred stores, so I am making that comment on behalf of residents.”

She went on to question whether there has been a traffic study on how an LCBO will impact Henderson, adding, “I am really surprised when I go over there [now] that it is hard to find a parking spot and I imagine that the LCBO would generate more cars than exist now.”

Parking rates, responded Town Planner Marco Ramunno, are the same for all commercial plazas, regardless of the type of store.

“The parking rate was accommodated when the site plan was originally approved,” he said, adding the zoning permits “a variety of personal retail uses.”

An LCBO, he confirmed, would have the same parking standards as a dollar store or a restaurant drive-thru.

“I think if that’s the way it is that’s the way it is,” said Councillor Gaertner, “but I think an LCBO would generate a lot more traffic, especially on weekends.”



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Hybrid Council meetings will continue post-pandemic

Questions raised about hybrid workplace for municipal staff

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The global pandemic changed our world as people found new and creative ways to maintain a business-as-usual mentality.

Programs once held in-person shifted to virtual platforms, new models of delivering services were adopted and, as things gradually began the process of returning to normal, these new flexible paths forward led to quick adaptation as public health restrictions shifted.

One such change at the local level was moving Council meetings online.

Since restriction have eased, Aurora Council has been operating in a hybrid model with most Council members returning to Council chambers to conduct the Town's business with members of the public able to delegate in-person or over zoom.

This hybrid model is set to continue well into the future as the Town looks at what was achieved during the pandemic and what might be the norm in a post-pandemic world.

"The Town's goal from the onset of the pandemic was to continue to maintain and offer programs and services to residents to maintain continued quality of life and livelihood while ensuring the health and safety of the community and staff," said Carley Smith, Manager of Corporate Communications for the Town of Aurora, in a post-pandemic wrap-up report presented to Council last week.

"The Town continued to manage taxpayer dollars efficiently, including taking advantage of all grant opportunities in its successful management of COVID-19's financial pressures. Financial Management Services assisted its departmental clients in the identification of their COVID-19 driven financial pressures, as well as their identification of mitigating cost savings and

alternative funding solutions in support of their continued delivery of services. The Town introduced the Patio Extension Program (over 25 patios in 2021) and partnered with the Aurora Chamber of Commerce on the Shop Local/Emerging Aurora campaign [and] the Town revitalized Machell's Alley to support downtown local businesses."

At Town Hall, many in-person services were shifted to digital channels, as were popular recreation programs like cooking, creative projects, exercise and fitness, while ice pads were up and running as soon as possible for residents looking to skate.

"The Town was routinely one of the first municipalities in the Region to re-open recreation facilities and indoor pools for programs and rentals, enabling a quick return to play for many community sport organizations," said Ms. Smith. "Access Aurora was deemed essential and continued to accommodate in-person appointments for payments, commissioning documents, marriage licenses, burial permits, etc., with added safety measures in place.

"During the early stages of the pandemic, Town staff ensured that the business of Council could continue, while maintaining the ability of the public to safely participate through the successful launch of virtual Council meetings. This would later evolve to hybrid meetings, where Council, residents and staff can join and participate in Council meetings from anywhere they have an internet connection. Hybrid Council meetings will continue post-pandemic as they offer a higher level of accessibility and convenience for Aurora residents wishing to partake in the democratic process."

The continuation of hybrid meetings was received warmly by Council members who agreed that it improves accessibility for all residents.

"Although a lot of residents complained or were disappointed that they couldn't come to the Council chamber in person I think what it says in the report is true. It is hard for some people to come out to meetings, especially those with accessibility issues, so...I am very,

very glad to see that in the report. I am glad that we're doing this and I would love to hear from staff through the coming months if we actually have any residents saying how happy they are that we are continuing these virtual meetings."

Councillor Michael Thompson was also looking for more information from Town Staff, but in different areas. While Ms. Smith's report touted many achievements made by municipal staff throughout the pandemic, he said more information was needed to "validate some of these assertions around being more effective or being as effective prior to the pandemic."

While CAO Doug Nadorozny said some of these areas would be "difficult to quantify," Councillor Thompson said "working from home is not for everyone" and hybrid workplace models have brought forward some unforeseen challenges.

"As part of the conversation in terms of how

the plans to manage going forward is perhaps some of those checks and balances from a leadership perspective we're implementing to ensure that it is working well for those who are choosing to do that [and] for those who may be struggling there are always ways to identify them and figure out why.

"The hybrid model is still an emerging model...and I have seen a number of articles and things written about some of the new challenges that are coming into place as part of this hybrid model [we hadn't anticipated], things like WSIB claims when things happen in the household, to wanting to be having a proper office and looking to the employer to provide desks, chairs, and those kinds of equipment, to even questions around overtime. There's this whole new realm of issues or concerns that are kind of emanating out of this hybrid model that a lot of different organizations are now dealing with."


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YRP to provide free Naloxone kits in Aurora and area

Opioid-related overdoses have been on the rise across York Region, with three incidents – including one death – occurring in Newmarket last month alone.

To combat this threat to community safety, York Regional Police has launched a one-year pilot project to provide free naloxone kits to anyone at risk of an opioid overdose. Friends and family can also request a kit for a loved one.

Offered in partnership with York Region Public Health, the Naloxone Distribution Program will run out of #1 District, which includes Newmarket, Aurora and King Township. Citizens can request a free naloxone kit from frontline officers or pick one up at #1 District Headquarters, located at 429 Harry Walker Parkway South in Newmarket.

Each kit contains two doses of NARCAN nasal spray (which is a type of naloxone), one pair of non-latex gloves, one rescue breathing barrier, a pamphlet describing steps on how to respond to an opioid overdose and resources to support people who use substances.

Naloxone is a drug that can temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. Once administered, naloxone will begin to work in one to five minutes and stays active in the body for 30 to 90 minutes.

All frontline officers in #1 District have been educated on the program and all supervisors, who will deliver the kits, have been trained on the administration of naloxone.

"This program will make it easier for members of our community at risk of an overdose to access life-saving naloxone kits," said Chief Jim MacSween. "Together with our partners on the Opioid Education and Response Workgroup, we are supporting a harm reduction approach to help reduce stigma and connect substance users with the community-based resources they need."

Symptoms of an overdose include slow, irregular and shallow respirations, pinpoint pupils, muscle rigidity, seizures and unconsciousness leading to coma. Minor effects include dizziness, drowsiness, headache, sleepiness, nausea and vomiting.





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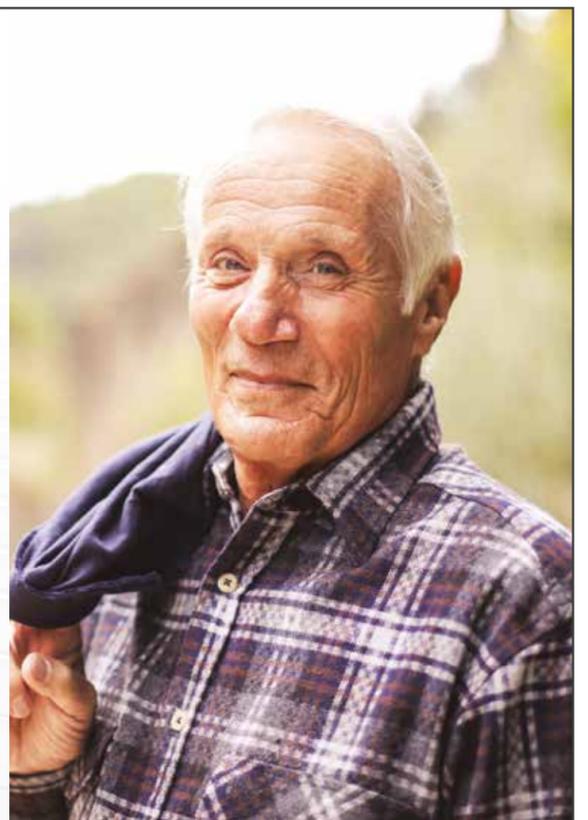
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FREE Week of July 14, 2022



St. Andrew's College hockey players drafted into the NHL



Matthew Morden (left) was taken by the Arizona Coyotes and Luke Devlin, (right) is off to Pittsburgh to join the Penguins.

Contributed photos

By Robert Belardi

St. Andrew's College saw two players from their first team taken in the 2022 NHL Entry Draft last week.

Defenceman Matthew Morden was selected in the fifth round, #131 by the Arizona Coyotes and centre Luke Devlin, was drafted in the sixth-round, #182 by the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Both players are coming off exceptional seasons under Saints head coach David Manning. This is the sixth consecutive year St. Andrew's College players have been drafted directly into the NHL and the fourth time where multiple players have been selected during that span.

Morden, is a 6-foot-5 defenceman who recorded eight goals and 27 assists last season with the Saints.

The Burlington native came through the Toronto Titans AAA

system. Throughout that time in 2019/2020, he made one appearance for the Burlington Cougars in the OJHL, recording one assist.

In 2020, he joined St. Andrew's and this past year, he made appearances for the Muskegon Lumberjacks in the USHL and Canada's U18 national team.

"Matthew was our top d-man. He's a big kid and was learning how to be that big defenceman. He had a chance to play for Canada U18 in the spring, which I think was an amazing experience for him. Probably solidified his status in the NHL draft. But the ceiling is really, really high for Matthew [and] I think there is so much potential there," Manning said.

"Matthew's...got good feet, he's probably from the teams we've played this year one of the best managers of the puck in terms of when he gets the puck on his stick he's going to

make a pass or a play with it. I think as he grows into his identity of that big smothering defender, I think they have a really good prospect on their hands."

Morden has committed to Harvard University this upcoming year and he will be playing hockey in the Ivy League this fall.

As for Devlin, the 6-foot-3 centre is coming off a great season as well, having recorded 19 goals and 28 assists in 44 games in the CAHS.

Throughout his time in St. Andrew's, Devlin also made six appearances for the Des Moines Buccaneers and two appearances for the USNTDP Juniors in the USHL. He also appeared for the U.S. National U17 Team.

"He was our captain, so obviously his teammates think quite highly of him and his leadership abilities. He was pretty consistent all year. He's an honest player who plays really hard, plays the right way and plays with a lot of intensity. He has all

of those intangibles you look for in any player and he brings it on a consistent basis," Manning said.

"He was our leading scorer...I just think he's an honest player that brings the same consistency, the same work ethic, day in and day out and I think all of those things speak well to his ability to needing some time to continue to grow and mature as a player."

Born in Memphis, Tenn., Devlin moved to Canada and currently holds dual citizenship. He is the son of Toronto Raptors broadcaster Matt Devlin.

He played for the Toronto Titans U15AAA and the Toronto Marlboros U16 AAA in the GTHL, before attending St. Andrew's College in 2020.

Devlin has recently committed to Cornell University located in Ithaca, NY. He will join the Big Red this fall in the ECAC – which is one of the six divisions that hosts division one hockey in the United States.

Forge FC defeat York United 2-0

By Robert Belardi

Tass Mourdoukoutas' own goal and Woobens Pacius' 77-minute goal proved to be the difference as Forge FC defeated York United 2-0 Friday night.

Under the lights at York Lions Stadium, rivals Forge FC came into town to spoil the fun and to the dismay of the Nine Stripes faithful, they did just that.

Midfielder/Forward Trisan Borges worked his way into space at the top of the box and his strike deflected off of Mourdoukoutas in the 29th minute, leaving goalkeeper Niko Giantsopoulos helpless as the visiting side took the lead.

In the second half, Forge FC came close to doubling the lead in the 50th minute.

Kyle Bekker's wicked strike was tipped on to the crossbar by Giantsopoulos, keeping the game within arm's reach. A minute later, Borges came close as well as Forge continued the heavy assault in the second half.

York countered with an opportunity

of their own a few minutes later. Mateo Hernandez – who came close to scoring in the first half – was at the tail end of another opportunity as he slid the ball slightly wide of goal.

Max Ferrari also had an opportunity denied in the second half. York, who continued to knock on the door, still couldn't find an answer.

Then in the 77th minute, Forge FC put the game to bed. Ashtone Morgan's ball into the box was tipped by Giantsopoulos. Unfortunately, it fell to Pacius who had a wide-open goal in front of him.

Statistically, York United did put forward a far greater offensive effort than in previous matches. The Nine Stripes, put forward 13 shots towards goal with two shots landing on target. The club held 48 per cent possession, completing 407 passes with 79 per cent accuracy.

York remain in seventh spot in the Canadian Premier League. The club currently holds a 2-5-7 record, with 14 games left to go in the 2022 campaign.

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Food insecurity, homeless, and youth to benefit from Hoedown Foundation

BY BROCK WEIR
 EDITOR
 LOCAL JOURNALISM
 INITIATIVE REPORTER

It might be another year before York Region residents can let out their “yee-haw” once again at the Magna Hoedown, but more than 30 community groups have been left cheering after being named 2022’s recipients of the Magna Hoedown Foundation.

This 2022 Magna Hoedown, York Region’s biggest part that has benefited countless local non-profits over the past three decades, was cancelled for the third year running this spring due to the global pandemic.

But that doesn’t mean local charities will be going without. Once again, in lieu of the party, Magna established the Hoedown Community Fund, which has set aside \$500,000, which will be shared 30 community groups – and teams of community groups.

- This year’s recipients are:
- Aurora Football Club
- Autism Ontario
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of York
- Blue Door Shelters
- CAYR Community Connections
- Cornerstone to Recovery
- Diabetes Canada
- House on the Hill
- Hope House & Hill House Hospice
- Jericho Youth Services
- Kerry’s Place Autism Services
- NACCA (Newmarket

- African Caribbean Canadian Association)
- Newmarket Food Pantry
- Newmarket Jets
- Ontario SPCA and Humane Society
- Optimist Clubs of York Region
- Shendery Gymnastics Studio
- Routes Connecting Communities
- The ABLE Network
- Walk It Off Spinal Cord Recovery and Wellness Centre
- Abuse Hurts
- Aurora Tigers
- Learning Disabilities Association of York Region
- Rose of Sharon Services for Young Mothers
- St. John Ambulance
- The Salvation Army
- Victim Services of York Region
- Women’s Centre of York Region
- Welcoming Arms
- York Region Food Network

“Magna is committed to supporting

organizations who provide critical services to our communities,” said Aaron McCarthy, Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer for Magna, in a statement. “I am proud to once again launch our Magna Hoedown Community Fund, which will benefit 30 local charities and over 150,000 residents in York Region.

“I would also like to thank the charities, volunteers, and our loyal Hoedown supporters for all you do to help us build better communities together.”

While some of the recipient organizations will use their funds to keep existing programs and services running, others will use their share of the pot to steer new initiatives in the community.

The Aurora Football Club, for instance, will use their proceeds to further free special needs indoor and outdoor programs, the development and certification of volunteer coaches, and to support equipment

and facility fees.

Virtual and in-person summer camp programs hosted by Autism Ontario Central East will benefit from the Hoedown Community Fund, supporting programs for children, youth and adults with ASD.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of York will put their money towards tackling an ever-growing waitlist for group mentoring programs, which “provide impactful mentoring relationships to individuals from lone parent to low-income families.”

A “First For Youth” program will be funded through Blue Door Shelter’s share of the proceeds. The program will focus on tackling youth homelessness across York Region, a community in which an estimated 1,500 people experience homelessness, 25 per cent of which are youth, according to Blue Door statistics.

The Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association will use their funds to “deliver important programming like food security, mental health education and support, and resisting anti-Black racism education and resources to the community at large.”

Food insecurity will also be addressed through the shares received by Welcoming Arms and the York Region Food Network. Welcoming Arms says their proceeds will help feed over 250 neighbours in need each week while the Food Network will focus on improving “access to fresh food through a revitalization of their gleaning program, which will put fresh, harvested produce in to the hands of people who need it most.”

Similarly, the Optimist Clubs of York Region (Aurora, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Keswick) will collaborate on expanding their school breakfast clubs and food pantry programs which they say have been “drastically impacted by the pandemic.”

For more on the Magna Hoedown Community Fund, including this year’s recipients and how to support the organizations yourself, visit hoedown.ca.



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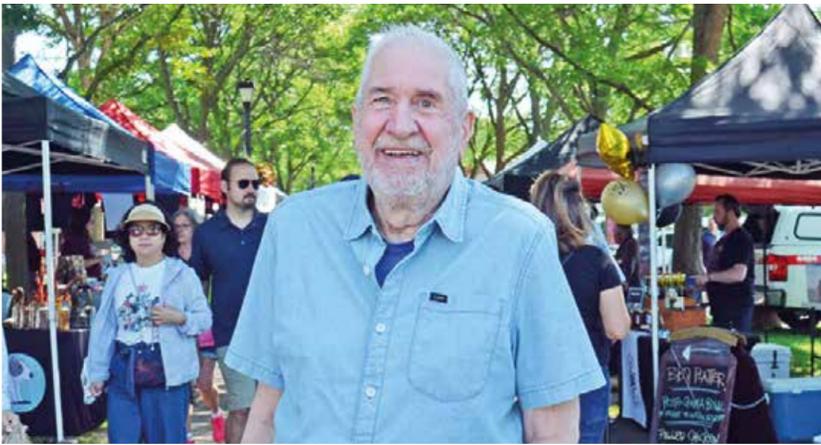
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Shopping local at Saturday's market



Town Park was bustling on Saturday morning as shoppers descended on the Aurora Farmers' Market to shop for fresh produce, meat, art and more. (Clockwise from Top Left) Volunteers Jordan, Sienna, and Xavier. Kylie of Willowtree Farms. Crackers perused the booths with their human. Author Jenny Mouse offered an array of children's books. Sasha of Sasha's Sweets had plenty of treats for sale. Retired market mainstay Gabriel Schacter scratched a few items off his shopping list.

Auroran photos by Brock Weir

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MUSIC IN THE AIR



Aurora's popular Music in the Park summer series got underway Wednesday night with a performance from award-winning musician George St. Kitts and his band (first row, second row right, third row right). Among those enjoying the concert were (second row left) Carol, Kelly, Brad and Monica; and (third row right) Ross with Luna. The series continued this Wednesday, July 13, with Sheer Heart Attack: A Tribute to Queen, and will continue again on July 20 with a tribute to The Travelling Wilburys.

Aurora photos by Glenn Rodger

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Invasive species impacting wetlands will be treated by herbicides: Council

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Phragmites, a plant recognizable by its pale brown stalks topped by a plume, can be found in damp soils throughout Aurora.

The plants are an invasive species and very little can be done to fight them.

But the Town of Aurora will be working over the next few years to make the weeds as much of a thing of the past as possible through herbicide treatments.

Council last week gave the tentative green light to a new Phragmites Control Program, which will use a chemical herbicide for treatment, as well as controlled burning in some cases, to get rid of the pests.

Should the program be ratified at this week's Council meeting, the initiative will be spread over four years at a cost of \$75,000.

"Phragmites (common reed grass) is an invasive, aggressive perennial that can grow in aquatic and subaquatic environments, reaching heights of more than 5m and densities of over 200 stems per square metre," said Parks Manager Sarah Tienkamp in a report to Council. "In 2005, it was recognized as Canada's worst invasive plant by scientists at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. During the 1990s it spread rapidly throughout Southern Ontario and can now be found as far north as Georgian Bay and Lake Superior. It has become one of the most significant threats to Great Lakes coastal habitats, where it has drastically reduced plant and wildlife diversity, as well as threatened a high number of species at risk.

"While phragmites has a significant effect on native plants and wildlife, along with coastal/wetland and lake habitats, it has many cultural and economic impacts that include: damage to infrastructure; safety hazards; increased costs in construction activities and potential delays; aesthetic degradation and blocking of property views; reduced property values; loss of productivity in woodlots and

agriculture; impeding access to important infrastructure and utilities; and recreational values."

The report notes that Wellington Street and St. John's Sideroad have "extensive" phragmites in the public right of way, and priority treatment areas have been identified as the David Tomlinson Nature Reserve near the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, the McKenzie Marsh on St. John's Sideroad, the Aurora Community Arboretum, and further east on St. John's towards Leslie Street.

"A sustainable long-term program will be required to manage phragmites to gain effective control," said Ms. Tienkamp. "While there are several methods to mitigate the spread, the most efficient solution is the use of a chemical herbicide appropriate to the site conditions, in conjunction with a controlled burn of the biomass. Successful control of phragmites over the long-term will require an integrated, large-scale implementation plan that includes all necessary partners and stakeholders within the Region. The plan will require sustained, multi-year funding, utilizing grant opportunities when available, to manage the realities of phragmites control, applying integrated pest management techniques."

While Aurora has previously passed a bylaw prohibiting the use of chemical herbicides, Al Downey, Aurora's Director of Operations, said the Town could permit the chemical's use going forward or create a phragmites-specific exception.

"Council, I believe, back in 2008, were quite adamant about removing any use of chemicals by the municipality, so we have not been using any chemicals," said Mr. Downey, responding to questions from Councillor Wendy Gaertner on why particularly problematic areas like the Aurora Community Arboretum had not gone down this road before.

Councillor Rachel Gilliland, who originally brought forward the motion for a municipal program to combat the invasive species, said she appreciated the recommendations on the table.

"It is so important to protect our natural capital assets and ensure that we're not causing any more harm," she said. "It is going to benefit the Town of Aurora residents like drinking water...stormwater management, and I could go on, but needless to say I am really happy with this report."

Prior to the meeting, she added, she reached out to representatives of the Aurora Community Arboretum to gauge their support of the recommendations and they too gave the program a green light – with the caveat that phragmites-combating initiative is a four-year plan with budget dollars behind it.

Councillor Michael Thompson was supportive of the program as well, but questioned whether savings could be had at the municipal level by partnering with

other municipalities that are also struggling to hold back the invasive species.

"I assume everyone is dealing with the same issue," said Councillor Thompson of the N6 – York Region's six northernmost municipalities.

Mr. Downey said that they are always looking for opportunities to collaborate and it was an issue he would bring up to his counterparts in King, Whitchurch-Stouffville, Newmarket, East Gwillimbury and Georgina.

"There are always economies of scale," said Councillor Thompson. "If there's an opportunity to collectively work together, it would leverage our buying power and perhaps get a better price for all municipalities – and if everyone is allocating staff to oversee this, there might be some savings."

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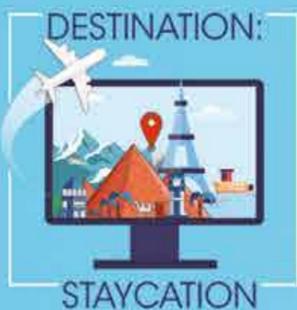
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Aurora's Deputy Mayor position will be taken in turns, Council agrees

From page 6

King, East Gwillimbury, and Whitchurch-Stouffville – as well as Halton Hills.

“The adoption of a rotation for the Deputy Mayor position represents the most equitable way for the Town’s ward Councillors to share the appointment. Staff also recommend that should a rotation of the Deputy Mayor position be adopted, that the monthly appointment also include the responsibility of chairing General Committee meetings (currently rotated amongst Councillors after chairing twice).”

Now that Council is moving in this direction (their decision is expected to be ratified at Council this week), the next crop of Councillors would hold the position of Deputy Mayor for seven non-consecutive months throughout the entire Council term – but some additional provisions would be in place depending on the time of year.

“It is generally accepted that the months of July and August are slower for municipal business than the others, and these months would be split evenly so a member is only Deputy Mayor in July/August once over the course of the term,” Mr. De Rond suggested. “To ensure Councillors are given the same amount of opportunities to hold the Deputy Mayor position, there would not be a designated Deputy Mayor in December 2022 or from July to October 2026 (which is considered to be the window of the 2026 municipal election).”

Councillors, the report noted, would be allowed to trade months if they know of an absence beforehand and can find a colleague to trade with. When there’s an unexpected absence, the Mayor would be tasked with chairing any General Committee meetings that come up at that time.

While Council gave the green light to the new process, the devil was very much in the details.

“This model does make sense,” said Councillor Rachel Gilliland, who said her only suggestion was to have a bit more

equity when it came to slower months like August and December which have fewer Council meetings, or, in the case of August, rarely. “We normally don’t have meetings in August and I feel that if that were to happen on occasion you would end up just pushing that rotation another month.

“I think for logistics it could be a lot more clear.”

Mr. de Rond said it’s a matter of trying to create a schedule that is fair as possible.

“The schedule is set out as it is,” he said. “If we happened to miss a meeting for whatever reason [such as] lack of items, I think that would be how it shakes out in the end. It’s possible to amend [the schedule] to include the August dates as the Mayor chairs.”

Councillor Wendy Gaertner also had a question about the schedule, but hers was clear cut, as was the answer.

“This is a rather strange question, but what happens if a Councillor doesn’t want to be Deputy Mayor? They will just have to be?” she asked.

Replied Mr. de Rond: “It would be a Council decision at that point in time in terms of maybe providing a different one for that month or changing the schedule.”

AURORA VOTES UPDATE

The position of Deputy Mayor is currently held by Councillor Harold Kim, who received the most votes from all Aurorans in the Councillor field during the 2018 Municipal election.

Councillor Kim has registered to seek re-election in the 2024-2028 term, this time as a candidate in Ward 6.

Councillors Rachel Gilliland and Wendy Gaertner have also put themselves forward for re-election, with Councillor Gilliland seeking the support of Ward 2 voters and Councillor Gaertner in Ward 3.

Iwona Czernecka, who stood as Newmarket-Aurora’s New Blue candidate in this spring’s Provincial Election, a newcomer to municipal politics, has thrown her hat in the ring in Ward 5.

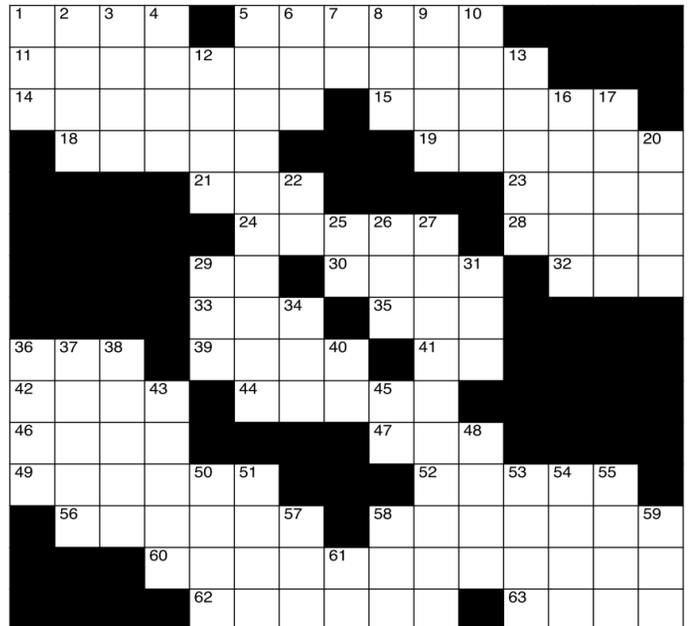
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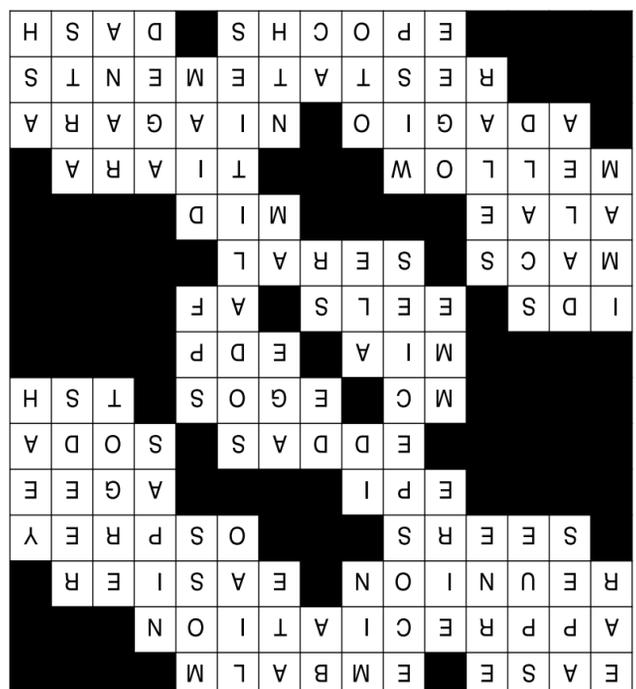


CLUES ACROSS

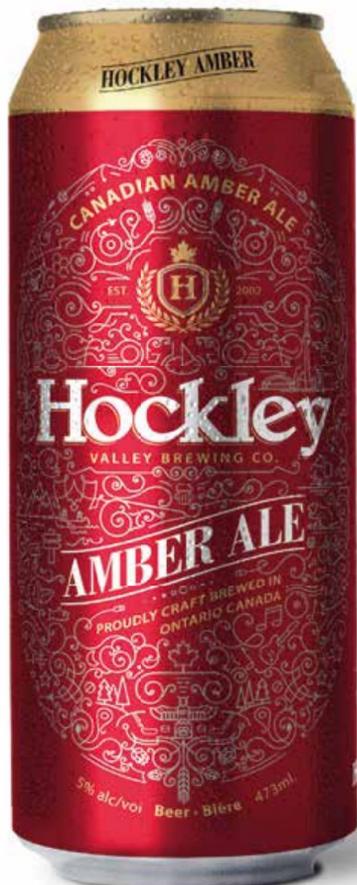
- 1. Absence of difficulty
- 5. Preserve a dead body
- 11. Gratitude
- 14. The act of coming together again
- 15. More cushy
- 18. Visionaries
- 19. Large, fish-eating bird
- 21. Indicates near
- 23. NY Mets legend Tommie
- 24. Icelandic books
- 28. Pop
- 29. Hammer is one
- 30. Sense of self-importance
- 32. Thyrotrophic hormone
- 33. Can't be found
- 35. Electronic data processing
- 36. Passports and licenses are two
- 39. Snake-like fishes
- 41. Air Force
- 42. Popular computers
- 44. Intermediate ecological stage
- 46. Wings
- 47. Used in combination
- 49. Laid back
- 52. Jewelled headdress
- 56. Slow
- 58. Famous Falls
- 60. Reassertions
- 62. Periods of time
- 63. Hyphen

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Body part
- 2. Mimics
- 3. Expel large quantities
- 4. Sea eagle
- 5. Genetically distinct varieties
- 6. Dialect of Chinese
- 7. Famous Mr. T character
- 8. Consumed
- 9. Chinese dynasty
- 10. Menace to yards
- 12. Ireland
- 13. Palm trees
- 16. Fungal disease
- 17. Willis and Robert are two
- 20. Affirmative! (slang)
- 22. It shows who you are
- 25. The First State (abbr.)
- 26. Get older
- 27. Associations
- 29. Woman (French)
- 31. Sunscreen rating
- 34. Brew
- 36. Leader
- 37. Plants in the legume family
- 38. Burn with a hot liquid
- 40. Junior's father
- 43. Scads
- 45. Morning
- 48. Length of a line (abbr.)
- 50. Double curve
- 51. Small, thin person
- 53. Worn by exposure to the weather
- 54. Mars crater
- 55. Humanities
- 57. Word element meaning ear
- 58. To the ___ degree
- 59. Residue of something burned
- 61. It cools your home



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THINGS you Ought To Know

THROUGH JULY 15

The Aurora Cultural Centre presents Backstories: The Researching Artist as Traveller and Interviewer. A solo exhibition and sale in the Centre's temporary gallery space at Town Hall, the exhibition is now online through July 15. Andrew Cheddie Sookrah's vast and varied practice is rooted in geographic exploration and spiritual expression. He is inspired by the essence of a place, the spirit of its peoples, and the inseparable connections they have to each other and the natural world. Backstories: The Researching Artist as Traveller & Interviewer exhibits paintings, drawings, and sculptures taken from Sookrah's life as both traveller and artist. Recognized for his bright and expressive technique, Sookrah takes us on a journey through rivers, lands, and into the intimate solitudes of his studio during a time of limited movement; The COVID-19 pandemic.

JULY 18 - 22

The Aurora Historical Society presents Time Travellers Summer Camp from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Hillary House National Historic Site. Suitable for ages 7 - 11. Jump in the time machine and get ready for a trip through the ages! Campers will travel around the world and explore the Middle Ages, Ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, the Wild West, Early Settlers, and

even the Roaring Twenties! Cost: \$150 per camper. For more information, visit 905-727-8991 or visit aurorahs.com.

FRIDAY, JULY 22

The Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion celebrates Christmas in July today from 11.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. with a special lunch. The traditional dinner will be prepared by Chef Michael from Zest Up Your Life. The luncheon will be served in the lounge or on our patio. Tickets are available now from the Legion Bar.

SATURDAY, JULY 23

The Aurora Historical Society will present Yoga at the Manor from 10 - 11 a.m. Relax your mind while strengthening your body on the serene Hillary House grounds. Suitable for ages 13 and up, beginner and intermediate fitness level. Today's theme: Yoga Movement & Meditation. \$10 per class. Bring your own yoga mat. For more information, including reserving your spot, visit aurorahs.com or call 905-727-8991.

JULY 25 - SEPTEMBER 17

The Aurora Cultural Centre presents Backwards and Forwards: Reflections in Porcupine Quills, a solo exhibition by Vanessa Dion Fletcher. Recent quillworks (2020-present), ranging from

intimate pieces on paper to large mural installations, at the core is a negotiation between the artist's hands and porcupine quills. Vanessa Dion Fletcher is a Lenape and Potawatomi neurodiverse Artist. Her family is from Eelūnaapëewii Lahkëewiitt (displaced from Lenapehoking) and European settlers.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

The Aurora Public Library, as part of the One Book One Aurora Program, presents An Evening with Jan Wong at 7 p.m. Jan Wong went to China as a starry-eyed Maoist in 1972 at the height of the Cultural Revolution. Learn about her experiences and how her love affair began to sour as she became aware of the harsh realities of Chinese communism. A talk followed by a Q&A period. Tickets are available beginning August 1. To register, visit bit.ly/3rFdZhL.

CONTINUING

Partagez le Francais: Ce groupe accueille les ADULTES / 18+ (des francophones aux débutants capables de converser) - qui cherchent à mettre en pratique leurs compétences Conversationnelle en français. Over Zoom with a nominal fee of \$2.50. RSVP by visiting meetup.com/Partagez-le-francais. For more information, email partagez.york@outlook.com.

Support AbuseHurts' Delivering Hope Full Circle Program textile recycling and donation program. In the current COVID climate, a greater number of people are wanting to donate or get rid of unwanted items, increasing the need for more outlets being available to receive the items. This program will provide a convenient way for people to donate or get rid of used/unwanted clothing, blankets, linens and furniture and will help lessen the amount of items ending up in landfills. Materials that were previously perceived as waste will now be seen as a valuable resource further encouraging redistribution. The items will be recycled in the following ways: To be given to individuals who are survivors of violence and are transitioning from shelters into new homes; To be sold in our store; To be sold to a textile recycler, which makes for an ongoing source of funding for Abuse Hurts enabling them to provide their services to the thousands of people that require them each year. When and Where: Monday and Wednesday, every week, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., with 30-minute time slots - only 1 drop off per time slot. If you do not have an appointment, we cannot accept your donation. The Abuse Hurts Warehouse is located at 1208 Gorham St, Unit 4, Newmarket - rear unloading dock. Visit AbuseHurts.ca to select your drop off time slot.



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Communications outage impacted emergency services, highlighted gaps

From page 1

It's an urgent priority across the country and York Region is no exception.

From the start of the outage early Friday morning, frontline and behind-the-scenes teams at Southlake and Central York Fire Services worked hard to reconnect through different means.

"While we do have some electronic mapping in the systems in the trucks, we got around any of the hiccups that we had and we were able to provide any services that were requested for that day," says Chief Ian Laing of the Central York Fire Services. "It's a bit of a challenge. Any delay in getting notification of an emergency generally makes the situation worse."

Impacts were also felt at York Paramedic Services.

"York Region Paramedic Services proactively opened the Incident Management Support Centre on the morning of Friday, July 8, 2022, to provide additional support and ensure continue timely and critical care to residents," said Linda Gonsalves, General Manager, Paramedic & Senior Services, in an email to The Auroran. "Essential staff reported to York Region Paramedic Services Headquarters to ensure service delivery continued during the outage. Ambulance radio operations and York Region's 911 infrastructure were unaffected. York Region Paramedic Services did experience outages on a couple administrative systems, but

these were easily resolved using our backup systems.

"York Region relies on multiple internet and cellular providers. Many Regional facilities also rely on connectivity provided through YorkNet fibre and as such services including landline phone and internet communications were relatively unaffected. York Region Paramedic Services is not aware of any service delays and has not received any complaints to date related to service on Friday, July 8, 2022."

Responding was a bit more complex for Southlake, as not only were they temporarily unable to connect to important outside information, but staff shift changes were also left up in the air as staff who were not already on site were unable to call in.

"We knew something was up fairly early in the morning when things weren't necessarily connecting as we would expect to them," says Robert Bull, Vice President of Facilities, IT, and CFO of Southlake Regional Health Centre. "Like any Code Grey, the priority is to figure out what is working as normal and what might be impacted. What are all those core systems? We were able to fairly quickly establish [connection] to the main health information system we use. Things within the building were generally working as they should be expected to. Our internal networks were all working. It was when we needed things to connect to the outside world that it was intermittent depending on

what the system was.

"With a Code Grey we were able to establish early on the main systems that weren't working and understand the implications of those.... We asked people to revert to downtime procedures for systems that don't work. There were well-established procedures that people have in case these things happen..."

One of the elements that was more difficult to sort out were staffing levels. Staff members on the Rogers network who were sick or otherwise unable to come in were unable to call into the staffing office and, in turn, reaching staff on the same network to fill in was also a challenge.

"Morning shift change is generally 7.30 in the morning, so we knew what the implications were there and it was sort of too early for major impacts then," says Bull. "The gap in information that we had was later in the day and was going to be for the night shift, which is generally 7.30 p.m. We didn't have great visibility into how many people had tried to call in sick or report an absence and couldn't get through to us.

"When we were trying to call out, we weren't having a good success rate to connect to people. We had plans in place and our command centre is [planned so] people designated to certain roles... and we had plans for a 24-hour command centre all through the weekend. One of the things we had to do heading into the evening as we

We asked people to revert to downtime procedures for systems that don't work. There were well-established procedures that people have in case these things happen...

headed into the 7.30 shift change was huddle with all our leaders, managers and directors to go back to all their units, confirm they were in good shape for the night, that we as leaders [went to] staff to give them the heads-up as obviously we needed to make sure we had adequate staffing throughout the night."

Eventually, Southlake was able to source alternatives to Rogers that gave them "flexibility in terms of being able to communicate with each other for people outside the building and our offsite locations."

"We will probably see a little diversification of those communications channels so we can adapt if something like this was to happen again," says Bull."

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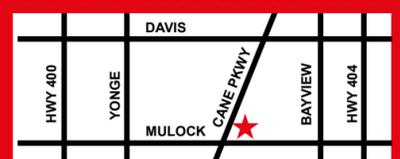


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