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THE AURORAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 15 No. 10 905-727-3300

theauroran.com

FREE Week of December 25, 2014



KEEPERS OF THE FLAME
Young members of the Cheder Chabad Choir, led by Rabbi Yossi Hecht of Aurora, serenaded a packed audience at York Regional Police's headquarters on Don Hillcock Drive on Wednesday night. They were on hand for the YRP's traditional Menorah Lighting Ceremony, which brought out representatives from various synagogues from York Region and the GTA, local dignitaries, and representatives from faith groups. For more on Hanukkah observances, see Page 7.
Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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Study could lead to new approach to Downtown revitalization: Council

By Brock Weir

A study to look at what it would take for the Town of Aurora to secure historic and vacant properties along Yonge Street could lead to new approaches to revitalizing Aurora's Downtown Core, according to some Councillors.

Council voted 8 – 1 last week to investigate a potential purchase price for historic Horton Place, which is situated on the northwest corner of Yonge Street at Irwin Avenue, as well as the two properties immediately north and south of the house, with a potential eye to spurring positive development and growth in Aurora's historic centre. Council's approval

also came with the direction of a full review of liabilities and risks that would be part and parcel of such a purchase.

The investigation is a result of a motion brought forward by Councillor John Abel. He said he believed it is the role of municipalities like Aurora to add to their land reserves with an eye towards heritage, culture, business and commercial uses.

He stressed all he wanted was for Town Staff to look at potential purchase costs rather than committing any funds. In looking at revitalization plans in other places, municipal involvement was key and Aurora needs to decide whether or

Continued on page 6

Hack will have impact on future, say local filmmakers

By Brock Weir

Aurora filmmaker Jared Pelletier has been working on a sci-fi project for some time now.

It is a film intended to make a statement – but it is unlikely this statement will have as wide-reaching an effect as the unlikely Seth Rogen-James Franco film "The Interview", which has been all but scrapped by Sony, its parent studio, and international theatrical distributors, including Canada's Cineplex Odeon, following threats from cyber hackers.

While the film is expected to be released online, the controversy to "cave" to these threats has had everyone from casual film buffs to the President of the United States weigh in, but young local filmmakers question how the decision will affect their industry down the road.

"The sci-fi piece works into some potentially political allegories, and I think most movies have some sort of allegory

Continued on page 13

Happy Holidays
from the gang at The Auroran

THAT'S ALL FOLKS!
This will be the last issue of The Auroran before the New Year as our team takes some time to enjoy family, friends and the spirit of the season. Watch for the next edition of The Auroran on the week of January 8, 2015. Our best wishes for a safe, healthy and happy holiday!

THE ART OF THE CRAFT.

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8:00 p.m.
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Phone 905-727-1375 • Fax 905-726-4732
Email info@aurora.ca • Website www.aurora.ca

Accessible formats
905-727-3123 ext. 4212
accessibility@aurora.ca

COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Thursday, January 8	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Committee of Adjustment
Friday, January 9	12 p.m.	Off-site	Special Council Closed Educational and Training Session
Saturday, January 10	8:30 a.m.	Off-site	Special Council Closed Educational and Training Session
Tuesday, January 13	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	General Committee*
Tuesday, January 20	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council
Wednesday, January 21	7 p.m.	Aurora Public Library	Aurora Public Library Board
Monday, January 26	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Special General Committee Budget Overview*
Wednesday, January 28	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Public Planning*

Meetings are open to the public and can be seen on Rogers TV, channel 10. For a full list of upcoming meetings, please visit www.aurora.ca

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



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Town of Aurora is now accepting applications for the following positions:

Manager of Bylaw Services

Application deadline is **Wednesday, December 31**

Procurement Consultant

Application deadline is **Sunday, January 11**

For more information, please visit www.aurora.ca/employment

Dinner and a Movie

Please note: Dinner and a Movie will resume in January 2015. Please look for our new schedule posted in January with our first movie starting on Saturday, January 17, 2015.

Register now for Winterfest Camp

Take a break from the cold weather and join us for activities including games, sports and arts and crafts.

Date: **Monday, December 22, 2014 to Friday, January 2, 2015** from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Extended care is available. For more information or to register, please call 905-726-4770.

Don't miss Aurora's Borealis!

Come to Aurora Town Park every evening from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. until **Monday, February 16, 2015** and enjoy the beautifully lit trees and festive atmosphere.

For more information, please call 905-726-4762 or visit www.aurora.ca

Central York Fire Services – Public Information Centre (PIC) on Thursday, January 8

Residents of Aurora and Newmarket are invited to attend a Public Information Centre on the Central York Fire Services (CYFS) Master Fire Plan Update on **Thursday, January 8, 2015**.

What: Presentation of the proposed CYFS Master Fire Plan Question and Answer period

When: **Thursday, January 8, 2015** – 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Presentation to commence at 7:30 p.m.

Where: Art Ferguson Club House - 16195 Bayview Avenue, Newmarket

Who: Members of Aurora and Newmarket Councils, CYFS staff, representatives from Dillon Consulting Limited, residents of Aurora and Newmarket

The 2014 Master Fire Plan provides CYFS with a strategic framework to update the current plan. It will assist the Town of Aurora and the Town of Newmarket in making decisions about fire prevention, public education and protection services, based on local needs.

For more information, please contact CYFS Administration at 905-895-9222.

REMINDER

Notice of Service Disruption at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex (SARC)

There will be a service disruption on **Saturday, January 3** and **Sunday, January 4** at the SARC.

These disruptions include:

- PUBLIC SKATE 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. due to a Hockey Tournament

For more information, please visit www.aurora.ca/news

Winter Parking Restrictions in effect from November 15 to April 15, 2 a.m. to 6 a.m.

It's that time of year again! Snow and ice are due to arrive soon.

Please make it safe for everyone and ensure that your vehicles are not parked on the street. It is also important to not park over sidewalks or onto the roadway. This is a hazard for residents and it severely hinders the ability of our Infrastructure and Environmental Services staff to efficiently plow our roads and sidewalks.

For more information, please call 905-726-4751 or visit www.aurora.ca

2015 Waste Management Guide and Recycling Calendar has been mailed out

Please note the 2015 Waste Management Guide and Recycling Calendar has been mailed out through Canada Post to all Aurora residents.

If you have not received your copy of the calendar, copies are available at Aurora Town Hall or visit www.aurora.ca/wasteandrecycling for an electronic copy.

Municipal Street Tree Block Pruning to begin in January 2015

Please be advised that Municipal Street Tree Block Pruning will occur in early January 2015 and continue through to late March 2015. For a list of affected streets please visit www.aurora.ca/trees

If you have any questions, please contact the Parks & Recreation department at 905-727-3123 ext. 3233.

Christmas Tree Pick-up during the week of January 26

Please note the Christmas Tree pick-up will take place during the week of January 26 on your scheduled waste pick-up day.

For more information, please consult your Waste Management Guide and Recycling Calendar or call Customer Service at 905-727-1375.

Seeking Citizen Members for The Town of Aurora Boards and Committees

Aurora Town Council invites residents to apply to participate as a citizen member for a list of Boards or Committees.

For more information, please visit the news and notices section at www.aurora.ca/news

WHAT'S HAPPENING

New Changes coming to Curbside Collection!

Starting **January 1, 2015** all residents and businesses in Aurora who participate in curbside collection must comply with the following changes:



- E-waste and batteries are banned from curbside collection
- There is a maximum of **five extra bulky items** per scheduled collection. For example, you can set out a maximum of five extra bulky items along with your green bin(s), blue box(es) and garbage bag(s)/can(s).

Please note: Any items over the five extra bulky item limit will be tagged and left at the curb. You do not require an appointment to pick-up your five extra bulky items.

Residents can dispose of their E-waste and batteries at one of the The Regional Municipality of York's local depots or at the Town's scheduled E-waste events at 9 Scanlon Court.

Extra bulky items can also be taken to one of The Regional Municipality of York's depots, wait till the next garbage cycle, or contact a private removal company.

For more information, please visit www.aurora.ca/wasteandrecycling or call Customer Service at 905-727-1375.

For a full list of The Regional Municipality of York's depots, please visit www.york.ca



Holiday Service Schedule December and January



MUNICIPAL OFFICE

Aurora Town Hall (100 John West Way) holiday schedule is as follows:

Monday, December 22	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Tuesday, December 23	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Wednesday, December 24	8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Thursday, December 25	CLOSED
Friday, December 26	CLOSED
Monday, December 29	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Tuesday, December 30	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Wednesday, December 31	8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Thursday, January 1	CLOSED
Friday, January 2	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Regular business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. resume on **Monday, January 5**.

If you would like to pay a water or tax bill, payments can be placed in the drop-off box 24 hours a day outside of Town Hall. Please do not place cash payments in the boxes and remember to include your payment stub along with your payment. Alternatively, you may pay your bills through your ATM or through your bank's online banking service. Parking tickets can be paid online at www.paytickets.ca



LIBRARY

To view the Aurora Public Library's holiday hours of operation, please visit www.library.aurora.on.ca or call 905-727-9494.



WASTE COLLECTION

Collection scheduled on **Thursday, December 25, Friday, December 26, Thursday, January 1** and **Friday, January 2** will take place the day after your scheduled collection day. Christmas tree pick-up takes place the **week of January 26** on your scheduled pick-up day. For more information, please consult your Community and Waste Management Calendar.



RECREATION CENTRE

Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex | 1400 Wellington Street East

Monday, December 22	5:45 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Tuesday, December 23	5:45 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Wednesday, December 24	5:45 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Thursday, December 25	CLOSED
Friday, December 26	8 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Saturday, December 27	7:45 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday, December 28	7:45 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Monday, December 29	5:45 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Tuesday, December 30	5:45 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Wednesday, December 31	5:45 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Thursday, January 1	CLOSED
Friday, January 2	5:45 a.m. to 10 p.m.

For swimming, public skating and Club Aurora fitness schedules, please visit www.aurora.ca/holidayrecreation. For up-to-date information regarding the re-opening of the Aurora Family Leisure Complex and Club Aurora, please visit www.aurora.ca

EMERGENCY SERVICES

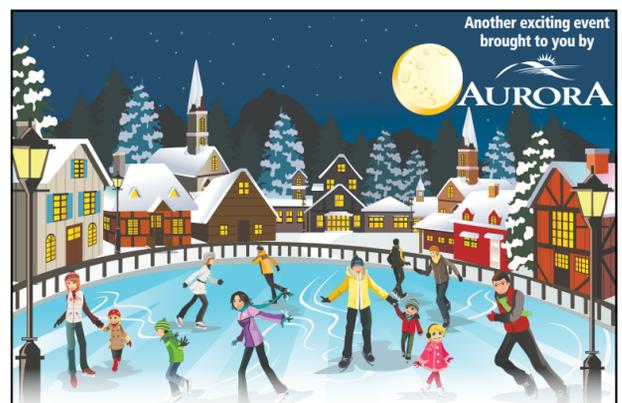
As always, the Town will continue to provide essential and emergency services.

For Town-related emergency situations, please call 905-727-1375 or 905-727-3123 and follow the voice prompts.

FOR ALL OTHER EMERGENCIES, CALL 9-1-1



The Town of Aurora wishes you a safe and happy holiday!



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31

FAMILY FIRST NIGHT 2014

Celebrate the New Year with family and friends!

5.4.3.2.1.



Date:
Wednesday, December 31, 2014
Time:
6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Location:
Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, 1400 Wellington Street East

Details:
Complimentary *Tim Hortons* hot chocolate with a food bank donation
Free skating and swimming
Children's activities – crafts, face painting, bouncy castle, skills games
Reptile shows at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m.
Magic shows at 6:30 p.m. and 7:45 p.m.

Call 905-726-4762 or visit www.aurora.ca/firstnight for more information

PLEASE NOTE, WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CANCEL, AMEND OR CHANGE ACTIVITIES.



Being difference makers is a team goal at Rick Hansen P.S. this holiday season

By Brock Weir

It only takes one person to make a difference in the world, but being the difference-makers in the world around them is a team effort for the students and teachers at Rick Hansen Public School.

When the bell rang on Friday afternoon, elementary and secondary school kids were off the hook until the New Year, but going home last week the Rick Hansen community was sure in the knowledge that their efforts would soon make a lasting difference.

By Thursday, hats and gloves were obscuring the greenery of the school's Christmas Tree as the students' hat and mitten drive went into the home stretch. The woolly clothes collected during this drive will be distributed as gifts to local families in need at the annual Christmas meal hosted by Jonathan's Restaurant.

While the kids looked after the hats and gloves, teachers on the other hand, pooled their annual gifts of soaps and other toiletries, donating them to the women and children at Yellow Brick House.

As these gifts bring smiles to the faces of recipients throughout the holiday season, these efforts to make a difference are, two years after its opening, becoming second nature to the Rick Hansen Community, according to teacher Ingrid LaGros, who heads their Positive Climates for Learning (PC4L) program.

"PC4L takes into account healthy schools, active living, social justice, equity and really trying to develop a culture in the school," says Ms. LaGros. "One of the things we have been doing from students participating is trying to develop initiatives that get the whole school involved in Making a Difference, which is our big idea for the whole school. In our student council, there is a Positive Climates committee that helps run all our initiatives and helps us decide what we would like to do next."

As for the teachers, their third-annual drive for Yellow Brick House brought in a bumper crop of donations not just from the teachers, but also the surrounding Rick Hansen community.

"As a teacher, you receive a lot of gifts," says teacher Laura Britten, who is one of a three-member team in their community classroom. "You often



Students Paige Harris and Anika Bisnauth helped spearhead the mitten and hat drive at Rick Hansen P.S., which will be distributed to local families in need at the traditional holiday dinner hosted by Jonathan's Restaurant this week. They are pictured with teacher Ingrid LeGros. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**

get lots of soaps and shampoos that you won't use at home and they often go to waste. So, we re-gift these to a worthy cause. It is just amazing to see how willing this community is to help families. Christmas isn't all about Santa Claus coming to Town; it is about giving to people in need."

This fall, the group led a food drive. Just a few short weeks ago, primary students up to Grade 2 put their best feet forward in their annual holiday concert, raising awareness for local organizations, and many of these efforts culminated in a \$275 donation to the York Region Children's Aid Society, where students plan to adopt families for gift giving next season.

In the early days of these efforts, Ms. LaGros says she was often left asking kids what they thought of certain initiatives, but getting students to take ownership of these initiative, was an entirely different challenge. Not so anymore.

"Now, we actually have kids asking, 'Why don't we do this? Why don't we do that?'" she says. "I make contact with the organizations and they do the announcements, they do the organizing, they do the collection and everything. It has now shifted from teacher-led to student-led, which is really where you want it to be because it has them

thinking about how to make a difference in their community.

"The most exciting part of it for me is the students are making the commitment to take the time to think about it, internalize it and find out what resonates with them. No matter what we do, the kids now have the mentality that now we're trying to make someone's life better. Whatever the initiative is, that is our end goal. I think the fact they're now thinking about it themselves is what excites me the most - that change in mindset of how can I make a difference in the lives of somebody else, and how can I encourage others to do the same?"

Adds Ms. Britten: "The staff and students here are absolutely fantastic. They would give you the shirt off their back if they could just help the community."

Briefly

CELEBRATE 2015 AT FAMILY FIRST NIGHT

Swimming and skating are just two activities on offer for New Year's Eve as Aurora celebrates Family First Night. Beginning at 6 p.m., the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex on Wellington Street East will throw open its doors for an evening of face painting, a bouncy castle, free swimming and skating from 6 - 8 p.m., magic shows at 6.30 and 7.45 p.m., reptile shows at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m., along with skills games, crafts, and more! Complimentary hot chocolate will also be on tap with donations of non-perishable food items to the Aurora Food Pantry. For more information, contact Shelley Ware at the Town of Aurora at 905-726-4762 or email sware@aurora.ca. The fun wraps up at 9 p.m.

LOOKING TO QUIT SMOKING?

If quitting smoking is one of your New Year's resolutions, the Region of York could help you along the way. Beginning January 21, the Region will host two "STOP on the Road" workshops. Using nicotine replacement therapies like the patch can double your chances of success. These workshops, scheduled for January 21 from 6 - 9 p.m. and January 27 from 12 noon to 3 p.m., offer five weeks of no-cost nicotine replacement patches for those who qualify, along with information and tips for a successful quit. For more information, including eligibility, call 905-830-4444 x.73052.



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Wish you a Safe and Happy Holiday Season



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Teachers, and the community at large, joined forces to collect toiletries, cosmetics and other items for women and kids at Yellow Brick House. A force behind this initiative is teacher Laura Britten who is pictured here with Rick Hansen principal Steven Gardner. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**



Make memories this holiday break

Register your child for **Christmas Break Riding Camp**. We accept riders of all levels. This is an exciting opportunity for any child. Space is limited so please call or email to book your spot today.

Ridgewood Farm also offers riding lessons all year round. Still lots of time to register for Winter.

Stalls now available for anyone looking to board their horse with us. Call for a tour of our beautiful facility and come see what we have to offer you and your equine partner.

www.ridgewoodfarm.ca

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TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE



SEEKING CITIZEN MEMBERS FOR THE TOWN OF AURORA BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Aurora Town Council invites residents to apply to participate as a citizen member of one of the following Boards or Committees:

Statutory Board or Committees

Application Deadline: Friday, January 9, 2015

- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Aurora Appeal Tribunal
- Aurora Public Library Board
- Committee of Adjustment/Property Standards Committee

Advisory Committees

Application Deadline: Friday, January 23, 2015

- Environmental Advisory Committee
- Economic Development Advisory Committee
- Heritage Advisory Committee
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
- Trails and Active Transportation Committee

For more information on roles and responsibilities for Boards or Committee members, please visit Aurora Town Hall, Aurora Public Library or the Town of Aurora's website at www.aurora.ca

For more information, please call 905-727-3123 ext. 4227.

What is the application process?

Appointment to Boards and Committees is open to all residents of Aurora, or owners of land within the municipality, or a tenant of land in Aurora. Applications must be submitted to the Town on the approved application form. Application forms and additional Board and Committee information can be picked up at Aurora Town Hall, Aurora Public Library or by visiting the Town's website at www.aurora.ca

Applications should be addressed to the Deputy Clerk and submitted by email to pthoma@aurora.ca or by fax at 905-726-4732. Applications can also be submitted by mail or hand delivered to 100 John West Way, P.O. Box 1000, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Canadians can't afford "another misspent year": Liberals

Looking back on the year, it is increasingly clear that Prime Minister Stephen Harper's priorities are no longer the priorities of Canadians.

His Conservative government has focused economic attention solely on its promise to introduce an expensive income splitting scheme.

Paying for it has trumped every other need. Over a billion dollars for veterans' services have gone unspent while the government closed nine local offices—making it even harder to access a support system the Auditor General called "complex and time-consuming." Veterans who needed mental health services have been left waiting months, even years, to get help.

Spending on infrastructure projects through the Building Canada Fund has been cut by 90%. Employment Insurance payroll taxes have been frozen at artificially high levels. Other taxes, such as tariffs on imports, have gone up. Public safety has been shortchanged, from search and rescue to food inspection and rail safety to environmental protection.

All for the sake of income splitting, which will cost the federal government a whopping \$2 billion a year, but will not benefit 85% of Canadian households. Single mothers and fathers, those who have the least and couples with similar incomes will get nothing. Among the few who will benefit, the largest benefit will go to those who need it the least.

There is no reason why middle class families should have to pay to give families like Mr. Harper's a \$2,000 tax break.

Worst of all, this scheme will do nothing to help with our middling economic outlook. Economic growth continues to be low, the jobs market sluggish and household debt high. Federal mismanagement has left big projects like the Keystone XL pipeline struggling to get going. Exports are only returning to their pre-recession peak.

Liberals have been hearing from Canadians that this is just not good enough. They are looking not only for a different government, but a better government. We are working hard to earn their trust.

We believe that a surplus built by Canadians should be invested for the benefit of all Canadians. That means investing in our people, our natural resources, our infrastructure, our trade and our drive to innovate. These are the things that made Canada successful in the first place. That is how we will restore growth and bring relief to struggling middle class families and all those striving to get there.

Canadians can't afford another misspent year.

**Judy Foote, MP
Whip, Liberal Party of Canada**

Timberlane development needs to be compatible: reader

As a home owner located near the proposed Timberlane redevelopment, we were surprised to learn there are 68 homes planned for just 4.7 hectares.

If approved this will mean unit density of 6.54 on the property as compared to 3.47 and 2.22 in surrounding neighborhoods.

Similarly, lot coverage will be 32 percent as compared to 16.5 percent and 12 percent for neighboring areas and 12 percent in the Town's Official Plan. Properly planned in fill developments

Continued on page 7

To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to letters@auroran.com

Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.



Springing a Leak



BROCK'S BANTER
Brock Weir

I hate to break tradition, so I will open my final column of 2014 with the dusty, yellowing opener of, "this time of year always brings a mixed bag of feelings."

This week is a time of celebration; an excuse to throw a good party, spread some holiday cheer, meet up with relatives you have not seen in a while, catch up with old friends, and experience the pleasures of gift giving while perhaps picking up a few nifty things for yourself in the process.

Then, in the post-Christmas turkey haze comes Boxing Day. If you're from a split family, it might be a time to start the whole clambake over again and/or hitting the shops for a great Boxing Day deal on that one elusive item that was on your list.

After that, the merriment continues with the anticipation of New Year's Eve, the celebrations that come with it, and the renewal which, in turn, comes with a fresh start.

That is, a fresh start might be anticipated by those who think with the glass half full. Those on the opposite side of the spectrum might be a bit melancholy to see an otherwise spectacular year be consigned to memory.

Usually, I fall somewhere in the middle.

Up until the middle of last week, my cup nearly runneth over looking forward to a fresh start.

Then, I went to get my hair cut.

On my way to take my seat in the barber's chair I grabbed a magazine at random off the table and began to get comfortable. Oddly enough, it was a coverless copy of Maclean's year-end edition from 2013. A lot happened in that year and when I leafed through pictures of memorable political moments, triumphs on the field, tempered with images of natural disasters and human suffering, I contemplated what would be the lasting images of 2014.

It is relatively easy to imagine this on a national perspective – particularly as most of these year-end editions are out now, having done the legwork for you already! – but I began to wonder what

the lasting local images would be here.

2014 did not get off to the best of starts, with the murder of a local woman abroad and remembrances of a long-serving Aurora mayor who died just before the New Year, but visually our eyes were craned upward to the trees, still encased in ice from the pre-Christmas storm.

Colourful images of butterflies were punctuated with smiles and tears as the St. Joseph Catholic School Community came together to raise money for the ongoing treatment of their friend, Laura, who sadly lost her battle this summer. Students rallied in inventive ways, both in video and strutting their stuff down the catwalk in memory of one of their own, who lost his battle with depression on the GO tracks one wintery January morning.

Aurorans celebrated in the lead up to, and during, Sochi 2014, not only cheering on local athletes as they prepared to make the trek, but also gathering in bars across town at dawn to watch the boys bring home hockey gold.

By the time February rolled around, the lasting memories created during 2013's Sesquicentennial celebrations were quite literally capped with the sealing of a time capsule to mark the occasion, while the racy images from the newly re-vamped Mardi Gras at Aw, Shucks kept more than a few of you warm on a cold March night.

March led the way for change as long-time MPP Frank Klees passed the Progressive Conservative baton to Newmarket Councillor Jane Twinney, and local Ontario Liberals picked Chris Ballard to represent them on the campaign trail, setting the stage for a dramatic election ahead.

There is little doubt what the most lasting images from April will be. Every time I delve into that month's archive for a reference, I can still smell the

smoke coming through our office as the nearby Aurora United Church erupted into flames.

It is interesting the scents and odours that stick with you for a lifetime. On the welcome end of things, the distinctly different smells of my late grandparents' respective kitchens bring back wonderful memories, as does the smell of a freshly picked tomato stem which is, in my mind, an instant blast of summer. Less welcome, however, was the smell that April day – a smell made extra pungent not by the burning wood and crumbling brick, but of the generations of memories and history that wafted away with each plume.

Each plume and flame that went into the air, and the cascades of water which poured down the thresholds of the building and onto the streets below, are images indelibly etched into Aurora's collective consciousness.

By the time my mind got to the end of April, I was halfway through my haircut when the woman wielding the scissors – the same woman who has been wielding the scissors over my scalp for more than a decade after an unfortunate incident elsewhere – my thoughts were interrupted by something of an exclamation.

The gist of the exclamation was, thoughtfully, to point out that I am now actually greying on the roof, rather than just the beard which has been taunting me for the better part of the year. After picking out the grey as they arrived, I eventually gave up and decided to let Mother Nature do her worst, but this inventory-taking of my beard's northern white counterparts simply drove home the fact that 2015 will usher me into my thirties and suddenly my glass-half-full spirit started to leak.

So, with that, it was off to hurriedly begin my list of New Year's resolutions before I hit that milestone, which is still – at press time – a work in progress.

I'll report back on this – and on the second quarter of 2014 – in the New Year.

Have a safe and happy holiday season!

THE AURORAN
Aurora's Community Newspaper

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IN GOOD COMPANY

Mayor Geoffrey Dawe

Getting Down to Business

As we enter the holiday season, I hope that each of you has the opportunity to spend some well-deserved time with family and friends, and reflect upon the successes of 2014.

It is back to business at Aurora Town Hall and at York Region. On December 2, our new Council was sworn in at our Inaugural Council Meeting at Town Hall.

It was a ceremony steeped in tradition, complete with a piper, colour guard, our Town Crier, representatives of our faith communities and members of Aurora's Queen's York Rangers.

It was a wonderful evening and I thank Town staff for organizing such a distinguished and well-organized event to usher in the 2014-2018 municipal term.

On December 11, York Regional Council held its Inaugural Council meeting, electing Wayne Emmerson, former Mayor of Whitchurch-Stouffville, as its first new Chair in 17 years. I am excited to continue working with Wayne, a knowledgeable and seasoned political veteran, and congratulate him on his successful campaign to succeed retiring Chairman Bill Fisch.

I also look forward to working with the newly sworn-in members of York Regional Council, and would like to thank Newmarket Regional Councillor John Taylor for running a spirited campaign for the Chair's position. While I ultimately voted with the majority of my Regional colleagues in electing Wayne Emmerson, I was pleased to hear John's principled stance at supporting social services for vulnerable residents, and look forward to his continued positive contributions at Regional Council.

The election of the Regional Chair has been the subject of some contention, as it is conducted by those democratically voted onto Regional Council, not the electorate at-large.

While there are certainly merits to both systems, Aurora has been well-served by the present model. With the election of a former mayor of a Northern 6 community – a group of which Aurora is a member – I am strongly encouraged that Aurora and the other smaller communities in York Region will continue to have a strong voice at the Council table.

With Councils in place, business has quickly turned to our annual budget process. I would like to thank the residents who took the time to give us feedback using our Citizen Budget online survey tool. This was the first time we used this easy-to-use interactive survey and we will continue to use this to gauge resident sentiment. The results of the survey will be sent to Council for their consideration during the budget process.

Resident feedback is critical to helping Council set budget priorities. I encourage all Aurorans to get involved in the New Year and attend one of our upcoming consultations. The consultation schedule will appear in January editions of our Town Notice Board, located on Page 2 of The Auroran.

Continued on page 14

NEW AURORAN POLL

Have you made any New Year's resolutions?
a) Yes b) No

Go to www.theauroran.com to vote!

Previous Poll Results

Christmas is just one week away.
Are you prepared?
A) Yes B) No

RESULTS TO DATE DECEMBER 22, 2014	YES	NO
	86%	14%



THIS ISN'T YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S STUFFING

Santa Claus headed over to Sobey's on Bayview Avenue at Hollidge to help Aux. Staff Sergeant Norm Radcliffe, Aux. Constable Jason Richards, Aux. Constable Mohsen Behravesh and Aux. Sergeant Heather MacKay of the Ontario Provincial Police's Aurora Detachment, and Sobey's staff to help "stuff the cruiser". All grocery donations received by the police, who volunteered their Saturday for the cause, were given to the Aurora Food Pantry. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**

A Year of Building Opportunity

Recently, the Ontario Legislature rose for its holiday break, giving me more opportunity to meet constituents, attend community events and spend time with family and friends.

The end of sitting is also an opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments of our government in 2014 and look ahead to the ways we will continue building opportunity and security for the people of Ontario in 2015.

This has been a very productive six months for the government of Ontario on behalf of the people of Newmarket-Aurora, and all Ontario.

Since the session began, we introduced and passed our budget and nine other pieces of legislation that build opportunity and create more security in people's lives.

We raised the minimum wage to \$11 and tied it to inflation.

We cut red tape for businesses and passed legislation to combat auto insurance fraud and lower your rates.

And we are helping kids get the best start in life by investing in their education and health.

The budget is central to our government's four-part plan to build Ontario up by investing in people's talents and skills, developing new public infrastructure like roads and transit, creating a dynamic, supportive environment where business thrives, and building a secure retirement savings plan.

There are positive signs that our plan is working.

Employment in Ontario has increased by 517,400 since the recessionary low in June 2009. Premier Kathleen Wynne's first trade mission to China in October



View From Queen's Park

Chris Ballard, MPP
Newmarket-Aurora

resulted in nearly \$1 billion of new investments by Chinese companies, creating 1,800 new jobs for the people of our province.

Our Youth Jobs Strategy is on track to create employment opportunities that are giving thousands of youth a foothold in the job market, and time and time again, companies are choosing to invest in Ontario, creating more opportunities for the people of our province.

A year ago, I was an Aurora Councillor and enjoying my 25th anniversary as president of a local small business. And a year ago at Queen's Park, our Liberal team was facing a challenging minority parliament.

What I saw was a government working in collaboration with the opposition to move forward with initiatives important to me and the people of Newmarket-Aurora.

The year got off to a great start when the province's largest coal-fired station, Nanticoke Generating Station, burned its last coal and went out of service. Three months later, Thunder Bay Generating Station burned its last piece of coal and Ontario became the first place in North America to eliminate coal as a source of electricity — the single largest climate

change initiative undertaken in North America.

In the spring, when the other parties decided not to support the budget, we went to the polls. I ran to serve as your MPP because I believe in Premier Wynne's practical and balanced plan to build Ontario up – and because I believe I have the skills and experience to make a real contribution on behalf of the people of Newmarket-Aurora. I am excited to have the opportunity to deliver for you and proud to serve as your MPP.

When our party was given a majority mandate, we got right back to work. We reconvened the legislature within a few short weeks and we passed the budget in July.

While I am encouraged by the progress people are seeing, I am also working to address the challenges that people in Newmarket-Aurora face, such as transit, transportation, environmental preservation and local economic growth.

I was delighted with GO Transit's increased train service to our riding in the summer, but more needs to be done and I will continue to advocate on behalf of this riding.

I am excited with the work I am focused on at Queen's Park, namely working with Minister Deb Matthews to help move the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy ahead, and with Minister David Orizetti, to help make it easier for small business to do business with the province.

A big issue, both here and across the province, is retirement security. We know that fewer than 35 per cent of Ontario workers enjoy the security of a workplace pension plan and that a

Continued on page 15

Christmas Gift Ideas

The world's leading scientists are all caught up making important discoveries, or un-locking the mysteries surrounding many of man's major diseases.

But all these things pale in comparison to the real issue that these people should have been trying to solve; man's inability to shop for Christmas presents.

And it is that time of year, once again.

I believe that there is something in a man's gene pool that does not allow them to begin purchasing any presents until at least 4 p.m. on December 23.

My situation is magnified, as I need to shop for birthday gifts during the holiday season.

My wife's birthday is the day after Christmas and my son's birthday is the day after that.

When I was first courting Julie she made sure to inform me "that Christmas and my birthday are two separate and distinct events."

I guess she felt "short changed" in the gift department growing up. Great, now I get to deal with the guilt!

I thought our son being born so close to Christmas would solve part of my Christmas buying dilemma; the argument being that Ryan is my annual and ever loving gift to Julie. I don't know why, but this did not sit very well with her.

For the first couple of years of our marriage, I would rely on my mother-in-law's advice for purchasing some of the gifts, until Julie found out about it. She then forbid me to talk to her mom from mid-November until December 27 every year.

I have also relied on the good graces

of others – sometimes complete and utter strangers in the shopping mall.

I have also relied on people at my work. A number of years ago, one of the ladies in the office was dressed very well one day, so I asked her what designer label she was wearing. She prepared a list for me (just the outerwear, thank you) of the clothes that she had on, then I went to the exact same store and purchased it. Not bad – I only had to return two of the three items!

In past years I had implored my wife to provide me with a list of things that she would deem suitable. No dice. She would always say, "Whatever you purchase will be fine with me" – which evidently was not the case as she took back most of the things I purchased for her.

I guess she thought I should have ESP – and magically figure out what she wants.

But three years ago something extraordinary happened. As Henry Kissinger once said, "Peace is at hand". Without me asking or prompting her in any fashion whatsoever, Julie provided me with her Christmas wish list.

I guess enough years of receiving hockey sticks, blenders, Leaf tickets



FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE

Stephen Somerville

and pitching wedges had now tipped the balance in my favor.

In the spirit of the holiday season I offer up some suggestions to the procrastinating shopper.

People always seem to appreciate books, a year-long subscription to a magazine or movie passes.

Speaking of books, a nice gift might be, "Long Walk To Freedom" which is the autobiography of the late South African President Nelson Mandela.

While not as personal, gift cards at his/her favorite store or within the local shopping mall can work.

Gifts do not have to be expensive. As they say, it is the thought that counts.

Providing a gift that has a personal touch is always special.

These "personal" gifts could be providing someone with a photograph of a special event that you undertook together. Placing the picture in a lovely frame is a nice touch.

What about food?

One of the ladies in our office loves baking and every year she makes a couple of homemade pies for her close friends. After the pies are baked, she freezes them and puts them in a nice gift box.

As difficult as it has been to purchase Christmas presents for my wife over the years, it has been that easy and quick to purchase a Christmas present for my mother-in-law.

The Petro Canada kiosk at the bottom of Orchard Heights and Yonge Street is open on Christmas day and usually has beef jerky on sale – two for a dollar.

Merry Christmas everyone!

Stephen can be contacted at stephengsomerville@yahoo.com

Motorists reminded of dangers of impaired, distracted driving as R.I.D.E. continues

By Brock Weir

Motorists coming through Aurora were reminded of the dangers of impaired driving last week as Ontario Transportation Minister Steven del Duca and York Regional Police Chief Eric Jolliffe took over a spot check on Wellington Street at Highway 404.

Getting some tips from the Minister and Chief, as well as an ice scraper to boot, it was a way to boost awareness as, according to Chief Jolliffe, some people just aren't getting the message.

He attributes the rise in charges to a number of factors, the first being the "community stepping up and helping us do our job" to keep the community safe, as well as strategic enforcement.

"The bigger message here is during this particular season, we want individuals to have fun, but please don't drink and drive," he said. "Take those other opportunities; have a friend give you a drive home, have a designated driver, stay overnight, but just make other arrangements."

While the number of impaired driving offenses is on the rise, conversely the number of fatal collisions for impaired driving is down. 15 per cent of fatal collisions have been alcohol related this year, he added.

The Minister's participation in the spot check not only allowed him to boost awareness of impaired driving, but also see the York Regional Police in action.

"Drinking and driving, unfortunately,

can happen at any time of day and folks here at the York Regional Police are doing an extraordinary job," said Mr. del Duca. "I am really thrilled to be out here this afternoon and have a chance to see them do their great work and have a chance to interact with some of the drivers to make sure they are getting the message.

Ahead to 2015, he added he was particularly eager to see Bill 31, which is currently working through the Ontario Legislature to bring new and distinct penalties for drug impaired driving and distracted driving, into reality.

"We have seen some studies come out



Minister of Transportation Steven del Duca and Police Chief Eric Jolliffe remind motorists of the R.I.D.E. program. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**

over the last year that suggest with our youngest drivers perhaps the distracted

driving piece, the texting and driving, is a concern."

Motion is one thing, but long term vision is another: Councillors

From page 1

not it plays a role here.

"This would be, in my mind, the first step going forward, putting in some valuable land right off Yonge Street in our core," said Councillor Abel. "You can wait for private developers to come and do it piecemeal, but if we grab parcels of land together, the opportunities are that much greater and will keep a lot more interest in development. We will also send a message that we are prepared to move forward with revitalization and it is a commitment.

"Purchasing land is not high risk, in my opinion. If there is a failure, we are

not committing any money to develop the land. We're only committing to purchase the land. The risk of failure to look at purchasing key properties in bulk, I think, is minimal compared to opportunities and potential that exist."

First to lend her support was Councillor Sandra Humfries, who said it was the "absolute right thing to do." Harkening back to comments made in the last term of Council towards the failed "Hillary-McIntyre Park" idea to acquire Horton Place and the two properties to its north, including Hillary House, for a "heritage park", she said while she liked that initial idea, this is a step forward.

While they ultimately voted in favour of the motion, the enthusiasm of some Councillors was more tempered. Councillor Harold Kim, for instance, said while it is one thing to move forward with evaluating the properties, the question of what Aurora would then do with them weighed on him.

"It would be nice if staff could also come back to us looking one step ahead [to see] how much it would cost to maintain the properties while we are debating on what we can do with the properties," said Councillor Kim. "I would hate for us to purchase the land and then have to spend tens of thousands maintaining the properties while debating for a year or two, or three, what is going to happen."

Councillor Jeff Thom, on the other hand, said a report would help in having all options on the table when making a final decision, but time could be of the essence.

"You don't choose what properties go up for sale and I think if Council wants to have a long-term vision for what the Downtown Core needs to be, then you need to look at acquiring the

properties."

From the perspective of Councillor Michael Thompson, moving forward with the concept of looking at new ways to revitalize Downtown Aurora is good, and the role of Council to examine all those opportunities, he didn't want to lose sight of other revitalization opportunities also on the table, such as the future of Library Square on Victoria Street at Church. An extra step was needed in the process, he noted, to address these concerns.

"I would like to see a step in between where there is that information piece... around that strategy [but] I don't want us to lose our focus with regards to Library Square," he said. "We have a number of different initiatives all costing dollars. I don't want this decision made in isolation of what we're doing overall. I think it is the right thing to explore and investigate, and have that conversation."

The dissenting voice to the plan came from Councillor Wendy Gaertner. While she does want to see revitalization of the Downtown Core, something she has spoken of for many years, she objected to Council's conversation taking place out in the open, calling the process "inappropriate."

"We had a very intensive closed session discussion on this property," said Councillor Gaertner of the two properties north of Irwin. "We had the advice of a consultant, we did a lot of work on this last term...but we decided as a Council for many reasons, in particular the condition of one of the buildings, the amount of money we would have to put in of the taxpayers' money. I think there were so many issues that made us decide this was not the appropriate way to go, and I am without words."

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Menorah lighting continues tradition as a “beacon of light and love”

By Brock Weir

The tradition of lighting the menorah might be an ancient Jewish tradition, but it is an ancient tradition that remains relevant and timely in today’s world.

That was the message brought to Aurora last week by Rabbi Mendel Caplan, a chaplain with the York Regional Police (YRP), as he led dignitaries, including Police Chief Eric Jolliffe and Councillor Wendy Gaertner, in the annual Menorah Lighting Ceremony, hosted by the YRP at their Don Hillock Drive headquarters.

“This is a festival that recalls a victory nearly 22 centuries ago,” said Rabbi Kaplan. “To be sure, the Jewish people living in the land of Israel 22 centuries ago were militarily weak, but they were spiritually strong. Their victory is not really about military prowess, it is about the spirit of force, a force of spirit that was captured in a snapshot when our ancestors came and lit a menorah.”

As the tradition goes, there was very little oil to keep the menorah lit for more than a day, but they lit the menorah with faith and it burned miraculously for eight days.

“It may be an ancient story, but this is an extremely relevant and timely message for us in our time,” he said. “Darkness isn’t chased away with sticks or brooms. Darkness dissipates and is expelled when we bring light into our lives and when we share that light with others. The message of Hanukkah is each and every one of us has to be prepared to serve as a beacon of light, serve as a lantern of love, and that that lantern of love and beacon of light doesn’t belong on your dining room table. It is not something that has to be focused and ruminated on in the privacy of the synagogue, but rather it is done at a public place at the window of our homes, in the doors, and at York Regional Police Headquarters.”

Hundreds filled the atrium at the YRP Headquarters to hear Rabbi Kaplan’s words, including children

from the Cheder Chabad Choir, led by Aurora’s Rabbi Yossi Hecht. Students from various nearby religious schools, individuals from local synagogues and representatives from other faith groups listened on.

It is this inclusivity Chief Jolliffe was keen to stress.

“It is just an honour for us to connect with the community as we firmly believe as a police service that to build trust and confidence in any community, you need to be a part of the community,” he said. “This is just one of those reasons why we are here to celebrate Hanukkah together.”

Rabbi Kaplan also paid tribute to this sentiment, noting the “leadership” police services are providing across the country. He was “amazed”, he said, to hear the Chief speak about using light to bring peace to neighbourhoods rather than force.

“What a Hanukkah idea,” he said. “What a menorah you and the deputies and the members of our Regional Police Force are.

“Throughout the world there were and will continue to be hundreds of events each day celebrating Hanukkah and internalizing the message that if we share the light we can make a difference. If we are not satisfied with our past accomplishments, and if 24 hours passes and we know we have to add another light, we shall prevail and light shall overcome. In the end, the forces of tyranny, persecution, of racism and wasted and wanton hatred shall be vanished and our earth will become a safer, more peaceful, and godly place in which to live.”



York Regional Police Chief Eric Jolliffe, Thornhill MPP Gila Martow, and Aurora Councillor Wendy Gaertner participate in the kindling ceremony at the YRP’s annual Menorah Lighting Ceremony.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

From The Gathering Place

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The Gathering Place of Aurora

210 Edward Street, Aurora

(Inside Gateway Lanes)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From page 4

are important for Aurora but we submit they have to be compatible.

In addition, the developer’s proposed plan directly contravenes Amendment 34 to the Town’s Official Plan whereby the Yonge Street South lands were designated as “low intensity and to be in the general range of 2 units per acre.”

Sections 3.2.4c and 3.6.2 of Amendment 34 also make interesting reading for all concerned and we hope our decision makers. Study them carefully before granting any exceptions.

Paula Fincham
Aurora

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Breakthrough Treatment Now Available in Richmond Hill

Imagine thirty to forty years ago if you were told that lasers would replace scalpels in surgery or that robotic instruments would build cars; you may not have believed it. By the same token, would you believe that chiropractic treatments could be performed using a special hand-held instrument developed by NASA scientists, all while you were sitting in an upright position without any turning or twisting movements?

Advances in computers and engineering technologies have been able to uniquely blend with chiropractic in order to both analyze and treat the human body in such a way that was never before realized.

According to Dr. Sean Eastman, “This new form of computerized treatment is so gentle and effective, that it amazes even the most skeptical patients. It’s called the ProAdjuster and is the latest, state-of-the-art technology in existence today, and the only one in the north Richmond Hill area.

The ProAdjuster can safely and gently analyze and treat the spine and other joints to remove the nerve impingement that is often the cause of pains in the lower back, neck, shoulder, and elsewhere in the body. It also works on a variety of muscular conditions to loosen tight muscles with ease and comfort. Many patients say that it’s like getting a mini-massage.

It can also help increase the amount of motion in almost any joint. Even patients with knee, hip, and foot problems such as plantar fasciitis are being helped. It is also covered by insurance companies since this is a chiropractic treatment and does not cost you anything additional.

Dr. Eastman says that “The secret to the Pro-Adjuster lies in its advanced piezoelectric sensor that is able to detect the slightest amount of restriction in a joint and then deliver an extremely precise adjustment.” He says that “Even though traditional forms of adjusting also work, people are drawn to this new technique because of how gentle it is and does not involve any twisting, especially



Dr. Eastman uses the Proadjuster to analyze a patient’s spine and pin-point areas of nerve impingement syndrome causing mal-function and pain.

in the neck. Many people love getting adjusted with traditional manual techniques, all of which are safe and effective. But there are a large number of people who never get to experience the amazing benefits of chiropractic because they are scared to have their spines adjusted in that way,” says Dr. Eastman. Now, there is no longer a reason to be leary. The ProAdjuster is perfect for anyone who has been thinking about going to a chiropractor, but hasn’t yet made that decision. Dr. Eastman wants everyone to be able to experience these same benefits and if you have any of the following conditions, the ProAdjuster may be the answer you’ve been looking for...

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Treatment with the ProAdjuster is consistent, measurable, and extremely gentle. There is no guesswork, and it’s safe for individuals of all ages. Call our office today and mention this article to receive a FREE ProAdjuster analysis to pin-point your problem areas and to see how the ProAdjuster can help. Call within the next 7 days and you will also receive a complimentary nerve stress scan and computerized muscle test/semg that can show the areas of your stress and how it’s affecting your body. Call 905-773-2225 today to reserve your free ProAdjuster Analysis Scan. (reg. \$90).

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Speed cushions could be coming to a neighbourhood near you

By Brock Weir

Speeding concerns brought forward by residents could result in an increase of speed cushions throughout Aurora in 2015.

Municipal staff are due to report back to Council in the weeks ahead on the viability of installing speed cushions in at least five locations around Aurora following a motion from Councillor John Abel.

In his motion, Councillor Abel said York Regional Police do not have "adequate resources" to patrol all local streets all the time and speed cushions are a practical solution. Particular areas that could be examined are Laurentide Avenue, Conover Avenue, Mavrinac Boulevard, and Kennedy Street West.

"I am not saying, 'Let's do this with the whole town', but I am just listing the areas [I heard while canvassing] that had a real problem there," said Councillor Abel. "[These streets] are heavily travelled and they present a danger to

our residents and their children. If they are not paying attention, they could become a statistic."

The motion was largely supported by Council, with members suggesting further areas where speed cushions could be used, including Stone Road by Councillor Wendy Gaertner, and Cranberry Lane and Timberline Trail by Councillor Paul Pirri.

"I want to make sure we are hitting all of those areas," said Councillor Sandra Humfries, adding she wanted to know of other areas that had specific concerns and what traffic management methods were already in place. "I want to understand how we are gauging the overall situation. Are we implementing the speed and traffic guidelines and doing things proactively, or do we wait for residents to complain?"

It is a little bit of both, according to Ilmar Simanovskis, Aurora's Director of Infrastructure. Aurora's recently completed Transportation Master Plan looked at opportunities for community

improvement, particularly on Yonge Street and other strategic areas.

"Typically, we also do traffic counts on a regular basis in conjunction with the Region to monitor key intersections to make sure the warrants are being met," said Mr. Simanovskis. "A good example there is the installation of lights planned for 2015 at Mary Street and Industrial Parkway South. When there is a complaint or a concern, we have a policy in place that is approved through Council, which provides for a process to validate any requests based on warrants, traffic counts, or whatever the criteria are to bring those recommendations forward to Council for direction as to whether or not they should proceed with traffic improvements."

Some of the streets proposed by Councillors this time around, he added, have come up as possible areas of concern in the past and, following the approval of the motion, reports will be coming forward.

Although Councillor Harold Kim said

he was "all for the motion", he wanted to ensure that all details would be tackled from a safety perspective, including talking to stakeholders like emergency responders because such traffic control measures could have an impact on response times.

Mayor Geoff Dawe noted that stakeholders are, of course, residents as well.

"Devins Drive School Council came here with concerns of speeding around their school and Councillor Abel and I went there [for] a couple of mornings and most of the stop sign running were parents dropping their kids off," said Mayor Dawe. "I think education is a component of what is needed here because, quite frankly, most of the speeders are the residents. I think we have to keep that in mind as well."



**SENIOR
SCAPE**

Charles Sequeira

Season's Greetings

On behalf of our Board of Directors and Committees at the Aurora Seniors' Centre, we take this opportunity to wish all our members and their families a very safe, happy, healthy holiday season and the very best in the New Year.

Thank you for all your support in our activities and events at the Centre.

We thank all our volunteers for their continued hard work, dedication and commitment. We also thank our Seniors' Centre staff: Karie, Andrew, Bill, John and the part time staff for their cooperation and support to our membership.

Friday Night Dances

In January, our popular dances will be on January 9 and January 23 from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. Line dance practice is from 7.30 - 8 p.m. Singles and non-members are always welcome. Cash Bar available.

Holiday Hours at our Seniors Centre
 December 24: 9 a.m. to 12 noon
 December 25 - 28: Closed
 December 29 - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with special activities planned
 December 30 - 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
 December 31 - 9 a.m. to 12 noon
 Normal activities resume January 2.

The CHATS "Walk for Wellness"

We at the Seniors Centre have been invited to participate in this program. Registration opens January 1, 2015. This year there is a registration fee of \$25 per participant which will cover the cost of a pedometer and a t-shirt each walker will receive. To register and for more details please visit their website at www.walkforwellness.ca. Who are you walking for? This year's walkers to identify a senior in their life who they are walking for.

For more information on the Aurora Seniors' Centre and all it has to offer, drop by 90 John West Way, visit the web site www.auroraseniors.ca, email auroraseniors@rogers.com or call 905-726-4767 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday.



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Community members look to stamp out drug problem in York Region

By Jake Courtepatte

The York Region community came together under one roof at the Ray Twinney Recreation Complex in Newmarket this month, and not to discuss matters of hockey.

About sixty concerned citizens showed up to begin the first stages of implementing a municipal drug strategy, the first of its kind in the Region.

Tim Greenwood, organizer of the movement, who works with the JVS Youth Reach program in York Region, put matters into perspective, comparing the community as a whole with an individual facing their own demons.

“Part of solving a problem is admitting that you have a problem,” said Greenwood. “That’s the point that York Region is at.”

With no current Municipal Drug Strategy (MDS) in place, the Region is looking elsewhere for groundwork they can build upon at a local level.

Susan Shepherd, part of the secretariat for the Toronto Drug Strategy, was at the Newmarket session to outline the basis of a successful campaign against drug abuse.

“We’re all members of the community,” she said. “We all have a role to play. None of you are starting from scratch on this...everyone has a foundation, and you built upon it by being here today.”

Four “pillars” constitute Toronto’s strategy; prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and enforcement.

Although the four pillars form the foundation of the problem-solving method, Greenwood stressed the importance of community involvement in getting the project off the ground.

“The four pillars are like a temple. But with any good temple, there needs to be a spirit, an energy.”

Shepherd echoed Greenwood’s thoughts.

“We have school boards, public

health, police services, etc., all dealing with the problem of drug abuse themselves. MDS’s bring together these people that would otherwise not collaborate together on an issue.”

And collaboration does not necessarily mean education. According to Shepherd, prevention goes well beyond simply the knowledge of the dangers of drug abuse.

Instead, what has been effective for the City of Toronto is the implementation of policies, mentoring programs, and harm reduction services such as needle programs.

In the local community, these structural changes must come from the top down.

“Political leadership is really critical in driving this work,” said Shepherd. “Because those are the folks that can be those champions. People listen to them, they can drive change.”

As a full-time employee of the City of Toronto, Shepherd explained the importance of an internal representative tasked solely with the implementation of the strategy.

“You really need a dedicated person where this is their job. You need someone that those in the community know to go to.”

While some might point out the difference in size and population between Toronto and York Region, the area is certainly not without its drug issues. In 2008, York Regional Police busted 64 grow-ups while laying 501 charges for drug manufacturing and trafficking.

But with a population slightly half of that of Toronto, the Region will have to implement its own methods and coping strategies moving forward – or at the very least, rework those of Toronto to represent a smaller, more local community.

“It must reflect a local context,” said Shepherd. “Every community’s different, with different dynamics.”

For more information, visit www.york.ca.

New committee will keep a sharp eye on Aurora’s budgeting, finances

By Brock Weir

More eyes could soon be keeping track of Aurora’s financial interests, following a decision by Council last week.

Councillors voted to restore Aurora’s Finance Advisory Committee, which is tasked with providing advice to Council on capital planning fiscal responsibilities, and providing an avenue for advance input on the annual budget process.

A Finance Advisory Committee is not a new idea. Aurora once had one, and attempts to revive it in the last term of Council were unsuccessful. Last week’s motion from Councillor Michael Thompson, however, did the trick. The next steps will be the development of terms of reference for the committee and recruitment of possible members.

“Advisory committees are set up to support the functions of the Town

and Staff, and this is certainly one that would provide a lot of benefit to us on Council, as well as to staff around the table,” said Councillor Thompson.

After talks with Town Staff, key areas on which Councillor Thompson said such a committee would have an immediate impact would be in continuing reviews of Aurora’s service levels and, if changes are proposed, whether they are on the right track.

“Certainly whenever we entered into the budget conversation we always [discuss if] we’re doing the right things and doing things right, and I think this advisory committee can support some of the initiatives we have with regards to the service level reviews [and other areas] of our capital budgeting forecasts.”

Councillors John Abel and Sandra Humfries also leant their voices in support of the restored committee.

Continued on page 14

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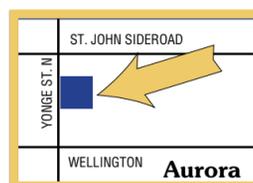
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FREE Week of December 25, 2014

Tigers head into Christmas break on a high note

By Jake Courtepatte

Aurora's Junior A Tigers survived the month of December with a 5-3-1 record, despite a large gap in the roster.

Four key players in Saskatchewan for the Junior A World Challenge meant a number of call-ups on the ice for the Tigers all month, resulting in four losses through five games heading into last week.

With a two-week break looming for the holidays, they hit the ice for back-to-back-to-back games over the weekend.

The Tigers hosted the Toronto Jr. Canadiens at the Aurora Community Centre Friday night, a team they had previously stomped 7 - 1 earlier in the season.

However, the Canadiens, winners of their last five, were a much more difficult matchup this time around.

Marcus Semiao, getting his tenth start in net, was beaten just over a minute in which put the home team down early 1 - 0.

Luckily, he got some help a few minutes later from Johnny Curran, who potted his team-leading twentieth goal of the year.

With defenceman Sam Quaranta off for cross-checking midway through the second, the Canadiens restored their lead heading into the final frame.

Eric Williams countered with a powerplay goal of his own, making it look like the game was heading to an overtime period.

But, Nicholas Erb robbed Toronto of a point in the standings with just ten seconds left in regulation, with a helper from Curran for his second point of the game.

They hit the road the next night to take on the Orangeville Flyers, a position they were comfortable with having only lost once in regulation on the road this season.

After building a sizable three-goal lead in the first period, Williams tallied another powerplay marker when he one-timed a Noah Delmas pass at the point, beating the Flyers goaltender blocker-side for a 4 - 0 lead.

With starting goaltender Andy Munroe back between the pipes the Tigers were able to shut down the Orangeville team offensively, with Munroe making a couple of key point-blank stops near the end of the second period.

He was finally beaten midway through the third, on a nice toe drag that went bar-down that he barely even saw.

Erb and Curran each added another, giving the Tigers a 6 - 1 victory.

They finished the week with a divisional matchup against the Pickering Panthers, in what turned out to be their toughest outing.

Munroe was given the night off again, as Semiao took to the ice for his second



Daniel Mantenuto celebrates Saturday's 6 - 1 win over the Orangeville Flyers with goaltender Andy Munroe.

Auroran photo by Jake Courtepatte

start in three nights.

He showed fatigue early, giving up two goals in the first period on just eight Panther shots.

However he came out for the second determined, stopping the next 25 of 26 shots en route to a 4 - 3 Tigers win.

Goals were scored by Mack Lemmon, Keaton Ratcliffe, and two for Williams.

Curran also had two helpers on the night.

Semiao remains unbeaten in regulation this season, posting a 9-0-1 record with an incredible 1.89 goals against average.

"He's the future of our goaltending," said head coach James Richmond. "He's got a bright future."

The Tigers are not back in action until Jan. 3 against the Toronto Patriots, and return home on Jan. 9 against the Stouffville Spirit at the A.C.C.

Yoga for Over Forty in Aurora in 2015!

As we age and our lives get taken up with so many other things, our bodies often fall to the bottom of our priorities list - and they end up getting neglected. We start felling aches and pains where we never felt them before. Our joints stop doing things they used to do easily and we put on extra weight. With our bodies not functioning the way they used to we generally start feeling old.

A lot of us take better care of our cars than our bodies. Why not take care of yourself like you do your car? Yoga is like a regular oil change for the joints, ligaments and muscles. It helps us distance our thoughts from self-centered busy ramblings, while gently opening up the heart



Yoga helps us distance our thoughts from self-centered busy ramblings, while gently opening up the heart and mind to experience the world from a fresh perspective.

and mind to experience the world from a fresh perspective.

The body is miraculous and with regular yoga, it can get back to working like it did when you were younger. Andrea Roth has been a yoga teacher since 1979 and has been teaching yoga in Aurora for over 20 years. The winter session for 2015 starts Wednesday January 19th. If it's time to put your body back on your priority list, the Wednesday night classes could be just the thing to get you started. Experience the joy, relaxation and recharging effects of yoga.

More info at <http://www.yogaforlife.ca>, info@yogaforlife.ca or call Andrea 905-505-1324

Aurora Tigers Atom AE team wins Silver Stick Regional Championship



Submitted by Chris MacEachern

The Aurora Tigers Atom AE team entered the Silver Stick Regional Tournament this month with the goal of earning a spot in their fourth consecutive tournament championship game.

The team, winners of the Orangeville Early Bird Tournament, had also delivered successive second place finishes in both the Motown Cup and the Bradford Blue & Gold Classic, respectively.

The Tigers opened the Silver Stick Regional Tournament with a close win over the Richmond Hill Stars followed by hard-fought victories over

the Innisfil Winterhawks and the Georgina Blaze.

In the semi-final game, the team emerged victorious over a skilled Markham Waxers squad, setting up a championship game between the #1 seed, Aurora Tigers, and the #2 seed, Newmarket Redmen.

In a highly competitive final, the Tigers and Redmen battled from whistle to whistle, back and forth. Spurred on by vocal fans and an unwavering focus on teamwork, the Tigers won a tight championship game, 2-1. With the victory, the team was accepted into the International Silver Stick Finals in Pelham, scheduled for January 8 - 11.

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Hockey fan brings artistic flair to the Tiger's den

By Jake Courtepatte

If you have attended a Junior A Aurora Tigers home game this season, you probably would have noticed a bright, intricate quilt hanging from the wall of ACC1.

This was the work of Joan Levert, a Tigers superfan whose hard work benefitted the Aurora Seniors' Centre, after the quilt was raffled off this month.

Moving from Toronto to Aurora in 2003 with her husband, Levert looked to get involved within the hockey community after having past experience coaching girls' hockey.

In addition, in typical Canadian family fashion, all three of the Levert's children grew up playing hockey.

"The background was there," said Levert.

They immediately became interested in the local junior action and, in Levert's own words, have been "hooked ever since."

As an instructor of the Sewing Club at the Aurora Seniors' Centre, Levert was considered by Tigers' volunteers to be the perfect candidate to create a lasting piece of hockey memorabilia.

To Levert, taking on the challenge was not simply one of needling together a quilt, but also designing it to be unique to the Aurora Tigers.

After doing some research, she chose different patterns for the "blocks" of the quilt, patterns that reflected the spirit of hockey.

"I thought, okay, how can I design it to really have meaning for the junior hockey players?"

The eight unique blocks on the quilt



Tigers fans Joan Levert poses with the quilt she created for the Aurora Tigers, and the winner of the raffle, Brian Walter. Submitted photo

represent friendship, speed, opposition, passing, back-checking, a "T" for Tigers and two blocks representing the stardom that players desire.

In the centre lies a Tigers crest to bring the elements together.

"I really enjoyed making it, because it was the first thing that I had ever designed myself," said Levert. "I had to mathematically work it out myself, it was quite a process."

The labour of love took Levert two and a half months to complete, before taking its place on the walls of the Aurora Community Centre at every Tigers home game.

It remained there until early December, when it was won by Tigers fan Brian Walter. Levert was happy to see the quilt go to a good home.

"He's a longtime fan as well," Levert said, "and he has a son who really loved the quilt. So I knew it would be greatly appreciated."

All of the proceeds of the raffling of the quilt went to the maintenance of the Seniors' Centre building.

For my final column of the year, I will touch on two pieces of legislation that - if enacted - will have both impacts on, and significance for, Aurorans.



POLITICS AS USUAL

Alison Collins-Mrakas

Strategic Lawsuit against Public Participation. These types of lawsuits are launched for no other reason than to shut people up through fear - fear of financial ruin.

A reality with which three Aurora families are all too familiar.

This new Act seeks to prevent those in power and/or those with money from abusing their office or their financial status. It will prevent those who hold elected or corporate office from waging legal war on those who dare to question decisions made by speaking their charter-guaranteed right to an opinion.

This legislation has also passed second reading.

Once enacted, Aurorans will never again be faced with a situation as we did in 2010 of unwillingly funding a legal war against private citizens. Our MPP Ballard spoke and voted in favour of this legislation while in the House. Odd. He did exactly the opposite while at the Council table.

No matter. Better late than never to see the truth and come to the right decision.

If nothing else, with the enactment of the aforementioned legislation, the New Year will see the promise realized of greater access to democratic office and greater protection for those commenting on it. And that's great for all of us.

And on that note, to all our readers, may you have a truly joyous holiday - Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! See you all again in 2015.

Until then, stay informed, stay involved because this is - after all - Our Town.

First, the Regional Chair position may finally be a one by, of and for the people of York Region.

The recycled motion put forward by MPP Ballard has already passed second reading and it is looking good to be enacted at some point in the New Year.

This motion - to make the Regional Chair an elected position - has been tried by multiple politicians multiple times. Let's hope fourth time is a charm?

The foes of the process are commenting on the fact that running an election Region-wide will be difficult, costly and thus limiting. "Limiting" is an interesting choice of words. Right now the "candidates" are limited to basically one, or maybe two people that a very select group of people deem worthy.

The voting public has no say in who can run, who can be nominated or even who can be "elected".

So, the argument that making the position subject to general election somehow "limits" who can run is, well, specious at best.

The potential candidate list is already extremely limited. How much more limited could it get?

It is true though that a Region-wide election could result in the reality that perhaps only candidates with money - and a lot of it - will be able to run for the office. Maybe so, but at least we, the voters, will know who they are and what they stand for.

Right now we have no idea who the candidates are until the night of the vote! Candidates for Regional Chair in 2018 will be forced to put out a platform, speak at debates, make themselves known publicly - in short, provide us with at least some knowledge of why they should sit in that chair, and why we should let them.

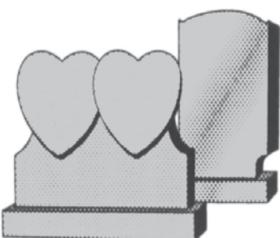
And that's a good thing.

The second motion making its way through the legislature is the SLAPP legislation. SLAPP stands for

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So if you find yourself down at the Aurora Community Centre for a home game, look out for Joan Evert...Tigers superfan.

"Come August, I can't wait for Junior A hockey to start...they are the best winter entertainment in Town, as during the game, the boys give their all and then some!"

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FEATURE RECIPE

New Years Soiree

New Year's celebrations wouldn't be the same without food and, of course, drinks. But while you may already have the champagne on ice for when the clock strikes 12, you may not already have plans in place with regard to feeding your guests as you ring in a new year.

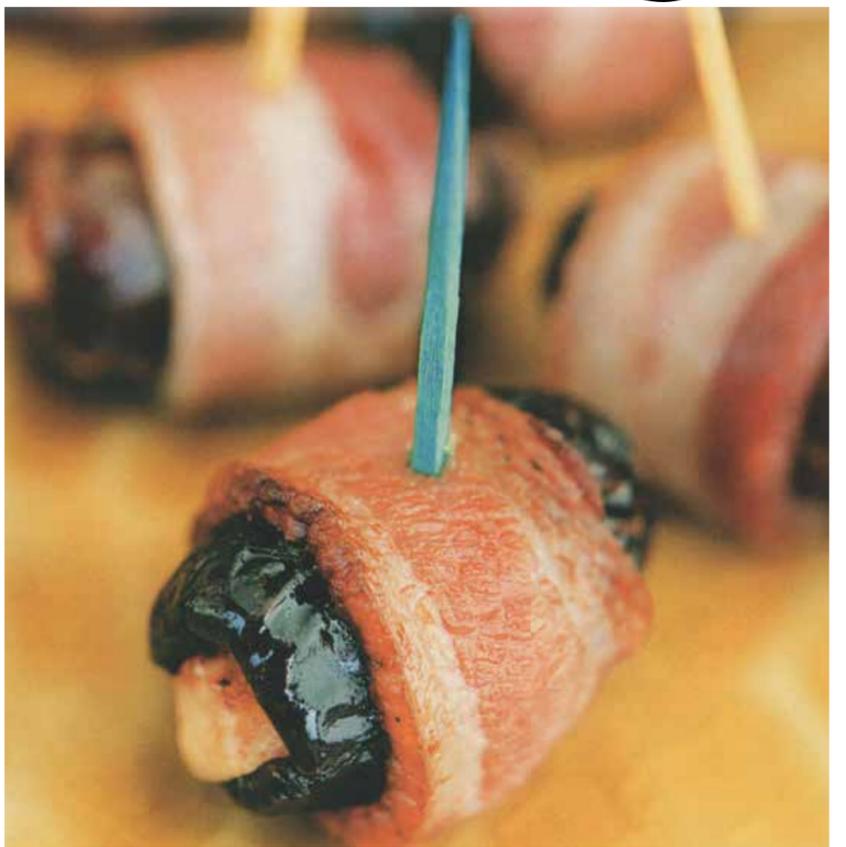
If you really want to send the year out in flavorful style, consider the following recipe for "Cocktail Dates" from Bob Blumer's "Surreal Gourmet Bites: Showstoppers and Conversation Starters" (Chronicle Books).

Cocktail Dates

Yields 12 bites
12 large dried Medjool dates
1 4-ounce chunk Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
6 slices bacon, cut in half widthwise
Preheat oven to 350 F.

Insert a bamboo skewer or a similar facsimile in the bottom of the date until the pointy tip rests on the bottom of the pit. Push the pit out of the stem side. Reserve dates.

Using your sharpest knife, cut Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese into 1/4-inch slices. Cut those slices



into 1/4-x-1-inch pieces (the resulting 1-inch pieces should be approximately the same diameter as a pencil). Cut the tip of each piece at a 45-degree angle.

Leading with the pointy end, stuff a stick of Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese into the pit hole of each date.

Wrap each date with a slice of bacon. Set dates on a baking sheet, seam-sides down, and skewer each with a toothpick to hold bacon

in place.

Bake for approximately 20 minutes, or until bacon is crispy. Caution: These cocktail dates are like molten lava when they come out of the oven. Let cool for a few minutes before serving.

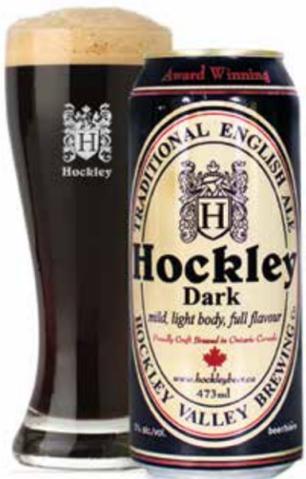
Note: Medjool dates or any other dried date can usually be found in Mediterranean stores or specialty food stores.

Note: Dates can be stuffed and wrapped up to 24 hours in advance.

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—THE AURORAN— Arts & Culture



Homes across Aurora have put their best foot forward this holiday season, including those participating in Pickering College's Holiday Home Tour. (L) This home on Blue Grass was decorated from top to bottom with designer duds assisted by Sam, Gabe and Nicole. (R) This Kennedy Street home was showroom ready with Mandy, Lori, Pam, Sandra, Sonny and Simon on hand to guide visitors. (Inset) Alex Buykowi and teacher David Howard were among the musicians providing entertainment at each home.

Auroran photos by Brock Weir

Hack is "bigger historical moment in cinema than people realise"

From page 1

that makes some sort of political statement, but this has already made me rethink that a bit," says Mr. Pelletier. "I think that is going to be the case for a lot of people and I think it is the wrong way to approach things because, again, any sort of reservation when it comes to new work, any reservation stemming from this whole event, is just playing into their hands and letting them win. It has had a huge effect."

Mr. Pelletier has been following the cyber-attack on Sony Pictures Studios and has watched in dismay as it grew from leaked emails that were little more than tittle-tattle amongst executives on some of the film industry's top stars, to the "9-11-style" threats against any theatres screening "The Interview", which is a spoof about two unlikely recruits being sent into North Korea to assassinate leader Kim Jong Un.

"I guess you have to take it with a grain of salt," said Mr. Pelletier, questioning the extent of the threat the public may not be aware of. "It feels like they are letting them win, which they are. Maybe it is for good reason, maybe there are threats, but it feels like a really strange political moment. Everyone I know in the industry who I have discussed it with have responded in the same way. I don't think anybody

expected it to come to this point."

The decision, he said, can have "huge implications" on censorship and could result in a "slippery slope" against other forms of satire.

"I think this is a bigger historical moment in cinema than maybe some people are realising right now in terms of how it affects what gets made down the road and ultimately how studios are going to treat this sort of material."

More guarded in his assessment is filmmaker Alex Broughton, whose films often come with a social statement. There are things we know and more things to learn, he says, but one thing is clear – and that is the landscape has changed.

"Sony hacking opens our eyes to a new digital system that has taken priority and those learning to master it are subsuming that power," said Mr. Broughton. "I think the real story is how shocked we are to know we are affected, we don't live in an innocent bubble and situations exist outside our Canadian media that we should be aware of."

"We are moving into a new age, we are completely connected by the internet and we need to see past the powerful veil that limits our horizons. As an artist, I have a hard time supporting censorship, however there is either a

serious threat or a great publicity stunt going on here. I am a fan of Seth Rogen and his work, and I would rather be called a fool than to put people's lives at risk and I feel we shouldn't be so quick to judge, despite the fact it seems Sony is giving into demands."

On the bright side, he says he is heartened to see a discussion of the larger issues and what could turn out to be a catalyst in moving towards "more common viewing hubs" like YouTube and Netflix.

"That said, I am only a starving artist, so if the North Korean government reads this, they can hack \$100,000 (or more) into my bank account for my next project, and/or my silence on the subject," he concludes.

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Members of the York Regional Police, and members of the public, joined Dr. Dave Williams, President and CEO of Southlake Regional Health Centre, fifth left, to help pack up and distribute toys collected for this year's Holiday Heroes campaign. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**

Holiday Heroes continue putting smiles on the faces of York Region kids

By Brock Weir

This week, kids around the world will be jumping out of their beds after a sleepless night, to tear open the tempting packages that have been tantalizing them in the days leading up for Christmas.

While the presents Santa Claus brought overnight have their own magic, the presents left under the tree earlier by parents, grandparents, and siblings can be equally tantalizing – and equally satisfying to open.

As broad as the smiles will be on the kids' faces as they open up these early arrivals, it will be a toss-up to see if they will be broader than the ones of the Holiday Heroes in our community who helped make some of these early bird gifts a reality.

Once again, York Regional Police have teamed up with the Children's Aid Society of York Region and the Salvation Army, to host the Holiday Heroes Campaign, which collects toys, clothing and other gifts for families in need during the holiday season. In an initiative which is fast becoming a holiday tradition, York Regional Police were on hand last week to pick up a bumper crop of donations courtesy of the staff at Southlake Regional Health Centre.

"This campaign gets bigger and bigger every year and it is a great opportunity to bring people together from everywhere in our community to showcase the hard work that they put forth for the sake of our children," said Superintendent Carolyn Bishop. "As our population grows, so do the needs of our community and we are pleased to support such a great cause and we are honoured to do it along with such great partners."

Year over year, the York Regional Police are impressed with the new and innovative ideas people come up with to raise more money and collect more gifts for the kids, she said. While the money and gifts continue to roll in this year, last year's campaign collected more than \$175,000 in donations for children across the region – and Bishop says she is confident 2014's numbers will be topped once all the numbers are crunched.

"With that being said, it is not about

the amount we can donate," she said. "This is about making sure we can focus on every child getting a gift and enjoying the holiday season. I am proud to say that the donations raised in York Region stay in York Region."

For Dr. Dave Williams, President and CEO of Southlake Regional Health Centre, the Holiday Heroes campaign is all about community. While the holiday season can mean different things to different people, it is fundamentally about celebrating with friends and loved ones, and celebrating the importance of the community.

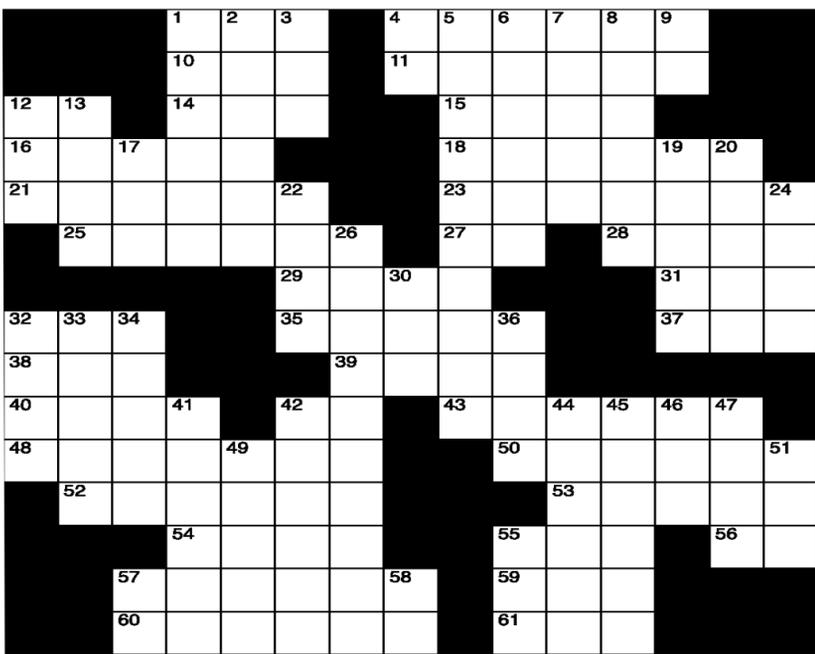
"There is no better way to celebrate the importance of our community than to be able to reach out and be able to help those in need, particularly during the holiday season," said Dr. Williams. "We recognize there is a wide variation of resources we all have and the ability to provide for those we care for the most is what is so unique about this event."

"We are very fortunate to have a really remarkable community. In the hospital, we benefit from the support of the community as a hospital. This is our chance to give back to the community. You think about the smiles that are going to be on the faces of kids when they get these presents and that's what makes it really worthwhile. It is truly about family and community, and sharing with each other during this time."

While the partners have been impressed with the money and donations received thus far, they are finding once again there is a trend that is creating a bit of a gap. As colourful toys were loaded into the truck outside of Southlake, Superintendent Bishop noted that one particular area that is often forgotten are kids who are a little bit older, between the ages of 12 and 14, who might be more difficult to buy for, but are no less needy. Clothing is always welcome, as are electronics, gift cards, and movie passes.

"[The most rewarding aspect of this] is seeing the boundless depths that our folks can really dig down and find charity in their heart," said Bishop. "It really is there, don't give up hope. I know people read bad news stories all the time, but there is a lot of good out there and a lot of good in people."

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Humbug
- 4. Meaningless talk
- 10. Conceit
- 11. Not studied
- 12. Megabyte
- 14. When born (abbr.)
- 15. Placed on a golf ball stand
- 16. Melekeok is the capital
- 18. Mischievous
- 21. Mason's mortars
- 23. Spain's former monetary unit
- 25. Small fries
- 27. Article
- 28. Capital of Yemen
- 29. Type of Theater companies
- 31. Plastic, paper or shopping
- 32. Electronic countermeasures
- 35. Language along the lower Yenisei River
- 37. Institute legal proceedings against
- 38. Beam
- 39. Old World buffalo
- 40. Latch onto
- 42. Physical therapy
- 43. Conditions of balance
- 48. Half pro
- 50. Resounded
- 52. Sales event
- 53. Separates seating areas
- 54. N.M. Pueblo people
- 55. Bridge building degree
- 56. Fullback
- 57. Peyote
- 59. Afflict
- 60. Rests on one's knees
- 61. Having negative qualities

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Besmear
- 2. Genus dasyprocta
- 3. A male ferret
- 4. Unit of volume (abbr.)
- 5. Italian hors d'oeuvres
- 6. N.W. German city & port
- 7. Signal sounds
- 8. Adult females
- 9. -, denotes past
- 12. Gas usage measurement
- 13. Fishhook point
- 17. Mauna __, Hawaiian volcano
- 19. In a way, thrusts
- 20. Grimm brothers birthplace
- 22. Withered; dry
- 24. Genus salvia
- 26. About senator
- 30. Livestock enclosure
- 32. Work units
- 33. Hebrew name meaning dog
- 34. A tumor composed of muscle tissue
- 36. Satisfy to excess
- 41. Third mast
- 42. A horse's strut
- 44. Tree producing gum (Arabic)
- 45. Armour carried on the arm
- 46. Winged goddess of the dawn
- 47. Ego
- 49. Hesitancy
- 51. Young woman of society
- 55. Founder of Babism
- 57. Mark (abbr.)
- 58. Jeans maker's initials

In Good Company

From page 5

The weather was on everyone's mind this month, as we grappled with the first major snowfall of the young winter season. Snow removal crews across Greater Toronto struggled to quickly clear roads and sidewalks during the protracted snowfall, and I wish to thank residents for their patience as our winter maintenance crews worked to keep our roads and sidewalks clear.

Residents can stay apprised of snow removal efforts with the new Where's My Snow Plow? app on the Town website. It provides real-time information on the location of our plows and displays which roads have been plowed. For details, please visit the Town's Winter Maintenance page, which will be on the www.aurora.ca homepage until spring.

Residents are reminded that primary or high-volume traffic roads are salted and sanded first after snow or freezing rain, followed by secondary or lower-volume roads.

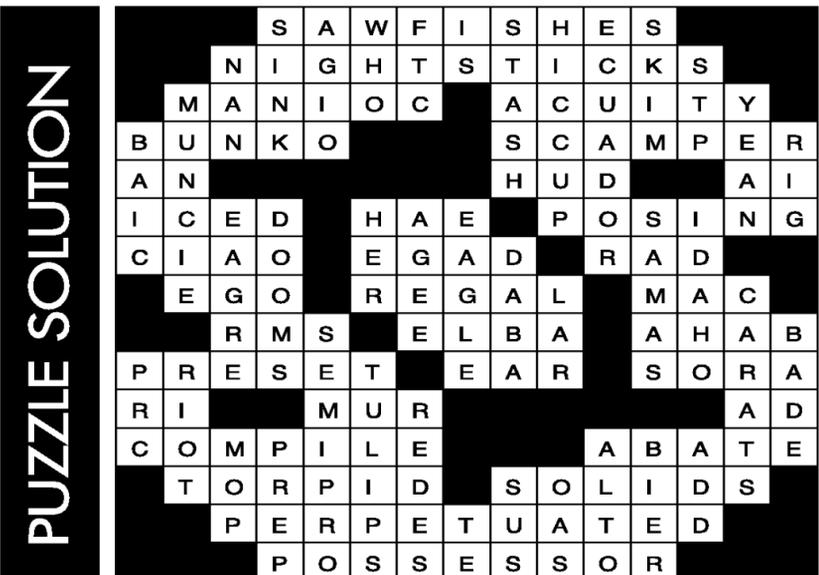
Snow removal takes place after 8 centimetres of snow has fallen on primary and secondary roads. Road

crews aim to have all roads cleared within 16 to 24 hours after snowfall has stopped and sidewalks within 24 hours. However, clearing may take longer if snowfall persists. Arterial roads, such as Yonge Street and Wellington Street are maintained by York Region.

I have received many calls and emails concerning the closure of the Highland Gate Golf Club, which occurred on November 10. While many have speculated on the fate of the property, there has been no change to the property's status since my last column on November 20. I remain committed to updating residents when any new information is available. The Town has a Highland Gate information page on the www.aurora.ca homepage.

Before signing off, I invite everyone to attend our Family First Night on December 31. Please note that the celebration will take place at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, as the Aurora Family Leisure Complex construction wraps-up. This is a great family event and a fun way to usher-in the New Year.

Last Week's Puzzle Solution



Committee would lead to more engagement: Councillor

From page 9

"I am really excited about moving this forward," said Councillor Humfries. "It is going to provide us with the interim reports that we need approaching budget [and] we're going to be a lot more informed and aware as things change. I think there will be less surprises and more familiarity, and it also allows us to be much more engaged in the process throughout the year, rather than at one big time, which is coming up for all of us."

The idea to re-establish the committee was carried over from the previous week's General Committee meeting, where Councillor Thompson told Council he was considering bringing this forward via a notice of

motion. There, it had the support of Councillor Paul Pirri as well, although he had some concerns.

"If memory serves, the first terms of reference that was brought forward made sense to a great deal of people around the table," said Councillor Pirri. "Where the conversation broke down was around membership. Some people believed we [Councillors] need to all be around the table, but a committee works best and most efficiently when there are only a few members."

"I personally would feel very comfortable just having those [original] terms of reference come back to us so as to set up one as a Council and we look at it as a Council. Personally, that makes sense to me."

COMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24

Aurora United Church will host two Christmas Eve services for their parishioners today at Aurora High School. The first service, the Family Service, will get underway at 5 p.m. in the school's auditorium followed at 8 p.m. by the traditional Candlelight Communion Service.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27

The Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion will host a Progressive Euchre tournament today beginning at 1 p.m. \$5 entry per person, includes cash prizes and fun games. Come on out for a great day of cards! The Royal Canadian Legion is located at 105 Industrial Parkway North.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 2015 HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The Aurora Legion hosts the 2015 President's Levee today at 11 a.m. Meet, greet and enjoy the great comradeship! Lunch is served at 1 p.m. Tickets are \$7 per person and everyone is welcome. The Royal Canadian Legion is located at 105 Industrial Parkway North.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4

Newmarket's Christ the King Graceland Independent Anglican Church of Canada will mark Elvis Presley's 80th birthday in a special service today beginning at 10.30 a.m. at the Newmarket Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion (707 Srigley Street). The service will also mark the 12th anniversary of the Elvis-oriented church.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7

The Aurora Public Library presents Money Talk\$: Your Personal Investment Plan - The Status of our Investment Plan at 7 p.m. in the Magna Room. Money Talk\$ is a free monthly discussion and education group to share unbiased experience and knowledge in economics and financial planning. The presentation will be followed by a group discussion. Money Talk\$ takes a macroeconomic view of market risks and market opportunities, oriented towards

those interested in learning about self-directed investing. Meetings take place the first Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. To pre-register, contact the Library's Adult Information Desk at 905-727-9494 x275.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14

The PROBUS Club of Aurora will host its monthly meeting today at the Royal Canadian Legion (105 Industrial Parkway North) from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. The guest speaker this month is a travel agent from Marlin Travel. For more information, call program chair Cliff White at 905-841-2421. New members are welcome. For more about membership, contact Gary Gilbert at 905-895-2849 or join at the meeting.

A new support group for moms in York Region launches today at 9.15 a.m. at 6 Hawking Court, Newmarket. Offered by Michaela McDonnell, Transformational Success Coach and mother of three, she is well aware of the pressures faced by new mothers. Having suffered emotionally with depression and physically with illness when her children were small, she feels excited at the prospect of opening this service to other moms looking for friendship, support and reliable techniques to enhance their experience of motherhood. The group will learn how to release stress and anxiety using state-of-the-art coaching techniques while learning how to use quick and easy visualizations, breathing techniques and meditations to create a better environment for mom and baby. For more information, call 289-231-4353.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24

The White Heather Pipes and Drums presents their annual Robbie Burns Dinner tonight with cocktails beginning at 5 p.m. and dinner served at 6 p.m. Enjoy an evening of bagpipes, Scottish music and dancing. Enjoy haggis, roast beef, tatties and neeps, and Yorkshire pudding. Silent auction. Performance by the White Heather Pipes and Drums. Live music by Aurora's own classic rock band Dalayne Drive. Tickets are

\$40 per person and on sale now from the Royal Canadian Legion (105 Industrial Parkway North) or from any band members. For more information, email tomkatbrowne@yahoo.ca.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27

The Canadian Federation of University Women Aurora/Newmarket meets at the Royal Canadian Legion (105 Industrial Parkway North) at 7.15 p.m. Senior team member Gary Ryan will speak about innovation and expansion and other highlights at Southlake Regional Health Centre. All are welcome. For more information, call Judy Craig at 905-895-8713 or visit www.cfuwauroranewmarket.com.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

The Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir will play Trinity Anglican Church tonight in a concert

benefiting Welcome Table. The concert gets underway at 7.30 p.m. For more information, visit www.welshchoir.ca.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24

The Canadian Federation of University Women Aurora/Newmarket meets at the Royal Canadian Legion (105 Industrial Parkway North) at 7.15 p.m. Dr. Hans Martin, atmospheric physicist and local beekeeper will speak about bees, climate and the environment. Honey for sale! All are welcome. For more information, call Judy Craig at 905-895-8713 or visitwwwcfuauroranewmarket.com.

To submit your event send details in 100 words or less to letters@auroran.com with the subject line "Coming Events".

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View From Queen's Park

From page 5

significant portion of today's workers are not able to save enough to live comfortably in retirement. We listened, and we acted.

Before rising, our government put forward the first piece of legislation required to make the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP) a reality, beginning in 2017. The reward for a lifetime of hard work should not be a retirement defined by financial insecurity.

There is no question that 2014 was a building year: building on your

strengths, building opportunity and security, building roads and transit, and retirement security. Six months into Premier Wynne's majority mandate, the work we are doing together to build Ontario up is just getting started. I look forward to continuing to serve this riding.

Our community office is located in Suite 203, 238 Wellington Street East, Aurora. We can be reached by calling 905-750-0019 or via email at cballard.mpp.ca@liberal.ola.org. Web: chrisballard.onmpp.ca.

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