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THE AURORAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 15 No. 26 905-727-3300 theauroran.com FREE Week of April 23, 2015 CMCA AUDITED

CONCERNED NEIGHBOURS – Chris McGowan was just one of nearly 40 residents surrounding the former Highland Gate Golf Club who came to the microphone to sound off against the planned redevelopment of the site as hundreds of their fellow residents looked on. Developers held their first public forum on their plans at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School on Wednesday night. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**

Tempers flare over Highland Gate redevelopment

By Brock Weir

Whether it is a "travesty" or an "inevitability", the proposed redevelopment of Highland Gate Golf Course raised more than eyebrows last week as hundreds of angry residents filled Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School.

Tempers flared as neighbours lined up to sound off against the proposed plan to transform the former golf course into a new residential development of nearly 150 homes, plus a large park area and trail extensions, demanding Council "kill" the project while it is still in its early stages.

If the plan becomes a reality, these homes will be built throughout the golf course area, which is largely lined with homes, resulting in existing homes facing streets and further units in their back yards.

"Once that space is gone, it's gone," said one man, a resident of the Highland Gate condominium, speaking against the inflow of traffic into the neighbourhood, and a plan to build a 10-storey condo unit near Yonge Street.

"What we're really trying to do is hold onto something that is important to us and our families, and that is space to walk, to ride our bikes, to walk our dogs. It is important to us we hold onto [this quality of life]. It is a Town we love and we want to stay in, and we don't want to see it become big buildings and lots of congestion."

Noting concerns of the surrounding neighbourhood were Cheryl Shindruk, Executive Vice President of Land Development for Geranium Corporation, a company which has

Continued on page 18

Aurora student crowned world champ debater

By Brock Weir

Some might think it takes guts for a country to send female diplomats to countries that have poor records when it comes to women's rights, even if it is just to make a point.

Olivia Railton is not one of those people and it was up to this Grade 10 Aurora student to convince the world, taking the stage in the grand finals of the World Debating Championship in Hong Kong.

The only Grade 10 student to crack the grand finals in a sea of

Continued on page 7

Councillors frustrated with "push back" over budget cuts

By Brock Weir

If Council isn't given adequate information to make an "informed decision" when it comes to reducing Aurora's proposed 3.95 per cent tax increase this year, they might just have to go it alone.

That was the opinion expressed by several Councillors last week as they sought ways to further reduce the forecasted tax increase by reducing a $196,000 budget for training and development of municipal employees.

Last Tuesday's discussions around this component of the budget was not Council's first kick at the can but, for many, it was one too many. Talks centred on a motion brought forward by Councillor Tom Mrakas demanding specifics on how this money is spent and what impact a budget cut would have on the organization.

This information was requested last month and, in his opinion, the response from staff was lacking – a view shared by others.

"At one point, we asked the CAO for a list of potential budget reductions to consider bringing it down and at no time was a reduction in the training and development budget considered at that time," said Councillor Michael Thompson. "Throughout this discussion, we, as a Council, have moved forward certain motions to see a reduction and there has been push-

Continued on page 6

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COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Tuesday, April 28	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council
Tuesday, April 28	7 p.m.	Leksand Room	Finance Committee
Tuesday, May 5	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	General Committee*
Wednesday, May 6	7 p.m.	Leksand Room	Accessibility Advisory Committee
Monday, May 11	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council (rescheduled from May 12)
Tuesday, May 12	9:30 a.m.	Newmarket	Joint Council Committee
Thursday, May 14	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Committee of Adjustment
Thursday, May 14	7 p.m.	Leksand Room	Economic Development Advisory Committee
Tuesday, May 19	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	General Committee*
Wednesday, May 20	7 p.m.	Aurora Public Library	Aurora Public Library Board
Thursday, May 21	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Public Planning*
Tuesday, May 26	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council

Council 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**

YEAR OF SPORT 2015 TOWN OF AURORA

The Town of Aurora proclaimed 2015 as the Year of Sport in Aurora. Stay tuned for a number of upcoming sporting events from various sports organizations in Aurora to celebrate the importance of healthy sport and activities in our community.

For more information, please visit www.aurora.ca

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Dinner and a Movie

Into The Woods (Rated PG)

Where: Aurora Family Leisure Complex
The Loft
When: **Saturday, April 25**
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Ages: 11 to 14 year-olds
Price: Entry is $3 per person and pizza will be served.

For more information, please call 905-727-3123 ext. 3121.

Seeking Present and Former Pan Am or Para-Pan Athletes

The Pan American Games are the world's third largest international multi-sport games. The Town of Aurora is proud to be the Community Celebration site as the Pan Am Torch Relay comes through Aurora on **Thursday, June 25**.

Following the Pan Am celebration, different festivities will take place in Lambert Willson Park. We will feature the grand opening of the Aurora Sports Heritage exhibit. The exhibit will highlight the sports featured in the Pan Am Games.

In addition to historical photos and artifacts from the Town's collection, the exhibition will showcase the 2015 Aurora Sports Hall of Fame inductees and past and present achievements of residents who competed, or are competing, in the Games.

The Town of Aurora would like to identify and invite Pan Am and Para Pan Am athletes, coaches and officials who represented any country and have resided in or are currently a resident of Aurora, to participate in the exhibition, which will run from **June 25 to mid-September**.

Please submit your interest to participate by **Friday, May 1** to Marianna Saavedra at 905-727-3123 ext. 4753.

Information about the Water Meter Replacement Program

Residents living north of Orchard Heights Boulevard, south of St. John's Sideroad between Bathurst Street and Yonge Street are advised that The Town of Aurora will continue our multi-year water meter replacement program in your area.

This program will be carried out by WAMCO on behalf of the Town. You will be receiving notification from WAMCO in regards to scheduling your water meter replacement.

There is no charge to the homeowner. For all inquiries, please contact the Town of Aurora at 905-727-1375.

Register now for Town of Aurora Summer Camps!

Register now for one of our many fun and exciting Summer Camp options. Whether you are interested in sports, art or science, we offer something for a variety of ages.

For more information, please see the *2015 Spring and Summer Program Guide* on our website at www.aurora.ca or pick-up a copy at one of our facilities today!

Join "Team Aurora" for the Run or Walk for Southlake Regional Health Centre

Aurora Town Council invites all residents to sign-up and join "Team Aurora" for the Annual Run or Walk for Southlake Regional Health Centre on **Sunday, April 26** at 7:30 a.m.

Interested in learning more or want to participate?
Visit www.runforsouthlake.ca

Help support your local hospital and make it a wonderful run or walk. Bring your family, friends, children and dogs – everyone is welcome!

Free admission to Club Aurora on Friday, April 24

Be our guest! Try Club Aurora for free on **Friday, April 24** from 5:45 a.m. to 10 p.m. Please visit and experience this fabulous fitness centre!

Aurora Seniors' Centre Spring Sale on Saturday, April 25

Don't miss the Aurora Seniors' Centre Spring Sale on **Saturday, April 25** from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The centre is located at 90 John West Way. Come out and see what the sale has to offer. There will be a giant white elephant sale, book sale, barbecue and more!

Pine Tree Potters' Spring Pottery Sale

Visit the Pine Tree Potters' spring pottery sale from **Thursday, April 30** to **Sunday, May 3** at the Aurora Cultural Centre, located at 22 Church Street. For more information, please visit www.pinetreepotters.ca

TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO PASS BY-LAW NUMBER 5714-15 TO DECLARE AS SURPLUS AND SELL MUNICIPAL LANDS

30 ERIC T. SMITH WAY, AURORA

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of The Corporation of the Town of Aurora (the "Town") is providing notice of its intention to pass By-law Number 5714-15 on April 28, 2015, pursuant to Report No. PL15-015, for the purpose of declaring as surplus and selling of land, municipally known as 30 Eric T. Smith Way, Town of Aurora, Regional Municipality of York and legally described as the West Part of Lot 1, Plan 65M-4324, Town of Aurora, Regional Municipality of York, having an area of approximately 0.87 acres, and being part of PIN 03642-3445 (LT), as illustrated for location purposes only on Figure 1 (below).

Figure 1

The final version of By-law Number 5714-15 will be available on the Town's website, located at **www.aurora.ca/agendasminutes**, on April 24, 2015 ahead of the Council meeting to be held on Tuesday, April 28, 2015 at 7 p.m. at Aurora Town Hall in Council Chambers, located at 100 John West Way.

For further information, please contact Anthony Ierullo, Manager, Long Range & Strategic Planning, at 905-727-3123, ext. 4742 or by email at aierullo@aurora.ca.

www.aurora.ca/publicnotices | 905-727-3123, ext. 4742

The Town of Aurora celebrates Youth Week!

Tour the new youth spaces at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC) on **Saturday, May 2**.

Don't miss the chance to view the newly created Skate park, The Loft, rock climbing wall, teaching kitchen and full-size gymnasium.

WHEN: **Saturday, May 2** from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Ribbon cutting at 12 p.m.
WHERE: Aurora Family Leisure Complex,
135 Industrial Parkway North
ATTENDING: Mayor Geoffrey Dawe and
Members of Council

Activities for the grand opening weekend will include:

- Skate park demos
- Drop-in sports in the gymnasium
- Free leisure swim from 1:15 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. with limited capacity
- Face painting and arts and crafts
- Drop-in programs at The Loft
- Free rock climbing

There will also be free refreshments. For more details and specific program hours of operation, please visit www.aurora.ca/newaflc

TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO PASS BY-LAW NUMBER 5713-15 TO DECLARE AS SURPLUS AND SELL MUNICIPAL LANDS

55 ERIC T. SMITH WAY, AURORA

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of The Corporation of the Town of Aurora (the "Town") is providing notice of its intention to pass By-law Number 5713-15 on April 28, 2015, pursuant to Report No. PL15-014, for the purpose of declaring as surplus and selling of land, municipally known as 55 Eric T. Smith Way, Town of Aurora, Regional Municipality of York and legally described as Lot 6, Plan 65M-4324, and Part Block 11, Plan 65M-4324, Town of Aurora, Regional Municipality of York, having an area of approximately 4.97 acres, and being all of PIN 03642-3450 (LT) and part of PIN 03642-3455 (LT), as illustrated for location purposes only on Figure 1 (below).

Figure 1

The final version of By-law Number 5713-15 will be available on the Town's website, located at **www.aurora.ca/agendasminutes**, on April 24, 2015 ahead of the Council meeting to be held on Tuesday, April 28, 2015 at 7 p.m. at Aurora Town Hall in Council Chambers, located at 100 John West Way.

For further information, please contact Anthony Ierullo, Manager, Long Range & Strategic Planning, at 905-727-3123, ext. 4742 or by email at aierullo@aurora.ca.

www.aurora.ca/publicnotices | 905-727-3123, ext. 4742

PUBLIC NOTICES

Notice of Service Disruption

Dear SARC Users:

Due to the scheduling of the annual Run or Walk for Southlake Regional Health Centre event, all Aquatic programs will be cancelled at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex on **Sunday, April 26, 2015**. There will also be no access to the SARC parking lot from 8:15 a.m. to approximately 12 p.m.

This shutdown will affect the following programs:

- Learn to Swim lessons (9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.)
- User Group rentals (7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.)

Lane and Leisure swims will NOT be affected and will take place as regularly scheduled at 1 p.m. (Lane Swim) and 2 p.m. (Leisure Swim).

On behalf of The Town of Aurora, we would like to thank you for your patience and apologize for any inconvenience.

For more information, please contact Aquatics at 905-726-4770.

Notice of Public Meeting for Accessible Playground Design for Queen's Diamond Jubilee Park

Date Thursday, May 14 at 7 p.m.
Location: Aurora Town Hall, Holland Room

Please join us for continuing discussions and ideas for the redevelopment of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Park (formerly Civic Square Park).

The purpose of the meeting is to provide an updated Landscape Master Plan, based on public input and comments received at the first Public Meeting held on January 15, 2014.

Newmarket-Aurora MPP Chris Ballard, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Transportation Steven Del Duca, ans Aurora Mayor Geoff Dawe at Friday's announcement in Barrie.

Photo submitted by MPP Ballard

Province renews commitment for all-day GO through Aurora

By Brock Weir

All-day GO Train service to and from Aurora could become a reality as early as 2017, according to the Province of Ontario.

Premier Kathleen Wynne renewed the Province's commitment to two-way all-day service to Aurora last week in Barrie, joined by Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation, Newmarket-Aurora MPP Chris Ballard, and Aurora Mayor Geoff Dawe.

"The government is working with its agency, Metrolinx, to bring Regional Express Rail to the GO rail network," said the Ministry. "Regional Express Rail is the province's 10-year initiative that will give people throughout the GTHA (Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area) new travel options with faster and more frequent GO rail service and electrification on core segments of the GO rail network.

"Construction of a new, second track on a section of GO Transit's Barrie line is part of the broader Regional Express Rail initiative. Grading and bridge and culvert work is already underway on this second track, with construction to be complete in 2017. Regional Express Rail will allow for 15-minute, two-way, all-day service to Aurora and new two-way hourly service to Barrie during the midday, evenings and weekends."

Commuters travelling the Barrie line currently have 70 weekly trips available to them. These plans, however, will increase those trips to over 200.

Funding for the rail expansion will come through the Moving Ontario Forward program, which will see a $4 billion investment of public money through the sale of a number of public assets, including a large chunk of Hydro One.

"The government is expanding access to transit and building the necessary infrastructure for now and for the future," said Mr. Del Duca. "People using the Barrie GO corridor will benefit from more train trips and future two-way, all-day service. This is further proof of our government's commitment to making the daily commute and quality of life better for Ontario families."

Following the announcement, Mayor Dawe said this is a "great opportunity" for Aurorans to look at alternate ways to transport themselves into and out of Toronto. Parking is currently a challenge, and will remain so, but Aurora is advocating with the relevant ministries to find a solution, he added.

"[The Province] is well aware there are going to be challenges as they go forward, but they are taking that step, and it is a pretty bold step," said Mayor Dawe. "I certainly applaud them for doing that."

Councillors, concerned citizens to join forces to correct Complex

By Brock Weir

They filled Council Chambers with a growing list of concerns over the newly renovated Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC), now these AFLC users will collaborate with three Councillors to try and rectify the situation.

Aurora Council approved a new liaison committee, bringing together Councillors John Abel, Sandra Humfryes, and Michael Thompson, along with AFLC users, and appropriate members of municipal staff, as a solution to evaluating which of a growing list of shortcomings with the building to prioritize, along with developing a communications plan to users overall.

"This is obviously a huge concern tonight and there is a big, big list in front of us," said Councillor Humfryes, who made the motion to establish the committee, addressing a lengthy list of deficiencies.

A smaller, focused group bringing together Council, but also those residents who have been more active in trying to have their concerns addressed would help prioritize issues.

"If we can narrow those down and focus strongly, I think we can get some quick wins," she said. "If there are some bigger projects that need to be done, some undertaking and some investment, we can make those decisions as we go along. The reason we changed this facility was to celebrate a youth centre and keep the facility running beautifully for [all users]. There are so many benefits we built,

Continued on page 15

Briefly

AHS TOPS LIST OF AURORA HIGH SCHOOLS

When it comes to Aurora's five public secondary schools, Aurora High School tops them all. Aurora High School (AHS) was the top ranked area school in the annual evaluation released by the Fraser Institute on Sunday. AHS was ranked 53rd in the survey of 693 Ontario high schools that are evaluated on a number of criteria, including standardized testing scores and gender gaps. In the latest survey, it was given a score of 8.1 out of 10. The second Aurora school to make the list was ESC Renaissance, which came in 104th with a score of 7.7/10. Third was Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School with a ranking of 198 and a score of 7.1, followed by Cardinal Carter Catholic High School in 258th position and a score of 6.8. Bringing up the rear was St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Secondary School, ranked 281st with a score of 6.1.

The Institute's annual Report Card on Ontario's Secondary Schools is published to "assist parents when they choose a school for their children" while encouraging school improvement, say pollsters.

"The act of publicly rating and ranking schools attracts attention and this can provide motivation," writes the Fraser Institute. "Schools that perform well or show consistent improvement are applauded. Poorly performing schools generate concern, as do those whose performance is deteriorating. This inevitable attention provides an incentive for all those connected with a school to focus on student results."

In 2014, AHS was the Aurora leader, placing in 80th position in a three-way tie, followed by ESC Renaissance at 122nd, St. Maximilian Kolbe at 113, and Cardinal Carter and Dr. G.W. Williams following, both tied at 145.

WAVESTAGE LAUNCHES "PETER PAN"

Aurora's Wavestage Theatrical Company launches their latest production, "Peter Pan", this Thursday, April 23, at Newmarket Theatre. Running through Sunday, the timeless story follows Peter Pan, Wendy, Michael and John on their journey to Neverland and battle with Captain Hook. Featuring iconic songs "I'm Flying," "I've Gotta Crow," "I Won't Grow Up," and "Never Never Land," and a rousing book full of magic, warmth, and adventure, **Peter Pan** is the perfect show for the child in all of us who dreamed of soaring high and never growing up. Tickets are $26 for adults and $20 for students and seniors. For more information, visit www.wavestagetheatre.com .

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TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

AURORA

NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION

The Town of Aurora will hold a Public Information Session regarding the provincial review of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan on **Monday, May 4 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.** at Aurora Town Hall, Skylight Gallery, 3rd floor.

About the 2015 Provincial Review of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan

On February 27, 2015, the Province of Ontario announced and formally launched the co-ordinated review of the Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan. In anticipation of these reviews, The Regional Municipality of York held a series of Public Consultation Sessions last year. These public consultations focused specifically on the Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. Furthermore, Aurora Town staff prepared a report to Council on July 15, 2014 with some preliminary comments on the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Review. At this meeting, Council directed that staff hold this Public Information Session and report back.

Contact information

Additional information may be obtained from Fausto Filipetto of the Planning & Development Services department at 905-727-3123, ext. 4342, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Town of Aurora 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1 | www.aurora.ca/publicnotices | 905-727-3123, ext. 4342

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gender identity awareness "upsets" resident, invites readers to feel the same

I visited Dr. G. W. Williams School Wednesday night regarding Geranium's development project.

The most disturbing thing about my visit there was the white board in the front foyer. Last week, schools honoured Pink Day. If you don't know what that is then get informed!

One side of the white board discussed "gender identity". There was a ruler/scale to locate where you fit in. The suggested choices are a-gender, nonbinary, genderfluid, genderqueer, bigender, trigender, neutrios, androgyne, demigirl, demiboy. It's scary that I can't just be a girl! Now they are going to teach this lie to eight-year-olds in elementary schools.

On the other side of the white board was "orientations of attraction."

This was even more upsetting!

I quote: "Polygamy-relationships - that includes multiple persons. Healthy polygamy! All persons are knowing and consenting." They are going to introduce the idea of consent to eight-year-olds.

Please citizens, don't think parents who are now fighting the new elementary sex education curriculum are all religious fanatics. Were you aware that our high school children are being indoctrinated into a childless society? Where sex is just a physical activity. Where the family, which for all time has been known as the fundament core of a society and necessary for the protection of children, is devalued.

Canada's birth rate is 1.61. We don't make enough babies to sustain our population. This is the truth, I wouldn't lie to you.

We need to throw out this gender identity nonsense and teach our next generation about procreation, family of a mother and father, the value of children.

If children as adults decide to reject that teaching that is their choice. We fail as a society if we don't teach our children about love and marriage and the natural family! The new elementary sex education program says "don't use terms like mother and father replace them with partner."

Get upset about this, everyone!

Suzanne Bolton
Aurora

April 16 edition hits home

This week's front page and your Brock's Banter were such a typical example of you reading the meaning of events and organizations happening in Aurora that I just had to write in and commend you on your writing.

There are many other editions that are as well put together but this one was personal as I am a member of Aurora United Church. The article the week before on the upcoming benefit concert was evenly excellent in putting works to the meaning of that event as well.

I realize most letters to the editor are of the complaint variety about one thing or another, mine this time is purely one of praise of you and the rest of the staff putting The Auroran together.

The quality of the articles in the Auroran is one of the many reasons why I consider The Auroran one of the best papers that come - free of charge yet - into my home!

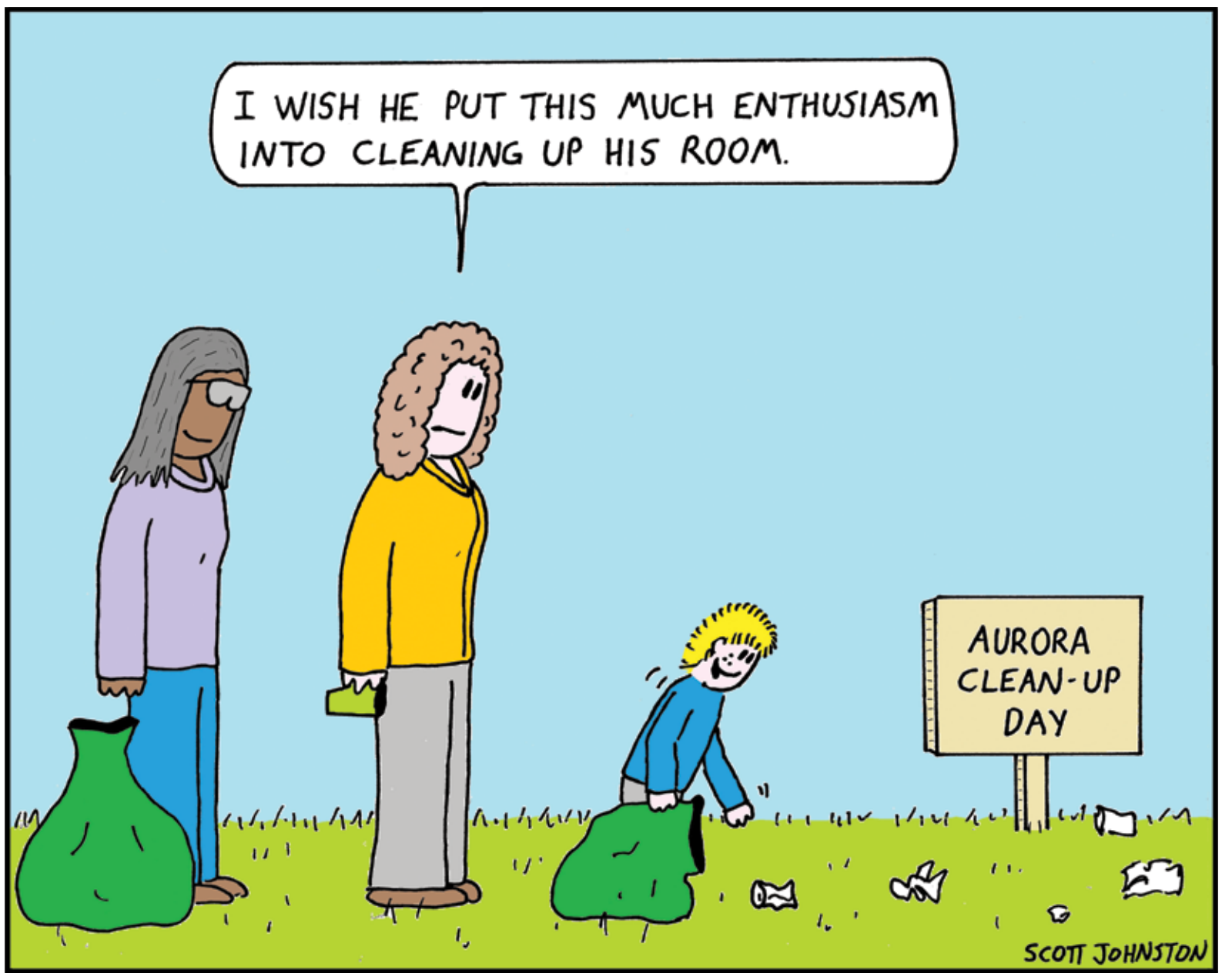
So, kudos to you and your staff!

Brigitta Gamm
Aurora

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

Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

Machell's Corners



Common Cents Revolutions

BROCK'S BANTER
Brock Weir

I grew up in the heyday of Mike Harris' so-called Common Sense revolution. If the adage of "no pain, no gain" holds true, I'd like to say some of this alleged "common sense" rubbed off on my generation, but let's be real: that particularly Ontarian phenomenon did little.

That is, if there is no common sense to go around in the first place, it is difficult to sow the seeds of any form of lasting wisdom.

I came from the seeds sown in mid to late 1984, and I think I have the authority to say on behalf of 1985 babies province-wide that rather than "no pain, no gain", a more apt cliché to trot out is "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger."

For reasons known only to the then-Premier and his revolving door of Ministers of Education, we 1985 kids had the misfortune of being the guinea pigs of every lame, crackpot apparently-revolutionary idea that happened to come to mind as far as our academic future was concerned.

Initially graded on a relatively straightforward system of numbers between 1 and 4, with a four being the pinnacle of achievement, this was tossed aside for a comprehensive letter system of A - F. This, in turn, was quickly binned in favour of a revolutionary system called "outcome based learning" (OBL) in which any tangible benefits were thrown out the window in favour of a new system where the worst you could get was a "needs improvement" if you failed or a "not applicable" if you didn't bother to do the assignment at all. In hindsight, I can only assume this was to cushion the blow of failure for the more delicate flowers in the 1985 garden, and the occasional over-sensitive parental gardener.

Speaking of which, another revolutionary component to this OBL program was for students to partially relieve teachers themselves of the apparently strenuous burden of leading parent conferences by having us call our parents in so we could conduct a stimulating tour of our OBL binders to point out our own strengths and shortcomings.

When the folly of this venture was clear, the Common Sense Revolution had even less intuitive solutions in store for us before we went back to the tried and true number- and letter-grade systems.

In short, as the system rapidly changed, we students rarely knew where we stood and what was expected of us. Teachers too were suffering under this as well, unsure what was expected of them and the objectives of what they were to impart to us. Going back to the traditional way of doing things provided some stability and a much needed reality check and we were the better for it.

Many years on, it was disconcerting to learn last week that this uncertainty as far as learning and education is concerned is a part of everyday operations at Town Hall.

At last Tuesday's Council meeting, several Councillors took a second stab at getting information they have been looking for since early March, namely just how much the Town of Aurora is spending on training, education and developing their full-time and part-time staff and, if they needed to halve this budget for 2015 alone, the impact it would have on the Town.

The first time they requested this information, a report was received with the view of Town Staff that reducing or cutting this portion of the budget would have a "significant" impact on the Town, but did not particularly elaborate on what these impacts would be. Would snow plows stop running if the managers overseeing this service weren't completely up-to-date on the latest iPhone operating system or new tweaks to Microsoft office? Would the onward march of subdivisions and commercial developments grind to a halt if the individuals behind progress had to skip a year of conferencing with their colleagues and comparing notes on best practices and sharing ideas on how to make their departments more efficient in the months and years ahead?

They might, they might not, and I am certainly not discounting the value of keeping up-to-date with one's skills and keeping ahead of the curve (after all, it is what keeps places like Aurora competitive), but the distressing part is it doesn't seem that they, or we as taxpayers, know for sure.

It emerged at Tuesday's discussions that this information simply isn't tracked. Municipal employees fill out forms to apply for funding to attend conferences and training sessions, applications which are reviewed and okayed by the relevant departments, but beyond that, it emerged these yellow sheets eventually find themselves in the wild, blue yonder with no clear answers on just where they end up.

According to the Town Treasurer, compiling the information on how much money was spent for training and development, and just what kind of training and development this money was going towards, would take "months", possibly delaying bringing the Aurora's 2015 Budget in for a proper landing if Council wanted to wait for it before rendering their final decision.

The apparent fact it would take "months" to compile this information should be a cause for concern. Had staff begun to gather this information, as requested, the first time around they would have already been a month ahead of the game, but the larger question remains: why?

Why isn't this information readily available with a push of a button? A simple excel spread sheet tracking who went where, how much it cost, and a brief description of why the session in question was of value to the Corporation of the Town of Aurora and, in turn, the people paying for it, would not only save a lot of time, but be a good development exercise in common sense.

Having this information readily available to the individuals who are, at the end of the day, the final word on how taxpayers' dollars are going to be spent, is not sticking their fingers where they don't belong, but what they were ultimately tasked by voters to do: represent them and their interests on the issues that matter the most. Discerning the importance of those issues, on the other hand, is impossible without the relevant information at their fingertips.

In fact, if we could master this art in Grade 6 through the curation of our binders, it should be a breeze.

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BACK TO THE SUGAR BUSH – Families had a sunny day out this past weekend, heading over to Sheppard's Bush to tuck into stacks of pancakes whipped up by the Lions Club of Aurora. Now equipped with their new mobile kitchen, the Lions revived the annual tradition at the beginning of April, wrapping up Sunday after three consecutive weekends.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Women and girls who lead

View From Queen's Park

Chris Ballard, MPP

Newmarket-Aurora

We recently celebrated International Women's Week and it was an important time to recognize the political, economic and social achievements of outstanding women and girls – both here at home and around the world.

On April 9, I was joined at the Aurora Cultural Centre by the Hon. Tracy MacCharles, Minister of Children and Youth Services and the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, to honour ten outstanding women and girls from the area.

Janice Hodgson

Janice Hodgson has been an active volunteer at the Canadian Cancer Society for nearly 15 years. She is an advocate for prevention and she sits on committees to help the Cancer Society with their mission.

She plays a vital role in raising awareness of screening and the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. She was a board member with the Red Cross and the treasurer of the Anderson Division of the Girl Guides of Canada for many years.

Nancee Webb

Nancee Webb has been a director of the Aurora Community Arboretum since 2009 and recruits volunteers to help preserve a living natural legacy in Aurora. She has co-ordinated volunteers to plant and protect 1,000 trees and shrubs within the Arboretum.

She also volunteers for the Canadian Cancer Society, where she is responsible for staffing various Aurora sites during the Daffodil Campaign each April.

Nancy Coxford

Nancy Coxford has been dedicated to freeing women and children from violence through her work at the Yellow Brick House for more than 10 years. She has established a foundation that supports initiatives related to violence against women. Her expertise in this area has allowed her to guide others through philanthropic outreach of the capital campaign.

Her passion for assisting women and children is driven by her strong belief that everyone deserves to live with dignity, integrity and free of violence.

Ellen Campbell

Ellen Campbell has been an active member of The Gathering Place of Aurora for more than 15 years. She spearheads "Queen of the Day," a yearly event where women in difficult circumstances get the opportunity to work with a stylist and given new clothing for job interviews. She also heads a program that gives children gifts at Christmas.

She has dedicated her time for many years, supporting women and children in Newmarket-Aurora. She is also a volunteer for "Wounds 2 Worship," which counsels women and connects them with organizations that can assist in their area of need.

Kristine Carbis

Kristine Carbis is the Membership Secretary of Freedom 90, an organization in Newmarket-Aurora that raises awareness of people who depend on food banks in our community and across the province. She also organizes trips across Ontario to meet like-minded groups in search of solutions to help feed less fortunate families, of which the majority are women and children.

Ms. Carbis has developed a poverty program that demonstrates the difficulties people encounter when they are in need of food banks. She also spearheads a recycling initiative in her housing co-op that redistributes items to others in need.

Jackie Playter

Jackie Playter is a great community booster and leader in Newmarket. She was instrumental in helping to raise $1,000,000 to build a women's shelter in York Region, which will be open in the Fall of 2015.

She is well recognized in Newmarket

Continued on page 16

Pauline Hubble, 1940 - 2015

FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE

Stephen Somerville

For anyone whose son or daughter has played hockey in Aurora during the last 34 years, you will have most likely either seen or spoken to my mother-in-law, Pauline Hubble.

Ms. Hubble was the volunteer Registrar for Aurora Minor Hockey.

It is with great sadness that I announce her passing on April 13, after a short illness.

She was a great lady and was very much emblematic of the fine folks that we have in Aurora.

Ms. Hubble was a selfless person, and to borrow an expression from Richard Nixon, one of the "silent majority." Those people who quietly meet the challenges and commitments of everyday life and also find time to volunteer their time to others. They usually don't garner headlines, trophies or accolades, but their individual contributions are what make our community worth living in.

A number of years ago, Ms. H was honoured with a plaque by the Town of Aurora. Typical of her, she did not attend the awards ceremony and did not even mention it. My wife was the one who found out.

We made sure she, and her family attended, the next time that Ms. Hubble was honoured for her volunteer contributions.

Back in November 2011 our family attended Sport Aurora's inaugural Volunteer Recognition Event.

We were attending because my mother-in-law had been nominated by the Aurora Minor Hockey Association.

Ms. Hubble was always at the rink to help with some hockey tournament, or else people would drop by her home at all times of the day or call her with some registration related question.

I was really proud of her that day; I was also in awe when listening to the brief description that was read of the reason for her nomination. Her dedication and time commitment for this local sport was amazing.

Thanks to her efforts, this community is a much better place to live.

As a few readers know, Ms. Hubble lived seventy-eight feet, three and one-quarter inches directly across the street from Julie, Ryan and I.

Someone once asked me if I was crazy living that close to my mother-in-law. Without hesitation I simply muttered, "Yes, I am!"

I remember my first night in our new home. I was having trouble sleeping so I watched television until 2 a.m. The next day my mother-in-law said "I saw your lights on very late last night, doesn't anyone sleep over there?" I said to Julie, "I'm putting the house up for sale this afternoon!"

Ms. Hubble had a great sense of humor. Even when I mentioned, on more than one occasion, that she should not come over to our house until it is dark outside so as to preserve the resale value of our home and those of our neighbors!

She was known by the various nicknames that I had gleefully assigned her over the years: Mrs. "H", Hubby, the Queen Mum, Garden Gnome, Yoda and my personal favourite, Shrek. Only occasionally was she known by her real name.

She also gave as well as she received.

I remember, a few minutes prior to my wedding, asking Mrs. H what she would do if I took off and left her daughter standing at the altar.

"I would feel both elated and relieved" was the immediate response! Ouch!

The Queen Mum was not at all averse at sharing her opinions. And never ever verbally dish the royal family or you would be getting an ear full. And don't even think of trying to watch something else on television when the Queen gave her annual Christmas Day address.

I have been so fortunate to have had Ms. Hubble in my life for almost 20 years.

And so many wonderful memories came flooding back as I looked at all the pictures that we have of various weddings, birthdays and Christmas celebrations.

Before my son was born, Julie, Ms. Hubble and I went to England to visit her sister and the rest of her family and we had a great time.

Our family also enjoyed having frequent pizza or Swiss Chalet dinners with Ms. Hubble and my brother–in-law Mike, sister-in-law Cindy and their two children, Brock and Devan.

Ms. H particularly loved Christmas. And although she was not a Catholic she really enjoyed attending the Christmas Eve mass with our family at Our Lady of Grace church. She also took great pleasure in purchasing and wrapping presents for her various family members.

I will always treasure the simple pleasure of our time together over the last few years. Every Saturday and Sunday morning, I would drop off her "medium, double milk coffee" and we would kibitz about the Leafs or talk golf or about politics.

Aurora and this writer are so very, very fortunate to have had such a person as her in our community and in our lives.

Rest in peace, Pauline.

Stephen can be contacted at stephengsomerville@yahoo.com

IN GOOD COMPANY

Mayor Geoffrey Dawe

Looking forward, looking back

I think the true sign that "spring has sprung" is the appearance of many events across communities in Ontario. Aurora is certainly not exempt from this, as our always popular Easter Egg Hunt took place on Saturday, April 4 at the Aurora Seniors' Centre. We had beautiful weather for this outside venue, and I was thrilled to learn that this usually "packed house" event was completely sold out this year!

I would like to pass congratulations to our staff for organizing another great event for our kids, and I look forward to a great effort next year.

Spring just wouldn't be spring in Aurora without the appearance of the annual Chamber of Commerce Home Show from April 10 to 12. I know the move from their traditional home at the Aurora Community Centre to the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex was a significant challenge for the Chamber, but they certainly pulled it off in style! The booths were bigger and better than ever, and the many people I spoke with at the show on Friday evening really enjoyed the great number of vendors, the atmosphere and the change of scenery.

I would like to thank and give due credit to Judy Marshall and the dedicated staff and volunteers at the Chamber for not only managing the challenges of a new venue, but for executing another cornerstone event in support of our merchants and our community.

The Home Show weekend also brought back some bittersweet memories, as we gathered on Saturday at the site of the Aurora United Church to commemorate the tragic loss that befell our community one year earlier, when fire completely destroyed the 136-year-old church.

I had the opportunity to speak with the many residents, congregants and public alike, who attended the remembrance ceremony to recount the events of that terrible day. However, while we remembered the shock of the loss, we also celebrated our community rallying to support the United Church congregation. In a day draped in chaos, caring residents from across the community banded together to help. As I look back on that fateful day, I will remember it both with sadness and as a day where Aurorans showed why this is such a caring community.

Moving on to Town business, over the past several weeks, there have been a few occasions where I felt there was an opportunity to share with residents the role of Council in the planning process.

First, the Town does not act as a landlord with respect to planning applications. We approve applications based on appropriate zoning and suitable land uses, as outlined in our bylaws and our Official Plan. To deviate from this invites bias, the potential for discrimination and likely legal challenges. Our duty is to assess suitability based on select criteria; nothing more, nothing less.

Second, all landowners have the right to come forward with an application. With that said, an application proposed does not equal an application approved. The Highland Gate proposal – which is under review and has not yet been considered by Council – is a

Continued on page 16

NEW AURORAN POLL

Do you support all-day two-way GO Train service in Aurora?

A) Yes B) No C) Unsure

Go to www.theauroran.com to vote!

Previous Poll Results

Should Aurora allow medical marijuana production facilities into the new business park?

a) Yes b) No c) Unsure

RESULTS TO DATE April 21, 2015	YES	NO	UNSURE
	61%	31%	8%

Council weighs service cuts in bringing budget in at 3.95%

From page 1

back. The majority around Council are saying let's look at training and development, and we're not getting that response back from the CAO's office. To me, there is a divide. It just seems that, in my opinion, we're not being listened to."

Council approved Councillor Mrakas' motion 7 – 2, with Mayor Geoff Dawe and Councillor Jeff Thom voting against it.

Speaking in favour of the motion, Councillor Sandra Humfryes said specifics were not provided to Council on the "serious implications" such a reduction in the training budget would have on Town Hall. It was important to know, she said, how much of the budget was "actually used year over year" for training.

Following Council's initial decision last month at the Committee level to slash the training budget by $100,000 for this year in a one-off cost-saving measure, this decision was reversed the following week in favour of tasking staff to look within their departments to come up with $300,000 in savings while boosting revenue by $100,000 to bring the budget in at that magic number of 3.95 per cent.

At the time, however, Aurora CAO Neil Garbe said cuts to services used by residents were likely to meet that target, a prospect Councillors largely agreed was not the right way forward.

Council's request last week was a "fair" one, said Town Treasurer Dan Elliott, but it is hampered by the fact the Town of Aurora does not have a central repository system to track training data and other items under this umbrella.

"We have over 200 full-time staff and over 400 part-time staff. Every single one of them are subject to training," said Mr. Elliott. "Many of them are annual training, many of them take multiple courses. Accordingly, to go through and develop and create essentially a repository for 2014 of each staff person's training, the cost of the conference and what they got… to go person to person, credential by credential, is going to take months."

Although new systems to track just this could be in place as early as this year, Councillors advocating for cuts in this department, however, expressed surprise this information wasn't already kept in a centrally located, accessible fashion, including Councillor Harold Kim, who said it is often overlooked that cutting taxes is also a service to residents.

"I wonder why we keep having the same budget and having the budget increased for this particular item," he said. "By budget time, if we can't be given sufficient information to make an informed decision, then I am quite happy to make a decision without it. It is a no-brainer in terms of whether you choose plowing a sidewalk or choosing to reduce the education budget for a year."

Added Councillor Thompson: "I am not sure what was spent last year, or why [there was an increase] year after year. Those details are important to me. At one time we talked about the tax pressure as a result and to alleviate that tax pressure with sidewalk plow service. I can tell you right now I am not going to cut sidewalk plow service if there is an opportunity to reduce training."

Given Mr. Elliott's statement it would take months to get the required information together, Mayor Dawe objected to the motion. Although he said he agreed it was important for Council to know what was being spent in this area of the budget, he questioned what Councillors ultimately would do with the information.

"If it comes down to putting money into training for staff, or putting money into snow plowing, I am pretty sure from what we've heard the money is going to go into snow plowing, which is fine," said Mayor Dawe. "That is a decision of Council, but that is a level of service we wish to provide our residents. It is not us managing the corporation. If we want to do that, I know how we can save six salaries anyway and we can cut the budget big time. If that's how Council wishes to manage the business, I presume that is Council's prerogative and I will not support the motion for that reason. There is no concept of the work we're going to ask staff to do, the cost, and we have no idea what we're going to do with the information."

For Councillor Mrakas, however, it was clear what they intended to do with the information.

"I would be able to make a decision on whether I want to put forward a reduction in this item during budget time," he said. "I think that is pretty straightforward. I believe taxpayers deserve this information and I just don't understand why it is such an issue to get this information. I am sitting here [and hearing] we don't track that and it would be too expensive to track that. Yet, we are spending $200,000 for a corporation of this size to send people for training and development. Training and development is important but I don't think spending this amount of money in a year where our tax rate is at such a high level it is warranted."

MAKING THE GRADE – Aurora Student Olivia Railton took home top honours earlier this month after being crowed the World Champion in debating at the World Individual Debating and Public Speaking Championships in Hong Kong. Team Canada had strong representation from King's Country Day School and fellow Aurora student Natalie Ganzhorn placed third in the Persuasive Speaking Grand Finals, speaking of the lack of awareness of treatment options for those living with anxiety disorders.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

Grade 10 student bests teens headed to Cambridge, Harvard

From page 1

Grade 12 students from around the globe who will be packing up for Harvard, Stamford and Cambridge this summer, she was shocked at her success,ww but kept her eyes on the prize.

"Before I went up to speak, I told my partner Philip [who is going to Harvard] that I was nervous," says Olivia. "He just said to breathe. 'Here's what's going to happen. Either you're going to come first and I'm going to come second, or I'm going to come first and you're going to come in second, but we can't let them win.'"

And they didn't. Olivia, a student at Country Day School, returned last week, crowned the World Champion.

The four students to make the Grand Finals were split into two groups of two, with the order of things decided by a coin toss. Whoever won the toss got to choose the topic, with the loser getting to pick which side of the argument they wanted to represent. The advantage was in losing, said Olivia, and when they lost the toss, choosing the side was a no-brainer.

"At first glance, it appears if you have a more feminist mindset the proposition would be the way to go, but upon looking at it more in depth, it actually," says Olivia, concluding the sentence with a dismissive gesture. "Our main idea was if you send only female diplomats to these countries it could actually undermine feminism as a whole. [The opposition]'s whole case was it would give the girls in these countries a role model to show women can be powerful too. Firstly, women would only be in these positions because they have to be women. They are not actually being powerful. The whole point of feminism is that the girls and boys in these countries can rise up and say women are equal and they shouldn't need any Western saviour to come over and show that to them.

"It also undermines diplomacy because you want feminism to be recognized as a legitimate ideal in the country. Also, the lives of these women could also be put at great risk because if you see everything that is happening in the news right now with ISIS and all the atrocious things that are happening, they really like the shock factor and would probably like nothing more than to kidnap a female diplomat and potentially harm her because that would show women can't do this job and this is what happens if you send a woman there."

Case closed.

As Olivia made her case, she was watched proudly by debate coach Kerstin Wyndham-West.

"Partway through Liv's speech, obviously the audience felt her arguments were very strong and the audience started to clap and cheer and she actually had to stop and chuckle," says Ms. Wyndham-West. "It is unusual for an audience to get so into a debate they're showing which side they agree with. It was a wonderful experience and a very proud moment for her mum, who was watching, and for me, as a coach, to see."

By the time her students get to the finals and grand finals, they are usually prepared, they know what to do, and Ms. Wyndham-West tells them to have fun. If they have to make a persuasive speech, as fellow-Aurora student Natalie Ganzhorn did, coming in third place in the Grand Finals for Persuasive Speaking, they might go through it once or twice before she calls time and they can relax and have fun.

I would say whenever students have done really well, and this is obviously above and beyond anything the majority of students have ever been able to achieve from our school, it is a matter of pride and excitement and high emotion.

"I have been doing this for a really long time and I would say whenever students have done really well, and this is obviously above and beyond anything the majority of students have ever been able to achieve from our school, it is a matter of pride and excitement and high emotion. The kids laugh at me, but I am a pretty emotional person, so I got a little teary."

For Olivia, however, the win took a bit of time to digest. It was a "nerve wracking" experience, but after grabbing the trophy, and giving it a kiss almost in disbelief, the reality set in.

"Afterwards, we were all freaking out because Team Canada as a whole did really well," says Olivia. "When people know nothing about debating, they typically think we're a bunch of non-fun people, just bookworms, but I like to think we're all really extroverted and fun. We argue for fun!"

As a Grade 10 student, Olivia has plenty of time to plan her future, but she has her sights set on defending her crown next year, before studying at Oxford or the University of London for politics, philosophy and economics.

"If I could be the person that goes from Canada to Switzerland to sign the pieces of paper that fix everything, I would be happy," she says.

Advertorial

What is Laser Therapy?

The technology utilizes superluminous and laser diodes to irradiate diseased or traumatized tissue with photons. These particles of energy are selectively absorbed by the cell membrane and intracellular molecules, resulting in the initiation of a cascade of complex physiological reactions, leading to the restoration of normal cell structure and function.

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Laser Therapy is highly effective in the treatment of musculoskeletal conditions, arthritis, sports injuries, wound healing and a wide range of dermatological conditions. Laser Therapy Systems are currently being used in over 50 countries by a broad spectrum of healthcare professionals including physicians, physiotherapists, chiropractors, naturopaths, dentists, veterinarians, athletic trainers, etc.

It should be noted that Laser Therapy represents the first advance in rehabilitation science since the introduction of ultrasound, interferential current, tens, etc. and is rapidly replacing those modalities. Moreover, it provides treatment alternatives for patients that have not responded to conventional treatments and can be administered without risk in the treatment of many disease entities. Generally it obviates the need for pharmaceutical solutions and frequently makes surgical interventions redundant.

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- Ligament/tendon/muscle tears
- Knee Dysfunction(meniscal/ligamentous tears)
- Fractures

Repetitive Stress Injuries
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- Rotator Cuff Injuries
- Epicondylitis

Inflammatory conditions
- Tendonitis (supraspinatus/achilles etc.), Bursitis
- Plantar Fasciitis
- Rheumatoid Arthritis

Back Problems
- Degenerative Osteoarthritis
- Spinal Stenosis/Sciatica
- Disc Herniation
- Myofascitis

Dertmological Conditions
- Eczema
- Psoriasis
- Herpes (Post-herpetic Neuralgia)
- Dermatitis

Neurological Conditions
- Neuropathies
- Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy
- Multiple Sclerosis

Wounds & Dermal Ulcers Secondary to:
- Compression
- Trauma
- Atherosclerosis
- Diabetic
- Venous Stasis

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Give Back Awards honour 20 local students

By Brock Weir

This Thursday, people will gather at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School to have their cheeks swabbed for Sarah's Drive For Hope, an ongoing bone marrow registration drive spearheaded by students at the school.

Since its inception, it has been a particular passion project for Grade 12 student Haven Moulds, and her efforts were recognized by Neigbourhood Network and Magna International Thursday night, where she was named one of this year's recipients of the Give Back Awards.

The Awards, founded by Belinda Stronach, recognize graduating students who have made an "extraordinary commitment" to their school – and the wider – community.

For Haven, a resident of Aurora, receiving the Give Back Award was unnecessary, but welcome recognition.

"It is really rewarding I am getting recognized for something I didn't need to get recognized for and meeting a lot of the people who have the same passion I do is really cool as well," she says. "That is one of the things I really love about volunteering: you get to meet people with the same passions."

After she graduates, Haven is headed to the University of Ottawa, where she hopes to ramp up her efforts in expanding bone marrow drives in the nation's capital as well.

Trevor Wright, a student at Aurora High School, is just one individual who shares that passion, and the reluctance to be recognized. Trevor is particularly focused on combatting homelessness, organizing the Sandwich Run at Aurora High School (AHS) to provide lunches for those in need. He also co-chairs the 360 Experience Youth Leaders Edition, to raise funds for, and awareness of, youth homelessness.

"This [recognition] is completely unnecessary but, at the same time, when you put so much hard work into trying to make a difference, it is nice when a big company like Magna and all these very respectable adults take the time to show their appreciation and let you know that the work you have been doing is recognized and is making a difference in the community.

"Volunteering for me is about recognizing your own blessings, taking the blessings you've had, and trying to give it to those who are less fortunate. Part of that comes from prioritizing the needs of society, but also just the act of giving back. It is about making the world a better place through the small actions we have."

Aurora students Haven Moulds and Trevor Wright, following Thursday night's ceremony.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

The greatest feeling, he says, is when people come up to him and share the impact these efforts – large and small – have had on them.

This fall, Trevor will be attending the University of Western Ontario, studying liberal arts at Huron University College. As he prepares for his future, he says he has started to consider opportunities to continue his efforts in his new school environment, particularly in youth homelessness.

"No matter what community you're in, every teen deserves a place to sleep," he says. "I am also hoping to promote the Federal Election next fall. Regardless of who people vote for, democracy is really important to me. Now that we will be able to vote, I want my peers to actually go out and exercise that very lucky privilege we have."

This year's recipients are:

Aurora High School
Trevor Wright
Cardinal Carter Catholic High School
Damian Di Biase
Damiano Panetta
Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School
Haven Moulds
ESC Renaissance
Cassandra Carey
St. Andrew's College
Dhruv Krishnan
St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Secondary School
Trisha Baladhay
Keswick High School
Eric Haskins
Our Lady of the Lake Catholic High School
Margaret Evans
Dr. Denison Secondary School
Mahima Mehta
Huron Heights Secondary School
Joshua Clements
Madison Maynard
Newmarket High School
Ashni Bhoolaton
Sarah Charnock
Melissa Cusack Striepe
Leah Hans
Samantha McFetridge
Jennifer Powers
Sir William Mulock S.S.
Bomi Park
Zach Roberts

The Town of Aurora celebrates Youth Week!

Aurora Family Leisure Complex
Youth Centre
Grand Opening

Saturday, May 2 – 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

135 Industrial Parkway North

Skate park demos with live music and DJ • Rock climbing
Drop-in sports in the gymnasium • Leisure swim from 1:15 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.*
Face painting • Arts and crafts • Refreshments
Youth drop-in activities at The Loft • ***All activities are free of charge!***

Ribbon cutting with Mayor Dawe and Members of Council at 12 p.m.

Tour the youth space at the AFLC, featuring:

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AURORA

THE AURORAN Arts & Culture

Theatre Aurora's Lost in Yonkers: A Review

By Scott Johnston

Theatre Aurora wraps up the 2014-15 season with the delightful Neil Simon comedy "Lost in Yonkers."

The story takes place in 1942 and centres on young teenage brothers Jay and Arty, who have been left to live with their strong-willed and slightly terrifying grandmother, while their father works out of town for most of the year. During this time, the boys grow as young men with, and sometimes despite, the help of assorted aunts and uncles, each with their own personality quirks and hidden secrets.

This is a well-written play, with lots of amusing observations. Better yet, it is performed by a terrific cast.

As Jay and Arty, Connor Machlachan and Tanner Douglas display great comic timing and presence for such young actors, and manage to get some of the best lines.

John Fetherston as Uncle Louie does a great job of playing a man with dark secrets, who is simultaneously providing a guiding hand for the boys in the absence of their father.

Lori O'Donnell Moritz as strange talking Aunt Gert, and Jeff Naworynski as father Eddie have smaller parts, but perform them well.

Solid performances and period detail bring Neil Simon's much-loved play to life at Theatre Aurora. Lost In Yonkers opens Thursday, April 23, running on select dates through May 2.

Auroran photo by David Falconer

Susan Thorburn Lane as the grandmother commands the stage in all of her scenes, easily evoking the unrivalled and inflexible head of the household.

But perhaps the standout performance is Kerrie Lamb as Aunt Bella. It's engrossing to watch her character's transformation from a slightly scattered and timid daughter, to a woman willing to stand up to her domineering mother.

There are a number of nice touches to this show, ranging from well-chosen 1940s music, to amusing off-stage video postcards from Eddie's travels, to the excellent and ever-changing period outfits.

Director Sal Aguila knows how to get the most out of his performers, and keeps the pace moving.

This enjoyable and well-performed play is a great wrap-up to the season.

But perhaps the standout performance is Kerrie Lamb as Aunt Bella. It's engrossing to watch her character's transformation from a slightly scattered and timid daughter, to a woman willing to stand up to her domineering mother.

Evening performances of "Lost in Yonkers" continue at Theatre Aurora, 150 Henderson Drive, April 23, 24, 25 and 30, and May 1 and 2, with a matinee April 26. Tickets are available through the box office at 905-727-3669.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Inside the Box: An Exhibition of Exquisite Small Ceramic Works

Inspired by the Orton Cone Box Competition, sponsored by Orton Ceramics, Pine Tree Potters' Guild is hosting a juried exhibition and competition of small ceramic works.

The show will be held in conjunction with Pine Tree Potters' Guild Annual Spring Sale.

Visitors to the Spring Sale at the Aurora Cultural Centre from April 30 to May 3 will have the opportunity to visit the exhibition and to cast a vote for the work that they like best.

The piece with the most votes will win a People's Choice Award.

Orton is a company that produces pyrometric cones that are used to measure the amount of heat inside a kiln.

The cones come in small boxes measuring 3"x 3" x 6".

Since 1975, a competition to celebrate small work, has been held every 2 to 3 years. The only criteria for the exhibition are that the work must be at least 50 per cent clay and must be able to fit inside an Orton cone box.

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Cathy Harris
Pine Tree Potters Guild

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Volunteering for Southlake Run "perfect way to give back"

By Jake Courtepatte

If you have lived in York Region long enough, chances are you or a loved one have experienced the top quality care of the Southlake Regional Health Centre.

For Brian North, Aurora's 2012 Citizen of the Year, his mother passed away there just over nine years ago.

"The hospital was phenomenal," said North. "They treat you well there, and deserve the assistance of the community for all they do for the community."

But the facility's reputation stretches much farther back, back to the days when it was known simply as York County Hospital. King Councillor Avia Eek's connection with the hospital has stretched the length of her life as well as her family's.

"I was born there, my husband was born there, my kids were born there… it's a family affair."

At the tender age of two, her son lost the end of his ring finger in a door-slamming accident. Ten minutes later she arrived at the hospital, and an hour later an on-call plastic surgeon had the distraught child's finger sewed back on.

"That's just one of the ways the hospital has been there for us. We've had great experiences, the level of professionalism is unbelievable…it's the perfect way to give back."

This Sunday marks the annual Run or Walk for Southlake presented by Nature's Emporium, a 10km, 5km, or 2.5km walk or run to raise funds for new or replacement hospital equipment.

"Right now they need something like $80 million just to upgrade," said North.

For Eek, she worries that while many people are willing to donate their time and money, most don't understand the magnitude of the hospital's financial situation. The emergency department was originally designed to service 40,000 people. In 2014, it serviced 99,000.

"As our community is growing, so are our needs for the hospital. We need donations from anyone…businesses, individuals…you don't even have to run to donate."

Both North and Eek have been privy to the inside workings of the run for some years now, both serving on the committee board since it was known as the Hartwell Challenge in the mid-00's.

The talented 15-member committee includes Southlake Board member Steve Hinder and Aurora Councillor Michael Thompson.

"They're tremendous, community-minded people," said Eek. We've got quite a cross-section of volunteers from the Aurora, Newmarket, Bradford and King area."

As the run grows in volunteers and participants every year, so does the need for more space. This year marks the first time the run will be held at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Centre on Wellington Street East, moving away from the Aurora Community Centre.

"We're hoping the move allows for a more relaxed and comfortable experience," said North. "We've got plenty of room for activities for the kids, like face painting and a bouncy balloon, some mascots will be walking around. Plus there's room for more volunteers, if people so wish."

As of press time, the run has raised just under $100,000, with an ultimate goal of $175,000. Usually a large influx of funds comes in the day-of or after the run, when community members see the enormous support for the cause.

"If anyone has a chance to be there Sunday, I suggest they get out there," said Eek. "The way the crowd gets pumped up, you've got the music going, you've got the activities for the kids, you've got the runners getting excited…it's quite a sight."

For more information on volunteering, running, or becoming a donor/sponsor, visit www.runforsouthlake.ca. Donations can be made up to two weeks after Sunday's run.

TELUS employees came together at the Air Canada Centre last Wednesday to raise money for "Hustle for Hugh", a team taking part in the Run or Walk for Southlake on Sunday.

Auroran photo by Jake Courtepatte

Charity and basketball combine for Hospital at Air Canada Centre

By Jake Courtepatte

TELUS employees came together last Wednesday to host an afternoon of basketball at the Air Canada Centre in Toronto, in support of the Southlake Regional Health Centre Foundation.

The group of about fifty basketball aficionados raised almost $5,000 in pledges for the opportunity to play on the Toronto Raptors' home court – living their childhood dreams with all the lights, scoreboards, and buzzers in full effect.

They took to the court for just over an hour, in between pre-game practices for the Raptors and the visiting Charlotte Hornets.

"It's just a good way for people to raise money while having fun doing it," said Dionne Malcolm, Manager of Communications at Southlake. "Most of the employees are from the Newmarket or Aurora area, so they understand how important Southlake is to the community."

The charity event came just a few weeks before the Run or Walk for Southlake, where over one-hundred TELUS employees will be running for colleague Hugh Johnson, currently battling stage-four lung cancer.

Going by the name "Hustle 4 Hugh", the team is led by Manager of Sales Tom Nemeth, who organized the event at the ACC.

As of press time, Hustle 4 Hugh is among the top five fundraising teams on the Run or Walk website.

St. Andrew's Saints' varsity lacrosse 2015 campaign underway

By Jake Courtepatte

With the spring varsity athletic season kicking off, the St. Andrew's College lacrosse program is looking to continue its proud and successful history.

The varsity team travelled to Westerville, Ohio earlier this month to open the 2015 season against three tough American teams, gaining NCAA exposure along the way.

A challenge was posed to the Saints in their first match of the year, facing Ohio-based Hilliard Davidson, with memories of a 13 – 3 loss at the hands of the team last year still fresh in their minds.

But the Saints exploded for offence early in the game, eventually potting 13 of their own to Davidson's 6. John Buchan led the way with four goals and an assist.

"We were able to control the tempo of the game as our athleticism and ball control were evident early on," said Greg Reid, head coach of the varsity team.

Rookie Cameron MacDonald also earned a hat trick in his first game with the varsity squad.

Later that day, the team visited nearby Wesleyan University where they toured the campus and enjoyed a pre-game meal in preparation for a game with St. Francis DeSales, who placed second in the State in 2014.

Despite the 14 – 8 loss, goalie Drake Porter played a phenomenal game as Reid says he "put the team on his back". The Saints were able to get within one in the third quarter, but ran out of steam in the fourth.

Buchan once again led the way with five points.

They ended their southern swing against the Pickerington North High School Panthers, unfortunately just too gassed from two hard-fought matches the day before. A 5 – 5 tie at half wasn't enough to balance out the second-half defensive shutdown in a 14 – 9 losing effort.

The St. Andrew's College varsity lacrosse team is hoping to repeat their successes from the late 2000's in this year's CISAA season. **Photo by Greg Reid**

But spirits were high entering their first CISAA-sanctioned game last Thursday, after downing Aurora High School in their annual cross-town exhibition matchup 15 – 3 one week earlier.

Unfortunately the Saints were on the wrong side of an 11 – 4 score, losing to St. Michael's College – a perennial powerhouse in the CISAA division.

The varsity squad will be looking to rebound at their home tournament later this week against regional competition.

St. Andrew's began a competitive lacrosse program in 1989, led by current U14 lacrosse coach Fraser Cowell.

The program won its first CISAA championship in the 2005-06 season, the first of four successive championships. The varsity team has also had success at numerous tournaments over the past few years, including the annual SAC tournament.

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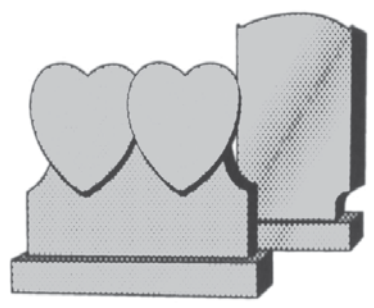
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Youth space construction left out core AFLC members: Abel

From page 3

but they are being overshadowed by disappointment from our residents."

The establishment of a committee to help steer the AFLC through these rough waters won the overall support of Council, who have been inundated with residents' complaints, well beyond the 10 residents who reiterated their concerns at the podium that night.

"We have a facility that is almost ready, should be ready, but it is almost there," said Councillor Jeff Thom. "There are a couple of things we need to deal with, some of which has been [addressed] already. I think this [Committee] is great because it is solution-oriented. We can drop all the negativity and anger and work together with members of the community, Council and staff, and get this list dealt with. If there is anything else to go on this list, let's get that dealt with and move forward."

This last point was one shared by Councillor Michael Thompson, who said he didn't want the mandate of the new committee to be governed too strictly by the list of shortcomings before them.

> *I think this [Committee] is great because it is solution-oriented. We can drop all the negativity and anger and work together with members of the community, Council and staff, and get this list dealt with.*

"I see this as a continuous improvement plan," he said. "I think you can address the things on the list, but more important things may come up [as people use the facility]. I would like to see this as an ongoing process to not only address the issues before us tonight, but others that crop up. I want to get to a point where we're all satisfied with the status of the complex. Residents have come out tonight with an expectation these issues being brought forward are being actively worked on."

Councillor John Abel was also vocal in his support for a solution, suggesting some groups of residents weren't adequately consulted when plans for the Community Space for Youth got underway.

"We were building a youth centre and we forgot all about our members," said Councillor Abel. "I would like to… bring it around to the standards they expect and to keep engaging with them so we can get this done properly and satisfactorily. There is a lot to celebrate that is there, but it is not too late to get this ship going and I think a lot of this can be addressed."

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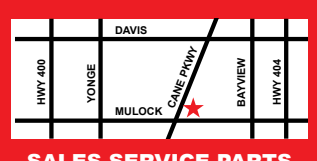

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MITSUBISHI MOTORS

Famed figure skating coach Galbraith dies at 92

By Jake Courtepatte

The figure skating world lost one of their builders last week when coach Sheldon Galbraith passed away at his home in Newmarket last Tuesday.

The long-time Aurora resident was monumental in Canada's figure skating success during the mid-20th century, producing some of the nation's most celebrated champion skaters.

Born in Teulon, Manitoba, Galbraith moved to Palo Alto, California at a young age where he and his brother skated for the touring ice show "Ice Follies." He served in the U.S. Air Force in World War II before embarking on a coaching career in Ottawa in 1946.

It was there at the Minto Skating Club that he took over coaching Barbara Ann Scott, already a Canadian national champion. The two made history when Scott became the first, and to this day only, Canadian woman to win Olympic gold in ladies singles in 1948.

Moving to Toronto in the late '40s,

his students also included pairs teams Frances Dafoe and Norris Bowden, and Barbara Wagner and Robert Paul, building his reputation as one of the top figure skating coaches in the world along the way.

Under the tutelage of Galbraith, his students were world champions in men, ladies, and pairs categories.

"He was a pioneer of the sport and has, as a part of his numerous accomplishments, the remarkable distinction of having coached six skaters who eventually were also inducted into Canada's Sports Hall of Fame," said Mario Siciliano in a statement, President and CEO of the Hall of Fame. "His passion for figure skating and leading edge techniques and innovations will forever mark his legacy in the world of figure skating."

Galbraith holds the honour of helping to bring home Canada's first non-hockey Winter Olympic medals.

Honoured by Canada's Sports Hall of Fame in 1980, Galbraith became the first figure skating coach to be inducted. His accolades since have included the Skate Canada Hall of Fame, World Figure Skating Museum and Hall of Fame, and the Professional Skaters Association Coaches Hall of Fame, as well as a member of the Order of Canada in 1999.

The figure skating community took to Twitter to mourn the loss of one of their greats last week. The U.S. Figure Skating Association offered their sympathies, calling Galbraith "one of Canada's great coaches." International Figure Skating Magazine said of Galbraith "he will be missed dearly by the community."

Galbraith and his wife (also deceased) had five children together.

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Bob Ince, The Auroran
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Best Garden/Landscape Display — Atlas Landscape Inc.

Exhibitor's Choice Award — Jack's Landscaping

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VIEW FROM QUEEN'S PARK

From page 5

for her passion to revitalize the downtown, that has resulted in a vibrant and flourishing business community. Ms. Playter is a Chair of the Newmarket BIA and engages property owners and businesses in the downtown core.

Leah Hans

For the past six years Leah has been a member of Girls Incorporated at the York Region Office, an organization that focuses on the empowerment of girls and young women.

Leah also volunteers with YouthSpeak, a youth performance organization and has written a campaign and filmed a video for which she wrote the script about bullying and the masks that victims wear.

Tammy Farbod

Tammy Farbod has been an active member in the Canadian-Iranian Community in Aurora for many years. In 2010, she organized a weekly program for isolated Canadian- Iranian seniors where they have access to English lessons, exercise classes and an opportunity to socialize with their peers.

The program has become well recognized in the community of Aurora over the years and CHATS (Community and Home Assistance to Seniors) has continued the operation of the program along with the dedication of Ms. Farbod.

Emily Li

Emily Li is the Vice-President of Project Luke Council, a social justice council that encourages students to be aware and participate in social justice issues. She is also on the Legacy Leadership Council and Chair of Free the Children which is an organization that promotes education and human rights for young girls and children world-wide.

She also mentors young girls, encouraging and inspiring them to make a difference in the school and in their community. She helps students to develop their leadership qualities.

Susan Lanthier-Doyle

Susan Lanthier-Doyle is an active member at Welcoming Arms where she played an instrumental role in opening the organization in 2006. She has dedicated her time for over 17 years by way of supporting women and children in Newmarket-Aurora. She is also a volunteer at St. Vincent de Paul in Aurora.

She provides women with the information they need to navigate through the social service system which helps them to find employment, healthcare services and activities for their children. Ms. Lanthier-Doyle's home visits provide guidance, encouragement and compassion.

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New school will address "grey area" in Autism education

By Brock Weir

Serena Thompson's young son, Daniel, lives on the autism spectrum.

He has been in public school and private school, he has even been home schooled, but he has yet to find the perfect fit for him.

Ms. Thompson, however, thought she had struck gold in an autism-specific private school in Toronto, but when told by the director parents were not allowed in the facility, there was no turning back for this mom. Joining forces with Laurie McRae, whose son is also on the Autism spectrum, the duo have set about turning a large Aurora house into Lighthouse Learning and Development Centre, slated to open this September on Old Yonge Street, next to Oakland Hall restaurant.

Unique for York Region, the school is focused on individual education plans, direct instruction, and sensory experiences, all lead by Ontario-certified teachers with specialization in teaching children with autism at a maximum rate of four students per teacher.

Throughout Daniel's journey, Ms. Thompson said he had "amazing teachers" in the school system, but these teachers were not given the adequate support they needed.

"In all the centres we went to, people wanted to tell me about my son, but I am with him 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so I am pretty sure I can tell you way more about my son than you can tell me," says Serena. "There seems to be a gap. [We chose the name] Lighthouse because a lighthouse is the only thing you can see in the dark from miles and miles away. Being a parent, I have felt a lot of times very isolated because you have to trust people to help your child, but that is really hard. There has to be something out there to help you and that is where this all came from.

"We're trying to service this grey area of children who are too high functioning for a typical community class, but they are not high functioning enough to not be supported in a regular classroom environment. Academically, Daniel is very strong, but he learns in a certain way. You have to talk to him in a certain way. You have to deliver the information in a certain way, and that is something that, unfortunately, the school boards have not caught up with."

Opening up a school to address this gap has been a dream of Ms. Thompson's since 2012. At the time, she says she knew how smart her son was but there weren't a lot of people who believed it. She was trying to fight for his education and convince people "he was worth teaching", she explains. He has the potential to be great, but if you don't believe in him first, he is not going to reach that potential.

That is a struggle common for parents with kids on the Autism spectrum, something 850 likes and counting on Facebook can testify to, she says.

Parents will have their first opportunity to take in Lighthouse with an Open House on Saturday, May 9. When completed, the school will have room for 25 students, ample volunteers, and even a "grandparents' room" where grandparents of students can come and spend time with their grandchildren with the support of trained staff.

Tuition is $2,400 per month per student for the school year and, in partnership with Under the Umbrella, Lighthouse aims to raise a minimum of $150,000 per year to provide student bursaries.

Lighthouse Learning and Development Centre co-founder Serena Thompson, left, with teacher Melissa Di Giacomo, are pictured outside the new school on Old Yonge Street, just south of Oakland Hall. The school will host a community open house on May 9. **Auroran photo by Brock Weir**

Students will follow a typical day familiar to everyday students in the public school stream, and this is by design.

"We're hoping this is sort of a middle point for kids where we can transition them into the regular school system seamlessly and we can't do that unless they are familiar with how that routine works," says Ms. Thompson. "Although we would love to keep them, we would love to see them move on. [We'll measure our success] by seeing some of our children integrate beautifully into the public school system, something they probably wouldn't have been able to do without coming to us first.

"Another way is by our parents telling other people how great this is, how welcoming it is, and by seeing the smiles on these little kids' faces – little kids who have anxiety about going to school, seeing them come here, want to be here, and be happy."

For more information on Lighthouse, visit www.lhldc.com.

COMING EVENTS

FRIDAY, APRIL 24

The Aurora Cultural Centre, 22 Church Street, presents Swing Time for Spring Time with the 23-piece After Hours Big Band. Sit back and enjoy the concert, or strap on your dancing shoes and hit the floor! Tickets $15 advance, or $20 day of concert. Cash bar. For information or tickets, call 905 713-1818, or visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

SATURDAY, APRIL 25

The Aurora Seniors' Centre will host their annual Spring Sale today from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. There's something for everybody: white elephant, giant book sale, coffee shop, vendors and artisans from the Aurora Farmers' Market and more.

SUNDAY, APRIL 26

The Aurora Historical Society and Hillary House present a musical tea party this afternoon from 1 – 4 p.m. with Toronto pianist Ellen Meyer. Refreshments will be served throughout and tours of Hillary House National Historic Site will be available. Tickets are $7 pp, $5 for AHS members, $3 per child and $15 for a family.

THURSDAY, APRIL 30

The Aurora Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion hosts Progressive Euchre this evening at 7 p.m. $3pp. Everyone is welcome for a fun night of cards.

APRIL 30 – MAY 2

The Pine Tree Potters' Spring Pottery Sale will be held April 30 – May 3 at the Aurora Cultural Centre, 22 Church Street, Thursday, April 30 and Friday, May 1 from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. There is free parking, free admission and a door prize. Visa, Mastercard and Interac accepted. For Further info: 905-727-1278 or visit www.pinetreepotters.ca.

SATURDAY, MAY 2

The Aurora Community Arboretum, in partnership with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, will hold their annual tree planting event today from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, rain or shine. Bring the whole family and plant a tree. The group meets at Optimist Park, off Birkshire Drive near Skipton Trail in Northeast Aurora. For more information, visit www.auroraarboretum.ca. Students qualify for volunteer hours.

SUNDAY, MAY 3

The Aurora Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion hosts Bid Euchre this afternoon at 1 p.m. Everyone is welcome. $5pp. For more information, call 905-727-9932.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6

The Moraine Quilt Guild meets today from 1 – 3.30 p.m. at Newmarket's St. Paul's Presbyterian Church (404 Water Street). Special Guest: Susan Bowslaugh will present a lecture and trunk show on From Traditional To Modern Quilting. www.morainequiltguild.wordpress.com

Continued on page 21

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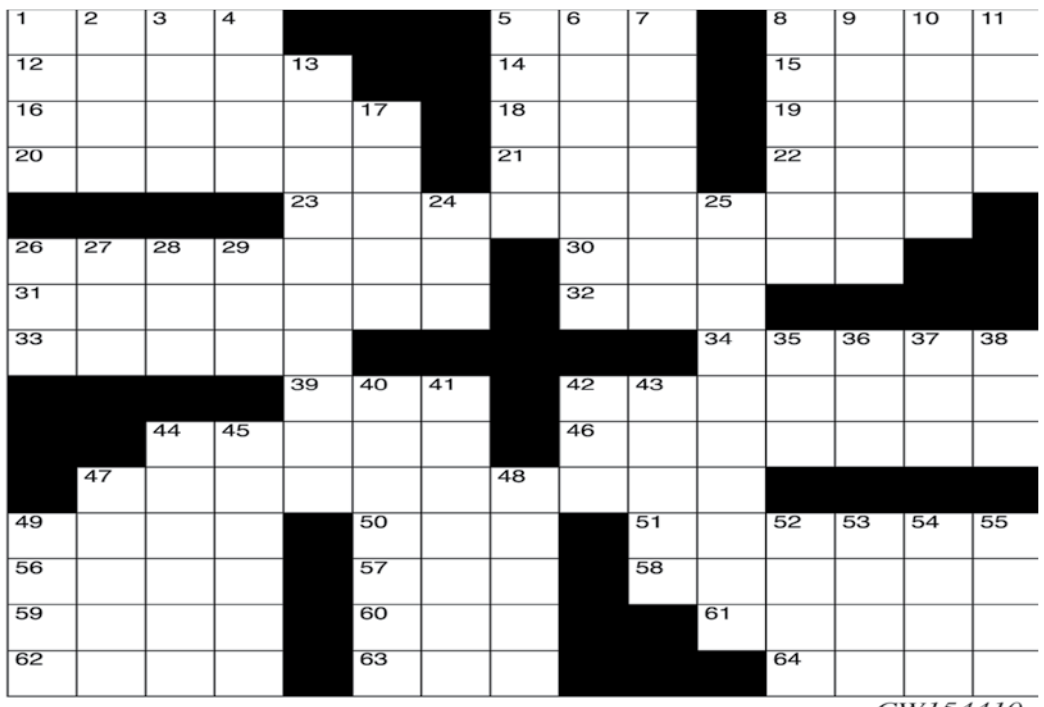

CW154410

CLUES ACROSS

1. Limited period
5. PC graphics file format
8. Coarse file
12. Smooth and lustrous
14. Equal, prefix
15. Waxplant genus
16. One who puts up with
18. H. Potter's BFF
19. Strays
20. Night flight
21. Over the counter (abbr.)
22. Salt Lake state
23. DWTS's oldest judge
26. A way to cut off
30. Hunted beings
31. Sacred tobacco pipe
32. Electronic data processing
33. # of nativity kings
34. Nebraska's largest city
39. School spirit rally
42. 20th Greek letter
44. Belonging to Greek Mother Earth
46. Daisy tanacetum
47. Skilled in many areas
49. Mures river city
50. Brew
51. Extreme fear
56. Ethiopian monetary unit
57. Cardboard box (abbr.)
58. Esoteric
59. Sword similar to a foil
60. __, you!
61. Grass tree
62. Queen of Sparta
63. Major division of geological time
64. Supply with nourishment

CLUES DOWN

1. Czar
2. Czech River
3. Nev. Senator since 1987
4. Person of ancient Media
5. Russian meat pie
6. Atom with the same atomic #
7. Harmony
8. Watery discharge from the eyes or nose
9. Arteries
10. "Breaking the Silence" author Katrina
11. Crushing blow
13. Florida state dessert
17. Della __, singer
24. Meshlike fishing device
25. Storage warehouse
26. Play a role
27. Humbug
28. Single Lens Reflex
29. Billiards stick
35. Parts of an hour (abbr.)
36. A.K.A. opt key
37. Tool to work the soil
38. Not or
40. Pain in the middle or inner ear
41. Collection of Psalms for liturgical use
42. Int'l. news organization
43. High Ottoman official
44. Equipped with gears
45. __ Doria, ship
47. Informal complaint
48. Kurt Weill's 1st wife, Lotte
49. Cain and __
52. Canadian flyers
53. contest
54. At some prior time
55. Make sense of language

Last Week's Puzzle Solution

PUZZLE SOLUTION

■	C	A	S	T	E	■	■	U	P	S	E	T	S	■
A	L	L	P	U	R	P	O	S	E	F	L	O	U	R
S	E	■	I	N	A	U	G	U	R	A	L	■	M	O
A	R	■	C	A	■	P	A	R	■	X	I	■	M	U
P	I	P	A	■	D	A	M	E	S	■	S	P	A	S
■	C	E	■	T	I	L	■	R	A	D	■	A	T	E
■	■	S	E	I	S	■	■	■	C	A	N	N	E	S
■	M	E	S	A	■	■	■	■	■	M	E	A	D	■
C	E	T	E	R	A	■	■	■	R	O	T	C	■	■
A	L	A	■	A	I	D	■	P	A	N	■	E	T	■
R	O	S	S	■	M	A	N	A	N	■	A	A	H	S
O	D	■	E	S	■	M	A	T	■	M	D	■	R	A
M	I	■	A	P	P	A	R	E	L	E	D	■	O	N
S	E	P	T	U	A	G	E	N	A	R	I	A	N	S
■	S	C	O	N	C	E	■	■	G	E	S	T	E	■

Highland developers seek to minimize impact on existing community

From page 1

partnered with landowner ClubLink to redevelop the course, and consultants, landscape architects, and traffic experts retained by the group to guide the process.

"From the outset, we wanted to design a plan that reflected the character of the community that is already there," said Ms. Shindruk. "It is obviously a lovely community and a lovely neighbourhood and we wanted our lots and homes to fit into the community and enhance what is already there. We know it is a tight, neighbourly situation so, from the outset, we also knew buffering and sensitivity to your properties is paramount and important to us."

To further this plan, the partnership has retained the services of Don Given of Malone Given Parsons, a consultant that has helped steer many developments in the Aurora area. Addressing the crowds, he said extensive work had gone into preparing the plan, accounting for the fact this redevelopment is, essentially, set to take place right in their backyards.

An important thing for residents to consider, he said, were provincial development guidelines which call for intensification on existing lands to halt urban sprawl. This project is typical in achieving those goals, he said, particularly in "reusing lands that have lost their useful purpose."

These statements didn't wash with the residents, however, particularly the view this redevelopment would be an "enhancement."

"I have spoken to people that will soon have, instead of green all around them, a road down one side [of their property] and down the other," said resident Chris McGowan. "It is difficult to think of that as enhancing the area."

Mr. McGowan was not alone in his criticism over the street layouts in the proposed plan, with similar views offered by many of his counterparts.

In response, Ms. Shindruk said the rights of way are "sized to meet" municipal standards, and these will be up for further review at Town Hall.

"We coexist tightly with our neighbours, and that is why we want to do what we can to buffer the relationship between the new and existing."

Pressed by other neighbours for examples of where Geranium had carried out similar redevelopment projects on golf courses, Ms. Shindruk said this was a first for them on this type of land, but she and Mr. Given pointed to Newmarket's Glenway redevelopment as an example of where it had been done elsewhere.

"Each site is unique [and has its] own set of challenges," said Ms. Shindruk. "We're obliged to conduct ourselves in a way that is appropriate for the conditions of the site."

The Glenway comparison though did not sit well with the Highland Gate neighbours.

"This is a form of development that is unusual," said Mr. Given. "We're not trying to hide that, but it is the only thing you can do when you have the tight arrangement of these fairways and we're trying to minimize the impact on the existing community. The reuse of the golf course is inevitable. It is private land. It has its rights to go through an approval process."

As the audience balked at the argument that the redevelopment was an inevitability, some turned to local leaders for some answers. In attendance were Mayor Geoff Dawe and nearly all Aurora Councillors. Addressing the crowds at the start of the meeting, Mayor Dawe said he and Council were there to listen to their concerns "to get a sense of where we want to go."

"We appreciate this is an emotional issue and we want to work with you to make sure whatever happens, happens in the best interests of everyone who is here tonight," he said.

As far as most of the audience was concerned, however, what was in their best interests was a far cry from the plan projected onto the screen.

"I am not sure I really buy the [intensification argument]," said another man. "146 houses isn't going to make much of a dint in the additional 20,000 [the province] wants in Aurora. It sounds like a sweet, easy target. For 146 houses, you are going to wipe out basically the style of living we bought into in the golf club area."

Added Aurora-resident Cyndy Skillins, who attended the meeting to speak on behalf of her mother-in-law, who lives in the Highland Gate area: "I know you guys (the developers) have done a lot of work, but when you take the number of houses, the number of people, the number of lots that have made Aurora a really good and amazing community, how can you turn around and not give either consideration or compensation for what we are going to go through in the property loss we're going to have, 20 acres of parks does not equate to what everyone has gone through. This is a travesty to what Aurora stood for.

"What you're talking about to me sounds like Wonder Bread. You have taken everything out from the nutrition of wheat, put a little back in and call it 'enriched.' It really is not for the people who are living here."

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Photography by: Greg King Photography

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MAGNA

Redevelopment will bring parks, "naturalization" to water courses

By Brock Weir

If the redevelopment of Highland Gate Golf Course ultimately moves forward as presented, it will bring approximately 50 acres of trails and green space into the community fold.

This was the message delivered at last week's public open house, which attracted hundreds of residents not just from the Highland Gate community, but Aurorans from all corners of the Town.

According to Mark Schollen, landscape architect retained by the partners to redevelop the course, approximately half of the 100 acre site will be up for parks and recreation, including a central park area of about 20 acres.

"When we started to design the plan, we looked at all the recreational amenities around the area to get an idea of what was missing so that we could build those components into our plan," he said. "As part of that process, we also spoke to representatives of the Town of Aurora to get an idea of what they thought was missing as well. We have developed a plan that includes many amenities that won't be found elsewhere."

While trails can be found across Aurora, the proposed redevelopment will help bridge a few gaps as far as off-road transportation is concerned. Approximately eight kilometres of trails – over half of which will be off roads – is included in the planning envelope.

"It will realise the plan of including a connected trail system from Bathurst Street to Yonge Street that will link transit and provide a larger trail network for residents [town-wide] to get to Sheppard's Bush, shopping on Yonge Street, and the like," said Mr. Schollen.

Outside of the realm of parks and recreation, the partnership has been working with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Area (LSRCA) to improve surrounding watercourses in the area. To achieve their infill goal of building nearly 150 homes on the existing golf course lands, a number of ponds will have to be filled up and this, said Mr. Schollen, was something welcomed by the LSRCA.

"That was done primarily as an aspiration of the LSRC as a means to improve fish habitat," he said. "Right now those ponds are contained by weirs and those weirs are barriers to fishing upstream and downstream."

This view was bolstered by Mayor Geoff Dawe, chair of the LSRCA, who said there was a "conservation goal to re-channelize that area" near Sunrise Assisted Living to address issues particularly surrounding a nearby pond, where excessive sedimentation has resulted in flooding of surrounding properties.

"They want to see those ponds removed and water courses naturalized and protected and allowed to run free flowing without having to go through a pond, and you have the problems associated with that," said Cheryl Shindruk, Vice President of Geranium Corporation, underscoring the Mayor's point about sedimentation. "[These problems also include] the change of temperature. Water courses that feed those ponds will be protected. There will be buffers established on either side of the course so the habitat for small critters and fish habitat, more importantly, is maintained and protected."

While some residents raised concerns about trails coming through the lands, particularly half of which will be on sidewalks, they also questioned the wisdom of filling in some of the ponds. While the residents conceded the ponds in question were not "natural", many having been built by the course owners in the interwar years, they had become "naturalised" in the intervening decades, providing habitat for ducks, birds, frogs, and other creatures.

Others didn't see the parkland dedication slated for the development as a generous gesture.

"It sounds very nice you have us 28 acres of parks, we appreciate that, but how much of this park is because you can't build a house," said one woman, pointing to area wetlands. "You want maximum profit for your organization and that is the truth,"

Not so, according to Ms. Shindruk.

"Some of the green space to be conveyed to the Town is not buildable, some of it is buildable," she said. "In order to satisfy our parkland dedication requirements by the Planning Act, we have to convey land that is otherwise buildable and we have exceeded that requirement."

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DOLLARS MAKE SENSE, but volunteering can make you feel like a million bucks

Get out there and be the change you want to make in the world. And what have you got to lose? With this change, you can also feel like a million bucks.

This Thursday, students at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School are carrying on Sarah's Drive for Hope, a student-led initiative to have people in the community over the age of 17 swabbed and registered for bone marrow donation.

"In a society like this one we live in today, it is important to feel like you are bigger, and you may believe you are," said Haven Moulds, a founding member of Sarah's Drive for Hope, at a recent event honouring young and mature female leaders in the Aurora and Newmarket communities, where she was joined by fellow student Meghan Harrison. "Men are often the ones who are shown to have the power and the ability to make the change. We are here to tell you – yes, you – have the power and the ability to make that change.

"You can lead and have followers and stand up for equality. We are strong and volunteering shows it. Many people can easily donate money, but you don't know where that money is going. When you volunteer, you can see how your work directly effects those around you and it is really an amazing thing. To be able to see your idea come to life in front of you becomes so incredible it is truly empowering. Being able to see the change you have imparted can make you feel confident and powerful and, for lack of a better term, like a million bucks."

Teens might feel that nobody will listen to what they have to say, but Meghan said she has found this not to be the case.

"Teens are the future and we believe the ones to make a change in today's society. So, why not make that a positive change. You may think your voice is small, but believe me. It isn't. If you set your mind to it you can have a positive impact on the world around you. This change doesn't have to be anything global. Even something that is small in your community can make a world of change.

"Figure out what you want to do to make your time on this earth worthwhile and go for it. Volunteering is one of the best ways to expand your horizons. You not only gain self-confidence and personal growth, but you become a better leader and someone who can one day empower others the same way you are empowered to do great things."

■ WRITTEN BY BROCK WEIR

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Long-time volunteer aims to inspire as Relay's Honourary Survivor

By Brock Weir

Relay for Life has always been a busy time for Michelle Clayton-Wood.

The long-time volunteer, and Newmarket resident, has been helping the Canadian Cancer Society plan their annual event for over a decade now using her expertise not only in the planning stages, but also organizing fun and games for the kids, and helping cancer survivors at the Relay itself.

This year, however, is different. Somewhat reluctant to put herself out there on the frontlines, she will share her story with the hundreds expected at this year's event as the "Honourary Survivor" for this year's event.

The 2015 Relay for Life will be an event of firsts. This year, the Newmarket Relay will be the focus of Northern York Region, having merged late last year with the Aurora Relay, which was previously held at Magna Headquarters. 2015 will also be, for many, somewhat less daunting, whittled down to six hours from an all-night affair.

"I am just used to keeping my head down and doing all the volunteer work and the legwork, but this might be a chance for me to grow within the organization and help a little more and learn about other ways of helping to give back," says Ms. Clayton-Wood. "I am very happy to have this honour. Although I have been a survivor all these years, I haven't decided to be very public about it. Bringing up my kids and running my business, I just kept it in the background. I have always been a volunteer, but never really put up my hand [to share my story]. I am really excited and I also feel I can help people realise people can live with cancer and maybe I can be a little bit of a role model."

When Ms. Clayton-Wood was looking for ways to give back, she looked no further than the Canadian Cancer Society because, in her view, without them, raising her children and running that business would have been decidedly more difficult as she battled the disease.

Diagnosed with cancer 15 years ago, she endured 40 radiation treatments and three weeks of chemotherapy, but the Stronach Cancer Centre at Southlake Regional Health Centre was still some years away from becoming a reality. Trips to Toronto's Sunnybrook Hospital were a regular reality for Ms. Clayton Wood, a particular challenge when trying to run a business while raising two children aged 2 and 5.

"With the support of the Canadian Cancer Society, I managed to get through that," she says. "I was driven down to my treatments at Sunnybrook every day. They would take me down every day and every night, because I really wanted to be home with my children who were still so young, to see them every night before bed and have dinner with them, even though I couldn't eat. That was really important to me. I was trying to figure out the logistics of how this was going to work and [the Society] guided me through all that. I owe a lot to this organization."

For more information on Relay for Life, to sign up, or support teams, visit www.relayforlife.ca. The combined Newmarket-Aurora Relay for Life takes place at Pickering College on Friday, June 19, from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m.

PASS THE BATON: King Mayor Steve Pellegrini, Regional Chair Wayne Emerson, Georgina Mayor Margaret Quirk, Newmarket Mayor Tony Van Bynen, East Gwillimbury Mayor Virginia Hackson, Honourary Survivor Michelle Clayton-Wood, Aurora Mayor Geoff Dawe, and Karen Beaulieu and Janice Foote of the Canadian Cancer Society were on hand to launch the Relay for Life campaign Thursday at the York Region Office.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

In Good Company

From page 5

good example. Our task is to assess the application to determine whether the proposal is appropriate, given our strict development standards. This does not preclude us from working with proponents to bring forward proposals that take into consideration the environment and the needs of neighbours, which we are doing with Highland.

As I write this article, I just received notice that the Government of Ontario and Metrolinx have approved the construction of a new, second track on the GO Transit Barrie line between Aurora and Union Station. This project, which is part of the Regional Express Rail initiative, will allow for 15-minute, two-way, all-day service to Aurora.

This announcement is welcome news for commuters, who will have more options for travel, easy access to downtown Toronto and full access to travel to Aurora. The project is anticipated to cost $17.4 million and is expected to be complete in 2017.

Before signing off, I hope to see many people out to support the Run or Walk for Southlake Regional Health Centre on Saturday, April 26 at 7:30 a.m. If you are interested in sponsoring or participating, please visit www.runforsouthlake.ca

On May 2, please join us for our Aurora Family Leisure Complex Youth Centre Grand Opening, to see the great new youth additions to the facility. Also, on May 2 and 3, join us at Town Hall for our very popular Juried Art Show and Sale. The weekend holds something for everyone. I hope to see you there!

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Fire Department seeking land for new station, training centre

By Brock Weir

The hunt is on for land on which to build a new fire station and training central for the Central York Fire Services, serving Aurora and Newmarket.

Newmarket Council has approved a $25,000 plan to hire an architectural consultant to help with land securement and, pending further funding, design the facility according to the land selected, that will house administration, a training facility, and a new fire crew.

A new fire station is one of many priorities outlined in the CYFS' draft update to their fire master plan. It is intended to be located centrally to both communities, and the Joint Council Committee (JCC), the group of Aurora and Newmarket Councillors tasked with overseeing the CYFS have, along with consultants drafting the plan update, been eyeing land located in the area of Yonge Street and St. John's Sideroad.

"Discussions at JCC centred around the budget and the recommendation to move forward with what is in our Fire Master Plan," said Councillor John Abel, who sits on the JCC. "What we recommended was moving forward with possibly looking at sites for the new fire hall and to only spend $25,000 on an architectural consultant to give an idea of what piece of land we need and for the options of how big a building we're going to build for training facilities as well as administration, which isn't huge.

"The bottom line is we want to start looking at securing some land."

Sitting in for Aurora CAO Neil Garbe at last week's Council meeting, Al Downey, Director of Parks and Recreation, said this is the first step in "addressing the need for an additional station" as well as where it might go.

"It is not committing Council to a purchase, but rather we're exploring the opportunities that are out there to retain those parcels of land, and then we will be reporting back to JCC and ultimately Council, [on] moving forward with a purchase or not."

If appropriate land is found, and the JCC moves forward with a new purchase, a funding structure would need to be agreed to and finalized between Aurora and Newmarket, according to Aurora Treasurer Dan Elliott.

"Due to a shortage of potentially available lands suitable for this purpose and the area we need them, they are starting to disappear and we would like to acquire these, narrow it down and make a recommendation as quickly as we can," said Mr. Elliott. "In the meantime, we're going to sort out [financing], one of the issues that has hit the service agreement. It speaks to if the municipalities can't agree, it is split 50-50."

A potential new fire station is not the only change on the horizon for the CYFS. Overtures have been made recently by the JCC to gauge the interest of Richmond Hill in joining up in a three-way partnership.

"The reason for choosing Richmond Hill specifically is we have heard there was interest when it comes to Richmond Hill, so we just wanted to see from the political side of it whether [their] Council would be interested in going down this road and possibly consolidating fire service," said Councillor Tom Mrakas, another member of the JCC, responding to questions from Councillor Harold Kim on why they approached Richmond Hill rather than other like-sized communities such as King Township and East Gwillimbury.

"I personally think it is centrally located, so it would make us a true Central York Fire Service, and East Gwillimbury and a lot of the other ones have lots of volunteer firefighters. From that aspect of it, consolidating them might be a bit of a problem in terms of bringing everyone together and hiring actual crews. This makes the most sense at this time and we figure it is a good first step to take."

COMING EVENTS

From page 17

* * * *

The Aurora Public Library presents the latest in their Money Talk$ Series: Managing Diversification with Stocks and ETFs, tonight at 7 p.m. in the Magna Room. This is a free, informal monthly discussion/education group to share unbiased experience and knowledge in economics and financial planning. Presentation will be followed by a group discussion. For more information, call the Adult Information Desk at 905-727-9494 x.275.

SATURDAY, MAY 9

It's time to clean up Hillary House at their annual Spring Clean-Up Day. This is your chance to help out in your community. Volunteers are needed and the Society is looking for those who can assist their Landscaping Committee in cleaning up the grounds in time for their spring opening. Lunch is provided. For more information, call 905-727-8991.

THURSDAY, MAY 21

The Aurora Cultural Centre will host The Art of Wine: A Wine Tasting Fundraiser this evening at 7.30 p.m. Guests will sip old world vintages in a casual, relaxed and fun setting, enjoying a series of tutored tastings guided by sommelier Franco Stalteri from Grapebrands Wines. Tickets are $75 pp or $70 for Friends of the Centre. For more information, visit www.auroraculturalcentre.ca or call 905-713-1818.

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