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# THE AURORAN

CANADA 150

*Aurora's Community Newspaper*

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**ENTER THE GUARDIANS** – Movie lovers were able to get up close and personal with the Guardians of the Galaxy last week thanks to members of Marquee Theatrical Productions. They added that special touch to Thursday night's screening of Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2, which unspooled at Town Park for Aurora's Movies in the Park program. The film series wraps up this Thursday, August 31, at Hickson Park with Trolls.

*Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger*

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## A new baby signals beginning of new chapter for sponsored Syrian family

By Brock Weir

A new life is the start of a new page in many a family's book, but for a local Syrian family, Sunday night marked the beginning of an important – and exciting – new chapter for them as they welcomed their first Canadian-born baby.

When they left Syria, this family of five – a mom, Hanaa, dad Mehsen, and three kids, including a toddler – had to walk for 22 days, often in perilous circumstances, to reach safety from their war-torn homeland.

Reaching the Jordanian border, the family did their very best to provide some level of comfort for their kids in

very uncertain circumstances. She was pregnant in the camp and by the time they were approached for a refugee opportunity in Canada, they were a family of six facing a crucial decision and, bravely, they decided to leap into the unknown.

They became the first Syrian refugee family sponsored by the Interfaith Refugee Resettlers (IRR), a group of volunteers from Aurora United Church, Trinity Anglican Church, and the Newmarket Islamic Centre.

"They were willing to go anywhere," says Mae Khamissa, a founding member of the IRR, who was honoured to be selected as birthing coach for the mother of the as-yet-unnamed baby

girl. "Living in a hell hole for a while, you would want to go anywhere too. Once they said yes, they started getting really scared because people were saying, 'Oh, you're going to a country where the sun never comes out, where it is cold, dark and gloomy,' but they said for the first time they set foot down here it has been a positive, incredible and amazing experience."

Jumping into the unknown is always a scary prospect, but they needn't have worried as they arrived at Pearson International Airport last winter. They were greeted by the warmth of IRR's enthusiasm

Continued on page 19

**AURORA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

2017 Aurora Chamber  
**TECH EXPO**  
Thursday, October 19th  
2-7pm  
King's Riding Golf Club



**THE VEGETARIAN OPTION** – Ribfest is all about the meat on the grill, but Kaylee decided to be a bit of a rebel, crunching into a freshly roasted cob of corn. Actually, corn was a very popular option as Ribfest took over Machell Park last Friday through Sunday. For full coverage of the festivities, please see Page 6.  
*Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger*

## Hospital security guard charged with two counts of sexual assault

By Brock Weir

A 24-year-old Aurora man faces two charges of sexually assaulting a 16-year-old girl and a 19-year-old woman.

Charged is Pabiram Ravichandran of Aurora who was a contracted security guard at Southlake Regional Health Centre, according to York Regional Police.

"In July 2017, York Regional Police began an investigation into a contracted

Continued on page 7

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# Province puts future of historic college building up in the air

By Brock Weir

It has gone by many names over its first century, whether it is De La Salle College, Pine Ridge hospital, or any number of Provincial departments. Soon, it could add another name to the list: history.

The Province of Ontario has put the wheels in motion to declare the building surplus and put the extensive property on the northwest corner of Yonge and Bloomington up for sale.

Paving the way for a potential land sale, the Ministry of Infrastructure is seeking zoning amendments which would, in turn, allow for the building at its core to be razed and paved over for a new housing development.

This fall, Aurora's Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) is expected to go through the Province's application, after Council put the brakes on the process following a Public Planning meeting this past spring.

Originally facing a motion to send the application from Public Planning directly to General Committee for subsequent Council approval, Councillors slowed down the process asking not only for a further report from staff to address the many concerns voiced by residents and employees at the building alike, but to send it to HAC for their input as well.

"There is a lot of stuff that needs to be looked at here," said Councillor Jeff Thom, voicing his concerns over heritage aspects of the property, and making the motion to send the matter to HAC. "I am not in favour, at least at this point in time."

The building in question was built in 1915 as the seminary De La Salle College, which housed a Catholic order whose history is reflected in the natural feature, Monk's Walk, which is to be preserved regardless of the fate of the rest of the property.

From 1949 to 1984, the building was Pine Ridge, a controversial Provincial hospital for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Pine Ridge was one of a number of similar Provincial institutions subject to a 2015 class action lawsuit for abuses patients suffered behind its walls. The



The Provincially owned building, formerly De La Salle College and later Pine Ridge, is located at 50 Bloomington Road.

class action lawsuit was settled earlier this year and the resulting \$36 million settlement will be used to provide compensation for residents not only of Pine Ridge, but eleven similar institutions as well.

Following its use as a hospital, the facility was retrofitted for use by the Province as offices for a number of ministries, including the Ministry of Transportation.

Now, those days are all but over and the Province is seeking to strip the property of its "major institutional", "minor institutional" and environmental function area" status to permit cluster residential. While the majority of the land currently owned by the Province is deemed undevelopable due to environmental protection, planners for the Province have outlined three different scenarios on how to maximize the land that can be developed.

The first concept shows between 140 and 153 residential units, with 45 single detached houses and up to 108 units within a new apartment building.

The second concept keeps the De La Salle College building in place, with up to 48 apartments built inside, surrounded by up to 14 detached and 88 stacked townhouses.

The third concept does away with the historic building entirely, making room for 44 townhouses and 102 stacked townhouse uses.

**Aurora photo by Brock Weir**

"They are strictly hypothetical, but they illustrate how modest residential infill could be accommodated on the site without negatively impacting the important views and vistas, and it will complement the overall character of the area and make good use of the existing urban infrastructure and services in the area," said Amy Shepherd of IBI Group presenting the options to Council.

As this is, at the moment, strictly a hypothetical situation, there is still a process the Province will need to go through. First the 13.3 hectares need to be formally deemed surplus and sold, a sale which will be offered in a hierarchy first to other Provincial ministries, then to the Region of York, the Town, and followed by other non-profits.

This process, she estimated, could take up to a year.

Surrounding lands have already been declared surplus, with the Town of Aurora's expression of interest in the land for new parkland the bid favoured by the Province.

The three hypotheticals have, so far, garnered mixed reactions from members of the public, largely negative.

These concerns range from preserving the environmental features of the land, worries over increased residential density in the area, storm water impacts, potential graves on-site purported to be the resting places of some of the monks and seminarians from the De

La Salle College days, lost employment opportunities, and various issues of historical interest.

"There were two major institutions that had a lot to do with the history of your community and I think that should be taken into consideration," said Jeff Andersen, who works at 50 Bloomington. "One of the things we're trying to find are grave sites of some of the brothers that worked there and the proposals are going right over them. We would have to find the grave sites before we can continue on. Take that storied history into consideration."

Added Asha Fortini, "Once I left home, I really wanted to continue living in Aurora, raise my family in Aurora, and work in Aurora. I have been lucky that I have been able to do so. It affords me quite a bit of work-life balance. On my lunch hours I can run out and get that birthday gift I forgot and I am shopping in Aurora. I can grab my groceries on my way home and I am doing that in Aurora. It was a very deliberate decision to work and continue to reside in Aurora... it would be a very crucial decision on if I would continue to live in Aurora to work and raise my family."

While Council members agreed there are many more questions that need to be answered before they can weigh in further, some expressed concerns that changing existing zoning on the property is really the Province asking the Municipality for help in realising the maximum profit from the sale of their land.

"There is a lot of uncertainty over the future development of the site," said Councillor Michael Thompson, drawing parallels to a recent application to rezone the land on which the former south Aurora Canadian Tire, now for sale, is located.

Added Councillor Tom Mrakas: "While this is not for sale per se, we all understand it is going to be deemed surplus. That is why they are here looking for an amendment to optimise the best use but at the end of the day it is also to increase the profit. I don't think [it is up to us to make an amendment] just to increase the profit margin so I am not in favour."

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# Michelle Stewart is making a difference – one smile at a time

By Brock Weir

A little positivity can go a very long way. That is the guiding philosophy of Michelle Stewart.

An active volunteer in many parts of our community, Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School grad says she gets involved to “make sure everybody has a positive outlook on life and to make sure everyone keeps smiling.” When she entered Council Chambers this past spring to receive the Youth Volunteer Award at Aurora’s 2017 Community Recognition Awards, there were plenty of smiles to go around and the broadest might have been from the individuals bringing her up to accept the award from Councillor Wendy Gaertner.

Still recovering from a concussion sustained in a fall from a horse several months ago, she was led into the ceremony by teachers Jocelyn Kervin and Mark Watkin who have been left awe-struck seeing, at a very personal level, just what the power of one – and a team – can do.

Mr. Watkin struggles to find the words to explain why he nominated Michelle for the Youth Achievement Award.

Among other endeavours, Michelle was honoured as a member of Sarah’s Stars, an in-school club inspired by young Sarah, a local girl who was diagnosed with cancer in 2012 aged just five.

Since that diagnosis, the students have raised more than \$10,000 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada, and registered dozens of individuals on the National Bone Marrow Donor registry with a simple cheek swab.

Sadly, Sarah Watkin lost her fight, but her father, Mark, is beyond proud that students like Michelle have ensured Sarah’s memory will live on.

“Just to hear Sarah’s name and hear that getting used in a positive way to help someone else, to pay it forward, is certainly an incredible thought in my mind,” says Mr. Watkin. “To be able to pay it forward is, for me, the best thing possible. I love that about her and



Mark Watkin, Michelle Stewart, and Jocelyn Kervin are pictured at this past spring’s Community Recognition Awards. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

everyone who has participated in these events.

“When this first came up, I thought of all the students in the school; who do I know, who is just exemplary, who is just an amazing student and just wants to help everybody, and I don’t think it took me very long to think of Michelle. She has really put back into the community. She is just a wonderful, caring student and I look forward to her doing many things in the future. I personally think she’s going to be the next astronaut! She is just an amazing girl.”

Ms. Kervin shares in this sentiment, calling Michelle “the absolute epitome of positivity.”

“There are very few people who just exude such joy in life and have such joy in other people,” says Ms. Kervin. “As well as helping out with Sarah’s Stars and running that, she is the president of our music council, she is a Best Buddy helping out in our Special Needs classes and just loves it, and the kids love her. She always has a smile on her face.

“She is struggling with a concussion right now and has just fought like mad to continue her schooling and continue being involved from a distance as much as she can. She is just so bright and lovely. She is a gorgeous, shining star and she just walks in and immediately lights up a room. You just want to help her help others in any way you possibly

can. It is such a joy.”

Ms. Kervin also knew Sarah Watkin and recalls her not only growing up as a girl but becoming a growing part of the Dr. G.W. Williams Community. Students like Megan Harris, Haven Moulds, and Abigail Kearney, she said, started the program and ran with it and they, in turn, were able to teach younger students like Michelle to keep paying it forward.

It is an enduring legacy.

As the school year begins, Michelle continues her recovery but is eager to take her place at Niagara College, where she plans to become an aesthetician.

“Winning [the Youth Achievement Award] was an incredible feeling after going through the concussion,” she told The Auroran this week. “It had me so down because I wanted to do so much more with my school, but being stuck in bed for almost eight months made my mental abilities go down. Having the opportunity to win such an amazing award, and even being nominated, just made me so happy and proud to continue volunteering even now.”

She hopes to plant the seeds for Sarah’s Stars in Niagara when she gets there.

“I want to make sure Sarah’s Stars lives on and continues to grow and keep Sarah’s name really bright in people’s eyes. When you think of Sarah, you

think of that amazing little girl who was fighting for her life, and we continue to share that legacy.”

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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Older neighbourhoods must be protected: reader**

The Regency Acres subdivision was built in the late 1950s and featured low rise, single family dwellings.

Times are changing with the advent of higher and very large homes being constructed on the original lots.

To date, some of the renovations and constructions have been tastefully done and fit in well with their surrounding houses. Others comply with existing zoning bylaws, but are clearly not compatible with their neighbours.

This is happening all over in our stable, mature subdivisions and needs to be addressed by Council.

Therefore, I would propose the following changes:

That height restrictions for new buildings be reduced in old residential sections of town

That zoning and planning departments help protect and maintain the integrity of these mature neighbourhoods – before issuing permits!

Prior notification in writing must be made well in advance to give residents a chance to voice their views

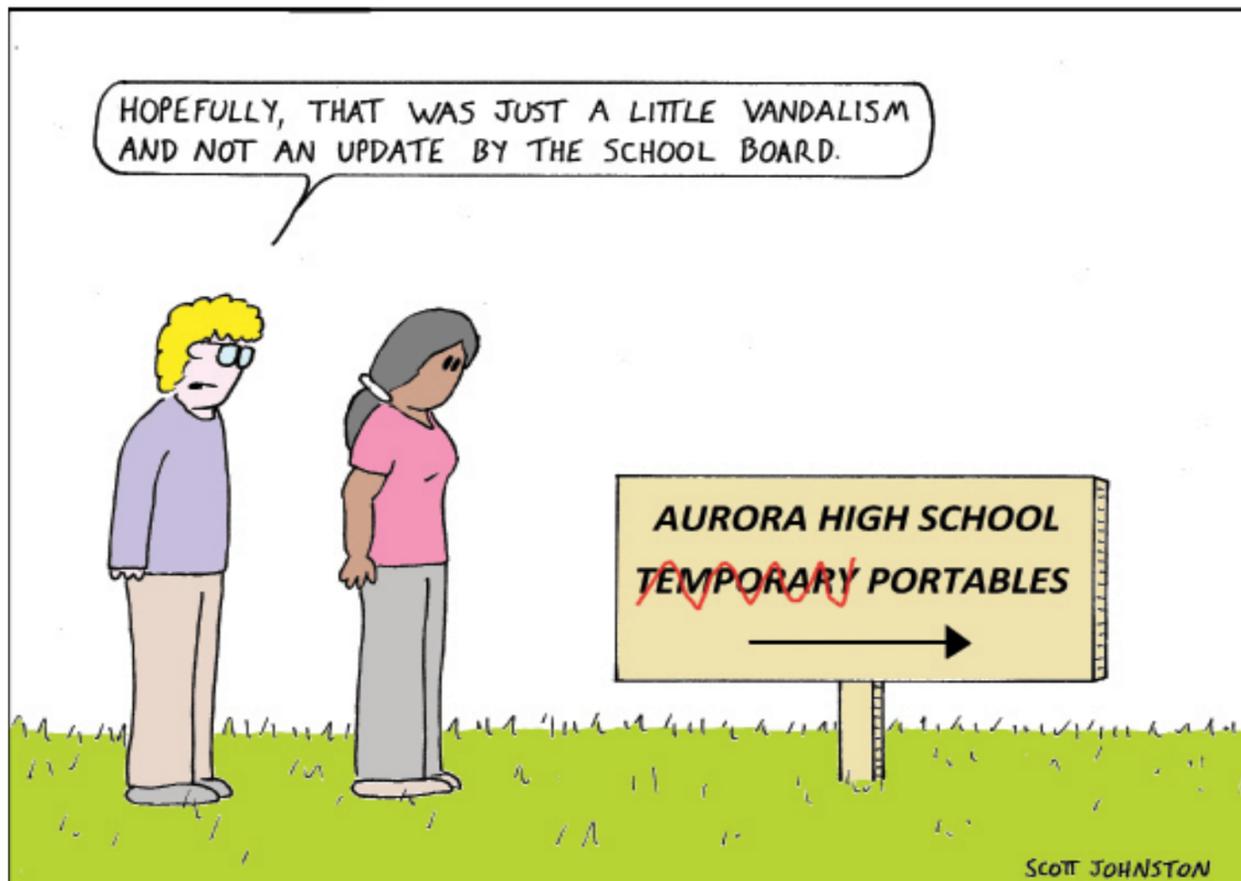
We, as residents of these older communities, and the politicians that represent us, must protect these mature sections of Aurora.

In my view, this is a really important community issue which must be addressed now.

If you agree, please write a Letter to the Editor as well as contacting your Councillors.

P.C. Smith  
Aurora

**Machell's Corners**



**Goddess of the Hunt**



**BROCK'S BANTER**

Brock Weir

A pair of burgundy track pants paired vividly with a ratty, neon orange FUBU t-shirt, which my eleven-year-old self really had a nerve to put on.

A full order of take-out from 4 Seasons, the Main Street Newmarket Chinese food staple.

Cantonese chow mein, steamed rice, barbequed pork, sweet and sour chicken balls.

Ice cubes tinkling in a frosty glass of coke.

All of which made a wooden TV table groan under the weight.

I was sitting in a comfy, grey armchair ready for a late, late dinner.

A remote control was on the right arm of the chair and, as we ate our meal, I asked my grandmother if she minded if I flipped around the channels for a bit.

We were watching something of such little consequence it left nothing but vapour in my mind. The rest? Those are fine details seared clearly and permanently in my mind.

As I flipped channels downward, I zipped past ABC News, which was running a special news bulletin.

What was on the screen took a moment to register and I continued flipping until I saw a flap behind me from the corner of my eye. Two generations of family females telling me to go quickly back to ABC and to the live coverage of what was, at that point, the bulletin Diana, Princess of Wales had been injured in a Paris car crash.

It was a long evening, but it was history unfolding before my young eyes.

Up until that point, I had heard my parents and grandparents recall with a degree of wonder, clouded with some lingering shades of horror, knowing exactly what they were doing, exactly what they were wearing, exactly what they were feeling at just such moments, whether it was the assassination of JFK or, under happier circumstances, the Moon Landing.

As soon as what I was seeing started to sink in, I knew this was the first time I would be experiencing just such a moment.

I have been a monarchist for as long as I can remember, so Diana, Princess of Wales was very much a part of my upbringing.

The Prince and Princess of Wales were, of course, regular fixtures in the media, but they were also fodder for plenty of conversation at family gatherings, for better or worse.

As strange as it seems today, the War of the Waleses was seen as perfectly appropriate table talk for someone who

great deal of this is the question of unfulfilled promise.

Once Charles and Diana had settled their differences and seemed to have settled into a more or less happy existence as co-parents, it seemed both of them were once again poised to reach their full potential.

Charles was able to get on with the business at hand, working tirelessly on the myriad benevolent initiatives he has carved out for himself as Heir to the Throne. On Diana's part, she seemed more content and comfortable than she ever had been, energized to tackle timely and tough problems facing the world. One such example was the scourge of landmines which were, at that point, continuing to wreak havoc in so many war-torn parts of the globe.

She used her star power to highlight this problem and it affected real change – even if this change was realised mere months after her death.

Of course, how much she could have achieved, if afforded the time and opportunity over the last 20 years remains untold, and that, in turn, has become a cornerstone of the myth.

Thankfully, we do have a mere hint of what might have been, with her sons and, most recently, her daughter-in-law doing their utmost to realise this potential not only with the way they are carrying out their royal duties but with the causes they champion.

In the next few weeks, for instance, Toronto will welcome injured and wounded servicemen and service women from around the world for the Invictus Games, an initiative spearheaded by Prince Harry. Together with the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, this trio have also kick-started a very important – and fresh – conversation on mental health through their Heads Together initiative, a movement that is ongoing and is, in turn, affecting real change for those who need it.

Over the course of time, the legacy and impact of Diana has come to mean different things to different people.

Despite her being a contemporary for so many of us, there is a new generation for whom she is simply a part of history seemingly far removed from the world of today.

While this week's milestone anniversary seems to have opened up old wounds in some quarters, it would be beneficial to focus on the positive and look to the future as her family furthers her legacy in ways that are unique to themselves.

was just seven during the 1992 so-called "annus horribilus", as well as for a mature nine-year-old when the "war" reached its zenith with the Princess of Wales' bombshell Panorama interview.

So, by the time they eventually divorced in 1996, I felt I had a vested interest in how it all turned out, not yet fully comprehending all the significant constitutional consequences the situation had here and throughout the commonwealth.

No one, of course, ever expected it to turn out how it did and it seems almost incomprehensible today; not just the tragic crash and the untimely deaths it caused, but the near worldwide mass hysteria it caused.

There is a fine line between myth and legend. Some people – Wayne Gretzky for sports fans, Robert De Niro for movie buffs, and (insert politician of your choice, I'm no fool) for politicians, to name just a few – become legends in their own lifetimes.

Despite being aged just 36, Diana was one such person.

In death, however, she became something more.

If I had the time, I would like to trace back just when, from my perspective, the late Princess of Wales became less of a legend minted during my own lifetime and when she acquired the patina of a near-myth.

Perhaps it was indeed the singular collective nervous breakdown that surrounded her death which bumped this up to a different level, but different it is.

Despite living through her heyday as a working member of the Royal Family and, later, as a tireless charity worker, her memory has acquired an otherworldly quality. It always happens when the light of a superstar is extinguished just as it burns its brightest.

It also tends to happen when the full picture of the person is lost as their most genuinely brilliant attributes are lionized while all human foibles and frailty are airbrushed away or swept off the larger canvas.

In this case, however, I think a

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The winner will be announced at the Library's Ontario Public Library Week Open House on Mon. Oct. 16

and will receive a gift certificate for a Movie Date Night. The winning photograph will be published in The Auroran.

To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to letters@auroran.com  
Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

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### The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating... The Canadian National Exhibition (CNE)!

For 138 years, the end of summer vacation has been signaled by the arrival of Toronto's CNE. Originally called the Toronto Exhibition, the Fair was re-named in 1912 to the Canadian National Exhibition – the same year this ticket was issued. This exhibitor's ticket belonged to Herbert J. Charles, an Aurora resident who made a living as a travelling salesman. If you look closely at the holes punched along the bottom edge, you can see that Mr. Charles spent quite a bit of time on the grounds showcasing his products.



### POLITICS AS USUAL

Alison Collins-Mrakas

### Privacy and Public Office

Do you think you have the right to know about the divorce proceedings of anyone who seeks elected office? The nitty gritty of their finances, their claims and counter claims against one another, their custody arrangements, all the nasty, ugly details of their “conscious uncoupling”?

Do you think any of that has any bearing on how or if they should hold elected or appointed office?

I ask because some folks certainly seem to think so.

There has been a spate of media stories recently about Canada's newly appointed Governor General, the accomplished Julie Payette. You know, Canada's second woman in space. A woman who, according to her biography, speaks multiple languages, has multiple degrees, and has been to space – twice!

That Julie Payette, who is now splashed across the headlines of national newspapers, not for her achievements but because she has sought to keep her private business – well – private.

Leaving aside my thoughts about the whole idea of ceremonial offices, I am appalled at the lengths media and others have gone to get the dirt – because that's what it is, dirt, gossip – about the circumstances surrounding Ms. Payette's divorce.

Media outlets have sought court orders to open up the private court records of her divorce proceedings. From the sounds of it, her divorce has been acrimonious. Most divorces are. But what makes this one titillating is that it comes with an accusation – almost immediately dropped – of assault. And it's that last bit that the media is focused on, the alleged assault. This despite the fact that the charge was almost immediately dropped. As if this is the first divorce in history where the parties make allegedly unfounded accusations against one another in the heat of the battle.

As a consequence of this little tidbit of information, I have now read multiple stories about the “controversial” appointment of Ms. Payette to Canada's highest ceremonial office.

As if her brutal divorce somehow taints her appointment.

I have made this case before, unless you can demonstrate to me how one's personal life – one's marriage – has any impact on how one comports oneself in public office, then I think it's none of our darn business.

If we expect all our elected officials to be paragons of virtue – spotless, stainless, perfect – with perfect marriages, two children, and a dog, then we will never have anyone to seek, let alone hold public office. And besides, to get all biblical, who among us should cast the first stone?

Before you send me a flaming email, I'm not saying anything goes.

An advocate of neo-Nazism, for example, would clearly not be a good choice as Canada's Governor General. But the very public metaphorical flogging of an extraordinarily accomplished woman whose great crime seems to be that she went through a horrible divorce is quite simply appalling.

Is it any of our business? No, it is most definitely not.

### Ontario supporting municipalities in fighting climate change

Here we are, ready for the Labour Day weekend. Where has the summer gone? It will soon be sweater season ... and I won't mention the “s” word – snow. Although it was a wet one, it has been a good summer for helping our towns and cities better deal with climate change.

I've often said our municipalities are the canaries in the coal mine when it comes to climate change. They see, first hand, the destruction of increasingly unstable weather.

There is good news. Ontario is investing \$100 million from its carbon market fund (a “polluter pay” system) in local municipal projects that will help to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution. As the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, I had the pleasure of making this announcement at the annual Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference in Ottawa mid-August.

Municipalities are important partners in the fight against climate change. Ontario's new Municipal GHG Challenge Fund will support projects like renewable energy and energy efficiency retrofits to municipal facilities like arenas, and making energy-efficiency upgrades to drinking water or wastewater treatment plants. Projects must achieve long-term and cost-effective GHG pollution reduction. I've already challenged municipal leaders from both Aurora and Newmarket to come forward with innovative ideas. I look forward to what they put on the table. Fighting climate change while supporting growth, efficiency and productivity is part of our plan to create jobs, grow our economy and help people in their everyday lives. Municipalities are invited to submit applications for the fund by November 14, 2017.

Selected projects will be announced in 2018. Municipalities may request up to \$10 million per project. The Climate Change Action Plan and carbon market form the backbone of Ontario's strategy to cut greenhouse gas pollution by 15 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020; 37 per cent by 2030 and 80 per cent by 2050. The government will report on the plan's implementation annually and review the



### View From Queen's Park

Chris Ballard, MPP  
Newmarket-Aurora

plan at least every five years.

#### Team Ontario Tops the Medal Standings at Canada Summer Games

Ontario athletes topped the medal standings at the 2017 Canada Summer Games, and brought home 212 medals. They made their fans across the province proud. Team Ontario's athletes returned home with 87 gold, 65 silver and 60 bronze medals, including record breaking performances by Graysen Bernard, who won 10 medals in various male swimming events - including three individual gold medals. Karson Kowalchuk, who won gold and broke the Canada Games record in the Men's 100m and Hanna Henderson, who won 11 medals in various female swimming events – beating the previous Canada Games record of nine medals won by one athlete.

Amateur sports play an important role in strengthening communities and inspiring people in Ontario to live an active lifestyle. Ontario provides year-round support to high performance athletes to help with the costs of living, training, equipment, coaching and travel to competitions.

Investing in the development of amateur athletes is part of our plan to create jobs, grow our economy and help people in their everyday lives. I am always thrilled to see the importance both local sport and recreation play in the lives of our citizens, especially our youth.

Electric School Bus Program As part of Ontario's Climate Change Action Plan, Ontario is investing in a new Electric School Bus Pilot Program

designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while giving students a safe, clean transit option to and from school.

School bus operators providing student transportation services in Ontario may apply for funding to purchase an electric school bus and associated charging infrastructure. Applicants will be chosen based on their experience in student transportation, ability to successfully deliver a pilot project, as well as their location in Ontario, type of route serviced, and the size of their school bus fleet.

#### Local events and happenings in Newmarket-Aurora

This past weekend I had the pleasure of attending Aurora's annual Ribfest. Every year I look forward to my annual “feed” of delicious ribs. This event featured fantastic live entertainment, had many activities for families and children and, of course, had delicious ribs.

I also had an amazing time at the Newmarket Farmer's Market at the “M” booth. “M” stands for Mayor, MPP and MP. It's a place citizens can stop by to chat with their local elected leaders. It is always enjoyable meeting and chatting with so many members of both our communities during this event.

I look forward in participating in the next “M” booth on September 23. Stop by and pick up a Shop Local bag and swag.

Riverwalk Commons was alive with music during the recent Newmarket Music Festival. Thanks to George and Sher St. Kitts, sponsors, the Town of Newmarket, and volunteers who put on an amazing show. I attended all three days and met friends from across the area. This event is a significant economic booster for the town. Having the chance to talk to many members of the community is always such a pleasure.

*As always, I invite you to contact me on any issue. Please call my community office at 905-750-0019, or visit my website at www.ChrisBallardMPP.ca. My email is: cballard.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org. I look forward to hearing from you.*

### Location, Location, Location

The big news in Town last week was the announcement that a second hotel might be built in Aurora.

Although both structures are still on the drawing board, and some time away from receiving guests, that's two more places for visitors to stay within our borders than we've had since Howard Johnsons closed a few years ago.

The most intriguing revelation in all this was the proposed location of the second hotel; just a stone's throw from the first one.

True, it's near the highway, but you'd think that the new hotel might want a bit more elbow room from its competition, and that they may be able to find a spot a little further away within Aurora's 50 or so square kilometres.

At the very least, instead of being perched out on the very edge of the municipality, where to be honest, there isn't a lot of anything, the owners would prefer it to be a little closer to downtown, whether that be Yonge or Bayview or Library Square, or wherever downtown Aurora is considered these days. At least somewhere where there are cultural, recreational and other venues that might attract those wanting to stay overnight.

On the other hand, looking at the history of other developments in Town, perhaps their preferred location this isn't so surprising after all.

It seems that no matter where any sort of new infrastructure is proposed in Town, local residents offer resistance.



### INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

Some recent examples include the new seniors' residence on Yonge Street planned to help fund the United Church development.

This, as well as other proposed condo developments have been met with concerns about height, blocked views, increased traffic and generally being too big and out of place for the local neighbourhood.

The Highland Gate golf course redevelopment has had to deal with fears of having too many houses, minimal setbacks, not enough green space, and even too much lighting in the new park.

Restaurants with drive-throughs have had complaints about traffic congestion, engine idling and litter.

Concerns have even been raised about the potential redevelopment of the Ontario government land on Bloomington.

Although these are more recent examples, this sort of NIMBYism isn't anything new in Aurora. While you don't hear much about them anymore, for a

few years there was a huge outpouring of angst from residents whenever a cell tower was proposed within sight of a neighbourhood.

That's not to say that in many cases residents don't have valid concerns and well thought out alternatives, and in the end, compromises on both sides usually result(ed) in these projects moving ahead to everyone's benefit.

But one can see how, based on the experiences of their predecessors, new businesses might be a bit leery of setting down roots in our community.

That's what makes the location on Leslie out on the edge of Town so perfect for a new hotel. While it may not be close to whatever attracts their eventual customers to Town in the first place, it's far from residential properties, and related concerns.

Certainly no one seems to have raised any red flags so far about this proposal.

Someday demand could be such that a third or even fourth hotel ends up in Aurora. If so, it wouldn't surprise me to see all of them clustered within sight of each other.

Unless, of course, by that time that area near Leslie has become surrounded by residential areas. In which case, any new hotel may face opposition that its predecessors didn't have to contend with.

Feel free to e-mail Scott at: machellscorners@gmail.com

### THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Do you think Ribfest has a positive impact on the local economy?

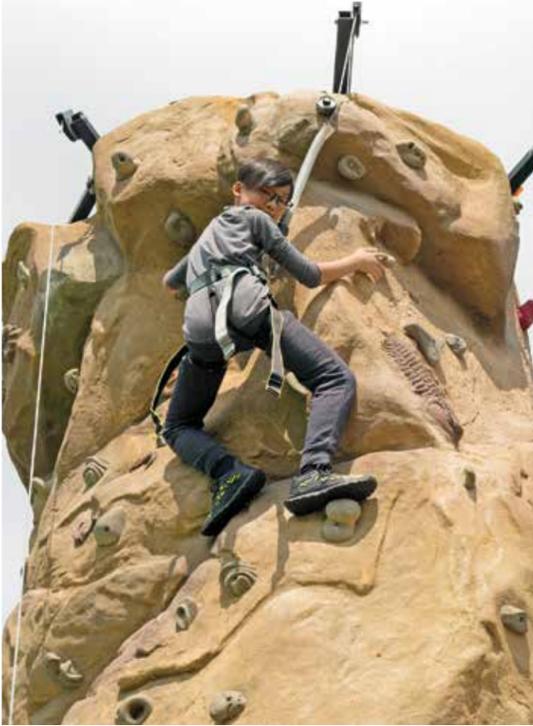
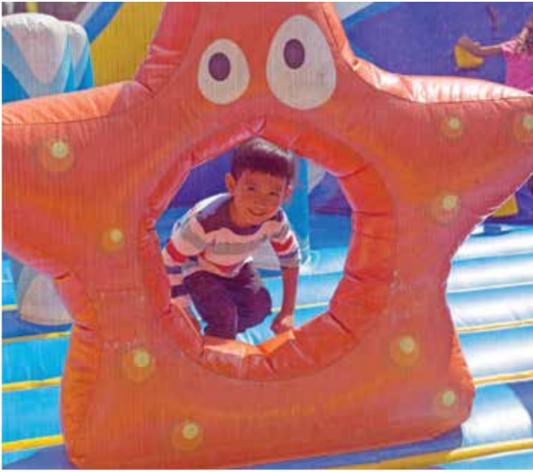
Yes No

Go to [www.theauroran.com](http://www.theauroran.com) to vote!

Previous poll results  
Did you catch a glimpse of Monday's eclipse?

RESULTS TO DATE Aug 29, 2017	YES	NO
	69%	31%

# Aurora's Tastiest Celebration Returns



Music – and the smell of sizzling meat – were in the air as the Town hosted its annual Ribfest at Machell Park. (Top Row) Rocker David Wilcox returned to the Ribfest stage on Saturday night for the second year running. On Friday night, Canadian band Harlequin took the stage, both to packed parks. (Second Row) Emma, Edyn Eriki, Liz, Joe, Thomas and Christina enjoy the offerings. Forrest, Roger and Gabe get the grill sizzling. Zelene digs in. (Third Row) Jeffrey makes his way through the fun and games of the midway. An added attraction this year was an escape room, pictured here with one happy escapee! Fans root on hometown girl Colette Zorzella, who performed in the Hoedown Showdown. (Fourth Row) Cyrus ascends the rock climbing wall. Jaya and Jeremy. (Fifth Row) Mayor Geoff Dawe, along with Councillor Michael Thompson, John Abel, Tom Mrakas and Harold Kim are pictured backstage with Harlequin. (Bottom Row) The Aurora Tigers offered plenty of fun activities for young fans.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger



# Project Angel is lifeline for those at high risk of violence

By Brock Weir

A good night's sleep is something we can take for granted. All too often, however, sleepless nights can leave you exhausted and stripped of energy to do the things that need to be done.

For a person in a violent situation, this can be paralyzing; leaving you without the internal resources to take that brave first step in looking for a new home away from the violence, the ability to apply for much needed programs, or simply go to work.

Indeed, that is the first measure of success of Project Angel, an initiative of the Victim Services of York Region. Project Angel aims equip to anyone in the community at high risk of experiencing violence from an intimate ex-partner with communication devices, complete with a GPS system, which, unlike other personal alarm systems, is connected directly to 9-1-1.

"Every second is imperative to these clients," says Gillian Freeman, Executive Director of Victim Services of York Region (VSY).

Project Angel was launched in 2012 with start-up dollars received from the Magna Hoedown. This year, VSY is once again partnering with Hoedown and will use its share of the proceeds to get Project Angel into the hands of more people who need it most.

"Sometimes we underestimate some simple things," says Ms. Freeman. "When you think of a good night's sleep, when you're tired and exhausted you don't have the energy to do all the things you need to do in order to remove yourself from a violent situation: the energy to start looking for a new place to live that the accused might not know; the energy to apply for housing if you need to; or go to work; or all the other things that help you in your everyday existence."

"Every Project Angel client, the first thing they report is they got a good night's sleep. Something as simple as just sleep helps build their resources and give them the ability to start working to make other change that is needed in their lives in hopes of not needing the alarm again."

This is certainly a measure of success. Before VSY received their start-up money for Project Angel, the organization facilitated a program called Support Link, which supplied mobile phones for persons at high risk experiencing violence. A government-run initiative, they soon found out that cell phones were not the most means in addressing clients' needs.

In some cases, clients would dial 9-1-1 but wouldn't have the capability of communicating their situation.

"On one 911 call, we were pulling off the satellite the area the mobile phone was communicating," explains Ms. Freeman.

"That only gives you a general geographic area, so it wasn't very helpful."

The new system, however, was immediately embraced by clients, shelters and counselling services alike.

"It is completely confidential and no one really knows about [the device]. It is pretty small and you can stick it around your neck without people knowing. It has proved its value with every single client."

Ms. Freeman began working with Victim Services straight out of university. In 2001, she was in York Region and was struck by the strong arm's length relationship VSY had with York Regional Police.

"When I first started, I was a one woman show," says Ms. Freeman. "Over the years, we have been able to increase the number of people we have provided support to, which is always phenomenal. We have been able to expand programs and one of the other programs the Hoedown funding is supporting is a suicide bereavement support group."

"York Region has never really had a specific suicide bereavement support group. There are support groups based on the loss

of a spouse or the loss of a child, but there is a unique aspect in relation to suicide."

In addition, there are a number of programs that help clients out in different ways ranging from back-to-school programs helping clients get their kids ready to hit the books with backpacks, lunch bags, and maybe even a new outfit. Around the holidays, they kick into high gear as well.

"Toy Mountain is lovely, but our clients are asking for dish soap and toilet paper because it is expensive," says Ms. Freeman. "I feel like Victim Services is York Region's best kept secret. I don't think most people know that we exist and that we're a separate entity from the Police. We are thankful to the Magna Hoedown for constantly supporting the community and for this year specifically Victim Services of York Region. The dollars are going to such worthy causes and we're thankful for all the support."

For more information on Victim Services York Region, visit [victimservices-york.org](http://victimservices-york.org). For tickets and further information about the 2017 Wild, Wild West Hoedown and how to support the 20 community partners, visit [www.hoedown.ca](http://www.hoedown.ca).

## Police urge victims of violence to seek support



From page 1

security guard working at Southlake Regional Health Centre," said Constable Laura Nicolle. "A 16-year-old female victim, who was familiar with the security guard from a previous visit to the hospital, came forward and reported being sexually assaulted by the accused off hospital grounds after he finished work."

"During the investigation, officers received a report from a second victim, a 19-year-old female, who advised that she was befriended by the accused while at hospital. After leaving the hospital, the victim was sexually assaulted by the accused."

Police released an image of Ravichandran to ensure that there are no further victims.

The charges have not been proven in court.

He is set to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Newmarket on September 13.

"A sexual assault includes any non-consensual contact of a sexual nature,"

says Constable Nicolle. "York Regional Police would like to encourage anyone who feels they may have been a victim of sexual assault to come forward and report the incident to police. There is no statute of limitations for sexual offences and offenders can be prosecuted well after the date of the offence."

Even if you, or someone you know, are not ready to report a sexual assault, Police encourage seeking support by contacting the Women's Support Network through [womensupportnetwork.ca](http://womensupportnetwork.ca), Victim Services of York Region at [victimservices-york.org](http://victimservices-york.org). Additional resources are available online through the York Regional Police at [www.yrp.ca](http://www.yrp.ca).

Anyone with information is asked to call York Regional Police Special Victims Unit – Special Assault Unit at 1-866-876-5423 x7071 or contact Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-TIPS. You can also leave an anonymous tip online at [www.1800222tips.com](http://www.1800222tips.com) or text your tip to CRIMES (274637) starting with the word YORK.

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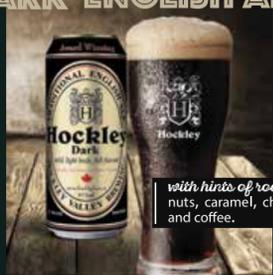
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## Aurora continues quest to snag post-secondary presence

By Brock Weir

Aurora and Newmarket might still be smarting from losing a bid for a new university campus to Markham back

in 2014, but Aurora has not yet given up hope of attracting a post-secondary presence.

An announcement of a post-secondary development could be

announced as early as this fall, according to the Town's Economic Development Action Plan.

One of the last remaining items of Aurora's former Economic Development Advisory Committee, which will be reconstituted into a Board before the end of the year, the forecast calls for the continuing advancement of both a post-secondary presence in Aurora, as well as an innovation incubator "with a potential Fall 2017 announcement."

While talks pertaining to both the post-secondary possibility and innovation incubator are subject to confidentiality, Aurora's Manager of Long Range and Strategic Planning, Anthony Ierullo, confirms continued "engagement" on the file.

"It is a key priority for Council in both our Strategic Plan and some of our other key planning documents," says Mr. Ierullo. "The idea of some potential post-secondary presence, as well as an innovation incubator-type concept is something Council and the community has determined is something that could be a good fit in Aurora and something that could support the community. We continue to engage and seek partners and identify opportunities. That continues to be active and we continue to explore some of those opportunities."

Aurora has been down this road before. Both Aurora and Newmarket expressed disappointment when their joint bid to host a satellite campus of York University on land straddling both municipalities was nixed in favour of the City of Markham. Bids from Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan made the short list, with Aurora and Newmarket left behind, the southern municipalities finding an edge when it came to transportation infrastructure and their "vibrant urban centres."

Aurora has also pitched the possibility of an innovation incubator before, with a proposal to transform the former home of the Aurora Public Library on Victoria Street into just such a maker space, complete with

development technology, 3D printers and other forms of maker spaces, extending the shelf life of the run-down building by several years.

Despite these speedbumps along the way, Aurora remains committed to the benefits both – or either – options would bring to a community such as this.

"Giving opportunities for residents to access post-secondary training is something I think a lot of [municipalities] find important in terms of building complete communities and giving residents, whether it be youth, seniors or the general population an opportunity build skills and a different way for us to encourage engagement," said Mr. Ierullo. "The flipside of that is looking for potential partners to take some of this knowledge and commercialize it into business opportunities, the idea that someone has a passion towards a specific area within our community they can build a bit of training and turn that into a product or a business, something that could be commercialized and add additional value in terms of employment."

"Employment is a key driver for us from a strategy perspective, it is something that our Council has told us and, quite honestly, when we went out for consultation on various documents it is something that was identified by the public as well. It is pretty clear that it is a strategy that could help add something to the community that perhaps isn't fully there and add a lot of great spin-offs."

Synergies are also possible with employment lands on the east side of Aurora between Leslie Street and Highway 404, he added, which have been subject to ongoing talks with landowners for the creation of a possible "medical campus" or cluster.

"The idea of a medical cluster that includes research practitioners and manufacturers is something that was identified as a potential strategy for some of our new business parks and it is something we continue to pursue with the property owners who are bringing lands to market," he said.

Advertorial

## You're invited! – Workshop: September 14th Learn How Local Experts are Investing in Mortgages

Ever wonder how banks earn big profits? Last quarter, the big 6 banks posted a net profit of \$10.18 billion. According to the Canadian Bankers Association, 88% - a significant portion of their profit - is generated from net interest income, such as from residential mortgages.

Local investors can now follow this proven formula for success by becoming mortgage lenders.

"Our investors earn between 8% and 13% annually on private mortgages," said Victor Camba, a mortgage agent at UNION Capital Management who specializes in matching borrowers with individual investors.

For those wanting to learn more, there will be a free workshop on September 14th in Aurora. Investors will learn how to get involved, and how to examine private mortgage deals in order to maximize returns and reduce risk.

Private lenders can invest using cash or registered funds (such as their RRSP). In return, they obtain similar benefits that banks enjoy such as predictable and stable monthly cash flow, and "bricks and mortar" security.

It is becoming increasingly more difficult to obtain mortgage financing through traditional banks. As a result, these borrowers are turning to private lenders.

A misconception is that these are bad-quality borrowers. "Bad credit? No Credit? No Problem," are advertisements sometimes seen. This is far from the truth.

In 2016, 2.7 million Canadians were self-employed (Statistics Canada). These people are generally in the sales and services industry, such as Realtors and Contractors. There were also 1.3 million small businesses. These borrowers do not meet the bank's lending criteria, and are therefore turned down. Their tax return may show a significantly lower figure than what they actually take home as income.

"We take into consideration all sources of the client's income, including asset

business income, something the banks don't do," Victor said. "But we are not going to take undue risk. We will take a calculated risk."

He prefers to offer loans below 80% of the value of the property to limit losses in case of a housing price downturn. Unlike mutual funds or stocks, a mortgage investment is collateralized with existing residential properties within the Greater Toronto Area, including Aurora and Newmarket. If the borrower defaults, their lender has the legal power to sell the property to recover their funds.

"It used to be investors went to their lawyer or accountant and said, 'I have a few million dollars and I want to lend this out and make a good return,'" Victor said. "They are still around, but now there are opportunities for the average investor with cash or an RRSP."

For those who want to invest in real estate without the hassle of tenants or repairing toilets, register online to attend the free workshop. Seating is limited to the first 20 people who register.

### REGISTER TODAY TO ATTEND

Date: Thursday, September 14th at 7:30pm  
Where: Aurora Town Hall, Lakeside Floor, 165 John West Way, Aurora  
Cost: Complimentary

Snacks and refreshments will be served.

Register Online: [sep14-lending.eventbrite.com](http://sep14-lending.eventbrite.com)

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**AN ORDER FOR MENTAL HEALTH** – Country Day School student Craig takes an order from Patricia and Michael on Wednesday night at Aurora's Boston Pizza. CDS students were special "Celebrity Servers" last week to help raise money and awareness for their team, the CDS Runners, which will be taking on the RBC Race for Kids next month. The event will support programs related to youth mental health. For more on the cause, and to support their team, visit [tinyurl.com/cdsrunners](http://tinyurl.com/cdsrunners).

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger



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# THE AURORAN ARTS & CULTURE

## Top 10 Showdown finalists get ready for the Hoedown spotlight

By Brock Weir

Inspiration was just a channel flip away for Schomberg's Zoe Jayne.

Recently named to the Top 20 in the 2017 Hoedown Showdown, the annual competition hosted by Magna International to find Canada's next country star, Jayne was just about at a loss as to what song she was going to perform before the judges for the semis.

Time was running short as the semi-finalists were due to hit the stage at Aurora's Ribfest on Saturday afternoon, but the muse called and she

hit the boards as a woman on a mission.

"The news came on in the background and I thought this song was more meaningful today than it has ever been," Jayne told judges as she launched into "That's Why I Pray" by Big & Rich.

"Than on the TV's gone insane, everybody's just laughing," the song begins.

"People 'cross the world holding on  
The earth caved in, the ocean came crashing

"My neighbour lost his house 'cause he can't find a job



**MEET YOUR TOP TEN** – (Top) The top ten finalists in the 2017 Hoedown Showdown gather for a group shot after learning they were headed into Mentorship Week. The Top 10 will perform one last time at the Magna Hoedown on Friday, September 15, where the winner will be crowned. Among the Top 20 were Aurora singers Melissa Suma (Above Left) and Colette Zorzella (Above Right).

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

"Don't you dare pledge allegiance, don't you dare speak of God

"Now I'm begging for forgiveness

"I want to make a difference even in the smallest way

"I'm only one person but I can feel it working

"I believe in better days

"That's why I pray."

The timeliness of the 2012 lyrics was not lost on judges Tom Cross of Metalworks Studios, TV personality and philanthropist Joan Walker, and Steve Hinder of Magna and Neighbourhood Network. Nor was the quality of her voice, which landed her in the Top 10 on Saturday afternoon.

"I have been playing this song for a long time and I thought it was a very good time to share it," she said.

"You are my surprise of the day," said Cross. "You came up, you sang great, and sang a song I actually have never heard and it sounded like your song. Then I looked back [at the semifinals] and thought the last time you sang, it was a song I had never heard and you're through until here. You're onto something. You know who you are and I really enjoyed it."

Ms. Walker agreed, adding: "You could probably sing anything. I just love your voice, the power and subtlety."

Before securing a place in the Top 10, Jayne was keeping her fingers crossed she would make it over the next hurdle. Between now and the finals on Friday, September 14 at Magna's annual Wild, Wild West Hoedown, the Top 10 will undergo an intensive mentorship week with industry professionals who will be on hand to help the musicians hone their craft.

Being able to experience that would be "unreal," said Jayne, but now

reality is setting in.

Joining her in the Top 10 are:

- John Anderson (Barrie)
- Sarah Campbell Mills (Burlington)
- Mike Chianelli (Sutton West)
- Patrick James Clark (Mulmur)
- Abby J. Hall (Burlington)
- Jamie Lynn Reid (Keswick)
- Katie Sacco (Toronto)
- Lauren (Renee) Vandervecht (Sharon)
- Cameron Von Criegern (Peterborough)

Aurora was well represented in the Top 20 by Collette Zorzella, who wowed the crowd with her rendition of Dolly Parton's "Jolene", as well as former Aurora Teen Idol Melissa Suma, who also borrowed from the Dolly's songbook with "I Will Always Love You," which won praise from the judges.

"That was a really powerful performance and I keep finding myself looking [at the sheet] to make sure you are only 15 because it has been a treat sitting in this seat for three years and watching you grow," said Mr. Hinder of Melissa. "Watching your vocal progression has been great and you sure make Aurora proud."

The judges, however, encouraged the 15-year-old to embrace her youth and try out more contemporary work.

"Sometime I want to hear you sing a song a 15-year-old would sing," said Mr. Cross. "You're always singing songs that are about yesterday, that older entertainers should be singing. Sometime I would like to see the fun girl in Melissa who has her whole life ahead of her because you are a great singer and a great talent."

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# If you've boosted your veggies, get ready to power down your phones with Healthy Kids Challenge



Kathleen Ko and Jen Atkinson of the Healthy Kids Community Challenge will be urging families to break the screen time habit in the next phase of the local initiative.

By Brock Weir

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

A couple of summers ago, Jen Atkinson trekked out for a remote camping trip. The remote location, however, meant there was no cell service and,

so far, so good, right?

The remote location, however, meant there was no cell service and,

therefore, no texts, no social media and, most importantly, no way to get in touch with anybody.

"I was quite upset," says Atkinson, Managing Director of Windfall Ecology Centre, "and it took me about 20 minutes to realise this is an opportunity: I don't need to be on my cell phone, I can look at the view around me, check it out and be very present."

This fall, Ms. Atkinson and Windfall, the local organizers of the Healthy Kids Community Challenge will be encouraging Aurora kids and their families to seize these opportunities and step away from their screen time.

Kids reading this, along with parents of kids who aren't looking forward to putting up a fight, probably just let out an involuntary shudder, but look at it this way: if you've gone through the first three phases of the Healthy Kids Community Challenge of Run, Jump, Play Everyday, learning the importance of water, and "Choosing to Boost Veggies and Fruit," this should be a piece of cake.

Well, maybe not cake.

The Healthy Kids Community Challenge is a Province-wide program involving 45 Ontario communities working on similar activities to encourage active living, healthy eating and generally improved lifestyles.

Themes are set by Public Health Ontario, which recently announced they were expanding the program by up to eight more months, making room to an as-yet-unnamed phase focusing on screen time.

"Turning off the TV, getting away from the screen and television and computers will really help increase physical activity," says Ms. Atkinson. "When kids are active, when families are active, there is better social time, they have more physical activity, they are going to sleep better, they're going to learn better, they're going to think better. Turning the TV off and getting people outside is all about getting up off the couch and outside as well."

"When I was growing up as a kid, story time was a really big thing in my family. We will be introducing things they can do together, things like story time, story of the day, going for an evening walk, rather than sitting in front of the TV in a sedentary position. Having that time before sleep [without screen time] is

really important in preparing for a good sleep. When you're in front of a television or game right before bed, your brain is very stimulated and not giving you that restful introduction to a good sleep. Having a different activity, some downtime, is really important."

As Ms. Atkinson spoke to The Auroran, she was very conscious of the fact her phone was in her pocket. It goes with her all the time, including on hikes, but, when in the great outdoors, she makes a point of limiting access, including turning off notifications.

When she's ready to sleep, she makes sure her phone is put away, far removed from the bed.

"A lot of us will go to bed with the screen, the phone or the computer right next to us," she says. "There is some science behind how it might disrupt your sleep, but knowing that you're constantly connected all the time and someone is always needing you and wanting you is a bit of a stress on its own. Put it aside, put it down, use it as a good tool, but being connected 24/7 is a challenge. When you're constantly on your iPhone you miss the small moments."



## MARKET MUSINGS

Jan Freedman

We have been so lucky to have enjoyed beautiful, sunny days and mild temperatures for the last two Saturday markets.

Two weeks ago, everyone who attended was treated to tasty barbecued local corn cooked by a few of our Town Councillors, John Abel and his wife, Tracy, and Harold Kim.

They were assisted by a great friend of the market, Diane Buchanan.

For the first time, a dunk tank added to the fun and both Councillors were great sports in allowing themselves to be dunked for charity. All together, we raised about \$360 for the Aurora Food Pantry. Thank you all.

This past Saturday began as a cool morning but gradually warmed and became a truly beautiful day.

The increasing warmth brought out the customers and it became very busy with some vendors running out of items.

Once September begins and families return from holiday and the kids prepare for school and university, we usually are extremely busy, so plan your Saturdays with an early stop at the market so you won't be disappointed.

The next market on September 2 will see Welcoming Arms returning to the market to sell Event and Raffle Tickets for this year's Magna Hoedown.

Welcoming Arms is a non-profit charitable organization whose primary objective is to relieve poverty and assist those in Aurora who are in the low income category.

They were founded by six churches in Aurora to pool their resources to better meet the needs of our low income residents.

It has expanded greatly since its inception.

Welcoming Arms now supports low income/marginalized members of the community through several benevolent programs. People are fed at two

community meal programs: Welcome Table, a dinner on Wednesday evenings at Trinity Church and Martha's Table, a soup and sandwich lunch on Thursdays at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

These meals provide nutritious food and a safe place to connect with others in our community.

There is food and transit support through the Bridging the Gap program. Many families rely on the Christmas assistance program. Other help comes in the form of free Income Tax preparation, a Community Garden and other money management programs.

These programs support hundreds of people in the community. Guests who come for the meals are connected to community referrals.

This amazing charity is supported by over 150 committed volunteers who cook and serve meals, pick up the weekly donations of bread for the diners, interview and support those applying for assistance and provide ongoing programming support.

Welcoming Arms is dependent on community donations to sustain its many programs. This year it has had the good fortune to be selected as one of the 20 community organizations to share in the proceeds of this year's Wild, Wild West Hoedown hosted by Magna International.

The funds received from participating in Hoedown constitute a large portion of Welcoming Arms' annual fundraising budget.

Please look for them to be back at the Farmers' Market, in the park on September 2 and visit the booth to get your Raffle tickets.

Our next Special Event at the Farmers' Market will occur on September 30 when we celebrate Culture Days with our annual Soup Fest.

We are currently working on our plans for that day.

See you at the Market!

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FREE Week of August 31, 2017

## Tigers on the ice for preseason action

By Jake Courtepatte

While still looking to finalize their roster, the Junior A Aurora Tigers put up a pair of impressive wins in their first two games of preseason action last week.

Looking like the strong offensive presence of Tigers team's past, Matt Gordon led Aurora to a 10 - 3 win in their opening game Wednesday against the North York Rangers, notching two goals and two assists.

Greg Smith, a veteran OHLer of the Owen Sound Attack, contributed three points himself while seven other newcomers had themselves a multipoint game.

Visiting the Pickering Panthers on Friday, Aurora managed an impressive 34 shots on net in a 5 - 3 win, kicked off by a shorthanded goal by Jake Bricknell under a minute in. Bricknell spent the last four seasons skipping around the OHL, playing

stints with the Belleville Bulls, Hamilton Bulldogs, and Guelph Storm before landing with the Cobourg Cougars last season.

Greg Smith had his second multipoint game in a row, as well as Steven MacLean, an incoming 6'5" defenseman.

The team hit their first blip in the system Sunday in a 7 - 0 loss to the Rangers on the road.

Preseason action continues Tuesday following press time against the Whitby Fury, and wraps up Friday when the Tigers host the Panthers at the Aurora Community Centre.

Opening faceoff is set for 7 p.m.

With the regular season fast approaching, the scores start to matter on September 11 when the Tigers visit the defending Royal Bank Cup champion Cobourg Cougars for the season opener. The home-and-home series moves to the Aurora



Brennan Stapleton looks to get around a North York defender in the Aurora Tigers' 7 - 0 loss to the Rangers at Herb Carnegie Arena on Sunday.

Auroran photo by Jake Courtepatte

Community Centre on September 15 for the Tigers' home opener.

The 54-game schedule runs until the end of February. The first meeting between the Tigers and the rival Newmarket Hurricanes will go

at Ray Twinney on October 19, before the Tigers host the Canes at the ACC on Friday, October 27.

For stats, schedules, and more information, visit [www.auroratigers.pointstreaksites.com](http://www.auroratigers.pointstreaksites.com).

## Aurora's top student athletes honoured



Photo by Anna Lozyk Romeo

By Brock Weir

There are still a few more days left of summer vacation and while many students would be content to put the 2016 - 2017 year behind their exploits on the soccer field, baseball diamond, and basketball courts will not fade into memory any time soon.

25 elementary and high school students have been recognized at Council by Aurora Sports Hall of Famer Allan Dean as Sport Aurora's School Athletes of the Year.

"Thank you on behalf of Sport Aurora for the opportunity to recognize these outstanding young athletes from the Aurora school system," said Mr. Dean. "Each athlete was named by their school for athletic excellence in their chosen sport. The recognition of these students highlights their achievements in our community."

Among those recognized were:

- Jordan Babcock (ESC Renaissance)
- Holly Biasi (Highview Public School)
- Claire DiLosi (St. Joseph CES)
- Vanessa Carvella (Cardinal Carter CHS)
- Andrea Christakkakos (Aurora High School)
- Lucinda Eveleigh (Our Lady of Grace CES)
- Olivia Fasan (ESC Renaissance)
- Brayden Futterer (St. Maximilian Kolbe CHS)
- Morgan Graham (St. Maximilian Kolbe CHS)

- Lara Jorgensen (Light of Christ CES)
- Christopher Jorstad (Light of Christ CES)
- Walter Karabin (St. Andrew's College)
- Emily Kroi (Hartman Public School)
- Markus Law-Heese (Regency Acres PS)
- Alyson Malowney (Regency Acres PS)
- Marko Micic (Cardinal Carter CHS)
- Alex Morra (Our Lady of Grace CES)
- Ryan Nembhard (St. Jerome CES)
- Juliann Nguyen (Lester B. Pearson Public School)
- Calum Ormond (St. Joseph CES)
- Jonathan Polinni (Highview Public School)
- Andrew Sergejowich (Aurora High School)
- Jack Sutherland (Lester B. Pearson Public School)
- Maya Talazzi (Regency Acres PS)
- Vanessa Tiberio (St. Jerome CES)

"Sport Aurora, through its member stakeholders, provides opportunities for a wide range of sports and recreation programs for people of all ages," said Mr. Dean. "Attracting young people into sports programs engage in active minds, promotes fitness, and a sense of achievement - qualities that bode well for the future."

"As chair of the Sport Aurora recognition and celebration committee, I am very excited to recognize these young athletes this evening. The event is an added bonus to the Sport Aurora Sports Recognition Programs that we hold."

## Late strike sends Aurora FC over West Ottawa

By Jake Courtepatte

A lone goal with under twenty minutes to spare was enough for the Aurora FC women to snap a two-game losing streak against West Ottawa SC on Saturday.

Courtney Chocol notched her third goal of the season in the 73rd minute to capture Aurora's fourth win in six games, giving goalkeeper Meaghan Phillips her second clean sheet of the season.

Sitting at a record of 8-8-0 with the end of the regular season fast approaching, Aurora won the game while fielding mostly inexperienced, up-and-coming players.

"We had two 2002s in the team, our centre-back and our striker, who scored

a goal, and we have a couple national team players in the team and at least 13 or 14 provincial players," said Aurora team official Siamac Kavianpour. "We have a good group and we are trying to improve our program every day."

Kavianpour was especially pleased with the play of Chocol, whose third goal of the season came in only her second game with the team.

"We had an aggressive run by our striker Courtney, and she made three or four runs like that tonight, which was a big reason we got the result."

Aurora now takes a week's break in the schedule before returning to action next Saturday against Durham United FA (7-6-3) at St. Maximilian Kolbe field.

Continued on page 18

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	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
2017	27	28	29	30	31		

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SEPTEMBER						1	2
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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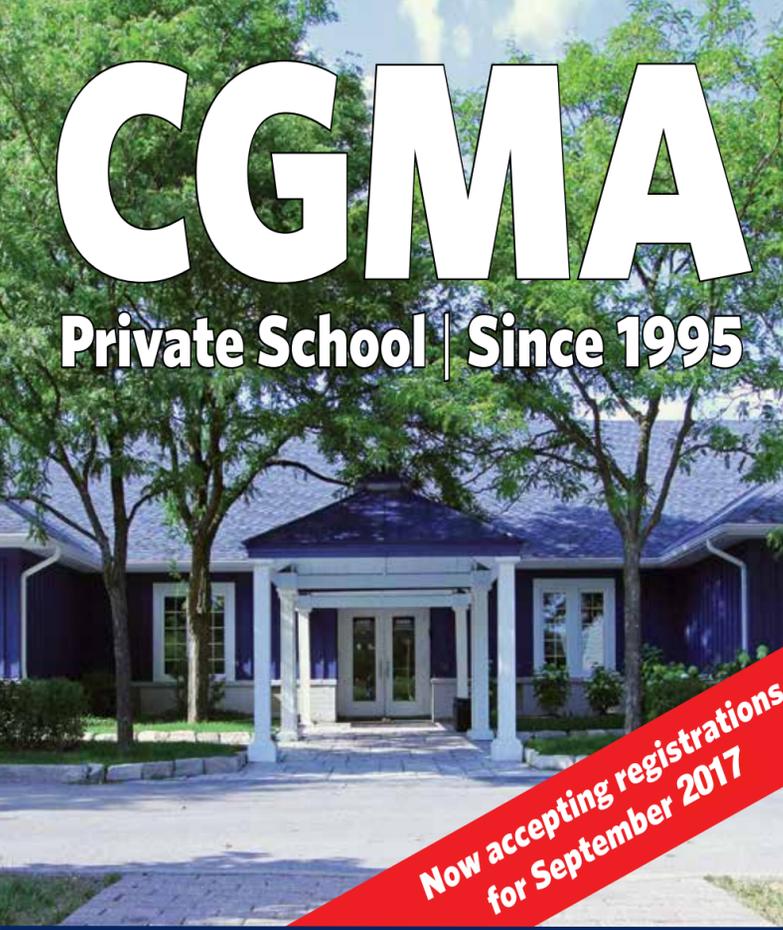

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	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
2017	29	30	31				

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			1	2	3	4	
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IEM SPARTANS

# Jays eliminated from North Dufferin playoffs

By Jake Courtepatte

A stellar season has come up short for the Aurora Jays against an experienced North Dufferin Baseball League champion.

After sweeping the Ivy Leafs in the opening round of the NDBL playoffs, the Jays were eliminated in four games Saturday against the five-time champion Bolton Brewers.

“There is a reason why Bolton won so many championships,” said manager Rob Wilson. “Unfortunately, we became another chapter in their impressive story.”

“While I feel like we didn’t play our best baseball, that’s no slight to their team and my hat’s off to them.”

After Bolton took Game One by a score of 7 – 4 in the best-of-five series, Aurora tied it up with a 5 – 4 win in Game Two, before the Brewers took Game Three on Thursday and Game Four on Saturday to close out the series.

The Jays finished the regular season with a record of 21-6-1, good for third place in the fifteen-team league.

Wilson said he believes this year’s squad was “one



Bolton's Mike Wallace reaches first safely in Game Three of the NDBL semi-final between the Aurora Jays and Bolton Brewers.

Auroran photo by Jake Courtepatte

of the best teams we’ve ever fielded.”

“It’s tough to not get to play for the Strother Cup, but a 21-6-1 regular season is something to take pride in,” said Wilson. “We will take the week off to rest some aches and head to the senior AA provincials well rested and hungry for a championship.”

Always a threat offensively year after year, the Jays had a number of breakout stars defensively this season as well, something Wilson hopes will only improve with experience.

“Thinking back over the year, what stands out for me is the impressive skill our younger guys are bringing to the club,” said Wilson. “Aaron Giroux at third, had an All-Star year.”

“Our pitching staff is so bright, it hurts to look at between Thomas D’Andrade, Devon Wu, and Rob Spencer.”

In a season full of highlights, what stood out the most?

“Nate Robinson throwing a no-hitter, followed by a homer in his first at-bat of the next game (same day),” said Wilson. “It doesn’t get much better than that!”

In the other semifinal series, the reigning champion New Lowell Knights took five games to eliminate the Clearview Orioles and move on to the championship round.

The finals, set to begin next Saturday, will be a best-of-seven round and only played on weekends.

For stats, schedules, and more information, visit [www.ndbl.ca](http://www.ndbl.ca).

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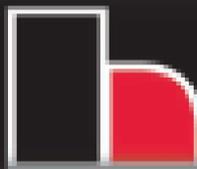
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# Hall of Fame inductee Thompson committed “life-long” to the pool

By Jake Courtepatte

A fifteen-year break from the pool was not enough to stop Dan Thompson from shattering records.

The former national swim team captain, and eleven-year Aurora resident, has put the Aurora Master Ducks Swim Club on the map after racing to numerous records at the Masters world and Canadian levels.

“(Master Ducks founder) Nancy Black cornered me in Longo’s one day,” said Mr. Thompson. “It’s hard to say no to Nancy! I hadn’t swam for almost fifteen years.”

Mr. Thompson is the second of four inductees into this year’s Aurora Sports Hall of Fame class to be highlighted by The Auroran, all admitted under the “Athlete” category.

Born in the summer of 1956, Mr. Thompson competed in butterfly events around the country and internationally throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, winning two silver medals at the 1979 Pan Am Games in Puerto Rico.

His strong performance earned him the captaincy of the national swim team program, a title he held for three years leading to the opportunity to represent Canada at the 1980 Summer Olympics.

He was prevented from participating due to the international boycott of the Moscow Games.

Upon his move to Aurora in 2006, despite leaving the pool behind

many years before, Mr. Thompson’s countless experience at the Pan Am Games, Commonwealth Games, and World Student Games helped him make an immediate impact with the Master Ducks.

First entering the record books in 2009, Mr. Thompson earned both the Canadian and World records in the short course 50-metre fly in the 50 - 54 age level. His success translated into a pair of records at the 55 - 59 level four years later, once again toppling the 50-metre fly time as well as the 100-metre fly.

In March of this year, he continued his dominance of the short course by setting a new record for ages 60 - 64 in the 50-metre fly. Two of his long course records also remain standing today.

Mr. Thompson’s long list of accomplishments don’t end in the pool: he also has served as the CEO of Skate Canada, as well as a Board member of both the Canadian Amateur Swimming Association and the Canadian Olympic Association.

As for the future of swimming in Aurora, Mr. Thompson sees the Ducks program continuing to grow at a rapid pace: and a need for the available facilities to match it.

“I see the need for a 50-metre pool,” said Mr. Thompson. “It’s the sign of a world-class community and that’s Aurora! The Ducks program will continue to grow as long as we can get pool time, and that’s why it’s so important that all stakeholders get



Dan Thompson

Photo by Merk Photography

is life-long. It’s a great sport: great people who are leaders in the Canadian sport community at all levels.”

“I’m going to be that 90-year old guy who loves to swim and feels blessed to be part of this great community!”

Mr. Thompson has been inducted to the ASHoF alongside Mike Palmateer, a prolific goaltender for the Toronto Maple Leafs, William Fleury, a pioneer in the Canadian cricket community, and Bob Wall, who was the first captain of the Los Angeles Kings in 1967.

“Aurora is a fabulous place to live,” said Mr. Thompson. “I feel fortunate to live in a community that encourages active healthy living no matter what your age. I hope my story encourages all Aurorans to participate in sport and recreation to experience the joy of sport for life.”

The Auroran will highlight the careers of Mr. Palmateer and Mr. Wall over the next few weeks.

Held annually at St. Andrew’s College, the ASHoF Induction dinner is one of the most spectacular nights of the year in the Aurora sports community. This year’s dinner will be held on November 8, and more information can be found at [www.aurorashof.ca](http://www.aurorashof.ca).

more water space.”

And Mr. Thompson sees himself as one of those stakeholders for a long, long time.

“My commitment to swimming

## Men’s side falls to Durham

From page 13

The men’s side was on the wrong end of a 2 - 0 score against Durham on Saturday, their first action in two weeks after last Saturday’s matchup in Oshawa was postponed.

Durham took a 1 - 0 lead into the half after scoring at the 31st minute, though Aurora changed strategies after the break and nearly broke even.

“It was a tactical change,” said Aurora head coach Derek O’Keeffe.

“When they scored their first goal, we just wanted to be a bit more direct. We brought on Aidane (Elder), whose first game it was. He’s a big man so we just decided to go more route one

football, try and knock it up to him. It nearly worked. We hit the post twice and I think we just caused them a lot more problems because we were tiring in the middle previously and not linking with the front men as we should have been.”

Durham cashed in again at the 65th minute, eventually earning the clean sheet.

The men sit at a record of 2-13-1 in their sophomore season, one point up on the last place Toronto Skillz FC.

They return to the pitch next Sunday after a week’s break to take on the North Toronto Nitros (9-5-3) on the road.

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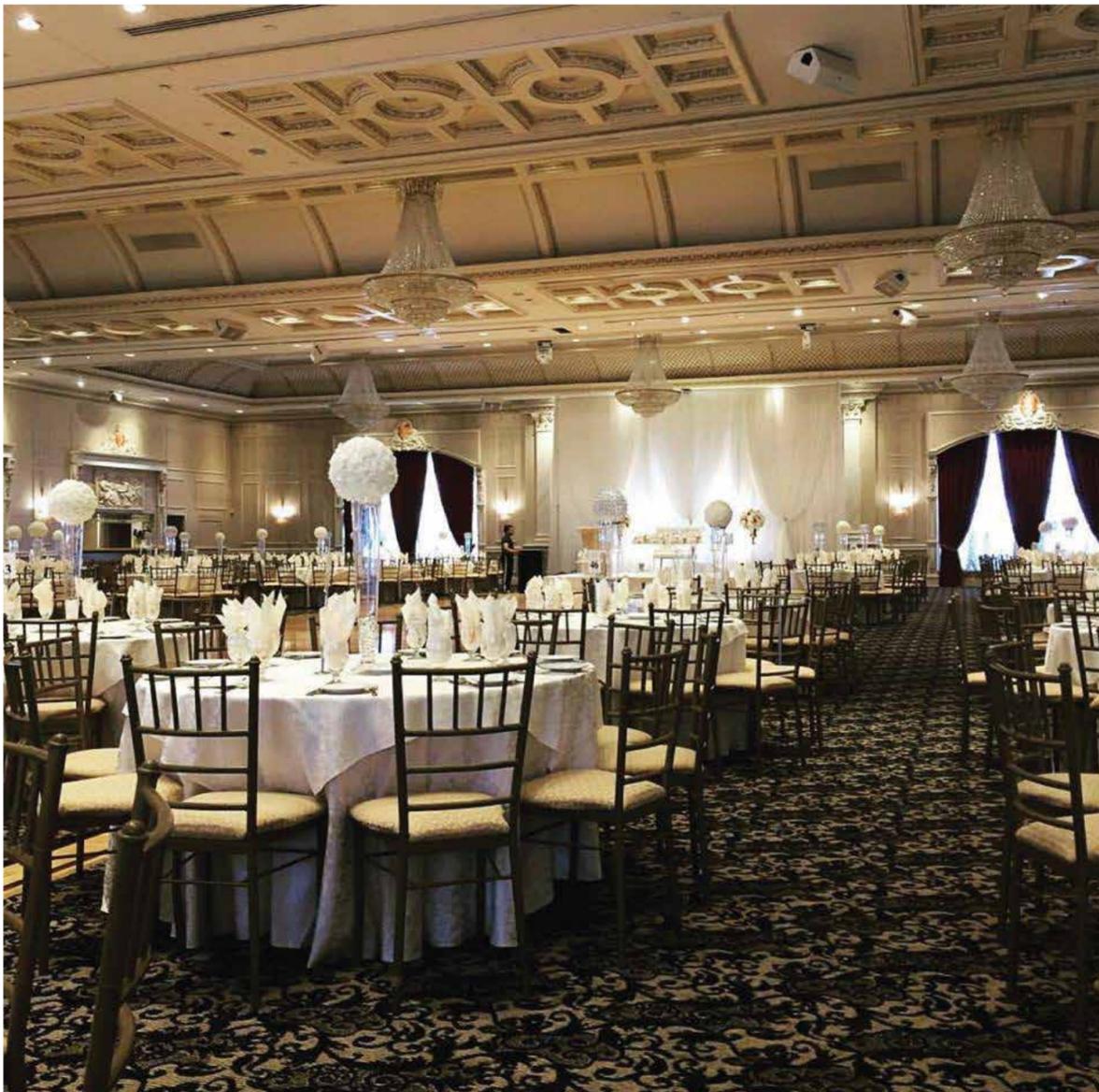
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# Council should focus on unfinished priorities: Kim

By Brock Weir

Whether it's the development of Library Square, laying the groundwork for a new multiuse recreation centre, or hammering out new deals with Aurora's Cultural Partners, Aurora has a lot of priorities on the go right now, and there should be a few more checkmarks on the list before tackling much more, according to Councillor Harold Kim.

Council resumes next Tuesday, having been on summer recess since July 11 and, when elected officials are back at the table, there will be plenty of initiatives to keep them busy, he says.

"As there are 14 months or so left in our term, the focus on Council is really to ensure much of the priorities we have committed to for this term is completed," he says. "I really want staff to just focus on open priorities that are out there right now."

From Councillor Kim's perspective, it has been an eventful term so far.

One of the most important checkmarks on the to-do list, he says, is securing Mavrinac Park, a six acre parcel of open space residents fought to keep parkland, for the community. Set to be complete later this fall, he said it is a key accomplishment Council can be proud of.

In a similar vein, another cornerstone has been making a decision for demolishing the former Aurora Public Library and Seniors' Centre buildings on Victoria Street.

"The demolition is very symbolic in that there is no turning back," he says. "Unlike previous Councils, they made their best efforts to moving it forward over the last two or three decades even, but I am happy to be a part of Council where we're really going to put in a marker and there is no turning back. I

think that will also be a key objective for Council in the fall, which is to keep that momentum going and get that RFP, architect and designer for a more detailed design of Library Square."

Indeed, the RFP is slated to be discussed at the very next outing of Council, with the winning bid to be awarded to The Planning Partnership to take the Cultural Precinct plan over the finish line.

In the meantime, there will be plenty to discuss with Aurora's so-called "Cultural Partners" ranging from the Aurora Cultural Centre to the Aurora Historical Society.

Earlier this year, Councillor Kim offered a notice of motion to look at how these Cultural Partners operate – and how the Town funds them – to look for "more efficiencies and a better funding model."

Although the motion raised a number of questions around the table, it was ultimately approved by Council.

"In the past, we had all our cultural partners come to Council hat in hand with their budget needs for the next year and I don't think any successful organization can function on a year to year basis," says Councillor Kim. "That is essentially living in subsistence and survival mode and what I would like is to provide the Cultural Partners with the long-term funding model so they can plan long term and be successful at it."

"Some people thought when I introduced the motion it was about cost cutting, but quite the opposite. If they give Council a long-term vision that looks successful, that provides a service to residents, then I am all for giving them what they need to provide great cultural service to our residents. I am happy with that and I know our CAO is working diligently [to come back with

the next steps this fall] which is putting a concrete vision on paper as to what that funding model will look like, what the alignment of cultural services will look like."

The fall could also lay the groundwork for significant change down the road for Aurora's sports and recreation community. A further notice of motion from the Councillor called on staff to incorporate budget funding for a new multiuse recreation centre in the 2018 budget.

Budget talks will begin this fall, and Councillor Kim says this will be a first step in addressing a growing issue.

"Our population is increasing," he says. "It is expected to continue to increase over the next three to five years and we need to ensure that our sports facilities are not playing catch up, but we build in advance of the need."

Addressing these needs would work hand in hand with the shortage of local baseball diamonds voiced by the Aurora King Baseball Association for

local kids. With this shortage, teams are having to seek out additional diamond time in Newmarket and as far away as Nobleton.

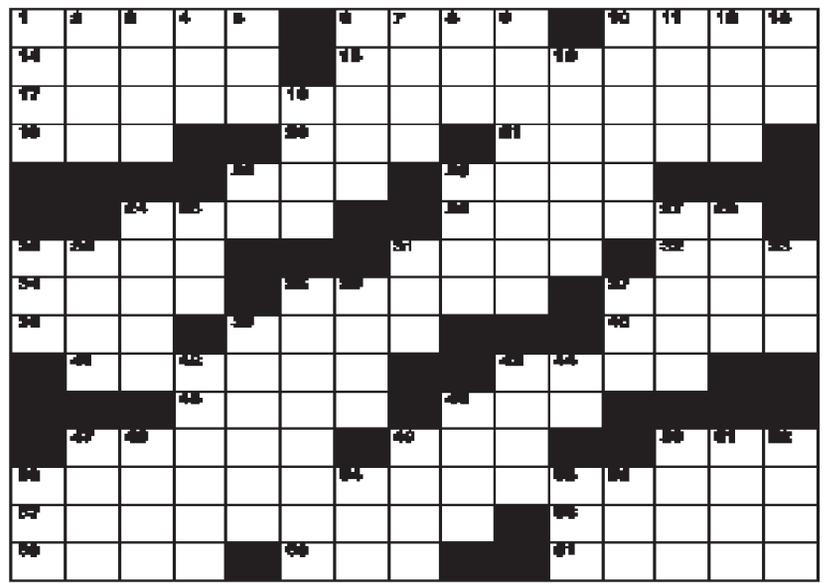
"Even two [diamonds] won't be sufficient but it goes a long way in helping Aurora provide the baseball facilities to meet the growing demands of the sport for youth and children," he says.

An additional initiative of Councillor Kim's is set to take place once again next Saturday, September 9.

The Aurora Multicultural Festival will take place for the second year running, this time in Town Park and it is expected to be bigger and better than ever.

"In its second year, I hope the residents continue to participate and give feedback on how that has to grow and look," says Councillor Kim of the Festival. "As it is the second year, I hope this year and every year it grows and better reflects the dynamic and cultural cross section of our Town."

## CROSSWORD



### CLUES ACROSS

1. Nocturnal rodents
6. "Six City" across Jamaica
10. Strong dark beer
14. Nebraska city
15. Inclined to avoid conflict
17. Mistaken belief
19. Expresses disgust
20. Greek goddess of the dawn
21. Cranky
22. Boy who wouldn't grow up
23. Suits for "beard"
24. Tuck
26. Countries
29. The duration of something
31. Pastries
32. Golf score
34. Reasonable
35. Feline pests

37. Art \_\_, around 1920
38. Beloved sandwich
39. Damaged
40. Long time
41. One who runs
43. Without
45. Occupational safety and health act
46. Political action organization
47. Geological period
49. Swiss river
50. Type of mathematical graph
53. Doctors are sworn to it
57. One's concerns
58. Type of wrap
59. Pony
60. Born of
61. A temporary police force

### CLUES DOWN

1. \_\_ and circumstance
2. Bowfin fish
3. Ready money
4. Expression of satisfaction
5. A person who lacks good judgment
6. Cooks where one
7. Mignon and Oswald
8. \_\_ learning
9. Ballo
10. Type of beard
11. A notice of someone's death
12. Disput with sweetness
13. Barbie's friend
14. Rectal procedures
16. Partner to carrots
22. Group of oops (abbr.)
23. First Chinese dynasty
24. A favorite of children
25. Being a single unit or being
27. Fencing swords
28. New England river
29. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)

30. Insect feeder
31. Payment (abbr.)
33. Director Howard
35. Large deep-bodied fish
36. Architectural term describing pillars
37. Charges legend Fanta
39. Avalon
42. Covered
43. Freak
44. Cooks a home
46. Congratulatory gesture
47. \_\_ file
48. Ancient Incan sun god
49. Card player's move: \_\_ up
50. Gentlemen
51. Educational organization
52. Autumn Daily
53. Southern sky constellation (abbr.)
54. Midway between east and southeast
55. Small European viper
56. Language close to Thai

## Baby Janah welcomed on Sunday

From page 1

who had excitedly been working on the family's living accommodations as soon as they received word their arrival was imminent. Priority number one, says Ms. Khamissa, was enrolling them in classes and getting the help they needed to gain a working knowledge of English, all the while finding jobs.

They picked up the language pretty quickly, with the mother, Hanaa, becoming adept very early on.

"The kids are incredible too," says Ms. Khamissa. "You would think they are kids who grew up in Canada from Day 1 because their English is incredible and they have done very well in school as well."

Now, there will be a new baby girl, Janah, to watch flourish in her family's newly adopted home.

"Grateful pride" is the phrase Ms. Khamissa uses to describe what it meant to be chosen as Hana's birthing coach.

"We take so many thing for granted," says Ms. Khamissa, who came to Canada from South Africa. "This brings it all back to how grateful we should be of what we have. These kids are going to have an incredible future, they are going to make something, whereas who knows what would have happened if no one approached them from the Canadian government in



Siblings welcome mom Hanaa and Janah, the new bundle of joy.

Photo by Mae Khamissa

those camps? Would they have had to turn around and go back to Syria and try and rebuild what was left of it? We just feel pride, joy, happiness and gratitude that they have a chance to have a good life.

"[This birth] is a miracle of life. This moment comes and you see this woman struggling through it, but then the moment comes and all the pain is forgotten. To participate was just an honour, and I am amazed to have experienced that."

The IRR continues to thank everyone in the community who has supported their group in supporting this family.

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# Cultural Precinct is “leadership opportunity” for Cultural Centre: Executive Director

By Brock Weir

A conversation will need to be had in Aurora on just what is possible in helping the Town realise its cultural potential, according to Suzanne Haines, the Aurora Cultural Centre’s newly minted Executive Director.

With Council set to resume talks on the future of Library Square and Aurora’s Cultural Precinct this fall with the only certainty being the former homes of the Aurora Public Library and Seniors’ Centre will be demolished, there are many opportunities to explore and the Aurora Cultural Centre is in the thick of it.

In the many proposals and visions that have come forward on what to replace the two buildings with, options have included extensions of existing buildings surrounding the site, including an expansion of the Church Street School to allow more space for services.

“When I looked at the Cultural master Plan and the Cultural Precinct, and [examining] those opportunities of how Town Council was talking about culture, it looked like a leadership opportunity,” says Ms. Haines. “We certainly don’t have a lot of purpose-built space in this community, so it would be fantastic to have arts space that is actually purpose-built and provides an opportunity for the community.”

When Ms. Haines joined the Cultural Centre in June, she says many ideas immediately began “running around” in her head and it was hard to resist diving right in. There are, after all, certain constraints within the heritage building, not the least of which is a finite amount of space.

“Working with my staff and trying to determine where there might be space to add is the first step and where we have opportunities within the community to add as well,” she says. “The facility itself is quite occupied and busy, which is great – a product of their success – and we need other people and other partners and sponsors to come on board if we’re going to be able to grow the organization and add programming and opportunities.”

Brevik Hall, the expansive second floor facility which is typically used as a performing arts space, is but one example of significant potential. Designed as a multiuse facility, it definitely lives up to that vision, hosting not only the performing arts, but large scale meetings, corporate hires, and other rentals.

“Within the space, we can use every nook and cranny,” says Ms. Haines. “I have had a lot of experience doing that, activating as much as possible and keeping our doors open as much as possible. It takes some money, it takes some time, but there is innovation and creativity. Luckily, I have creative people on board and an incredible staff, many of whom have been here since the beginning. There is a real innate knowledge of what has been tried, what has been successful,



Suzanne Haines

Supplied photo

and what the community wants to see in this space.”

But, there needs to be a talk on “What is possible and what can be supported in the community,” she adds, noting it is not just organizations like the Aurora Cultural Centre and Theatre Aurora, to pick but one example, that need to do the talking, but those who “want to interact with culture.”

“Certainly it was exciting to me when I looked at the job and thought this is a place that is looking to grow and really have an impact on the community in a cultural way,” she says. “There are studies upon studies that show arts and culture drives economic development and absolutely changes how people think about their communities and how they feel about where they live.

“Like many communities, Aurora is one that has a number of different types of people – people who live here and stay here, people who go to work somewhere else and only live here at night, or people like me who come here to work and be here during the day. They need to have this cultural touch point because it makes their lives richer.

“How do we tailor our programming to make sure that we’re meeting those needs? There is certainly some excitement around the leadership that has been show through the documentation I have looked at and the process the Town is going through. I am looking forward to being part of that conversation on growth. There are lots of opportunities for growth and partnership. My door is always open and the space is open for people to come and enjoy.

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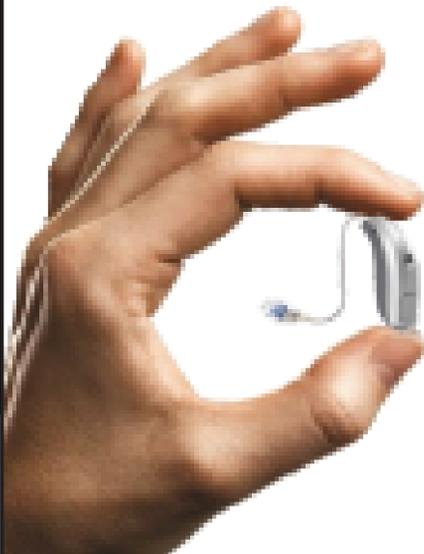
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# THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW

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Canadian Blood Services will hold a Blood Donor Clinic today from 2:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the Aurora Legion (105 Industrial Parkway North). #GiveLife and bring a friend.

\*\*\*\*

The Town of Aurora presents Movies in the Park this evening at Hickson

Park (155 Conover Avenue) from 7 – 10 p.m. Tonight's film is Trolls. Activities and pre-movie surprises will begin at 7. All movies begin at dusk. Movies are free a food donation to the Aurora Food Pantry is appreciated. For your seating comfort, please bring your own lawn chairs.

## SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Amnesty's Aurora-Newmarket Group will be present at the Aurora Farmers Market. Drop by and find out more about how Amnesty International helps ordinary people stand up against human rights abuses around the world. Our group meets monthly from September to May. For more info, call Renee 905-713-6713, or visit [www.amnesty.ca](http://www.amnesty.ca) or [amnestyaurora.wordpress.com](http://amnestyaurora.wordpress.com).

\*\*\*\*

The Town of Aurora hosts the second annual Multicultural Festival at Town Park today from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Come and celebrate Aurora's cultural heritage and diversity. There will be music, dancing, food, games, crafts and lots of family fun.

\*\*\*\*

Eating Disorders of York Region's Riverwalk Wellness Centre will host their fifth annual Songs to Recovery Concert today at the Aurora Cultural Centre from 1 – 4 p.m. "Join us as we celebrate art and autumn with a musical concert and art show! Riverwalk presents a café series in communities across York Region culminating in the Songs to Recovery Art Show and Concert." Open seating, doors open at 12:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10 or \$5 for seniors and students. [www.edoyr.com](http://www.edoyr.com).

## MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Toastmasters invites residents to its Showcase Meeting tonight from 7 – 9 p.m. at Aurora Town Hall to network with members and participate in a meeting that will include prepared speeches, impromptu speeches and an overview of the organization and program. The public is invited to attend this Showcase Meeting to learn what Toastmasters has to offer. Toastmasters International is a world leader in communication and personal development where members improve their speaking and leadership skills by attending one of the 15,900 clubs in 142 countries that make up our global network of meeting locations. Northern Lights Toastmasters meets twice each month at 7 p.m. at the Aurora Town Hall, Leaksand Room (Wellington Street and John West Way). For more information about this event and the club, please visit [www.toastmastersaurora.org](http://www.toastmastersaurora.org).



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# Southlake's littlest patients have out-of-this-world encounter

By Brock Weir

Southlake's littlest cancer patients had an out-of-this world encounter on Thursday as they watched a live feed of astronauts on the International Space Station donning some of their very own handiwork.

It might have been the world's first zero-gravity fashion runway, but it was the debut of UNITY, the space suit pediatric oncology patients helped create.

According to Southlake, the Spacesuit Project was launched by Astronaut Nicole Stott and Ian Cion, director of the Arts in Medicine Program at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center to demonstrate the benefits of arts and science to adults and children fighting cancer.

Through the program, patients are challenged to hand-paint fabric patterns which are later stitched together into wearable replica space suits.

UNITY is the third such space suit, joining HOPE and COURAGE.

Kids gathered with real-life astronaut Dr. Dave Williams – who just happens to be the retiring President and CEO of Southlake Regional Health Centre – for the morning of fun as they had a chance not only to see the space suit, but hear the astronauts on board the International Space Station answer questions that had been sent in by the students.

The kids also had the opportunity to paint swatches for EXPLORATION, which will be the fourth creation to come out of The Spacesuit Project.



Dr. Dave Williams is pictured with last week's participants.

Photo courtesy of Southlake Regional Health Centre

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