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THE AURORAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 19 No. 27 905-727-3300 | theauroran.com | FREE | Week of April 18, 2019 | CMCA AUDITED

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT – The recipients of the 2019 Give Back Awards gathered at Magna's Aurora headquarters on Thursday at the height of National Volunteer Week to receive scholarships in recognition of their vast contributions to their school communities and their wider communities across York Region. This year's recipients are: Ryan Chen, Madison Coker, Adamo Crescenzi, Jeremy Doucette, Rachel Gallagher, Su Gulerman, Faith Gunn, Kara Hunt, Nicole In, Mariana Koruni, Olivia McElrea, Darcy O'Reilly, Stephanie Payne, Hannah Phillips, Rafael Sakarya, Maryam Samimi, Samantha Surtees, Jessica Somerville, Rebecca Streef, and Jack Viney.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

Give Back Award winners offered 8,000 hours to community

By Brock Weir

Maryam Samimi takes matters into her own hands.

A Grade 12 student at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, Maryam knows the importance of getting a good education. On the other hand, after growing up in the United Arab Emirates, she knows all too well that when it comes to learning, there are many inequities that must be overcome.

As a young high school student, however, she and her friends teamed up to help close that gap, co-founding Reading with Superstars, a program advocating for a child's right to education.

Through this initiative, they raised money for hundreds of books in her hometown of Sarjah. Now, in her adopted hometown of Aurora, Maryam's efforts were recognized Thursday night as one of 20 York Region recipients of Magna and Neighbourhood Network's 2019 Give Back Awards.

Maryam and 19 of her York Region peers were honoured at Magna's Aurora headquarters where they were hailed for giving a collective 8,000 hours of volunteer hours back to the community.

The Give Back Awards are presented annually to 20 outstanding area high school students who have demonstrated exceptional volunteer contributions. Presentations take place each year to celebrate National Volunteer Week.

"We are truly honoured to celebrate

Continued on page 18

Mayor, Councillor move to stop "demolition by decay"

By Brock Weir

Some property owners have been criticized for taking the easy way out – that is, letting heritage buildings on their lands decay past the point of no return rather than going through a proper demolition process.

But Mayor Tom Mrakas and Councillor Sandra Humfryes are working to make "demolition by decay" a thing of the past with new stringent measures that

Continued on page 19

95 YEARS STRONG – T.H. Oliver Heating & Cooling celebrated its 95th anniversary in Aurora on Saturday at the Aurora Chamber Home & Lifestyle Show. Business owner Steve Desjardins, left, welcomed Mayor Tom Mrakas and Dr. Leslie Oliver, son of company founder Howard Oliver, for a special cake cutting. For more on the anniversary, see Page 8. For more on the 2019 Home & Lifestyle Show, see Page 13.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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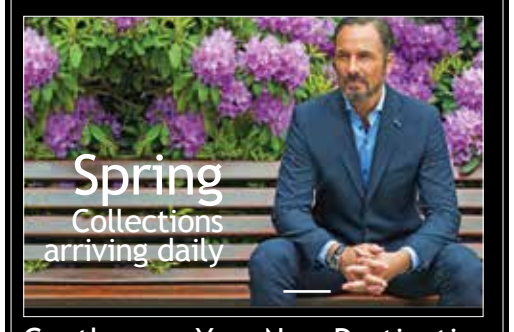
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TOWN OF AURORA

Notice Board

Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
~~Thursday, April 18~~	~~7 p.m.~~	~~Holland Room~~	~~Community Advisory Committee~~
			Rescheduled to Thursday, May 2
Tuesday, April 23	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, April 23	7 p.m.	Council Chambers	Council
~~Wednesday, April 24~~	~~5:30 p.m.~~	~~Holland Room~~	~~Finance Advisory Committee~~
			Rescheduled to Tuesday, April 30
~~Wednesday, April 24~~	~~7 p.m.~~	~~Council Chambers~~	~~Public Planning~~ **Cancelled**
Tuesday, April 30	5:45 p.m.	Holland Room	Finance Advisory Committee
Thursday, May 2	7 p.m.	Holland Room	Community Advisory Committee

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

Council meetings are open to the public. For a full list of upcoming meetings, please visit **aurora.ca.**

What's Happening

Notice of service disruptions

Please see below for a scheduled service disruption at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC):

• Please note that electrical repairs are scheduled at the AFLC starting Monday, April 22 to Friday, April 26. As a result, Club Aurora Fitness Centre and Lind Realty Team Fitness Studio will be affected visit **aurora.ca/notices** for details.

Please see below for a scheduled service disruption at the Stronach Aurora Family Leisure Complex (SARC):

•Preschool drop-In located at the SARC will be cancelled on Saturday, May 4 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. due to an event.

We apologize for any inconvenience. For more information, visit **aurora.ca/notices**.

Aurora Seniors' Centre launches Seniors' Centre Without Walls

The Aurora Seniors' Centre is excited to announce the launch of Seniors' Centre Without Walls (SCWW). This is a free community outreach program to support vulnerable and isolated seniors and adults.

Through conference calls, SCWW will provide Aurora's seniors with an opportunity to obtain health information and social interactions. For more information, please email **kpapillon@aurora.ca** or visit **aurora.ca/scww.**

Stay busy during the Easter weekend!

Stay busy during this Easter Weekend from April 19 to 22! The Town of Aurora has several activities and programs for everyone to enjoy. Check out our Easter holiday recreation schedule at **aurora.ca/easterweekend**.

Tips to empty your hot tub and spa safely

With warmer weather approaching, please follow these tips on how to correctly empty your hot tub or spa.

For more details, visit **aurora.ca/pools.**

What's Happening

Register for Spring & Summer 2019 Programs

Registration is now open for Spring & Summer Recreation Programs, Spring Aquatics and Summer Camps. Pick-up a copy of the Community Services Program Guide at our Recreation facilities, Town Hall, Aurora Public Library or Aurora Cultural Centre. You can also view the Program Guide online at **aurora.ca/recguide.**

Club Aurora Wellness Seminar - Introduction to Foam Rolling

Register today for Club Aurora's Wellness Seminar, an *Introduction to Foam Rolling* on **Saturday, May 25** from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex. For more details, visit **aurora.ca/fitness.**

Apply for the John West Memorial Leaders of Tomorrow Scholarship Award

The Town of Aurora is currently looking for young people entering post-secondary school who have made a positive impact on the community. You could win $1,000 through our John West Memorial Scholarship. The application deadline is **Wednesday, May 1**.

For more information, visit **aurora.ca/leadersoftomorrow**.

Easter Holiday Service Schedule

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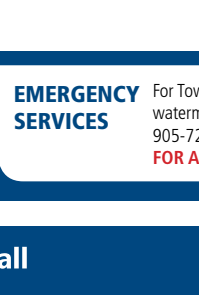
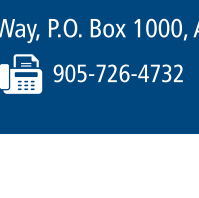


MUNICIPAL OFFICE • 100 John West Way

Aurora Town Hall (100 John West Way) will be **CLOSED** on **Friday, April 19**. Town Hall will reopen on **Monday, April 22** at 8:30 a.m.

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



AURORA PUBLIC LIBRARY • 15145 Yonge Street

Aurora Public Library will be **CLOSED** on **Friday, April 19, Sunday, April 21 and Monday, April 22.** For more information, please visit **aurorapl.ca** or call 905-727-9494.

WASTE COLLECTION

Due to the Good Friday holiday, waste collection that occurs on Friday, April 19 **will be delayed to collection on Saturday, April 20**. Please consult your *2019/2020 Waste Management Guide and Recycling Calendar for more details.*

RECREATION CENTRES

Recreation centres including the **Aurora Family Leisure Complex** and the **Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex** will be operating with **modified hours.** For a full list of hours of operation and program opportunities including fitness classes, pool, gymnasium, rock wall and The Loft hours, please visit **aurora.ca/easterweekend.**

Aurora Seniors' Centre will be **CLOSED** for the Easter holiday from **Friday, April 19** to **Sunday, April 21** and will reopen on **Monday, April 22** at 8:30 a.m.

EMERGENCY SERVICES For Town-related emergency situations such as flooding, watermain breaks or downed trees, please call 905-727-1375 or 905-727-3123 and follow the voice prompts.
FOR ALL OTHER EMERGENCIES, CALL 9-1-1

What's Happening

Portraits of Giving recognizes Gonsalves for lifetime achievement

Rosalyn Gonsalves, third from right, was honoured at the launch of the 2019 Portraits of Giving exhibition on Thursday night. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

By Brock Weir

When she and her family first arrived in Aurora, Rosalyn Gonsalves quickly set to work making the place she decided to raise her family a better place to live.

Nearly 40 years on, her decades of volunteerism within the community were recognized Thursday with her being named "Life Time Giver" in the 2019 Portraits of Giving photographic exhibition.

Spearheaded by Richmond Hill photographer Karen Merk, Portraits of Giving recognizes the volunteer achievements of residents and community-builders spanning York Region.

Ms. Gonsalves, who came to Canada from South America, was recognized this year alongside Michael Croxon, Benny Socia, Tina Tehranchian, Kelly and Mike Foley, Eric Tappenden, Daniela Hofmann, Gary and Gina Semeniuk, Patrick LeBlanc, Anita Smeskal-Donato, newly-minted OPP Commissioner Tom Carrique (recognized by the York Regional Police), Chief Deryn Rizzi, Kirk Kelly and Lauren Castelino.

"I was very honoured and humbled by the nomination made by Sandra Ferri of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce," says Ms. Gonsalves, whose roots with the Chamber run deep. "This was certainly not what I was expecting."

For over 20 years, from 1985 – 2006, Ms. Gonsalves served as General Manager of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. It was a time of significant development for the Chamber and during her tenure she helped spearhead a number of firsts including the Aurora Home Show in 1987 and the Aurora Street Festival, both of which remain popular to this day.

She first applied for the job when her children were in Grades 1 and 3.

"I wanted to get out of the house," she says with a laugh and, perhaps, a degree of self-depreciation.

At the time, the Chamber could offer wages of $4 an honour, but that didn't matter to her. They only had $3,000 in the bank back then, no permanent home, but at the end of her term as General Manager, their finances were more secure – and they had built a new permanent home built with zero debt thanks to some canny fundraising.

"I thoroughly enjoyed what I was doing and I felt that there was a need in the community to raise awareness about what a Chamber could provide for businesses within the Town," she says. "In 1985, John West was Mayor of Aurora and [by nature of his position] was sitting on the Chamber's Board as a non-voting individual. He dared us, 'You will never be able to do a home show,' and I said, 'Watch me.' The first Home Show was done in 1987 and the intent behind it was to bring awareness in the community to what businesses had to offer – and the Home Show still continues 33 years later."

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce, however, was not Ms. Gonsalves' first foray into being a local difference-maker.

Little more than a year after she, her husband George, and their two children settled into their new hometown, people across Aurora soon learned her name as she went door to door collecting signatures for a highly successful petition to eliminate long-distance charges on calls made from Aurora to Toronto.

The resulting petition of 5,000 signatures was presented in the House of Commons by then-MP Sinclair Stevens and, from there, it made its way through the CRTC to become a reality.

Just a few years later, through her volunteerism with the Canadian Cancer Society, she met a woman called Mildred Wickson. Ms. Gonsalves' daughter was set to be in a ballet recital and she invited Ms. Wickson, who was instrumental in the establishment of the National Ballet of Canada, to come along.

Her guest was struck by the talent of a young ballerina playing the Snow Queen, sensing she might be the right material for the National Ballet.

"Mildred was very instrumental in getting the young lady into the National Ballet," Ms. Gonsalves recalls. "Unfortunately, by the time the young ballerina performed in The Nutcracker, Mildred had already passed away. However, she left in her will a bursary for this young ballerina from Aurora to continue and pursue her career at the National Ballet, which she did, and she is still a ballet instructor."

Ms. Gonsalves has also dedicated her time to supporting parent councils where her children attended school, has served on various councils at Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church, the Friends of the Aurora Public Library, the Economic Development Advisory Committee for the Town of Aurora, and currently volunteers a number of hours each month with the PROBUS Club of Aurora, the Newmarket Voice Festival, and the Optimist Club of Aurora.

"I have been a member of the Optimists now for seven years and I am always happy when I am able to attend their functions," she says, noting that for the past four years she has taken special interest in the Optimists' scholarship program which provides bursaries each year to students attending Aurora's five high schools. "The Optimists are a 'Friend of Youth,' so we try to support as many of the events as we can in Town.

"Volunteering builds a sense of community and belonging. It also helps to develop your creativity and open-mindedness to new ideas of affecting change. That's exactly what I feel: it is building a sense of community and belonging and I think that is very vital."

Portraits of Giving 2019 is now on display in the Great Hall of the Regional Municipality of York (17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket). The portraits exhibition arrives in Aurora from June 24 – July 14 at Aurora Town Hall and from September 16 – October 1 at the York Regional Police headquarters.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Premier "taking Province down dangerous path," says university student

Last week, we saw young people from our great province walk out of class to protest the conservative government. They must continue to fight.

Mr. Ford and his government are dragging Ontario backwards not forwards.

It is clear that young people will pay the price for this government's mistaken and misguided beliefs, fear and hatred toward groups of Ontarians. We, as young people, cannot stand for this – this is our future and it is jeopardy more now than it ever has been in past.

This is not about a disagreement in ideology or policy, this is not about a Premier that is running his government like a dictatorship because he believes he is the king of Ontario.

We need to stand and fight. We have seen conservative MPPs not fight for their constituents or what is right; we are seeing damage to a beautiful province that will take years to reverse.

Ontarians have anxieties about issues facing them every day this Premier does not understand that because he has a silver spoon in his mouth.

Students education is vital. The cuts that this Premier has made to the Ontario student assistance program classroom sizes and autism funding must be stopped. This Premier is taking Ontario down a dangerous path with his reckless policies that are hurting Ontarians in every walks of life. It will be young people that will pay the price for this in the end and we must use every tool available to us to stop this government in their tracks.

We will be able to vote out this government in four years as young people and that is exactly what we will do. These cuts to programs we all rely on show us how heartless this government and this Premier really are.

Mr. Ford, you talk a good game but your actions speak louder than your words in the last few months you have done more damage to Ontario then any other government in history.

It breaks my heart to see where our province is headed. This is not the Ontario I want to live in. We need to respect the equality and freedom of every Canadian and this government is not doing that we must stop them before it gets worse. We must protect them from themselves because they can't see the error in their ways.

Benjamin Williamson
Aurora
(Student, Carleton University)

THE AURORAN

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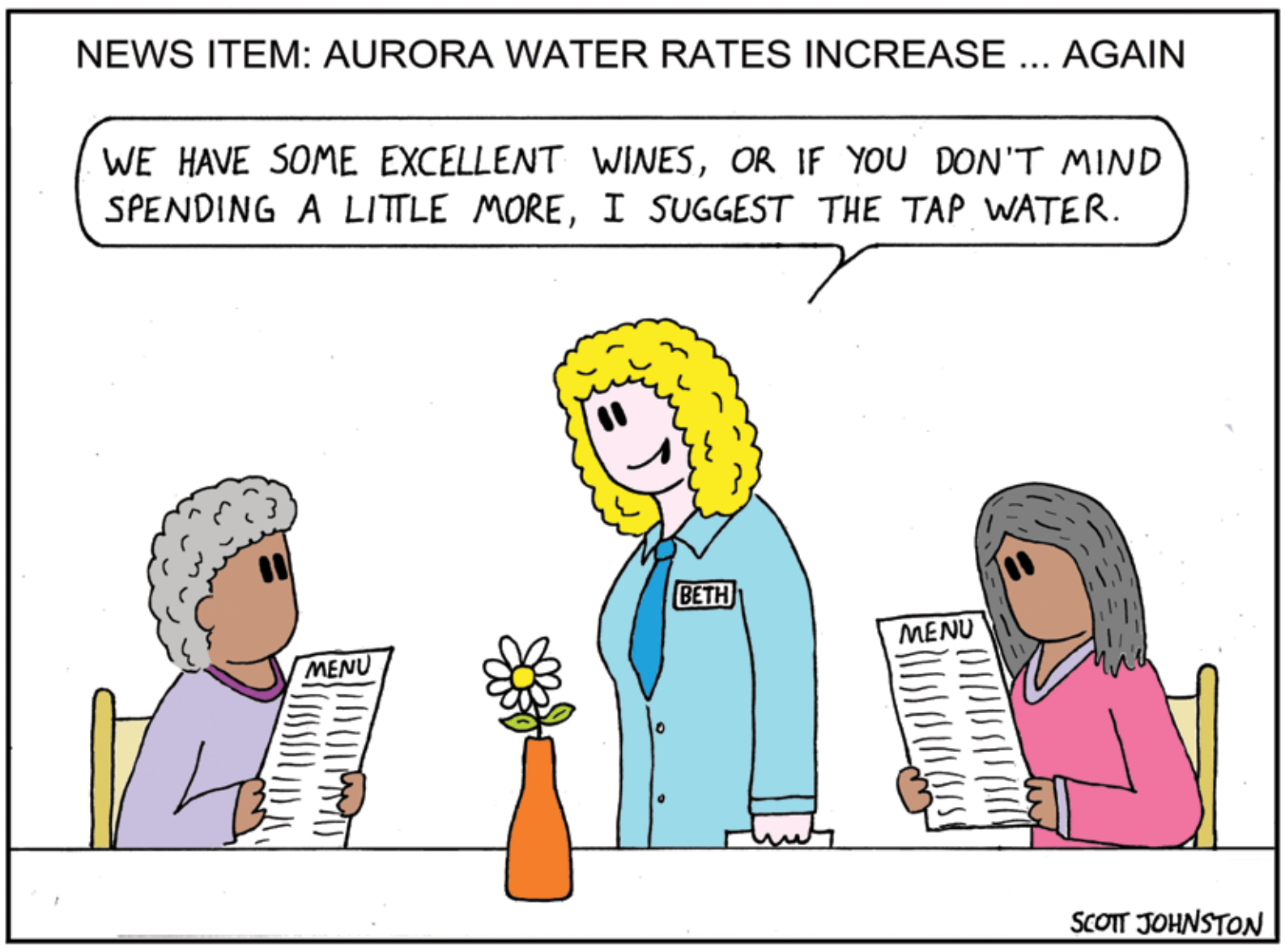
To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to letters@auroran.com Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

Machell's Corners



A part of us

BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

If you were like me on Monday, you might have found it very hard to get work done as you sat gripped to your computer, television or device watching the fire at Paris' Notre Dame Cathedral unfold.

At the outset, it seemed within the realm of hope that it might just be a small roof fire, sparked by ongoing renovation and restoration efforts intended to keep the iconic edifice in good repair for another millennium.

Sadly, and all too quickly, it became all too clear that this was not a fire that could be quickly doused.

Within an hour or two, flames were raging through the architectural marvel of the ceiling, reducing it to beams, then cinders, before it ultimately came crashing down on the floor below; a floor that had been trod on for nearly 1,000 years by innumerable members of the clergy, millions of the faithful, ever more millions of tourists from around the globe, not to mention a panoply of the great and good, infamous and terrible from the annals of our collective history – kings and queens, emperors and popes, traitors, historical heretics and martyrs.

Watching the life stream from the bottom left corner of my computer screen, my momentarily diverted eyes were drawn back to it again as a gasp that will be seared forever in my mind emanated from the hundreds of onlookers as the cathedral's spire, and way-finder for generations, collapsed like a house of cards into the inferno below.

This unforgettable gasp was followed a short time later by something equally unforgettable: the sound of hundreds of voices raised in hymn for hours as they watched their "home" burn down.

For many of the members of public, it was their spiritual home; a place where they were baptized, married, gathered for important observances, or said farewell to a loved one. For others…well, it was a spiritual home as well, an embodiment of yet another eternal city, a guidepost, a testament to something that transcended mere time, a monument that had withstood centuries of religious strife, conflict, a handful of revolutions, two World Wars, and ongoing civil unrest.

And, with a spark, almost all was lost.

At the point of this writing, the outer walls of the cathedral, including its iconic towers, appear to be safe. Given the destruction within, it's something of a comfort that these landmarks will continue to be a beacon of sorts to generations to come, but the loss inside is incalculable.

"My thoughts are with all Catholics and all French people," said French President Emmanuel Macron in a statement as the fire raged. "Like all of our compatriots, I am sad this evening to see this part of us burning."

It is important to note that the President did not say, "a part of the city", or "a part of our history." It is, indeed, a part of us. No matter where the upper branches in our family tree first sprouted, threads of our collective consciousness could be found inside.

If you are a member of the Catholic faith, the connections don't need to be stated, but the relics protected in what was once Notre Dame, from the purported relics of Christ to the incomparable works of art, are something each and every one of us could relate to in our own way.

On a personal note, I just wish I had a clearer picture on just what this personal connection was.

When I visited Paris in 2007 on an extended stopover on the way back from elsewhere, I had the pleasure of staying at a youth hostel in the heart of the city. Certainly not purpose-built, the hostel was built into the solid stone walls of a conglomeration of historic buildings, each with a story to tell.

My arrival at the hostel was not auspicious.

At first, my reservation seemed to have gone astray. Then, once found and a room assigned, my battle-scarred suitcase gave up its will to live on the fifth flight of my six flight trip to my bedroom, leaving two months worth of clothes streaming down a flight or two and once finally settled in I felt like I was almost on autopilot: aware of my surroundings, conscious of the fact I had a whole new city to explore, but slightly detached from it all.

As I climbed back down those six flights of stairs, a journey made tricky by a back still a bit angry from the suitcase debacle, I set out to visit one of the places on the top of my list: Notre Dame.

Being slightly dazed from the long journey, I don't remember much of what happened next, just a feeling.

I opened the heavy wooden gates of the hostel and walked casually, without a map, and definitely with no GPS on my pay-as-you-go flip phone, directly to the cathedral not even paying attention to the landmarks around me. Yet, somehow I knew instinctively how to get there.

As odd as it sounds, I experienced a peculiar sensation as I walked to Notre Dame that I had been down that path before, many times. But that was certainly not the case.

Once behind its stone walls, I was overcome with that sensation as it intensified: an indescribable feeling that I was back where I had once been, a place that in which I had already spent many hours and had been, in a way that I have not been able to pinpoint, somehow influential to my past.

Elusive as it was, I had hoped to visit once again sometime in the years ahead to see if that feeling was still as potent as it was the first time and, if so, being more conscious of the feeling, whether I would be better able to discern why that feeling was simply so overwhelming.

I wonder how many of you who had been privileged enough to walk under its arches experienced the same thing. Once France rebuilds this testament to our collective heritage, will it be possible to experience it again?

This Easter or Passover, however you observe, it might be an opportunity now to take stock of your spiritual home and the treasures contained within, and make renewed memories of the things you might otherwise pass by without a second glance. If your spiritual home, however you define it, is outside a traditional place of worship, make a special effort to appreciate it.

We all know it can be gone in an instant.

THE AURORAN
Aurora's Community Newspaper

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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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Publisher is not liable for slight changes or typographical errors that do not lessen the value of an advertisement. Disputes must be brought to the attention of the publisher prior to the following edition.

The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating…

Look Alike Day! (April 20)

While searching for an image for National Look Alike Day, this one stood out above all others. Unfortunately, it also fits into the category of Unknown Aurorans as we know nothing about the girls. The original image is a tintype, which was an early form of photograph development that used thin sheets of metal coated with a dark lacquer. Tintypes were very popular during the back half of the 1800s and as new printing/development technology was invented, they continued to be used as a novelty item.

TIME TRAVELLERS DIARY

Shawna White
Curator, Aurora Museum & Archives

Attention Fellow Time Travellers

It appears that our time travelling machine has a glitch.

While we can't pinpoint the exact cause of the disruption, we encounter a major malfunction every time we try to travel back to the not so distant past.

Our collection is full of wonderful objects and incredible stories from over a century ago such as the construction of the drill shed in Town Park (1874) and the Victorian Bicycle Craze that rolled through Town in the 1890s, but stories from the 1970s, 80s and 90s are rarer than hen's teeth.

Every day at the Museum we hear rumours, little snippets of long forgotten stories just waiting to be retold.

What's the story behind the weekly wrestling matches at the Aurora Community Centre? How many horses actually fit into Town Park? Could you really buy a house in Aurora for less than $25,000? But just as we get close to learning the truth, the stories vanish.

Stories have to be told or they die, and when they die, we can't remember who we are or why we are here.

Sue Monk Kidd, author

Knowledgeable sources have told us that within Town limits there are tens of thousands of fellow time travellers, each with their own areas of interest and expertise. We are calling upon you to share your experiences of life in Aurora.

Write down the details of your journeys (500 words) and send them to us. Help us save the past for future generations. Be one of our contributing writers to this weekly Time Travellers Diary column. No story too small, every word is an essential part of who we are.

There's always room for a story that can transport people to another place.

J.K. Rowling, author

We know you're out there. Please make contact.

A Rebuttal

Getting Things Done

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

I read a recent op-ed piece in a national newspaper about the need for more housing in Ontario and what's holding it back.

Included in the piece were the stated perspectives of a few representatives of the building industry. Suffice to say I was disappointed in what I read; statements such as "nothing can get built" because "developments are held up in 10 years of red tape."

The thrust of the piece seemed to be saying, to me at least, that there is a housing "supply" issue in Ontario, the fault of which lay at the feet of Municipal governments, and our misguided belief that we need to uphold our Official Plans. If only Municipal governments would just get on board, cut all the "red tape" of planning policies, rip up our various municipal zoning bylaws and replace it all with anything-goes development, then the housing "supply" problem would be solved.

As I prefer to deal with facts, rather than self-serving half truths, let's consider the statement that "nothing can get built" due to "10 years of red tape."

Not true. By any measure. Any resident in York Region can tell you that things are getting built. In fact, I have an inbox full of residents expressing concern about how much is getting built and the increasing encroachment of development and corresponding loss of greenspace.

But leaving that aside, as per the Region's own staff report, "(York) Region has an adequate supply of both registered and draft approved and designated units to support anticipated demand." In fact, right now the Region has a designated supply of over 180,000 units. That supply, "…includes units within planning applications that are proposed as well as potential development and re-development of lands with a residential designation in local municipal plans but which currently have no application."

No "red tape" needs to be cut. Start digging now. Just follow the Official Plan in the municipality you wish to build and you can build tomorrow.

If the issue is truly one of a lack of supply, then why not build the thousands of units in the areas already zoned for housing, rather than fight to open up land that isn't?

Time and time again, Councils across the Province are asked to make exceptions – often substantial exceptions – to what is allowed under our Official Plans. We see requests to amend the zoning to allow 20 houses where currently one stands or a 20-storey building where the zoning allows for seven storeys. And on and on it goes.

Municipal Official Plans are collaboratively developed, provincially approved, municipal planning documents that set out what can be built and where in a given municipality.

It's a plan that makes clear, that when you buy a piece of land, you know what can be built on it. And what can't.

Yes, OPs are meant to be flexible. They aren't carved in stone, but who gets to decide how much change in a community is reasonable? Whose vision of a community takes precedence? The Municipal Council elected to serve the people who live there and work there, or a for-profit driven industry whose primary consideration is their financial bottom line?

The planning goals of a profit-driven development industry are clearly different than those of a community-focused Municipal Council. One focuses on an individual corporate bottom line and the other the community building, socio-economic bottom line.

Land-use planning decisions made within the context of the Provincially compliant zoning bylaws of one's municipality are not obstructive or a capitulation to "NIMBYism" but rather responsible leadership of the communities we serve.

Is there a housing supply issue? Absolutely. But conflating increased availability with affordability doesn't address the central issue. We need more than just more housing, we need more housing options. And in particular, purpose built rental housing.

Communities grow and evolve. But the drivers of community change should be the community itself.

If we are to develop a shared bottom line of appropriate growth, we – municipal leaders, residents, business owners and the development industry alike – need to work together to identify and deliver the housing needs unique to our communities so that we build a positive future and a vibrant community.

That's all for this week. As always if you would like to get into contact with me please feel free to contact me anytime by phone 905-727-3123 ext. 4746 or by email tmrakas@aurora.ca and if you would like to sign up for more newsletters and council updates then please visit Mrakas.ca/contact to join the growing list of Aurorans that are staying informed.

My Aurora Budget Speech

FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE

Stephen Somerville

The Federal Minister of Finance, the Honourable Bill Morneau gave his Budget Speech a few weeks ago and his Ontario Counterpart, the Honourable Vic Fideli, followed last week.

For those who have been loyal readers of this column, you will know that your friendly scribe has pontificated on the budget process, the roles and responsibilities of the various levels of government and the trending of our taxes against various metrics in the past.

I present below, for the readers' perusal, amusement and probable ridicule, my own hypothetical Aurora Municipal Budget Speech.

I will have you know that, due to the solemnity of the occasion, I have put on my best blue suit, white shirt (with blue stripes) and a blue tie. And I am wearing a pair of black Italian loafers that have gold buckles. (Due to self-imposed austerity measures – i.e. my wife would not be too pleased - I have refrained from the budget making tradition of buying a new pair of shoes). I then affixed a yellow and white carnation to my suit jacket lapel.

Sitting in the Council Chamber, I would have a sip of water, then at 4:35 p.m. - just after the financial markets have closed so as not to unduly alarm world markets – I would rise from my seat.

My Budget Speech would go something like this:

Mr. Mayor, Councillors, ladies and gentlemen, friends, assembled guests – and my father-in-law, good afternoon!

It gives me a tremendous amount of pride and satisfaction to rise from my seat in this great rotunda of thought and grand debate to deliver, on behalf of the Mayor and his Council colleagues, my first Budget as Aurora's Minister of Finance.

I would like to first thank the citizens of this community for their active involvement in our special budget consultation meetings held earlier this year. As part of the budget process, Council was looking for suggestions on how to increase non-tax revenues and how to save money on Town processes and services. Your ideas were most welcome and many of them have been incorporated into today's Budget.

This Budget is about four P's.

It is about Perspective. It is about Prudence. It is about Priorities. But it is mostly about People.

Perspective: Aurora is the fifth largest of the municipalities within York Region and growing at an enormous rate. So too is our Town's growing appetite for services and capital projects.

The Town annual operating budget is approximately $67.5 Million.

The Town is responsible for things such as local roads, fire protection, garbage collection, snow ploughing, traffic control, Library, Seniors' Centre, recreation facilities and local land use planning needs.

Prudence & Priorities: The Mayor and his six Council colleagues have been painstakingly going through the budget items – one at a time.

As this is the first Budget that our new team is bringing forward, we want to send a message of focus and also to set a tone.

From our discussions with Aurora residents, there is widespread concern about our aging infrastructure. A significant proportion of your tax dollars will go toward repairing roads and sidewalks.

We have an ambitious ten-year capital plan to spend $286 Million - representing 519 capital projects. 356 of these projects are for repairs and replacements, 99 are for growth and new projects and 64 are related to studies and other projects.

People: Our community is what we make of it. What we want is to have a Town where every individual can enjoy the activities and programs that our community has to offer.

We know that there are a number of children in our community that would love to play hockey, baseball or soccer but their families cannot afford the annual fees.

Therefore, we are setting aside $150,000 every year to be used so that children, under the age of 19, can have access to community sports groups.

To encourage people in our community to vote we are also setting aside $30,000 for election prizes. All those who actually cast a vote in municipal, provincial and federal elections will be eligible. Four draws of $2,500 each will be done after every election.

Finally, our Council also believes in accountability. To this end the following Ways and Means Motion will be tabled in this chamber this afternoon.

Be it resolved that Council will direct Town Staff to produce a quarterly or semi-annual scorecard or specific update for the citizens of Aurora that will be published in the local newspaper so the citizens can monitor the progress on these agreed upon Budget Priorities.

The 2019 Aurora Budget document is understandable, it is prudent and it lays out our priorities for the next four years. But above all, this Budget is about people and how we can, together, make a safer, happier, healthier and better Aurora.

Thank You.

Stephen can be contacted at stephengsomerville@yahoo.com

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Did you support the students in their April 4 walkout?

Yes No Unsure

Go to www.theauroran.com to vote!

Previous poll results

Will increased class sizes have a negative impact on high school students?

RESULTS TO DATE April 16, 2019	YES	NO	UNSURE
	75%	25%	0%

Wildlife Crossing areas marked for St. John's, Henderson

AURORA TEEN IDOL 2019

Aurora residents between the ages of 12 and 17 are eligible to participate in the competition.

Open to individual vocalists only

Applications are available online at:
aurora.ca/canadaday

Or in person at:
Aurora Family Leisure Complex, Aurora Town Hall and the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex

AUDITIONS
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 2019
6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Aurora Community Centre

Final competition takes place during the Canada Day festivities on Monday, July 1, 2019 at Lambert Willson Park

Register by Friday, June 7, 2019

$500 in prizes to be won!

Please note, we reserve the right to cancel, amend or change activities.

905-726-4762 • aurora.ca/canadaday
#AuroraTeenIdol

AURORA

By Brock Weir

Why did the turtle cross the road?

Well, for some poor creatures, getting to the other side of a busy road is more of a dream than an achievement.

New illuminated road signs, however, are hoped to give turtles and other critters more of a fighting chance to make it across St. John's Sideroad and Henderson Drive in the weeks ahead.

This spring, solar-powered illuminated wildlife crossing signs will be installed near wetlands on these busy thoroughfares following concerns from residents in the Henderson area.

Council approved $7,000 for the installation of four signs and some turtle nesting boxes – two signs in each neighbourhood – as part of the 2019 Budget.

It was hoped these signs and nesting boxes would be in place by the time nesting season rolls around at the end of this month, but budget constraints have put the nesting boxes in question.

"We have a budget of $7,000. The signs have already taken us over that," said Al Downey, Aurora's Director of Operations, at last week's Council meeting.

Mr. Downey was responding to questions from Councillor Wendy Gaertner on the status of the signs and nesting boxes.

During the budget process, Councillors Gaertner and Sandra Humfryes were the most vocal proponents of installing nesting boxes and wildlife crossing signs in these particular areas, citing concerns they had received from neighbours and the efforts residents had gone to either help the turtles cross the road from adjacent ponds and wetlands, or care for turtles that had been injured in the process.

"Every year, we have an issue with wildlife crossing over certain roads," Councillor Gaertner told her colleagues at the March 18 Budget Meeting, paying particular attention to Henderson and St. John's. "It concerns residents and last year I drove Mr. Downey crazy [about signs] but I think we need to put something in the budget to try and address this problem. [Acting Parks Manager] Jim Tree said maybe we could hire a consultant and figure out the best way to do this, but I think [at this point on Henderson at least] I would like to is a placeholder in the budget. It won't be a lot of money… and it would give Mr. Downey and the residents and Council some flexibility to deal with this."

This was, added Councillor Humfryes, an "immediate concern" with the arrival of spring and animals starting the mating game.

"We could do something this year to protect wildlife," she said. "I think we're kind of running out of time. With this motion, I think for next year for sure, we'll need to get a study done and some real expertise, but this year we're going to miss an opportunity to protect this wildlife. It is short-term and long-term."

Councillor Harold Kim agreed with their efforts, noting residents had, just a few months previously, made a number of recommendations to address the problem that seemed cost-effective.

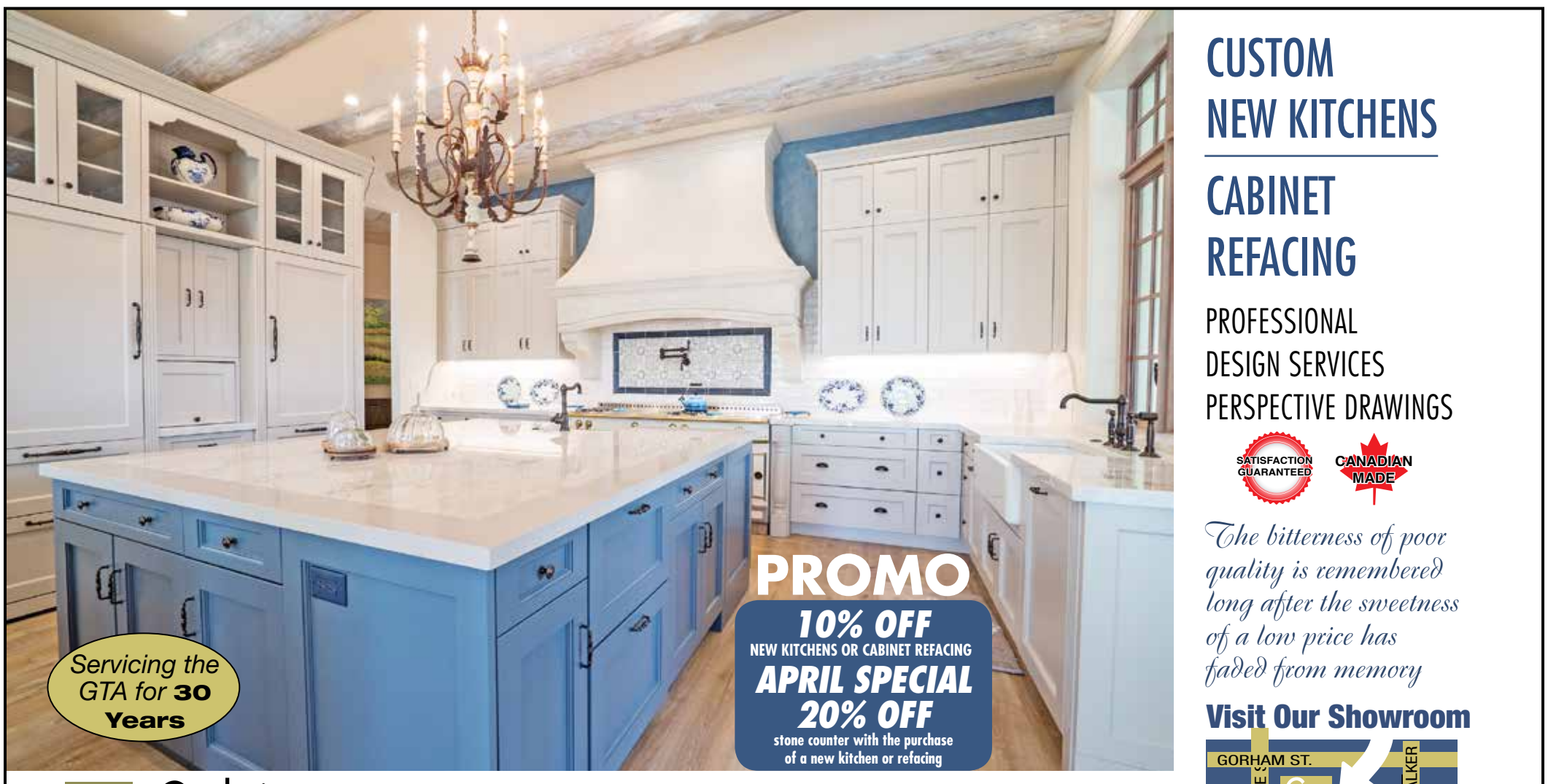
Fast forward, and the four signs have already gone $1,000 over the allotted budget.

"We would like to post [these signs] as soon as possible," said Mr. Downey last week. "I have contacted the [Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority] and they are able to put in turtle nesting areas. However, we are over-budget at this point and we'll have to give some consideration on that. We've directed staff to install silt fencing along Henderson to help with the turtles crossing.

"We will be meeting with the Conservation Authority to find out whether or not this is something…they have the capabilities of doing it, [and] whether or not we can look at doing that in this budget, or whether we look at this as an overall plan when we do road reconstruction at Henderson."

CHAMPS – Aurora players captured the A-1 Division Championship for the Indoor East Ladies Tennis League over the weekend. Gameplay was held at the Marilyn Redvers Tennis Centre, which is situated just north of the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex. Winning players were Lori Zubyk (Captain), Laurie Calvert, Christina Cellucci, Leslie Hobson, Val Logen, Denise MacNeil, Suzanne Millar, Marie Moloughney, Joy Rudyk, and Johana Schneider.

Contributed photo



Movies in the SARC gets a *Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious* twist next Saturday

By Brock Weir

It's still a few months before local families can enjoy box office hits under the twilight of summer skies, but Aurora's Movies in the Park series is getting a Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious twist.

Next Saturday, April 27, at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, the Town will host a free screening of Mary Poppins Returns at Movies in the SARC.

Played by Emily Blunt, viewers catch up with Mary Poppins as she returns to Cherry Tree Lane and the next generation of Banks children for some new adventures accompanied by Jack the Chimney Sweep, as portrayed by Lin-Manuel Miranda.

The free screening gets underway at 6 p.m., but doors will open early at 4 p.m. for a number of Mary Poppins-themed crafts and activities.

"We are super, super excited to have a Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious experience at the first movie for the Movies in the Park series and we have tried to do everything Practically Perfect as Mary Poppins would have tried to do," says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. "With this event, not only do we have the dynamic sensational box office hit Mary Poppins Returns we'll be showing, we're also going to be raffling off free Town of Aurora Summer Camps this summer. Not everyone knows, but the Town of Aurora camps have been voted as number one camps in York Region.

"As well, families will actually be able to meet some of the camp counsellors. They will be the ones supervising the activities offered before the movie, so it is a great way, as a parent, to ask all the questions you have about the summer camps, what you can expect, what your child will expect. There are more than 60 different camps offered this summer. It is quite impressive the lineup that is offered, so this is a great, fun way to showcase what our summer camp program has to offer."

In addition to crafts and the sneak peek at summer camp opportunities, the Movies in the SARC program will feature a musical performance from Marquee Theatrical Productions and a chance to meet a Mary Poppins tribute who will be coming complete with her "trinket trunk" and face painting kit.

"If kids prove they know their manners well, they get to go into our trinket trunk to actually get a prize out of it," says Ms. Ware, noting it's probably not a good idea for movie-goers to leave their mouths hanging open like codfish. "Manners, Manners, Manners will be the theme for the evening and kids will have a fun way of learning them. We're striving to do everything in a way that Mary Poppins would approve.

"As well, STEM Minds will be on site, each with an interactive, really cool activity that kids can have a hands-on experience with and give them a taste on what our summer camp programs (like Engineering for Kids) will offer this year. It is going to be super, super fun."

Mary Poppins Returns forms the centrepiece of Movies at the SARC next Saturday, April 27. Doors open at 4 p.m. with a showtime set at 6 p.m. Admission, crafts and activities are all free of charge. The popular Movies in the Park series for 2019 is set to take place August 15, August 22, and August 29.

For more information, visit www.aurora.ca/moviesinthepark.

York Region Transit wants your input at Wednesday meeting

Meeting comes just over a week following subway announcement

By Brock Weir

Whether you're a regular transit user, or a person who has a particular reason not to, York Region Transit wants to hear from you.

York Region Transit (YRT) will host a public engagement forum (PEF) in the lobby of the Aurora Public Library this Wednesday, April 24, from 4 – 8 p.m.

The YRT kicked off a series of forums on April 3 in Newmarket and Aurora is the second-to-last stop.

"This is an opportunity for the public to learn more, ask questions, share concerns or provide suggestions on proposed transit, roads and construction initiatives," says the YRT. "Each Public Engagement Forum will have information displays and Transportation Services staff will be available to answer all initiatives in detail and answer any questions.

"Guests can share feedback and learn more about York Region Transit service adjustments and new initiatives for 2019 and 2020, the Electric Bus Pilot Program, transit technology and green initiatives; traffic signal installations, timings, technology and safety features; active transportation initiatives and improvements for pedestrians and cyclists; current road maintenance and construction projects; and future construction projects, plans and more.

"Your feedback is invaluable as it will help us complete an annual review of our services for 2019 and finalize plans for 2020."

Next Wednesday's meeting comes just over a week after the Province announced further plans to expand subway service into York Region, building north on the Yonge Line from Finch Station to a new terminus at Richmond Hill Centre.

The subway extension was just one component of a $28.5 billion expansion to the Province's transit network.

"Our government is investing in transportation to bring relief and new opportunities to transit users and commuters," said Premier Doug Ford. "We announced the new Ontario Line to deal with the dangerous congestion on Line 1, the Yonge North Subway Extension that will connect the subway to one of the region's largest employment centres, the three-stop Scarborough Extension to better serve communities, and the Eglinton Crosstown West Extension – a large portion of which will be built underground to keep people and goods moving on our roadways.

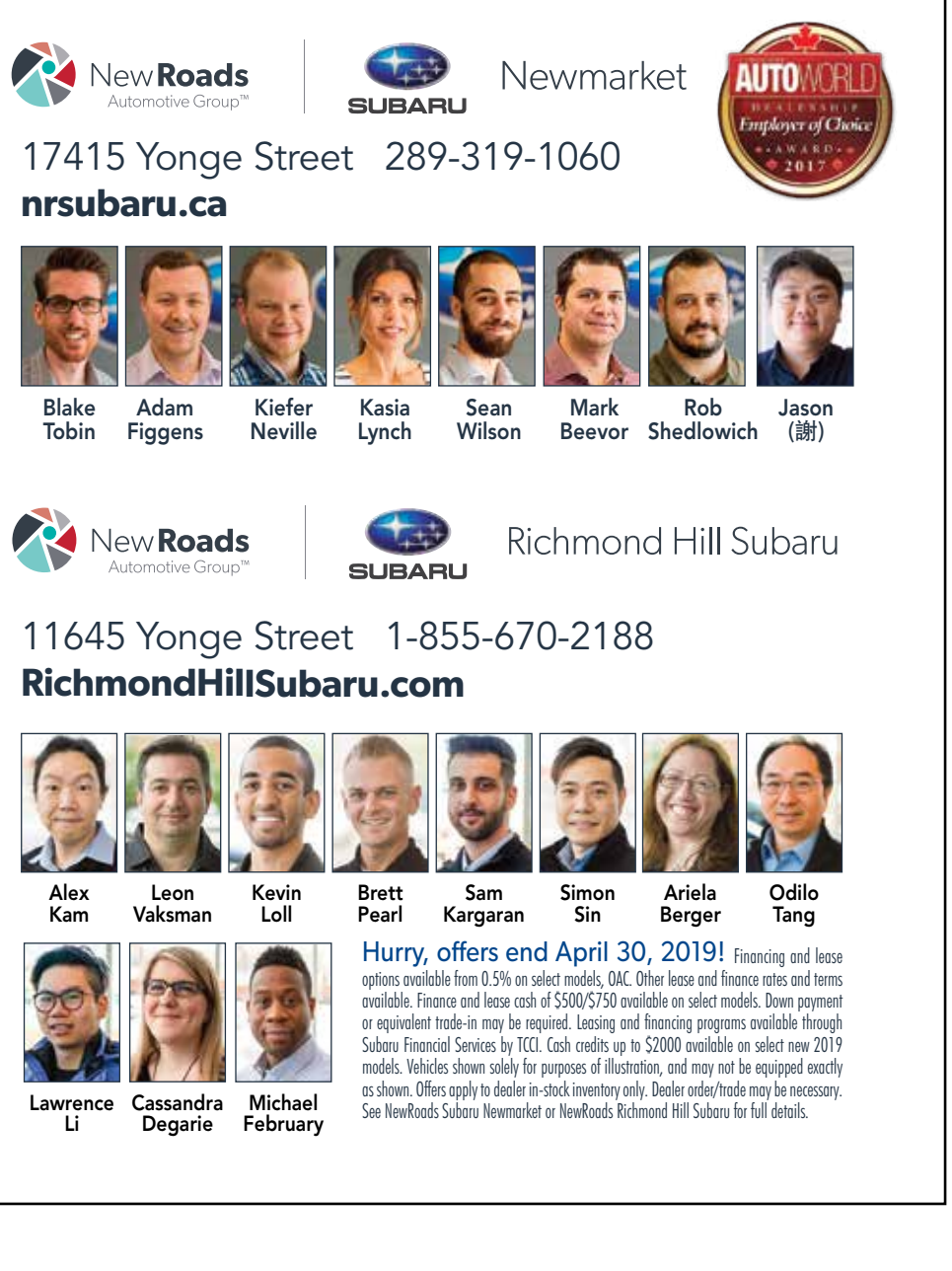
The Yonge North Subway Extension will cost an estimated $5.6 Billion and, according to the announcement, will open "soon" after the opening of the new Ontario Line, which is slated for completion in 2027.

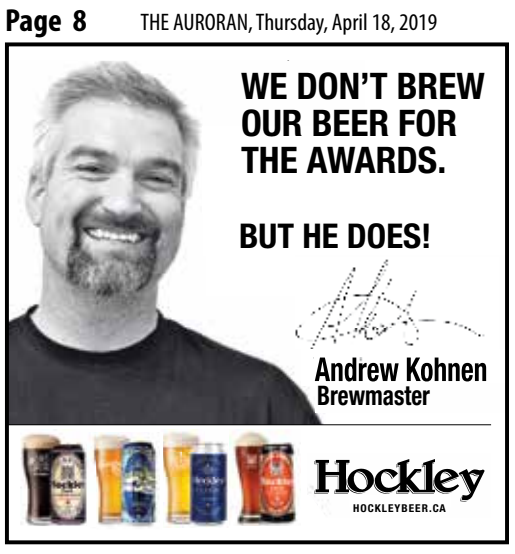
Funding for the Yonge North Subway Extension will, in part, have to come from the Region of York.

Transit was also on the minds of local lawmakers at last week's Council meeting.

Councillor Wendy Gaertner questioned Mayor Tom Mrakas, Aurora's representative at the Regional table, about buses going down Yonge Street at off-peak periods that are "empty or almost empty." This concern, she said, was related not only to Viva Rapid Transit, but also YRT buses as well.

"It is a constant conversation at the table," said Mayor Mrakas. "[The YRT] is going to be taking quite a few routes offline, but not in Aurora. There are a whole bunch in Newmarket that we have actually taken offline moving forward. They are looking at increasing efficiencies within the transit system and they will be coming to do a presentation (in front of Council) very shortly."





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Aurora's first "high tech" business still going strong at 95

By Brock Weir

When Howard and Leta Oliver went into business in 1924, they were at the cutting edge of technology, introducing automatic home heating into the community.

They were, according to their son, historian Dr. Leslie Oliver, Aurora's first "high tech" business before the phrase was even coined – and 95 years later, they still pride themselves to be on the forefront of heating and cooling technologies.

The Desjardins, Mayor Tom Mrakas, and the Olivers celebrate the milestone at the Home Show.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

Dr. Oliver joined the current owners of the business, Steve and Elise Desjardins, Mayor Tom Mrakas, and a host of other dignitaries to celebrate T.H. Oliver Heating & Cooling's 95th anniversary at the Aurora Home Show on Saturday afternoon.

A milestone certainly for the business and its storied history in Aurora, but it also marked a milestone for the Desjardins who purchased the business a quarter-century ago this year.

"We're really happy to be involved with this business and we want to give thanks to the community and continue the legacy of what the Oliver family started," said Steve. "That is part of what we wanted to do from the beginning. Bringing modern technologies to local families is what it was founded on and what we have continued to do over the years."

In a history of the company prepared for the 95th anniversary, Dr. Oliver says Howard was just a young man off the farm when he was "captivated by the newly-emerging, life-giving electro-mechanical and electro-magnetic devices of his time; in much the same way as youth today enthusiastically embrace the promise of electro-digital devices that are changing our lives in the early 21st century."

"With a Grade 8 education, largely self-taught, his early work in high voltage electrical devices, those devices and systems that provided the spark required for internal combustion engines. The gasoline engine was the early 20th century high-tech device that made possible the farm tractor that worked Canada's agricultural lands, as well as the life-altering automobile, which would soon crowd our streets, highways and byways.

"The foundation stones of Oliver Heating & Cooling were laid in the mid-1920s when Howard was instrumental in introducing automatic home heating into the community. A landmark of the times was the pioneering work of Howard Hughes, Toronto innovator and entrepreneur (Howard Furnace & Foundries). The Howard South Wind was an iconic streamlined, modern-looking forced air oil fired furnace of the 1930s. In the ensuing years, it would replace many of Aurora's sprawling wood and coal-fired furnaces."

Around the same time, Howard Oliver introduced electric refrigerators into Aurora homes and businesses, with air conditioning following after the Second World War.

The Howard South Wind might be more of a museum piece now, but T.H. Oliver has kept up with the times.

"We pride ourselves in our integrity, but mostly it is to bring technology and honesty to everything that we do, and to support it in the field," said Steve. "We want to be a part of the community, not just to sell a piece of equipment and run away; we want to build long-term relationships with our customers and word-of-mouth referrals are the most important lead for us."

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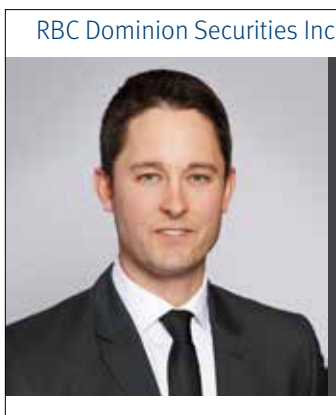
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Post-Budget Breakfast
Tuesday, April 23rd
We invite you to hear from Hon. Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier of Ontario and MPP for Newmarket-Aurora as well as Michael Parsa, MPP for Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill, on the Government of Ontario's Budget 2019.
The government's plan will responsibly restore fiscal balance, prioritize core services that matter most to Ontarians, make Ontario open for business and jobs, and put people first.
This will be an opportunity to hear firsthand on how Budget 2019 will assist job creators in Newmarket-Aurora and across Ontario.
St. Andrew's Valley Golf Club
4 Pinnacle Trail, Aurora
7:30am – 9:30 am
Cost: $25/Members; $35/Non-member – *includes a hot buffet breakfast*
Visit www.aurorachamber.on.ca to register
or call 905-727-7262

GRAND OPENING – Stephenson's Rental Services (250 Industrial Parkway North) is excited to be a part of Aurora, a fast-growing community with a small-town atmosphere in the heart of the Greater Toronto Area. "We think there is no better place to open our doors and support our customers," say owners. From Left: Patrick Ayranto, Councillor Rachel Gilliland, Dan McCarroll, Mayor Tom Mrakas, Crystal Hennigan and Brad Hedger celebrate the business's grand opening.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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READ OUR L.I.P.S.

Ladies in Philanthropy for Southlake hosted their Celebration of Spring Fashion Show last Tuesday night and Highland Automotive Professionals. This season's fashion show featured outfits and clothing from Oakridge Fashions, MR Menswear and Dekade Clothing. Pictured above are Caroline Baile and Sandy Bundy. Above right, some of the men's fashions modelled by local residents.

Auroran photos by Robin Taylor-Smith and Diane Buchanan

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The $99 weekly payment is calculated by dividing the bi-weekly payments. Payments cannot be made on a weekly basis. Equivalent weekly payments are for informational purposes only. Annual kilometer limit of 20,000 km, $0.16 per excess kilometer. $3,950 down payment required. Payment may vary depending on down payment trade. Total obligation is $14,247. Freight ($1,895) and air conditioning charge ($100, if applicable) included. Taxes, license, insurance, registration and applicable fees, levies, duties and, except in Quebec, dealer fees (all of which may vary by dealer and region) are extra. Option to purchase at lease end is $35,448. **Eligible 2019 All-New Silverado 1500 Crew Cab Custom of Custom Trail Boss. Offer available to qualified retail customers in Canada for vehicles financed and delivered between April 2 and April 30, 2019. Financing provided, on approved credit, by TD Auto Finance Services, Scotiabank® or RBC Royal Bank. Participating lenders are subject to change. Rates from other lenders will vary. Representative finance example based on a new 2019 All-New Silverado 1500 Crew Cab Custom or Custom Trail Boss. Suggested retail price is $50,640. $0 down payment required. $47,990 financed at 0% finance rate (0% APR) equals a monthly payment of $667 for 72 months. The offer includes $2,650 Cash Delivery Allowance (tax exclusive). Cost of borrowing is $0 for a total obligation of $47,990. Freight ($1,895) and air conditioning charge ($100) included. License, insurance, registration, PPSA, applicable taxes and dealer fees not included. Dealers are free to set individual prices. Limited time financing offer which may not be combined with certain other offers. ®Registered trademark of The Bank of Nova Scotia. RBC and Royal Bank are registered trademarks of Royal Bank of Canada. 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Easter Bunny is hopping excited for Saturday's Egg Hunt

By Brock Weir

Easter is a little bit later than usual this year and the Easter Bunny has been taking the extra time to get in the zone for their biggest weekend of the year – not to mention a traditional visit to Aurora.

On Saturday, April 20, the Town of Aurora will once again host the annual Aurora Easter Egg Hunt at the Aurora Seniors' Centre.

Doors open to the fun at 9.30 a.m., with Egg Hunts running between 10.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m.

Additional family-friendly activities will be spread out throughout the Aurora Seniors' Centre and adjacent Aurora Community Arboretum. Inside the Seniors' Centre, crafts and games will be running along with a pancake breakfast hosted by the Optimist Club of Aurora for a nominal fee.

Ahead of the big day, the Easter Bunny sat down with The Auroran for a sneak peek at the plans.

The Auroran: What have you been doing with all this extra time ahead of Easter?

Easter Bunny: It has certainly enabled me to make more treats – and I think it certainly enables kids to make sure they will all be worthy of their treats on Easter Morning. I quite often like a late Easter because I know the ground is a lot harder for me to hop on! Sometimes when Easter is in March, there's still often snow and some parts of Canada are really wet. Having it in April means I can clean my feet less.

TA: But that means organizers have had more time to prepare here in Aurora, as well. What have you heard about what's in store?

EB: Well, I have not seen this firsthand, but I am very excited to see it. I understand that once all the kids find their special eggs and they redeem them for their goodie prize, they are going to be redeeming their eggs from an Easter-decorated crooked hut, which has been all jazzed up. I have no idea what these event coordinators are talking about, but they are hopping excited about it. In the past, there has always been a tent set up for the kids to redeem their eggs and this year there is a physical crooked hut ready to go and apparently it has been painted in my favourite colours – blues and reds.

TA: That's what the organizers are cooking up, but what are you doing to prepare?

EB: I always want to make sure my hair is ready for photos because I know kids like taking their photos with me, but my coat is getting a little bit thinner because of the warmer weather, so I am hoping my hair is not too thin by then. I'm also doing my regular exercise routine. Now that I have had a few extra weeks to train for my big night, it is a bit more than what I'm used to.

TA: So, this hare is hoping for a good hair day?

EB: Very funny!

TA: I try! What are you most looking forward to?

EB: It is always different what is on the ground each year because each spring is completely different – and that's the joyous thing about the season: it's a time for rebirth. The plants and stalks will be coming up, there is always something different and it is always something cool to look forward to. A lot of people don't realise that the Egg Hunt is only one of the activities. There are always countless extra activities in Aurora – and I love to brag about them because they are all themed around me! They have a fun activity called Bunny Bowling – no, it doesn't involve any real bunnies, but I'm flattered they made a game all about me. As well, they have a face painting station, and a lot of kids seem to have their faces done just like me! A lot of the crafts are bunny-themed too, and then there are these cool Rabbit Hoppers, which are races where kids get to jump on these tiny inflatable rabbits down a course.

TA: Easter is your busiest time of year. How do you find the time to fit Aurora into your schedule each year?

EB: Have you ever seen a bunny race? We are one of the fastest – maybe not as fast as a cheetah, but bunnies certainly have a lot of speed and know how to cover a lot of ground efficiently!

TA: Will you have any helpers on the ground this weekend to make things go even smoother in Aurora?

EB: I sure do. I am very impressed that the Aurora Girl Guides come out every year and help to volunteer and put on all the activities. My understanding is there are approximately 30 Girl Guides who will be there helping us and, in addition to them, there are going to be about 40 high school students. All in all, I think there is going to be over 400 hours of volunteer work, all done to celebrate my special day.

TA: That sounds impressive!

EB: There are so many things that teens could be doing on the Saturday and I know from what I hear that teens like to sleep in, but at Aurora's Easter Egg Hunt, this is not one of those mornings you sleep in. All the volunteers are up super early, they are in the Arboretum, making it safe for everybody and the fact they are giving their Saturday is very heartwarming.

TA: Do you think you'll see some familiar faces this weekend, maybe people who have come to the Egg Hunt before and are excited to come back?

EB: There is really something the entire family can enjoy. The Easter Egg Hunt is a truly multigenerational event, a magnet for nuclear families to get together, along with their extended families. For every child that attends this event, there is a guarantee that it is 2.5+ people that come out with that one child. It is really cool to see.

Aurora's annual Easter Egg Hunt will take place Saturday, April 20 from 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wristbands are on sale now for $6 per child (parents and guardians free) and can be purchased at Town Hall, the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, and the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex. Wristbands will not be available on site. For more information, visit www.aurora.ca/eastereggghunt.

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KEEP AURORA BEAUTIFUL

Scores of volunteers fanned out across Aurora on Saturday for the Town of Aurora's annual Cleanup Day.

Volunteers fanned out across Town on Saturday for Aurora's Annual Clean-Up Day, hosted by the Town. The event kicked off at Town Park where those looking to keep Aurora clean and tidy received their clean-up kit and one of dozens of locations identified as in need of a helping hand or two. Following the morning clean-up, participants were invited back to Town Park for an appreciation barbecue. Clockwise from Top Left: Don and Ty clean up a trailside. Councillors Humfryes, Gilliland, friend Heather and dog Norm pick up trash at John West Way and Wellington. Greta, Steve, Jean, Adam and Alex with MP Kyle Peterson. Abbey, Jaidyn, Jennifer and Olivia the Dog at the Aurora Community Arboretum.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger and Brock Weir

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Nabob ground coffee 915/930 g or **Melitta whole bean coffee** 907 g
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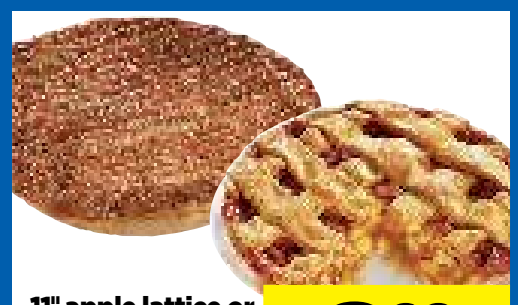

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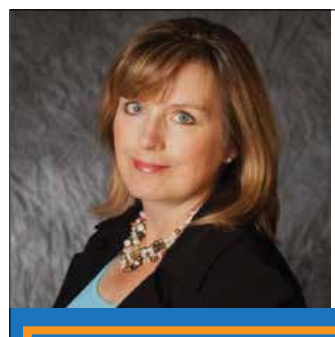
Aurora Chamber Home & Lifestyle Show another success

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce took over the SARC this past weekend for the annual Aurora Chamber Home & Lifestyle Show. Thousands came through the arena's Wellington Street East doors on Friday, Saturday and Sunday to shop, get some ideas for their homes and yards, take in landscaping, cooking and athletic demonstrations, or even just to grab a burger served up by the Optimist Club of Aurora. Among the participating exhibitors were Healthy Planet, Gardens of Joy, Hourglass Workout, Food in Motion, Native Seed (Winner – Most Unique Product or Service), Summers & Smith, Atlas Landscaping (Winner – Best Garden/Landscape Display), Backyard Pool & Spa, Lenard Lind (The Lind Realty Team), and The Millionaire's Daughter (Most Creative & Unique Booth).

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger



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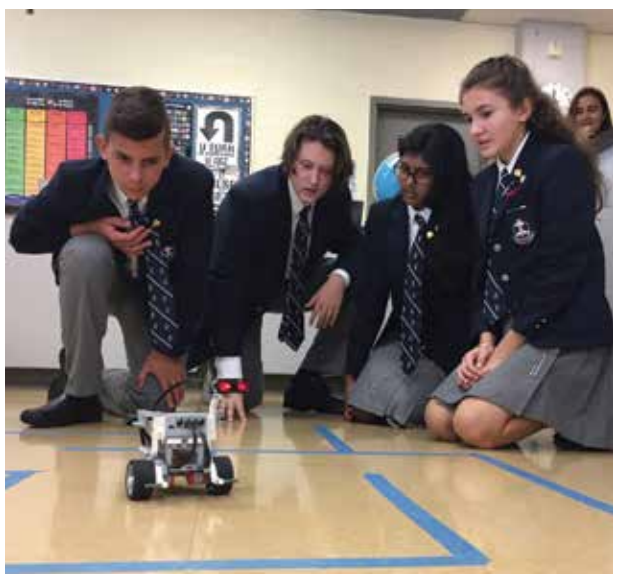

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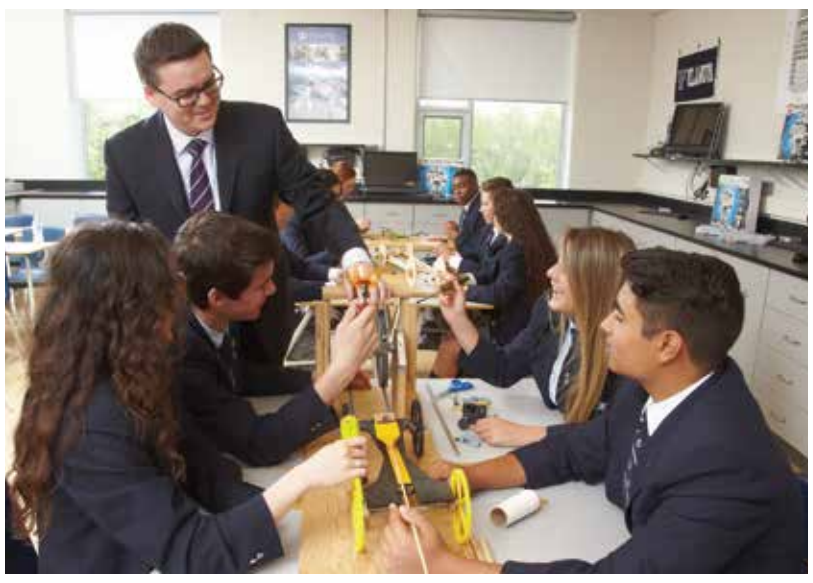

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THE AURORAN

SECTION B

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Vol. 19 No. 27 905-727-3300 theauroran.com FREE Week of April 18, 2019

Aurora Soccer Club celebrates 65 years with renewed vision

By Brock Weir

The Aurora Soccer Club is celebrating its 65th anniversary with new vigour and a new vision.

Founding members Benny Steenhorst and David Geering were honoured at Town Hall last week with Aurora's Excellence in Sports Award.

But the presentation was also a chance for the Aurora Soccer Club (ASC), which calls Industrial Parkway South's Highland Park home, to outline its vision for the future.

"We have officially become old age pensioners," said the ASC's Martin Ambrose on their milestone sixty-fifth birthday. "The big news is we have done a lot of revitalization [and under the tutelage of Councillor John Gallo] we have built a business plan over the last five years which has allowed us to take a look at where we're going to take this club and how we integrate ourselves in the community over the next five to ten years. You're going to see a lot more sports, social and charitable and cultural endeavours coming out of the soccer club as we move forward."

Perhaps one of the biggest examples of this coming forward is a grand plan for an Oktoberfest celebration at Highland Park on October 5, which will include a 12-hour program anticipating between 1,500 and 2,000 attendees for good beer and live music.

"As we look forward to the long-term…we are working with Aurora Youth Soccer on this to make sure we're not standing on each other's toes, putting that aside to make sure we're collaborating on how we ensure we get everything from the kids to the old people on the field of play and getting them involved in the social integration the club offers," said Mr. Ambrose. "Our sweet spot really is anything over the age of 18, but generally speaking, when you look at the demographic of the Town, that is kind of 30 – 55 – that is the majority of our playing membership in that sweet spot."

With an eye towards membership sustainability, Mr. Ambrose said they have doubled the size of their playing membership from last year, going from 350 registered members to over 700 playing members actively registered with the Ontario Soccer Association.

On top of this membership of 700, there are many more who aren't registered and simply come by the ASC for a game or two of pickup.

"[Our membership] stretches as far as Bradford, southeast Richmond Hill, over to Schomberg, and over to Mount Albert," he said. "Almost 70 per cent of our players come from Aurora and we're trying to make this sustainable, something we, as a Town, can be proud of.

"[In recent years] we have also doubled the size of our over-45s, which is predominantly over 50s and over 60s, pretending they're young! What that should tell us, as a community, is that while we're aging, we need to be able to offer these programs to people also so, one, they keep the social interaction, and that [is important to] staying

Continued on page 21

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Mayor Mrakas and Councillor Gilliland joined members of the Chartwell team at Friday's dedication.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

Chartwell keeps seniors, community "on track" at Leisure Complex

By Brock Weir

Residents of area retirement communities under the Chartwell banner have made the walking track at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex a destination for keeping healthy and active.

It has been a long-running relationship, but one which was taken to the next level on Friday morning as Chartwell and the Town celebrated the re-dedication of the Chartwell Walking Track.

"This is another great example of how the Town of Aurora partners with outside organizations and especially with an aging population it is a great way for us to educate, promote and provide more opportunities for our seniors within our community," said Mayor Tom Mrakas.

"It is a great opportunity for us because…this is a great opportunity to highlight the health and wellness of our seniors," adds Patti Smith, Retirement Living Consultant with Chartwell Park Place. "In the wintertime, we come here almost every Thursday. We come here once a week from Park Place on buses. Our residents enjoy the fact that they can get out, especially in the wintertime, because sometimes they are stuck inside a little bit more. They like to come out and do their walk, then we always go out for tea afterwards at the Maple Tea House. That is a big thing!

"They feel part of the community, it gives them the chance to chat with other people, it gives them an idea of what else is going on in the community, and it is very important to have an opportunity to talk to your peers."

Now that they have secured the naming rights to the track, Chartwell will soon begin to take an even more active role in the facility. On the docket are a series of community seminars they will facilitate touching on topics such as dealing with aging parents.

In June, they will host a fundraiser for a wish foundation similar to the Children's Wish Foundation, but focusing on the wishes of our senior population.

"We partner with Make a Wish and we make wishes throughout the community. Anybody can sponsor a senior for Make a Wish," says Ms. Smith, noting that wishes granted through the foundation so far include a trip overseas, reuniting a father and son, getting another resident who dreamed of flying in a Second World War fighter jet up into the air, and making one senior's wish of attending a Celine Dion concert come true.

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Kyle Peterson
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
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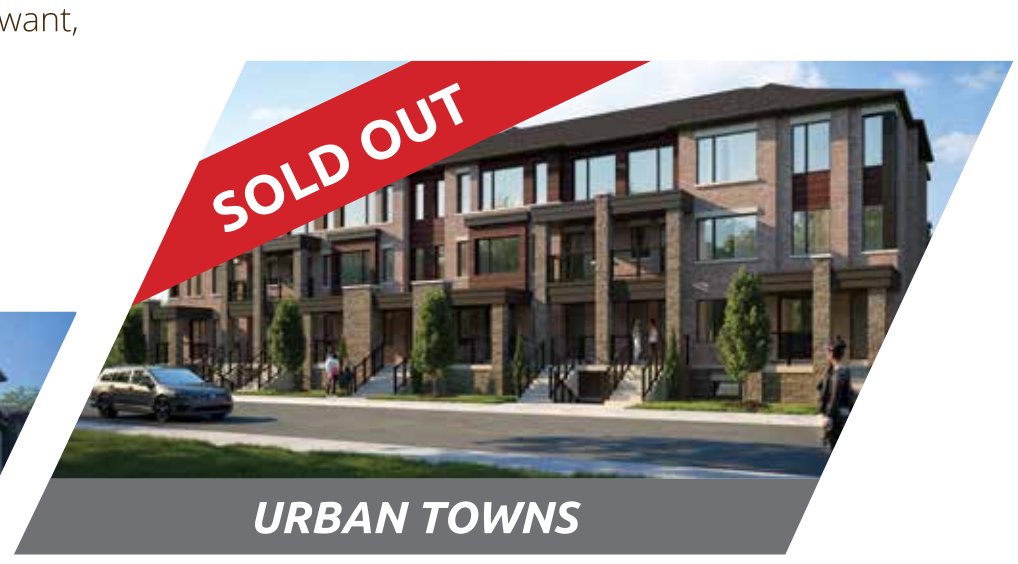
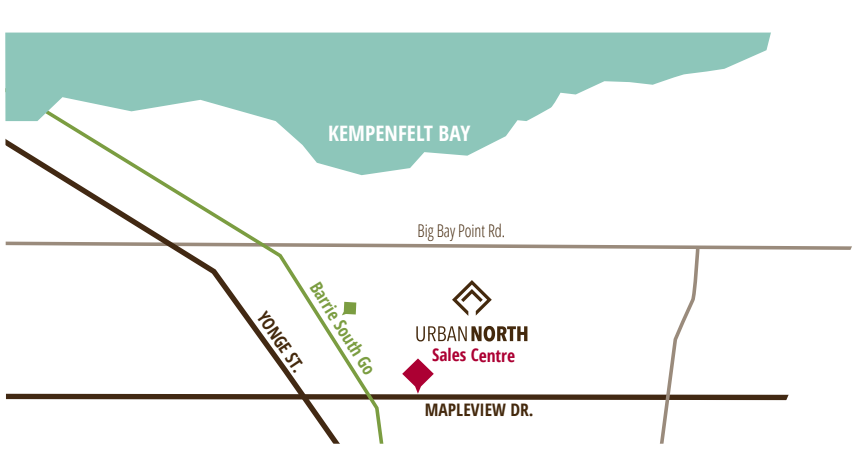


URBAN TOWNS

BACK-TO-BACK TOWNS



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PACE DEVELOPMENTS

Give Back winners continue to impress

From page 1

this year's recipients, all of whom have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to community involvement," said Erin Cerenzia of Neighbourhood Network. "At Neighbourhood Network, we believe in life-long volunteerism. It's about finding something you love to do that helps make communities a better place."

Joining Maryam were eight other honourees who study in Aurora: Adamo Crescenzi (Cardinal Carter CHS), Jeremy Doucette (ESC Renaissance), Rachel Gallagher (Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School), Nicole In (Williams), Darcy O'Reilly (St. Maximilian Kolbe CHS), Rafael Sakarya (Renaissance), Rebecca Streef (St. Max), and Jack Viney (Aurora High School).

"Volunteering has been a rollercoaster of emotions and experiences for Maryam, from volunteering at local libraries to volunteering at Southlake Hospital," reads Maryam's citation. "Her experiences range from different fields such as healthcare, education and child development. Maryam volunteers because it allows her to explore her strengths, find her identity and she wants to be a good example for her younger brother. She truly believes that community involvement is necessary for a brighter and more fulfilling future."

Speaking to The Auroran following the ceremony, Maryam said she firmly believes in the power of saying "Yes."

"I feel if you say 'yes' to things, things come to you like an open window," she said. "In the United Arab Emirates, there are some government schools that are not funded as much as the private schools I attended. Sometimes locals attend and they don't really have a lot of books and materials. As a hypothetical project for my (extra-curricular) Global Leadership track, we formed a group with my friends and it was an amazing experience. I am very open about the [importance of] education and whenever I see children who are not getting the experience they deserve, I am always there to advocate for their education and advocate for what they really deserve, which is books."

Maryam hopes to pursue an undergraduate in health sciences this fall.

Careers in the sciences was a common theme for many of the Aurora-based Give Back honourees, including Williams students Rachel Gallagher and Nicole In.

"This is recognition that even the smallest things we do for our community makes a difference, has an impact and doesn't go unnoticed," said Rachel, who is eyeing an undergraduate in biological or life sciences "I really took that to heart because it means no matter what you're doing, you're doing something, and that is a start."

Rachel's citation pays tribute to the priority she set for herself to volunteer both within her school and wider community, taking a lead on in-school fundraising initiatives ranging from Newmarket's Coldest Night of the Year to Lemons for Leukemia, which challenges students to raise funds by seeing who can swallow the greatest number of lemon slices to benefit the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

Among these, Rachel says Light the Night, a walk for Leukemia research, was the most meaningful of her high school career, leading the Williams team this past October.

"We raised over $3,000," she said. "Raising that amount of money and being able to give back to the community and help fund research was really amazing. Attending the event that night was so emotional and so impactful. We walked back to SickKids and some patients smiled and waved down at us. You could just directly see your impact on others. Even though a few thousand dollars isn't a lot in the long run – you need millions in research dollars – it is just amazing to be a part of."

Nicole, who plans to pursue a degree in life sciences with a focus on mental health, was recognized for her ability to "find joy and purpose in helping others."

"She believes that volunteering holds the potential of changing the local community and the world in a positive way," reads her citation, which underscored her work for the Canadian Cancer Society, the Best Buddies Club, Williams' Peer Mentor group and her involvement in the school's Me to We club.

"This award means a lot," said Nicole. "I feel it shows that anything you do really has an impact and you're actually impacting the lives of others in a positive way. This propels me to continue on."

Asked which volunteer experiences she has found most rewarding, she cites a fundraiser she spearheaded with her sister last year: a restaurant fundraiser at Kelsey's Aurora to benefit Blue Door Shelters.

"It is really important that we look out for other community members who are in need and just support them," she said.

Aurora Students give back

Adamo Crescenzi (Cardinal Carter CHS)

Adamo has volunteered his time as Student Council Vice President, camp counsellor for Grade 9 retreats. Through the City of Vaughan, he volunteered by assisting kids with disabilities, he coached soccer teams, and has been involved with his church's youth group. Adamo volunteers to help others and to better the community. Following graduation, Adamo will be attending Ryerson University where he will study criminology. During his time as a law student, he hopes to spend time volunteering at the John Howard Society, which is a non-profit organization that seeks to develop understanding and effective responses to the problem of crime and prison reform.

Jeremy Doucette (ESC Renaissance)

At school, Jeremy volunteers with many clubs and organizing committees, such as prom, multicultural and Phoenix Day. Jeremy is actively volunteering within his community at Arts Society King, seniors expos, and the Dufferin Marsh cleanup. He is the leader of the Environmental Club and is the Grade 12 representative on Student Council. To Jeremy, volunteering means giving back through donation, commitment, dedication, time, and using skills to better the world one worthy cause at a time.

Darcy O'Reilly (St. Maximilian Kolbe CHS)

For Darcy, giving back is an opportunity for her to help make the world a better place, one individual at a time. Over the years, she has learned that change is a chain reaction. One small action or initiative within a community can inspire others to do the same. Darcy has spent hundreds of hours volunteering as a counsellor in training, coached special needs soccer teams, assisted with the Santa Claus Parade and Tree Planting, and she has been Vice President for her Student Council since 2017. Last year, she became co-president of HOSA, a group dedicated to future health science professionals. Her volunteer experiences have inspired her to study behavioural development disorders.

Rafael Sakarya (ESC Renaissance)

Rafael volunteers because he likes to help others and make people happy. Whether it be a small donation of his time or planning a significant event that requires a lot of energy, he volunteers because it gives him the ability to make a bigger impact in his community and in society. Rafael has been a camp counsellor, has helped with sports teams, he is currently President of Student Council and he enjoys public speaking at events where he can share his personal experiences.

Rebecca Streef (St. Maximilian Kolbe CHS)

Rebecca started giving back because she wanted to become involved in her community and she joined clubs at school to meet like-minded peers. She has spent a lot of time working with her school's Best Buddies club, she has volunteered as a Peer Mentor, she has been Vice President of her school's eco team since Grade 10 and, on top of it, she even donates her time at the local arena snack bar. Volunteering and giving back are very important for Rebecca because she realizes how impactful her contribution has been to both her community and school. Her various efforts within her clubs have ensured that her school community is both practicing and celebrating inclusion, friendship and equity.

Jack Viney (Aurora High School)

Jack is very involved within his community, spending hours of his time volunteering with the Aurora Minor Hockey Association, Aurora Youth Soccer, the Country Day School, Habitat for Humanity and the Town of Aurora with events such as Arctic Adventure, Ribfest, Haunted Forest and Hometown Hockey. Jack volunteers because he feels it is important to give back to organizations that taught him so much when he was a young child, and he also enjoys helping children and those in need.

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Mayor, Councillor aim for demolition deterrents

From page 1

will impact owners of heritage properties.

The duo will introduce a motion in the coming weeks that will open up the arsenal available to communities like Aurora under the Municipal Act and jacking up the penalties against such demolitions wherever they can.

The Mayor announced the move at last week's Council meeting where local lawmakers continued to seek answers after a designated building with an equestrian history on the southeast corner of St. John's Sideroad and Leslie Street was razed to the ground before Council formally signed off on de-listing the property.

As The Auroran reported last week, Council raised alarm bells earlier this month after buildings on the property were demolished before the property owners' demolition permit had worked its way through the system.

The property in question, according to a report from Municipal Planner Adam Robb, is considered a "worker house estate" with a two-storey brick residence dating from the 1960s, along with an equestrian complex from the same era. The property also held a 19th century barn, a one-storey mid-century cottage, and a further residence dating from after 1927.

A Cultural Heritage Assessment and Heritage Working Group evaluation found that the property as a whole did not meet Provincial standards for heritage preservation, nor did any of the individual buildings on site, but staff recommended a heritage plaque be installed.

The lands are slated to redevelopment as part of Aurora's 2C Plan and the property owners submitted a demolition permit earlier this year. Under regulations, the Town had 60 days for the application to move through the system, including review from the Town's Heritage Advisory Committee and, finally, Council. But property owners beat Council to the punch.

Councillors raised a number of questions on the subject at the April 2 General Committee meeting and Councillor John Gallo continued the questions last week.

"We have had some internal discussions with [our Legal Department] on the next steps," said David Waters, Aurora's Director of Planning, after Councillor Gallo asked what work had been done on the file in the intervening week. "We haven't finalized it, but one of the options we're looking at is for the developer to provide the Town with a financial contribution as a condition of Draft Plan approval to the Heritage Reserve Fund. That appears to be the best solution moving forward, but we haven't finalized that."

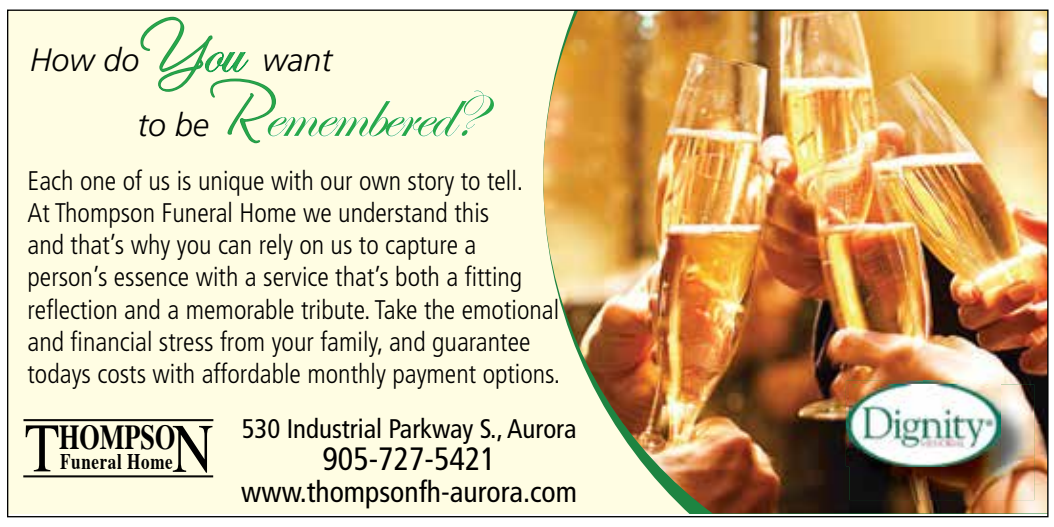
Councillor Gallo asked that Council be in the loop regarding that process going forward and Mr. Waters noted that next steps would be subject to a further Council report.

"I was at the [Heritage Advisory Committee] meeting and members were quite concerned over this and looking for staff to come back with some report or status on what we can do," said Councillor Sandra Humfryes on the demolition issue. "I know in the past, we have done a charge or an increment of monetary value against the incorrect process, so we're hoping to hear back for sure."

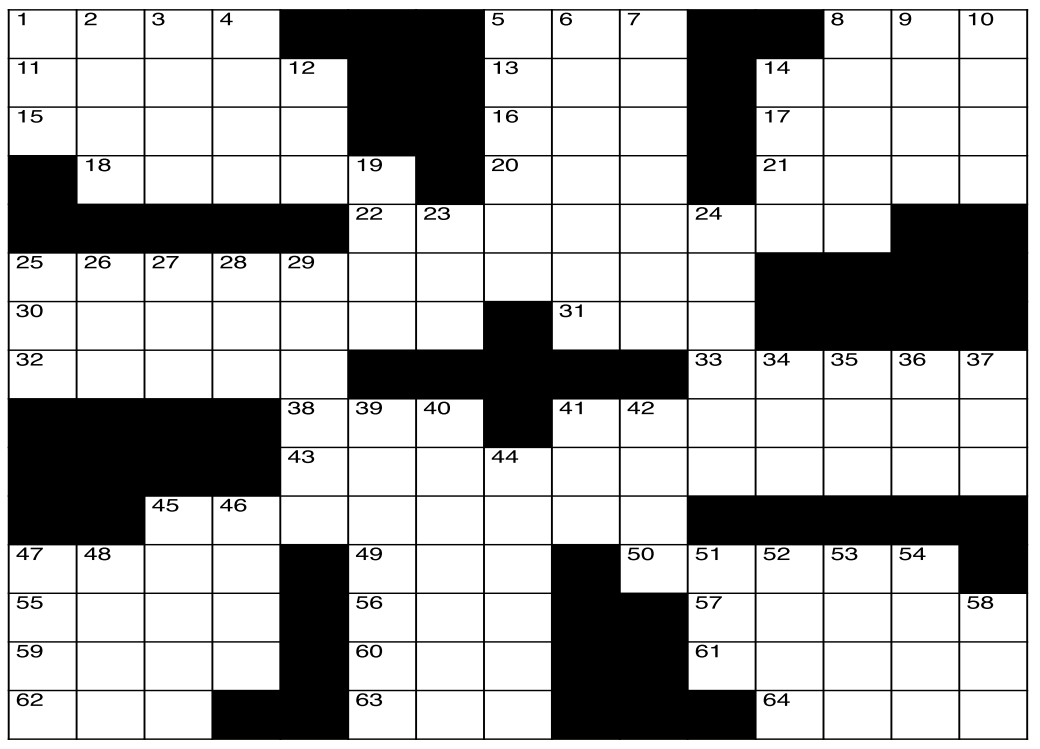
But these concerns could translate into further action. According to Mayor Mrakas, they are joining forces on a motion they hope will lead to a practical deterrent against future demolitions such as these.

"We have seen it again recently with demolition by neglect," said the Mayor. "Councillor Humfryes [and I] have been working with staff to finally, once and for all, come up with a solution for this issue and we'll be presenting that Notice of Motion Shortly.

"I think, at the end of the day, we only have so many tools that we're allowed to use as far as any penalties through legislation on the Provincial side through the Heritage Act. What we're trying to do is come up with some solutions and some cost penalties within the tools that are afforded to us through the Municipal Act. There are quite a few of them and they are extensive. We will put something in front of Council, we have been working on it, and once and for all we can hopefully stop this from happening within our community."



CROSSWORD



CLUES ACROSS

1. A way to wound
5. Hormone secreted by the pituitary gland (abbr.)
8. Shows the world
11. Decided
13. Indigenous person of NE Thailand
14. Dough made from corn flour
15. Honors
16. Political commentator Coulter
17. Expresses pleasure
18. Heavy clubs
20. Defunct phone company
21. Algonquian language
22. Salts
25. Act of the bank
30. Danced
31. Drummer Weinberg
32. Small goose
33. Helps evade
38. Certified public accountant
41. Periods of time
43. Kids' book character
45. Type of beer
47. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
49. A way to attack
50. Talk radio personality Margery
55. Whale ship captain
56. Request
57. Large underground railstation in Paris
59. BBQ dish
60. No (Scottish)
61. Jewish spiritual leader
62. Tool used to harvest agave
63. Explosive
64. A reward (archaic)

CLUES DOWN

1. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
2. Polite interruption sound
3. Extremely small amount
4. Very short period of time (abbr.)
5. Fires have them
6. Sacred place
7. Island capital
8. Volcanic craters
9. Arthur __, Wimbledon champion
10. Bullfighting maneuver
12. Midway between east and southeast
14. A ceremonial staff
19. Cheap prices
23. North Atlantic fish
24. Oil company
25. A federally chartered savings bank
26. Paddle
27. Where UK soldiers train
28. One point north of due east
29. Attention-getting
34. Ballplayer's tool
35. Sun up in New York
36. Where golfers begin
37. Soviet Socialist Republic
39. Represented as walking (animal)
40. Craftsman
41. Unit of force (abbr.)
42. Dueling sword
44. Houston hoopster
45. Stone building at Mecca
46. __ and flows
47. "Beastmaster" actor Singer
48. American state
51. Swiss river
52. U.S. island territory
53. German physicist
54. One point east of northeast
58. Get free of

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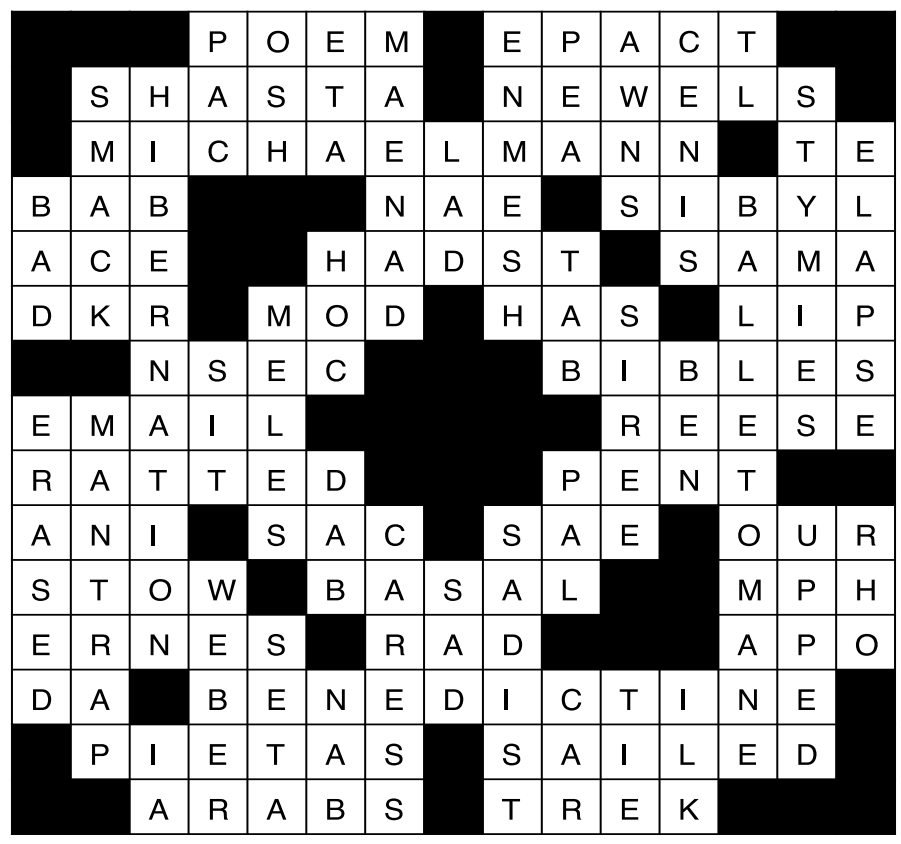

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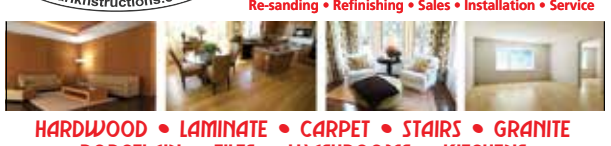

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Council honoured Aurora Soccer Club members Benny Steenhorst, David Gearing and Andrew Pendlebury last week. They were joined in Council chambers by Martin Ambrose, President of the Aurora Soccer Club (ASC) and ASC General Manager Carrie McLucas.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

Aurora Soccer Club celebrates 65 years with renewed vision

From page 15

healthy, and, two, they get to have a little bit of exercise."

Whether it is growing their membership, or bringing a bit of Oktoberfest to Aurora, Mr. Ambrose said everything the ASC does is done with an eye of charity and civicmindedness. They have been particular supporters of the Heart & Stroke Foundation and Southlake Regional Health Centre in recent years and, this year, they are joining forces with the local chapters of Special Olympics for a unique game on May 10.

"We now have collaboration agreements with [both Aurora and Newmarket] organizations and the purpose of that is to make sure we don't leave anybody out on the edge of being able to play sport within the community and they can feel involved," said Mr. Ambrose.

Following the presentation, Council members shared their enthusiasm for the ASC's plans going forward, responding to Mr. Ambrose's calls to work with municipal staff on how they can expand and update their current facilities to meet the demands of the "twenty-first century."

"The Aurora Soccer Club is the best-kept secret in this Town," said Councillor Gallo. "The amount of work that the Club has done over many, many years and the tens of thousands of dollars they have given back to the community is extraordinary and we should be yelling from the rooftops the amount of work they have done. I am so proud of the work they have done, particularly recently – and just watch what they do. They're going to achieve so many great things."

– Employees at Vince's Markets set a challenge for themselves Friday morning, creating a "Really BIG Deli Sandwich" – emphasis on the "big" – that was later sliced and sold to customers. Here, showing off their handiwork with Vince's Own black forest ham and Ace Bakery bread are Karen Hawthorn and Jessica Schneider.

Contributed photo

THAT'S A REALLY BIG SANDWICH!

THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW

THURSDAY, APRIL 18

The Prostate Cancer Canada Network will host its monthly support group tonight from 6.30 – 9 p.m. at the Newmarket Seniors Meeting Place. (474 Davis Drive, Newmarket). Meet and Greet at 6.30, with session to start at 7 p.m. Presenter: Dr. Vincent Tu, Staff Urologist, Southlake Regional Health Centre on the topic of Treating Prostate Cancer.

SATURDAY, APRIL 20

Hop to it! The Town of Aurora will host the annual Easter Egg Hunt today at the Aurora Seniors' Centre. The Easter Bunny is coming back to Aurora! Purchase your wristbands now for one of Aurora's most eggciting events. The Town of Aurora and the Aurora Girl Guides invite all residents and visitors to come out for some fun at the Aurora Easter Egg Hunt. Wristbands are on sale now for this event and available in limited quantities. Wristbands can be purchased at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, Town Hall and the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex. Children can participate in a variety of activities at the Seniors' Centre including an exciting egg hunt. Every child that participates in the egg hunt will receive a bag of treats. Activities for kids include face painting, a carrot toss, crafts and more. The Optimist Club of Aurora will also be hosting a pancake breakfast at minimal cost. 9.30 a.m. – 1 p.m. Multiple egg hunts from 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. Children aged 12 and under can participate in the event. Wristbands are $6 per child and must be purchased in advance. Parents and guardians are free to attend. For more information, visit aurora.ca/easteregghunt.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24

The Aurora Historical Society's Speaker Series continues tonight with Barbara Trendos and "Survival: My Father's War as an Air Force Gunner and P.O.W." 7 – 9 p.m. at Hillary House National Historic Site. Tickets are $7, or $5 for Historical Society members.

APRIL 25 – 27

The Country Day School presents James & The Giant Peach Jr, April 25 and 26 at 7 p.m. and April 27 at 1 p.m. Based on one of Roald Dahl's most poignantly quirky stories, Roald Dahl's James and the Giant Peach JR. is a brand new take on this "masterpeach" of a tale. Featuring a wickedly tuneful score and a witty and charming book, this adventurous musical about courage and self-discovery will surely be a favourite. When James is sent by his conniving aunts to chop down their old fruit tree, he discovers a magic potion that grows a tremendous peach, rolls into the ocean and launches a journey of enormous proportions. James befriends a collection of singing insects that ride the giant piece of fruit across the ocean, facing hunger, sharks and plenty of disagreements along the way. During this journey, James learns the true definition of family and finds his place in the world. With music by Oscar, Grammy, Tony, and Golden Globe Award-winning songwriters Benj Pasek & Justin Paul, this show will delight audiences of all ages! For tickets and further information, visit www.cds.on.ca.

SUNDAY, APRIL 28

St. Andrew's College Highland Cadet Corps will conduct its annual Church Parade with musical performances by the School's award-winning Wind Ensemble and Pipes and Drums at Aurora Town Park. 12.15 – 3.45 p.m. For more information, visit www.sac.on.ca/page/event-detail?pk=11056607&fromId=192345.

MAY 2 – 5

The Pine Tree Potters' Spring pottery sale will be held Thursday, May 2 - Sunday, May 5, 2019 at the beautiful Aurora Cultural Centre, 22 Church Street, Aurora. The hours are Thursday 10 a.m. – 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., and Sunday 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. There is free parking, free admission and a door prize just in time for Mother's Day. Visa, MasterCard and Interac accepted. Please call 905-727-1278 for further information or visit www.pinetreepotters.ca.

SATURDAY, MAY 4

The Aurora Community Arboretum holds its annual Community Planting Day today from 10 a.m. until 12 noon. Come and bring the family to help us plant 500 new trees! Parking and entrance will be at 245 Industrial Parkway North. Shovels will be provided. Boots are recommended. Rain or shine!

THURSDAY, MAY 16

The Prostate Cancer Canada Network will host its monthly support group tonight from 6.30 – 9 p.m. at the Newmarket Seniors Meeting Place. (474 Davis Drive, Newmarket). Meet and Greet at 6.30, with session to start at 7 p.m. Presenter: Rouge Valley Hyperbaric Centre on Hyperbaric Use in treating prostate cancer and other diseases. For more information, call 905-235-7021, or visit www.newmarketprostatecancer.com

SATURDAY, MAY 25

Aurora United Church hosts the Wesley Bells in concert today at 7.30 p.m. at Trinity Anglican Church. Wesley Bells in concert with Aurora Chorealis, soprano Ursula Ivanoffski, and soprano Margaret Heney on piano. Free will offering will be held after the concert. For more information, contact 905-727-1935 x21.

AURORAN CLASSIFIEDS

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- Diploma in journalism preferred
- Candidates should have experience working on the editorial side of the newspaper industry
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- An interest in local issues is a necessity, as the majority of the writing for this role will be local

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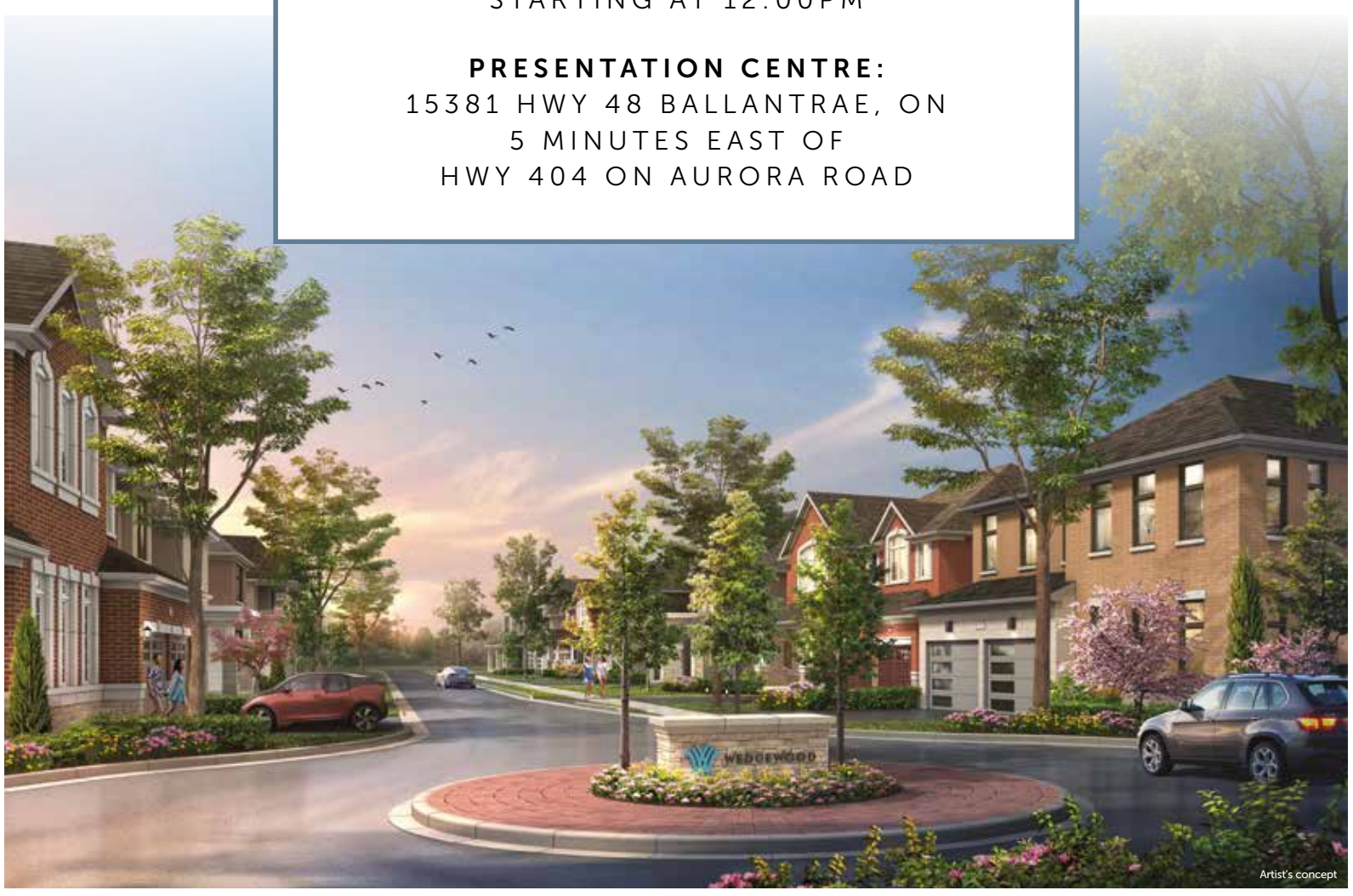

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