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# THE AURORAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 19 No. 28 905-727-3300

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FREE Week of April 25, 2019

CMCA AUDITED



**ON THE HUNT** – Sienna and Calden meet the Easter Bunny inside Petch House on Saturday at the Town of Aurora's annual Easter Egg Hunt. Thousands of kids and their families braved the muddy weather for a trek through the Aurora Community Arboretum looking for colourful eggs and trying their hands at scores of Easter-themed games. For more, see Page 22.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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## Town set to go it alone on Sports Plan

By Brock Weir

Aurora is set to go it alone on a new sports plan with revised priorities and new recommendations.

Sport Aurora got the ball rolling on the municipality's Sport Plan, which was aimed at removing barriers to sport, ensuring local sports resources meet the needs of a growing community and fostering a climate for sports tourism, but after considerable debate around the table, Council is set to take things in-house.

This week, Council is expected to

sign off on a new permanent full-time staff position, a "Sport & Community Development Coordinator" to bring the project in for a landing.

\$103,400 for the new position and the Plan itself have already been allocated as part of the Town's 2019 Operating Budget.

According to the report brought to last Tuesday's General Committee meeting by Recreation Manager Lisa Warth, a review of the Sport Plan's current status has resulted in a "re-prioritization" of the recommendations contained within it.

"Sport Aurora has made good progress on the Sport Plan, however, some of the recommendations are principle-based, philosophical statements, and a measurement of success is difficult to ascertain," said Ms. Warth. "In addition, some of the tactics currently identified for implementation require considerable resources and may be a challenge to move forward."

If approved this week, the revised plan will give increased priority to the creation of a "sport policy" that would "define priorities and responsibilities

Continued on page 21



**SEASON FINALE** – Aurora's youngest hockey heroes were celebrated at Council last week at the end of a remarkable season. For more on their achievements, please see Pages 8 and 9.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

By Brock Weir

Aurora's new Business Improvement Area is readying its budget for Council approval.

The Business Improvement Area's (BIA) budget was presented to Council at the Committee level by Board member Jack Laurion last week and it outlines a series of initiatives that will be spearheaded by the BIA in the years ahead to restore

Continued on page 12

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## "That little girl isn't running anymore, she's flying"



Kim Phuc speaks at Northridge Community Church.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

### Iconic "Napalm Girl" shares story of forgiveness with Aurora

By Brock Weir

Kim Phuc was just nine years old when a napalm bomb fell on her village in 1972.

The clothes burned off her back by the resulting fire, her image – naked, screaming and running away from the epicentre of the attack – was captured by an Associated Press photographer and became an iconic image of war.

But, to many, it also became an image of peace, a symbol that reminds people of the horrors of war in the hopes that it is never repeated.

For Ms. Phuc, however, it is something more: the beginning of a story, one that set her on the path to forgiveness.

She shared her inspiring story of courage and faith with Aurora residents this month at the Salvation Army's Northridge Community Church.

"I was a healthy child and I knew nothing about war," said Ms. Phuc, addressing an audience of more than 100 people. "My most serious injury had been hurting my knees when I fell off a bicycle."

She recalled the people of her village taking refuge in a nearby temple. For the children, it seemed more like an adventure than taking cover under the threat of fire. The temple was a safe, holy place, she said, and it was unimaginable that it could be violated by "the horrible fire that would drop off from the sky."

"It was only when the soldiers yelled for the children to run that we got really scared," she recalled. "The airplanes were so loud, so close. We were running down the road and suddenly there were bombs, explosions of gasoline. My clothes were burned off, my skin was on fire, someone began screaming, 'Too hot! Too hot!' That someone was me."

Those screams were captured by Associated Press photographer Nick Ut, and so evocative was the resulting image that it won a Pulitzer Prize.

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"That day changed my life forever," said Kim. "Nick took me to the nearest hospital and I was severely burned, so they moved me to the first children's hospital, where they gave up hope and placed me in the morgue. After three days of screaming, my parents found me in the morgue. Everybody was expecting to bring my body back to the village for burial. Then, a miracle happened: my father met a friend who worked at the hospital and asked for help. They had me transferred to a burn clinic where I spent 14 months and thanks to God and the wonderful doctors and nurses, I survived."

Over the course of her recovery, Kim Phuc endured seventeen operations, the last of which took place in Germany in 1984. Left with scars on her back and left arm, she says she didn't feel pretty. She envied her girlfriends who could wear short-sleeved shirts, certain that no boy would ever love and marry her.

"I never thought I would have a normal life," she said, "but I was so wrong!"

Inspired by her long stay in the hospital, Kim developed dreams of being a doctor. Her doctors were her heroes, inspiring her every day of her recovery. Ten years after the bomb, she was accepted into medical school.

She thought she was on track to achieve her dreams until the Vietnamese government stepped in and decided she would be a potent war symbol for their country. They cut short her study for those purposes and Ms. Phuc says she quickly began to feel like a caged bird.

"I kept asking, 'Why me? Why did I have to suffer so much?' I used to curse those who had hurt me to death and I wanted them to suffer even more than me. For a while, I had a lot of anger, but I knew I could not live like that. I had to change my heart or die from hatred."

Eventually, she says, she found what she needed in the local library, where she stumbled across a copy of the New Testament.

She became a Christian at the age of 19 and it was then, she says, that she "knew God had a purpose in her life."

Eventually, the Vietnamese government allowed her to travel to Cuba and it was there she met her husband and set her sights on a new dream: finding a way to live her life in freedom in the west. She and her husband married in Cuba and received visas to honeymoon in Moscow. On their way back to Cuba, their flight had a stopover in Gander and, with their luggage still on the plane, the newlywed couple decided to leave everything behind and defect to Canada.

"We had no money, no friends, nothing," she said. "We had no knowledge of the Canadian culture, no knowledge of the language – we had nothing but faith. My physical recovery was a challenge, my life in a new country was a challenge, but by far the biggest challenge was learning how to forgive those who caused my life."

On the road to forgiveness, the Bible provided direction.

She said she knew that in order to be truly free she had to learn how to forgive.

Naturally, it was far from an easy process, but she knew she could trust in God.

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"The more I prayed for my enemies, the softer my heart became," she said. "I felt forgiveness completely in my heart. It didn't happen overnight; it took a long time, but when I experienced real forgiveness, my heart felt free and it was Heaven on Earth for me. It sounds easy, but it was the hardest work of my life. But, I did it – and if I could do it, all of you can do it too."

The real test of her forgiveness came on a 1996 trip to Washington DC where Ms. Phuc was asked to deliver a few remarks at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. There, she met many of the people involved in the conflict and forged an unlikely bond with one veteran who said he was struck by her message of having no animosity and only forgiveness for the pilot who put in the air strike on her village.

"It was a true reconciliation," said Ms. Phuc on meeting this veteran. "The healing I went through made my body strong, but it also made my mind

and my faith strong. It gave me the determination to fulfil my life goals."

Now settled in Ajax, Kim and her husband were eventually joined here by her parents and, as a couple, they raised two sons and now enjoy the company of a daughter-in-law and a grandson.

She feels privileged, she said, to work now as an advocate and a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, sharing her story along the way.

"Every time I travel, I call my mom and say, 'Mommy, that little girl isn't running anymore, she's flying.' My dream is that one day people will live without fear in real peace with no fighting and no hostility. Our world is troubled and full of conflict, but every single day we have opportunities to be better people, better neighbours and better friends. I believe that peace, love and forgiveness will always be more powerful than bombs."

## Museum, School Board collaborate on Heritage Fair

By Brock Weir

Local students are shaking the dust off history ahead of next weekend's Heritage Fair. A collaboration between the York Region District School Board and the Aurora Museum & Archives, the fourth annual Heritage Fair will take place Saturday, May 4, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex.

"After a 10 year hiatus, the Heritage Fair was brought back three years ago as part of the Canada 150 Celebration Initiative and the decision to keep it going is really quite fantastic," says Michelle Johnson of the Aurora Museum & Archives. "The projects that are presented are quite diverse. It's not just an interpretation of somebody taking on the personality of a historical figure. While that has its own value, the students are looking at sophisticated questions and projects that really challenge and complicate history." In recent years, one student liked history to her own experiences of coming to Canada from another country and facing Islamophobia. She presented an argument on using social media as primary sources, citing the US President's tweets as an example of primary sources in an "ongoing cultural conflict." Another student, using their own ancestors' experiences in the Holocaust, illustrated how trauma "can traverse the genetic structure," while another, a team of twins, presented the history of the LGBTQ+ community, and one of the twin's personal experience of coming out, through the medium of slam poetry. "This is not your average Heritage Fair," says Ms. Johnson, noting the Fair is open to the public. "If you are able to come and see some of these projects, prepare to be amazed."

Participating York Region students represent Grade 6, 7, 8 and 10 and a broad range of interests.

Over 100 individual and team projects will be on display during the fair.

In addition to the collaboration between the York Region District School Board and the Aurora Museum & Archives, additional workshops will be provided to students throughout the day by the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame, the Ontario Multicultural History Society, the Richmond Hill Cultural Centre, and the Sharon Temple.



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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR****Thank you for investing in education, says reader**

(Re: Kaleidoscope project will bring Cultural Centre into Aurora schools, April 4)

This morning I read the good news in the local newspaper that you (Council) have made an investment in Aurora's children by providing the matching funds for the ACC's Kaleidoscope in the Schools program.

This new program conceived by the forward thinking creative ACC Executive Director Suzanne Haines and her staff is so timely, and more important than ever considering the conservative provincial government's determination to strip the education budget.

Many worthwhile school arts programs and those who teach them will be lost.

It is through the arts we learn to be a more compassionate, and kind people. These are the attributes which produce a more inclusive society, better able to help everyone to grow and prosper together.

Can you imagine a world without the joy of music, colour, dance? I hope each Councillor, especially Mr. Thompson who voted against this worthwhile program, will be able to attend a performance/workshop in at least one Aurora elementary school to personally see and hear how much good you have made possible for our next generation through investing Town funds in their education.

Susan Morton-Leonard  
Aurora

**Greenbelt Coalition decries proposed changes to endangered species legislation**

It is becoming a pattern with this government to hear, once again, that Ontario's most sensitive and valuable environments are being offered to the highest bidder. 'Open for business' now also means trading protection for species at risk to anyone willing to pay the price. A strong and prosperous Ontario has a healthy and bountiful natural environment.

By weakening and outright removing protections in exchange for money this government weakens our province and sells our natural heritage out from under us. This move is particularly shocking given the global epidemic of species loss.

Ontario's Endangered Species Act was already insufficient. This proposal effectively removes the small safety net species at risk had remaining.

Like Bill 66, the process to determine which regulations can be avoided are taken out of the public eye and at the discretion of the Minister. Local habitats could be under threat without any notification or public input opportunities.

The government will establish a second set of rules for those that are able to pay more. Instead of following the rules everyone else has to, sprawl developers, aggregate companies, even our own municipalities can just pay their way out of the process, regardless of whether it undermines Ontario's environmental integrity.

Yet again we are forced to point out to this government that this proposal is not needed.

In Simcoe County we have a surplus of land available for houses and employment. We do not need to sacrifice our forests, wetlands and shorelines for more.

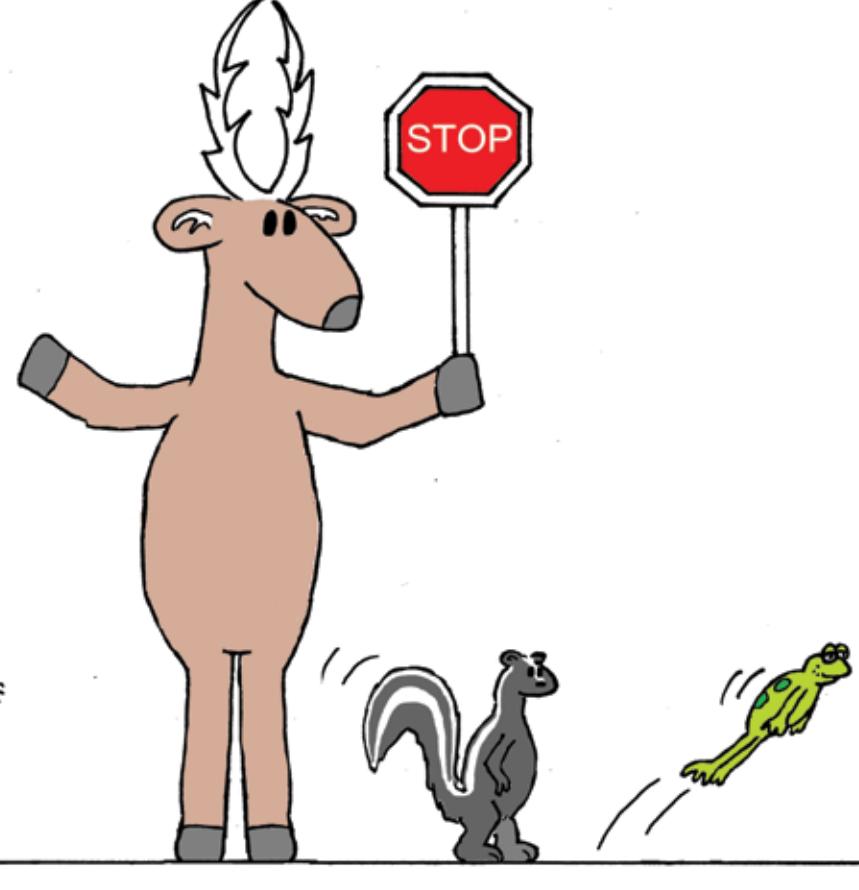
Who does this benefit?

Dredging wetlands that prevent flooding or paving over forests

**Continued on page 27**

**Machell's Corners**

Henderson



SCOTT JOHNSTON

**A few simple words****BROCK'S BANTER**

Brock Weir

We live in an age of economics – well, as far as our words are concerned.

The days where we were encouraged to wax lyrical on any number of subjects, the flowerier the better, are long gone.

Those days have been replaced with an age of expediency where it is both desirable and encouraged to cram complex thoughts into just a few hundred characters, bite-sized, slightly pre-digested, for mass consumption on social media.

Don't get me wrong, it is something of an art, and it always has been; after all, everyone from Blaise Pascal to Winston Churchill has been quoted as saying something along the lines of, "Excuse this long letter, I didn't have time to write a short one."

Whoever actually said it, and whoever actually started this trend, it seems as much as we focus on boiling down our thoughts into a wafer-like appetizer we are getting further and further away from truly considering the impact that just a few words can have.

A weekend ago, I was stuck by the elation a friend and his circle felt hearing just two simple words come out of the mouth of Federal Health Minister Ginette Petipas Taylor. Those words had, in their view, been a long time coming.

"I am enthusiastic, creative, love beauty in all its forms and eccentricities equally," writes my friend, Jeffery Smith for the Wall of Missing.

The Wall of Missing is a collection of photos, vignettes and biographies of people across Canada who have been struck down with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, better known as ME, and previously known by the misnomer Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

"I devour history, and style, and classic films. I hope I am kind, equitable and I fight for equality for all. I am grateful and know I am blessed. I am the creator of magazines, art, and occasionally writing. I am sarcastic and love black humour, but I am an optimist who believes that we, like Martin Luther King, can make the world a kinder place if we try and care."

"I have been ill with ME since September 1996. That was my D-Day; the day my world, life and productivity

practically stopped. I hope I am still all of those things, though I have access to little of it anymore. Most days I am a faint shell of that person, like someone with advanced Alzheimer's."

"I grew up gay in a small hockey town in the 1970s and learned about injustice and inequality early. Even though I could stay hidden, people of colour and other races could not and I developed a deep empathy for those being unfairly prejudiced against. In my 20s, I developed a rich and full life with my loving partner Dave, wonderful friends and the ongoing love of my parents."

"In September 1996, I got a flu that never went away. I went from 100 per cent capacity to about 20 per cent and am now less than that. I am always dizzy, have cognitive breakdown and tremors throughout my body when standing for more than a minute. I am unable to achieve anything but the most basic self-care on most days."

"It would take me years to find out that my Epstein Barr was constantly reactivating, leaving me ill daily as someone in the last stages of AIDS or cancer – but frozen in that state. I changed jobs six times, moving down to less responsibility due to the cognitive dysfunction before becoming too ill to work at all and ending up on long-term disability."

"I had three GPs over the years in Canada. One said it could be Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), but that may not exist. The other said CFS was imaginary and the third said I probably had ME, but there was no diagnoses or treatment here, only anti-anxiety meds and antidepressants."

"Jeff went to the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome in Stanford, California about five years ago, where he received a battery of blood tests, undertook a number of interviews and examinations that, after 18 years, were still not available in Canada while millions like Jeff continued to get sicker and sicker."

Those trips for treatment to California cost him thousands of dollars out of pocket, but he said it was worth the hardship.

"I needed hope, support, diagnosis and treatment, and none of this was available here," he said. "Although my illness continues to progress, I have met the bravest, most fierce and loving souls in the ME community that inspire me to not give up when I don't have it in me to face the future so deeply impaired."

What Jeff often doesn't realise is that, through him, I too have met one of the bravest, most fierce and loving souls, so I was buoyed when it seemed the quest for hope and support received a shot in the arm.

That shot in the arm came from a direction some people might not understand: the simple fact that the Minister of Health voiced the word "M.E." for the very first time.

It might seem small, but for the dozen-or-so weary advocates taking a stand at a health forum in Toronto over the weekend hosted by MP Rob O'Leary, it was almost the dawn of a new day; after all, previous Health Ministers have, apparently, fallen short of that mark.

They came with a mission: to advocate Ontario Health Minister Christine Elliott and her Federal counterpart to create a centre of excellence in ME/CFS care, education and research in Ontario, as well as to establish a transitional implementation committee to provide leadership in the initial phases of putting this plan into action.

"I hear you," said the Minister Petipas Taylor. "I know that there are challenges and I know when it comes to the levels of investments, they haven't been huge, but as a government I am committed that I certainly want to pay closer attention to this and if there is any way that we would be able to meet in Ottawa to discuss this matter even further I would be more than happy to meet with you and get a better sense of your requests, and also to get a better sense of the situation."

We can only hope this meeting transpires and leads to concrete action from the top down.

**THE AURORAN**  
*Aurora's Community Newspaper*

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15213 Yonge Street, Suite 8, Aurora, L4G 1L8

Main number 905-727-3300 • Fax number 905-727-2620

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Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.



## The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating... Affordable Homes!

If you read the Time Traveller's Diary this week, you might have found yourself marvelling at the cost for a brand new home in 1969. For the low price of \$25,500 (the equivalent of \$178,896.37 in 2019) you could be the proud owner of a bungalow in the new Orchard Heights subdivision. This image captures various styles of new houses being constructed in the 1960s, on the south side of Orchard Heights Boulevard, west of Laurentide Avenue.

## April in Review



### MP's Report

Kyle Peterson, MP  
Newmarket-Aurora

volunteers at the Aurora Seniors' Centre for your assistance to organize the event and for your warm hospitality.

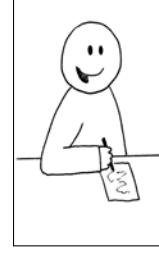
On Wednesday April 3, inspiring young women from across Canada visited Parliament Hill to take part in the Daughters of the Vote 2019. Congratulations to Farah Ahmad for participating in our democracy and representing our community of Newmarket-Aurora and taking your seat in the House of Commons.

Great job Farah! I wish you much success in all your future endeavours. It was great to meet you.

On Saturday April 13, I was happy to join our community in support of the 10th Annual CHATS Walk for Wellness at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex. The fundraising walk is held every year, to further build community support and raise necessary funds to support the programs and services that are a vital support to the health, wellness and independence of older adults in Newmarket-Aurora and across York Region.

It was great to see so many residents dedicating their time to walk and show

## From the Ashes



### INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

members of the community from their personal collections.

The most positive similarity in both fires was that no members of the public nor any first responders were killed.

The fires that occurred five years apart did not completely consume the structures, with a number of walls remaining standing. However, in Aurora damage to these areas was extensive and it was deemed necessary for safety reasons to demolish those parts of the church that survived the fire.

In Paris, pictures show that while the spire and roof are gone, the rest of the exterior walls of Notre Dame are largely intact. Although inspections are still being conducted, it is hoped and expected that much of the original building can be saved.

One optimistic note in both cases was that once the blazes were extinguished there was immediate confirmation from local officials that the structures would be rebuilt.

support for CHATS.

Thank you to the sponsors, organizers, volunteers and many walkers. It was another successful event.

The Town of Aurora's Annual Clean-Up day was held on Saturday April 13, with nearly 500 volunteers participating in the event to clear litter and debris from around town.

A volunteer appreciation barbecue was held at Town Park following the clean-up efforts. Thank you to the dedicated volunteers, town staff and the event sponsors for your time and efforts to clean up our community and protect our local environment.

Neighbourhood Network will be hosting their annual Spring Tree Planting Day on Saturday April 27. The spring tree planting event will be held at various sites across Newmarket-Aurora and York Region. If you are interested in participating or would like more information, please visit: neighbourhoodnetwork.org.

In August, the Magna Golf Club will be hosting the LPGA Canadian Open, and volunteers are needed. Please consider helping out this fabulous event. Visit: cpwomensopen.com/volunteer-information to sign up as a volunteer.

As a reminder, you can reach out to my office and my staff at any time. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you need any information or assistance with any federal matters. We are located at 16600 Bayview Avenue, Suite 202. You can reach us at Tel: 905-953-7515 or by email at: Kyle.Peterson@parl.gc.ca.

Although his country has far greater resources to draw on, the French President has set an extremely ambitious (and I feel unlikely) timeline of five years for the Notre Dame repairs to be completed.

Here in Aurora it is now five years since the AUC fire, and while much planning, design, fundraising and approvals have moved forward in that time, actual construction has yet to begin. It is hoped that formal groundbreaking will take place this summer, with all work being completed in about two years.

It is too early to know what form repairs may take to the original Notre Dame building in Paris, or how the final version may differ from the original.

Starting with a blank slate, the new AUC will incorporate some design elements of the old building, but will be updated in part to allow it to be used as a more flexible community space.

While the losses of both buildings are tragic, it is inspiring to see their respective communities coming together spiritually and physically to rebuild these landmarks.

I will continue to watch the progress of the rebuilds of both monuments with great interest, and look forward to seeing both churches fully re-established on their respective municipality's skylines as prominent and inspiring centres of worship, community and history.

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



## TIME TRAVELLERS DIARY

By Helen Roberts, Volunteer  
Aurora Museum & Archives

## A Fifty-Year Flashback

It's 1969 and the newly married Time Traveller and her husband are looking for their first home.

Although both were born and raised in Toronto, prices of suitable homes in that city exceeded their modest budget of \$25,000. So, they looked north; to the new development in the village of Beeton - homes within the budget but too far north; to Tottenham where pre-fab homes were available at a very reasonable price - too great a distance from jobs in the city.

Richmond Hill was a possibility but the couple finally decided to check out a new subdivision in Aurora. Just south of St. Andrews College, Wimpy Homes, a well-known builder was opening a brand-new subdivision called Aurora Orchards.

The couple was delighted to discover that two of the new homes fell within their budget - a side split with half basement and crawl space, and a bungalow.

Both models offered three bedrooms, one bathroom, living, dining room and kitchen plus a carport. Although \$500 over their budget, they chose a bungalow on Orchard Heights Blvd.

Rumours suggested that the road would one day go all the way west to Bathurst Street, but that was difficult to believe - at the time the area was covered with the remains of the original apple orchard.

By the end of November, the house was ready (complete with the latest yellow bathroom fixtures), the sod was laid and before the end of the year the couple became residents of the Town of Aurora.

On checking out Aurora's amenities, the Time Traveller was pleased to discover that shopping was close by and easy to access.

The main shopping district on Yonge Street provided a butcher, bakery, dairy, hardware, two jewelry stores, a menswear store, a five & dime and even a small department store at the corner of Wellington carrying everything from clothing for the entire family to sporting goods, fabrics and sewing supplies.

The bank stood in the centre of the block. Groceries would be no problem - both the IGA and the new A&P at Aurora Heights Dr. carried all the essentials.

The library on Victoria Street was quite new and promised to be an interesting source of reading material and there were five churches within easy reach of the new home. With the growing population, schools were becoming overcrowded, however a new public school within the subdivision had been promised (and was built by the time the Time Travellers' family had grown to include children).

The future was exciting for the young couple and their choice of Aurora as their new home and the place to bring up their family proved auspicious.

Fifty years later they would still call Aurora home.

## THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Do you think the Downtown BIA will see results in bringing people into Aurora's Downtown Core?

Yes No Unsure

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

Previous poll results

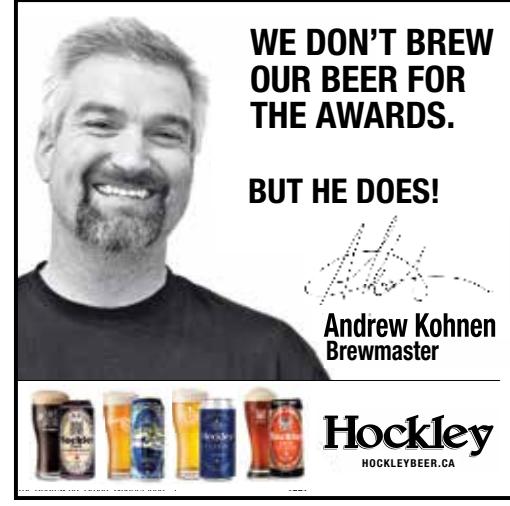
Did you support the students in their April 4 walkout?

RESULTS TO DATE April 23, 2019	YES	NO	UNSURE
	81%	18%	0%

# Judge awards Hinder more than \$174k in costs following "frivolous" lawsuit

By Brock Weir

A judge has awarded Magna's Steve Hinder a further \$174,400 in costs stemming from the lawsuit brought against him by former Council candidate Anthony Pullano



— a lawsuit the justice has dubbed "frivolous" and a "waste of the court's time."

Justice McCarthy made his decision in a ruling dated April 15.

The cost decision follows a lengthy court case stemming from a lawsuit launched by former Council candidate Anthony Pullano against Magna's Steve Hinder, claiming Mr. Hinder assaulted him at a political event in 2014, resulting in myriad subsequent health challenges.

The matter was put before a jury last fall and while the six-member jury found that Mr. Hinder had "punched" Mr. Pullano at the event in question, it did not result in any "physical, emotional or psychological injury."

As such, Mr. Pullano was awarded no damages as a result of the lawsuit;

instead, he was ordered to pay Mr. Hinder damages of \$50,000 relating to the latter's countersuit of defamation against Mr. Pullano, which cited a number of tweets posted in the years leading up to the trial identifying Mr. Hinder as a "bully" and a "thug."

In this latest decision, Justice McCarthy rejected Mr. Pullano's costs claim of \$140,357.92 and instead ordered him to pay costs of \$174,509.63 (\$120,000, plus HST and disbursements) to the defendants — Mr. Hinder, Magna and The Stronach Group.

Justice McCarthy said in his decision that awarding costs to Mr. Pullano would "usurp" the role of the jury and nullify its decision.

"The plaintiff was entirely unsuccessful at trial," said Justice McCarthy. "The finding by the jury that he had been punched by Hinder, in all circumstances, cannot be viewed as constituting any measurable level of success. The jury dismissed the notion that Pullano sustained any physical, emotional or psychological injury. The jury rejected the suggestion that the punch had caused the infection of his [cardiac] implantation site. There was no basis for an award of general damages. I have found that an award of nominal charges is unwarranted."

"The jury found no conduct on the part of Hinder deserving of aggravated or punitive damages. Conversely, the jury found multiple instances of defamation of Hinder by Pullano; implicit in its verdict is that it accepted Hinder's evidence that he had suffered emotional upset and embarrassment as a result of Pullano's defamatory comments being disseminated via social media to the broader community."

Justice McCarthy went on to note that due to the way in which Mr. Pullano portrayed the matter on social media, coupled with the involvement of Mr. Hinder, Magna and the Stronach Group within the communities of Aurora and Newmarket, the case was given "a higher profile than it perhaps deserved."

"This was highly publicized, hotly contested and emotionally infused litigation which, as became quickly obvious to any neutral observer, involved accusations, recriminations, allegations and hostility beyond what anybody could reasonably have expected from a brief encounter between acquaintances at a seemingly boring and convivial acclamation meeting for a political candidate."

"Finally, it cannot have been lost on Pullano, a businessman, former

politician and a person of some sophistication that, in bringing a claim against corporate giants like Stronach and Magna, seeking punitive and aggravated damages, making serious personal allegations against prominent members of the community, publicizing the details of the action on social media, and in making statements which he ought to have known might attract a counter claim for defamation, he was almost inviting a contentious, lengthy and expensive trial. The costs of his unsuccessful action and of Hinder's successful counterclaim for defamation, to which Pullano's initiative gave birth, must lay largely at Pullano's feet."

Near the end of Justice McCarthy's decision, he delivered strong words on the issue of how the case played out on social media platforms, particularly Twitter.

"Pullano called into question the personal integrity of Hinder and attempted to sully his name in the community," said Justice McCarthy. "By dragging corporate actors Stronach and Magna into the mix, through allegations of conspiracy and cover-up, it is obvious that Pullano was bent on pursuing his own murky and obscure private agenda. Social media attacks on individuals have become all too commonplace in recent years. They are evidently an inexpensive method by which motivated individuals are able to launch distant but personal attacks upon others with aplomb and apparent disregard for consequences."

"Pullano's method of communicating his grievances towards Hinder, Stronach and Magna was ill-chosen; worse, the content of his messages, which clearly attracted the disdain of the jury were on the whole cynical, petty, callous and abusive. In my view, Pullano's online campaign against the defendants serves as an unfortunate example of how communication via social media often deteriorates into irresponsible comment and uncivilized dialogue between individual citizens on matters of public and private interest."

Mr. Hinder declined to comment on the matter.

William Reid, the lawyer representing Mr. Pullano, said his client is mulling his options.

"Mr. Pullano is very disappointed with the decision," he said. "He is reviewing Justice McCarthy's reasons and considering all options carefully. Mr. Pullano has until May 15 to decide on an appeal."

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# Province moves to improve, safeguard Community Housing across Ontario

By Brock Weir

All three levels of government need to work together to ensure Ontario's most vulnerable have a place to live, according to Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The Province stepped up to the plate with a series of measures Wednesday morning aimed at helping to sustain, repair and grow community housing and help end homelessness.

Announced in Newmarket-Aurora alongside area MPP – and Deputy Premier – Christine Elliott, the Province's new Community Housing Renewal Strategy includes "early steps" aimed at improving community housing by making rent more predictable, fostering a climate where tenants can seek opportunities for work and education without penalty for working more hours or going to school, and freeing up wait lists by having tenants prioritize their first choice and accept the first unit they are offered, and making housing available "to those who truly need it" by requiring an "asset test."

Community housing, said the Minister, will also be made safer by empowering housing providers to turn away tenants who have been evicted for criminal activity.

"Homes are more than just bricks and mortar; they are the foundation to raise a happy, healthy family," said Clark. "A home allows people to participate in their community, whether it is through work, volunteering, shopping at local businesses or attending local events. Our government believes everyone deserves a place to call home."

"Right now, there are too many families living in places that are overcrowded and rundown. Some of them just aren't safe. Across the Province, there is a shortage of good community housing for people who need it the most. York Region is not immune. In fact, it has the lowest supply of social housing compared to its population

in the Province. There are only 17 units available for every 1,000 households. The Region's wait list is well over 14,000, double what it was seven years ago."

To this end, Mr. Clark said municipalities across the Province are feeling the pinch when it comes to community housing and without any support the situation will only get worse.

"Because much of Ontario's community housing was built a long time ago, and when the original funding agreements that support them will soon come to an end, when that happens we risk losing some of the housing people are relying on. If nothing is done, there is a possibility that over 106,000 units across the Province could be lost in less than 10 years."

The new measures, he said will help "meet people's complex and changing needs."

Housing providers will be eligible for more flexible and streamlined arrangements and may also be eligible for new funding as their original agreements expire to help protect existing units.

The system will go on to make it easier for tenants to predict their rent and make it easier for housing providers to calculate it.

In addition to removing penalties for tenants who might wish to pursue education or further work hours, they will also be protected from being penalized financially for child support payments.

"Of course, our service managers will use their discretion to make sure everyone on the waitlist is respected and finds the home that best suits their needs," said Clark. "Our plan will require service managers to set appropriate asset limits for applicants to ensure community housing is provided to those who need it most, and give housing providers the power to turn away former tenants that have been evicted for serious criminal activity so all residents can feel safer in their homes."

"My ministry is providing more than \$1 billion this year to help maintain, repair and grow Ontario's system of community



Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs, Parliamentary Assistant Christine Hogarth and Deputy Premier/Newmarket-Aurora MPP Christine Elliott announced reforms to community housing in Aurora's north riding last Wednesday.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

housing; help get those living on the streets into stable homes and continue to support off-reserve indigenous housing in the Province. This money will go directly to the communities and much of it is flexible so that it can be invested in solutions that best meet local needs.

"We're leveraging every single federal dollar that is available to us by cost matching the Federal National Housing Strategy investments. I am so pleased to see the Federal Government's renewed interest in the Housing file. Our province needs all three levels of government engaged so we can solve our Province's housing crisis. I plan on continuing to push my colleagues in Ottawa to invest their fair share. The National Housing Strategy is a good start, but it is not enough."

Going forward, Mr. Clark told media at Wednesday's announcement that it is essential to "make sure all three levels of government are working together."

"We want to make sure our community partners, those not for profits and existing organizations that are providing housing and housing supports, that we all work together. If the private sector wants to participate in and it results in more stock, renewed stock or renewed opportunities, we will explore every option available to us."

Asked what the Province could do to incentivise housing companies and developers to allocate units for community housing and make a better climate for public-private partnerships, he said there will be more to say "in coming weeks" about what has been done.

"I am realistic though," he said. "There will have to be other measures that we'll have to move forward on as a government in the fall. There is not one thing I can table in the legislature and then have everyone pat me on the back and say that I solved the housing crisis. That is not going to happen. It is a continual focus on what we can do to make it happen."

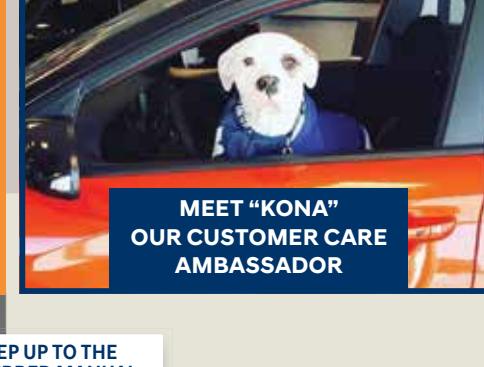
Wednesday's announcement at Newmarket's Old Town Hall was also attended by Mayor Tom Mrakas. Speaking to The Auroran following afterward, he said it is "always great to see the Provincial government come to the table and say we need to provide some better tools to increase not only our supply, but how efficient we are when we provide community housing for residents."

"I think it is a good first step, but we need to continue work not just within the Provincial government but all levels of government to make sure we can end homelessness within York Region."

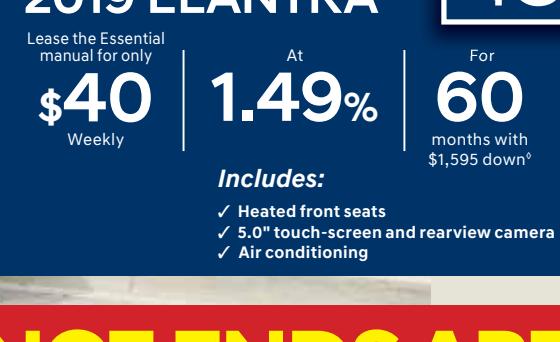
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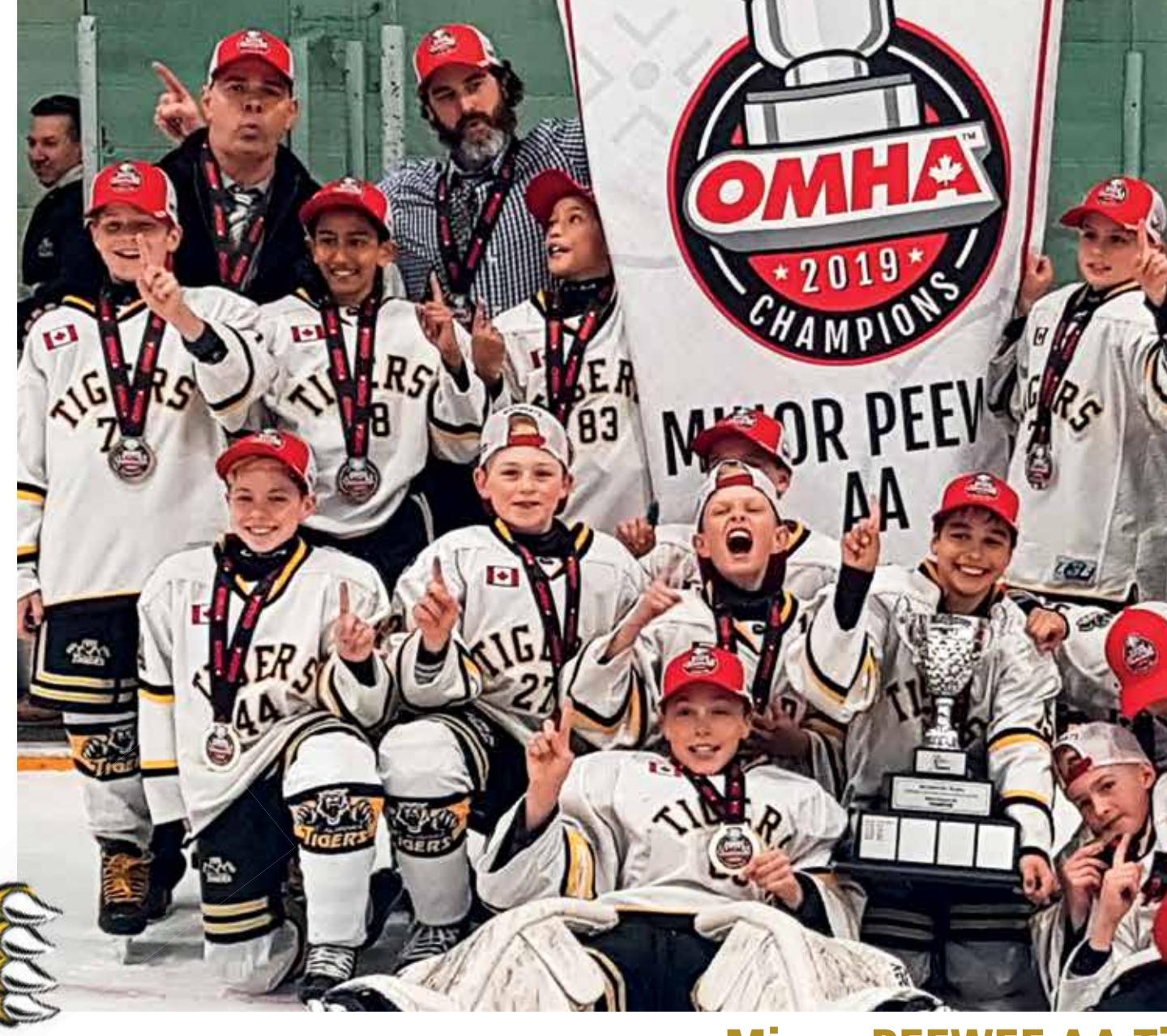
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## Minor MIDGET AA Aurora Tigers

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# ions



## Minor PEEWEE AA Aurora Tigers



The coaching staff of the Aurora Tigers Minor Peewee AA want to extend a **HUGE** congratulations to the team on an outstanding year. The Tigers not only finished 1st in the regular season, but followed that up with some great playoff series wins against TNT, Newmarket, Clarington and St. Catharines to win the OMHA Championships.



gers

smith, Kyle Cordingley, Owen Marsella. Front Row: Cohen Bugeja, Owen Pinder, Callum Heath, Matt, Matthew Andersen



## Minor MIDGET AA Tigers

I, Dylan Andersen, Riley Pearl, Graham Sim, Steven Burfield, Jack Reily, Owen Papulkas, Zander Liapis, John Bryden, Chris Koulouras, Efan Ranzin, Ryan Weeks, Ryan Bryden, Kurtis Gipp, Ethan Belisle, Kelden Dagenais, Ben Goring and Gage Gonsalves Front Row: Liam Falconer,





## **Author and activist Rebick to share personal story at Library**

By Brock Weir

Judy Rebick has never shied away from leading the charge for social justice.

A activist by nature, she doesn't skirt controversial topics or miss an opportunity to get people – particularly the powers-that-be – out of their respective comfort zones.

But, in tackling the very personal issue of mental health, Ms. Rebick had to address some uncomfortable subjects of her own.

She is set to share that personal story at the Aurora Public Library this Wednesday, May 1 at 7 p.m. in an "In Conversation" event hosted by this writer.

Wednesday's discussion will focus not only on Ms. Rebick's storied career as an activist, publisher and television host, but also her new memoir, *Heroes in my Head*, which charts her own experience with clinical depression and Dissociative Identity Disorder, a disorder previously known as "multiple personality disorder."

"I think my story shows a different side of what most people consider mental illness," says Ms. Rebick.

Trauma of any kind can be destructive, she says, and people tend to look at the destructive side of it, but looking back on her own

experience she says "surviving a trauma can make you more creative in lots of ways" as well.

"I like to call them mental injuries because, in my case, it is not an illness but an injury inflicted on me," she says. "I fought to change the world for women and children and part of that is because of what happened to me. I find a lot of people who are active are active because it helps them heal their own situation, their own problems, and make them feel better about themselves as they try to change the world to be better for others."

Ms. Rebick says she knew she didn't have an easy childhood. Her father was domineering and had fits of violence outside the home while his "yelling and screaming" was a regular experience indoors.

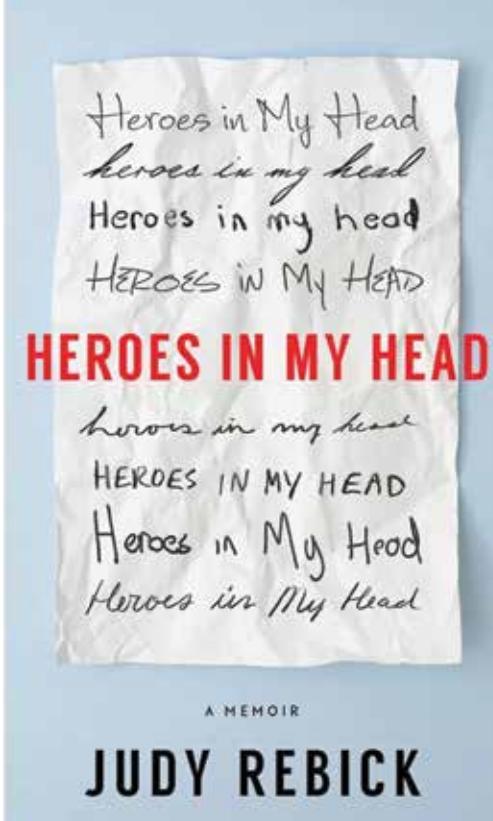
She says she knew she had issues, but didn't know she had been sexually abused until she started going to therapy in 1980.

Setting down on paper what happened next was a very hard process. While her five previous books took an average of two years to complete, *Heroes in My Head* took eight solid years start to finish.

"I had to learn how to do something very different," she says, noting that because she was disassociated, there were gaps in her own memory she



Judy Rebick  
Contributed photo



hidden my whole life. I am a very public person and I have never talked about any of this. I don't think I even talked about any kind of sexual violence. I had to face that people's ideas of me would be changed by this."

There was a risk, she said, that people would think less of her but, in the end, the reception *Heroes in My Head* received was "incredible."

"I never experienced anything like it because I am a fairly controversial person," she says with a laugh. "This is the only thing I have ever done that I got nothing negative, not even on Twitter. There was one tweet that said, 'How does she remember? This is all bullshit. There's no such thing as multiple personalities.' There was one tweet from somebody who didn't even know how to tag me."

"This book is about the interplay between healing from abuse and activism. My mental injury actually helped me to be a better activist because it made me fearless, for one thing. I couldn't feel fear. People think of me as strong and fearless, and a lot of that is because I was so disassociated from my feelings."

To join the dialogue at In Conversation: Author & Activist Judy Rebick with Brock Weir, reserve your free ticket at [aurorapl.ca](http://aurorapl.ca) and come out on Wednesday, May 1 at 7 p.m.



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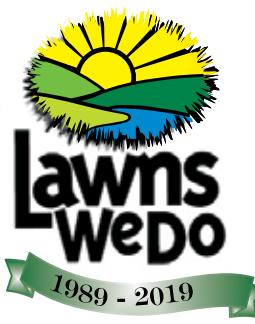
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## Last chance to see thought-provoking "Watershedsci" exhibition

By Brock Weir

Whether it is traditional paint pieces created from debris found along the Lake Simcoe shoreline, or small pieces of fabric suspended from the ceiling to represent microplastics omnipresent in our water, Watershedsci has sparked no shortage of thought-provoking discussion.

Saturday, however, will be your last chance to see what people are talking about as Watershedsci, a unique environmental collaboration between the Simcoe Watershed Art Project and Lakehead University, prepares to leave the Aurora Cultural Centre.

The creators behind Watershed welcomed participating artists and art lovers alike to the Cultural Centre last Saturday for a special reception that shed light on the science that inspired the project.

"When Jenny Clark, founder of the Lake Simcoe Watershed Art Project, brought this exhibition to my attention, I was intrigued by the idea of artists responding to scientific research," said Clare Bolton of the Aurora Cultural Centre. The result, as you can see, is an exceptional thought-provoking exhibition by outstanding artists working in a variety of mediums. I am grateful for the artists and scientists for using art as a vehicle for social change.

"I feel this exhibition has inspired visitors – young people, educators have come through the doors and the community at large – to start their own conversation about environmental concerns. I have learned since the opening of this exhibition [from] the educational school system that the conversation is happening [there] and that it is an integral part of their education. I am hopeful. There are some great things happening with the young people today. Exhibitions like this remind us of the challenges we face, but when we look at the creativity involved and the response to the scientific data that the scientists presented to the artists and worked with them. For me, it is essential for society to come up with innovative solutions for the challenges we face. This exhibition, and the response, gives me hope."

It also gives hope to scientist Debbie Balika, Water Quality Specialist for Kawartha Conservation, who helped get this conversation started in the first place.

Ms. Balika became involved in the project while working at Lakehead University where she was asked to speak to Ms. Clark and participating artists about what they had in mind. What transpired, she said, was a great conversation that boiled down highlighting the art already existing in nature and melding these into a common vision.

"This Watershedsci project is very dear to my heart," said Balika. "It really acts as a bridge for different conversations to occur, but it also allows for understanding and, at the end, what we all really want is action to happen."

When people understand environmental issues and they understand impacts and are able to act on it, we couldn't ask for a better flow.

"As we moved forward with this collaboration, we had a multitude of meetings. We had a lot of meetings to work out the details, our contributions, the artists and timelines, and the artists carried the lion's share of the work. We spent an evening of learning and lectures...and then we sent all the artists home with thick wads of academic papers about different research on water quality issues. The topics we talked about that night, we really narrowed down to a focus on Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching because, as you know, we have a lot of water quality issues on a global level and we wanted to narrow down that scale."

Some of the things talked about in relation to the two lakes were water quality monitoring, urban run-off, rural run-off and the dumping of nutrients into the water; e-coli, pesticides and biological invaders.

"After that night and after the artists had time to absorb all that knowledge and they chose a topic they wanted to focus on a little bit more, they were paired up with a Lakehead University scientist. I was lucky to be paired up with Jenny," she continued. "She is just as excited as I was. It was a mutual excitement. We had lots of good and thoughtful conversations and discussions and what I took from it as a professional was I really increased my skill of making science accessible because it really needs to be understood in order to then share it with someone else."

"I feel the success of this exhibition itself is only a possibility because two different spheres came together and that is an art sphere and a science sphere. Both bodies were willing to look at things through different lenses

and understand different perspectives. When we look through different lenses and we share perspectives, we can also make new perspective. The culmination

of everyone's passion and hard work is really evident today. Your work is creating new dialogue around the very thing that connects us all – water."



Debbie Balika, Water Quality Specialist for Kawartha Conservation speaks at the artists' reception for Watershedsci at the Aurora Cultural Centre. The exhibition closes Saturday.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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## BIA plans archway, series of on-street events

### From page 1

the Town's historic Downtown Core as a destination.

"We have had several meetings to try and determine what would make sense to increase the livability and business atmosphere of the Downtown Area," Mr. Laurion told Council. "The mission of the Downtown Aurora Business Improvement Association is to support members through promotion and education, to attract new businesses that add value to the Downtown Core, and support their integration within the community, and participate in the marketing and beautification efforts for Downtown Aurora."

"With so many new changes to

Aurora – being Library Square and the remodelling of the Aurora Cultural Centre – we will see positive change through marketing initiatives, running events to spotlight the Downtown Core, supporting existing businesses, building a long-range plan with the Economic Development Board to help attract new businesses that will further enrich the Downtown experience and contribute to the beautification efforts undertaken by the Town through the streetscape plan.

"Our vision is to lead the revitalization of Downtown Aurora as a Town focal point where businesses thrive, residents live, work and play, and visitors feel welcomed."

All this, however, comes at a cost.

A final report on the BIA's budget will come forward for Council approval and enactment in the first half of May.

The budget is contingent on a new tax levy that will be handed down to businesses that lie within the geographic limits of the BIA, being the blocks radiating out from Yonge and Wellington.

BIA Board members estimate this tax levy will come out to an average of \$400 per property annually, with the 101 subject properties contributing an estimated \$40,400 to fund the initiatives.

"The levy structure is being requested as we are here to advocate on behalf of the interests of the Business Improvement Area," said the BIA in their business plan. "We wish to maintain and improve the downtown core area and provide a more pleasant atmosphere for local businesses and neighbouring residential areas."

The BIA's business plan sets out three years of objectives.

In the first year, the BIA will focus \$15,000 on advertising, including the creation of websites, newspaper and social media ads, flyers and marketing materials. \$10,000 is allocated to hire entertainment for a planned series of three events which will include road closures in the historic core. More will be spent on metal buildings and lawn signs intended to designate historically significant properties to illustrate

Aurora's heritage.

The second year will look at similar advertising efforts, \$7,000 for entertainment, the creation of more signage as well as a new mural on a prominent Downtown building which will illustrate the history of the core.

The third year will continue spreading the word, but focusing on the creation of a metal archway over Wellington Street to signify the entrance to Downtown Aurora.

The proposed archway, similar to the arch that indicates Newmarket's Historic Main Street when coming from the north received a boost from Mayor Tom Mrakas.

"I like [the idea] of the historic metal archway at Wellington," said the Mayor, noting he and Stephanie Mackenzie Smith, Communications Manager for the Town, had been brainstorming ideas earlier in the day. "We thought [about] not only one, but possibly a second one at the other end."

"The BIA has sure hit the ground running," said Councillor Sandra Humfries, who chaired last Tuesday's General Committee meeting. "You have been here a few times already since your inception and I am really proud of that. Thank you for relaying the need to beautify and work on the downtown core. For me, it is critical to the success of our businesses along with the great initiatives of our Library Square."

"Thank you for continuing to push forward."

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## Coconut Village Nails Spa GRAND OPENING



Owner Phiona welcomed Mayor Tom Mrakas to the grand opening of Coconut Village Nails Spa last week, along with Councillor Rachel Gilliland. Coconut Village Nails Spa has become a popular spa facility providing natural spa, facial, manicure and pedicure treatments in a 'Caribbean Vibes' environment. "With our natural ingredients and revitalizing products our spa specialists are ready to restore your skin to its natural glow again," say owner. "You will also love our waxing and massage procedures. We strongly promote appointments only in order to effectively deliver that 'relaxed and get pampered' experience." Coconut Village Nails Spa is located at 38 Wellington Street.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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# Retail set to make a comeback at former Canadian Tire site

**By Brock Weir**

Canadian Tire may have moved from Yonge Street to Bayview Avenue, but the company is looking to re-invest in its old site and bring new retail opportunities to Aurora's south end.

Canadian Tire's former store on Yonge Street just south of Murray Drive has stood vacant since its move in 2016 and the company has applied to Council for new zoning provisions that would open the door to a series of changes on-site, including a reconfiguration in parking and the construction of a new drive-thru restaurant at the Yonge Street side of the property.

If their plans are brought to fruition, the present building will be divided into three commercial units with a new loading dock.

"Currently, the property has very restrictive zoning on it which is just to permit a Canadian Tire-type store with some ancillary restaurant-type uses," said David Waters, Director of Planning & Development Services, for the Town of Aurora. "However, in order to make the property more marketable at the end of the day, the applicant has come in and expanded the range of uses for the property. They do confirm with the Official Plan [and while] the Official Plan and York Region Official Plan do provide for higher order uses, at this point in time, the site is not ready to move in that direction, but those development rights are within the plans for both the Region and the Town."

Although all plans for the property, which is no longer for sale by Canadian Tire, are subject to future site plan approvals, Council is set to give the green light to zoning bylaw amendment changes this week after giving the thumbs-up at the Committee level last Tuesday night.

Some Council members, however, expressed some misgivings on the

proposal, particularly from Councillors Wendy Gaertner and John Gallo who questioned whether the plan meets intensification targets, fulfills the vision of the Aurora Promenade Plan, and what impacts – negative or otherwise – the changes might have on homes on the west side of the property.

From the residents' perspective, Councillor Gaertner said she had concerns about the noise the proposed drive-thru would create for area residents, along with the noise from loading zones. An additional concern, she said, was the current right-of-way at Mosaics Avenue, which shares access to Murray Drive with the plaza to the north.

On his part, Councillor Gallo said he wanted more clarity on how the proposals conformed with the Town's Official Plan and in particular the Aurora Promenade Plan which focuses on building a pedestrian-oriented community through higher densities and placing midrise to high-rise built forms closer to the street, buffered by appropriate transitions, with parking in behind.

"I envisioned something different on the site, particularly when it comes to the Promenade study and all the work that was done," said Councillor Gallo. "I just feel like we're getting just more 'big box' and that doesn't sit too well."

"In its current state, it is very restrictive and I would agree with that. Although my comfort level isn't very high, is there an opportunity to go through the site plan process prior to the rezoning of the properties so that my and perhaps others' confidence would be slightly higher if the commitment from the owners is to go through the site plan process prior to us doing the rezoning? I know it is not common, but it has definitely been done before."

Mr. Waters responded that Canadian Tire has decided to take a two-step approach with this plan, going for the rezoning first, followed by the site plan process.

"If I had a choice, they would... go through the site plan process prior to the rezoning of the property," said Councillor Gallo. "I will sit and ponder that for the time being."

Councillor Michael Thompson, on the other hand, said the proposal from Canadian Tire is very much in line with what was there before as well as the uses of lands surrounding the site, particularly the Smart Centre plaza just to the north, which is anchored by Winners.

"It is hard to distinguish between one property versus another," said Councillor Thompson. "While I would agree there are a lot of us who thought this would be an excellent opportunity for other kinds of development, they did have the property for sale for a period of time and were trying to perhaps move in that direction, there were some other issues we might not be privy to, but at the end

of the day that is what the applicant has come forward with."

While Councillor Harold Kim said he would welcome further dialogue with Canadian Tire to make sure what they want is in sync with what the Town envisions, Mayor Tom Mrakas said having something on site is better than leaving the lands vacant.

"It is better off that something be there, be open, instead of it being vacant and empty," said Mayor Mrakas. "We have complained many times about the Canadian Tire being vacant and empty, so I would rather see some stores in there available to the residents in the area instead of being empty."

"I think as we move forward, down the road more people will look into the area and possibly look at picking up this property and maybe looking at changing its use at that time."

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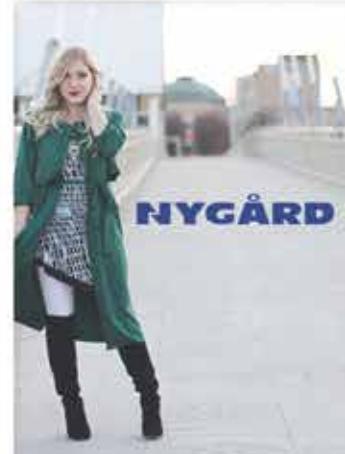
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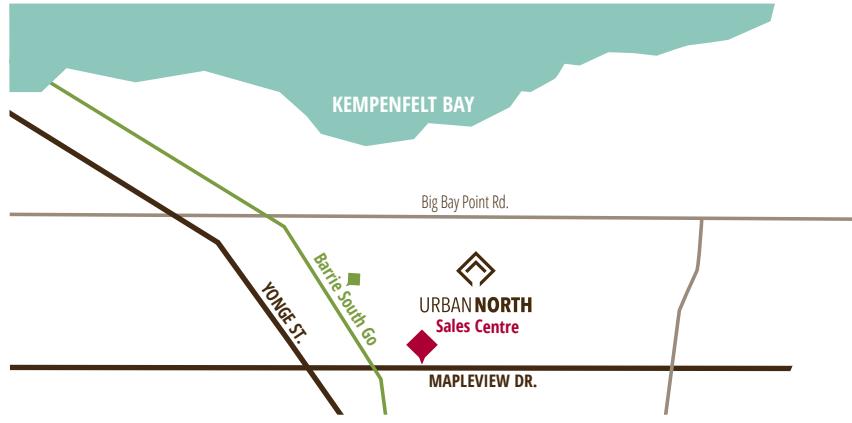
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## Byfield "humbled" by OHL Rookie honours



Quinton Byfield, pictured with the York-Simcoe Express in the 2016-17 season, has been named as the OHL's Rookie of the Year.

Auroran photo by Jake Courtepatte

captain Quinton Byfield was named on Thursday as the OHL's Rookie of the Year, earning the Emms Family Award for the 2018-19 season.

"It's super humbling," said Byfield. "There's a lot of good rookies this year that could have won it. I think a lot of them deserved it as well. I couldn't have done it by myself and owe a lot to my coaches who put trust in me, gave me every opportunity to succeed, and put me in every situation."

He called his chemistry with his first-year teammates, both on and off the ice, "unbelievable."

"We had a very special group, we're super tight, and that helped us on the ice and really helped me too."

The Newmarket native, tabbed as a consensus first overall pick before even the midpoint of the 2017-18 season, was named the winner of the Jack Ferguson Trophy last April as the top choice by the Sudbury Wolves.

The six-foot-four, 200 lb. centreman gained a reputation among the minor AAA circles as the right combination of speed and skill, captaining the Minor Midget Express to an OHL Cup in March of 2018 while leading the team in scoring with 92 points.

The former St. Maximilian Kolbe student added twelve points in the Express' playoff run, cementing his position atop the OHL's most wanted list.

Byfield excelled immediately in his jump to the major junior ranks, posting 29 goals and 32 assists to lead Sudbury in scoring. As a sixteen-year old, he lit the lamp more than any other Wolves rookie since 1997.

His Wolves were swept in the second round of the OHL playoffs by the Ottawa 67s, though Byfield prefers to look back at the positives and support he received in his rookie season.

"My billet family, since day one, welcomed me into their family and they supported me along the way," said Byfield. "To my mom, dad, sister, Oma, they all believed in me, supported me, and sacrificed everything for me just so I could go play hockey. This is just really special for me and I'm really honoured."

In a press release, Wolves head coach Cory Stillman, a former Rookie of the Year himself, added Byfield has done "everything for us" since joining the squad.

"He's an extremely talented player and is a treat to come to the rink and watch every night...what makes Quinton special, to me, is how hard he plays in all areas of the game. He plays on the power play and on the penalty kill. He plays in the last minute if we're up a goal or if we're down a goal. I think the biggest thing with Quinton is that he's only going to get better."

Byfield was also named to the OHL's All-Rookie team, and will be eligible for the NHL's 2020 draft.

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By Jake Courtepatte

A familiar face around the Aurora rinks has been lauded as the top first-year player in the Ontario Hockey League.

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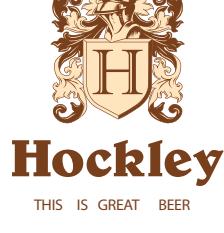
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# Walk for Wellness raises more than \$17,000 for senior services

By Brock Weir

They laced up their running shoes, did their stretches and, in some cases, unfolded their walkers or whipped out their Nordic walking poles, and hit the track last Saturday with the same mission – to raise much needed funds for senior services in York Region and South Simcoe.

The Chartwell Walking Track at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex was the scene on April 13 when CHATS (Community & Home Assistance to Seniors) hosted its annual Walk for Wellness.

Dozens of participants and vendors banded together for the event which, at press time, was well past a fundraising target of \$17,000 with sponsor dollars pouring in.

Topping the list of teams was the CHATS Board Walkers, which raised a whopping \$5,650 for the cause, while the team from the Aurora Seniors' Association glided into second place with \$1,697.

"I always say I come from the best community – well, most people say that, but I am actually right when I say it – and part of the reason is so many great organizations like CHATS," said Newmarket-Aurora MP Kyle Peterson at the conclusion of the Walk. "As Member of Parliament, you get to take a look at the whole community and all the organizations out there. We really do have a great community and it is because of volunteers and community events and organizations like this."

"You are really, truly making a difference in people's lives. It seems simple to spend a morning walking around a few laps, but those little efforts and events like this make our community so much better and it makes the lives of people who live in our community so much richer."

CHATS has a long history of service within the York Region and South Simcoe Community.

Its programs include in-home and home safety services to seniors, transportation services and community programs.

"I want to say a very big thank you on behalf of CHATS, the Board, staff and the 480-plus volunteers who contribute to providing support to York Region's older adults on behalf of CHATS to support their care close to every day of the year," said CHATS Board Chair Ian Hillel. "This is a very important event for us."

Upcoming events in support of CHATS include a car rally on August 24, supported by snapd Richmond Hill, and the Tim Jones Classic Golf Tournament on September 9.



The CHATS Board Walkers were the top fundraising team at the organization's 2019 Walk for Wellness, held at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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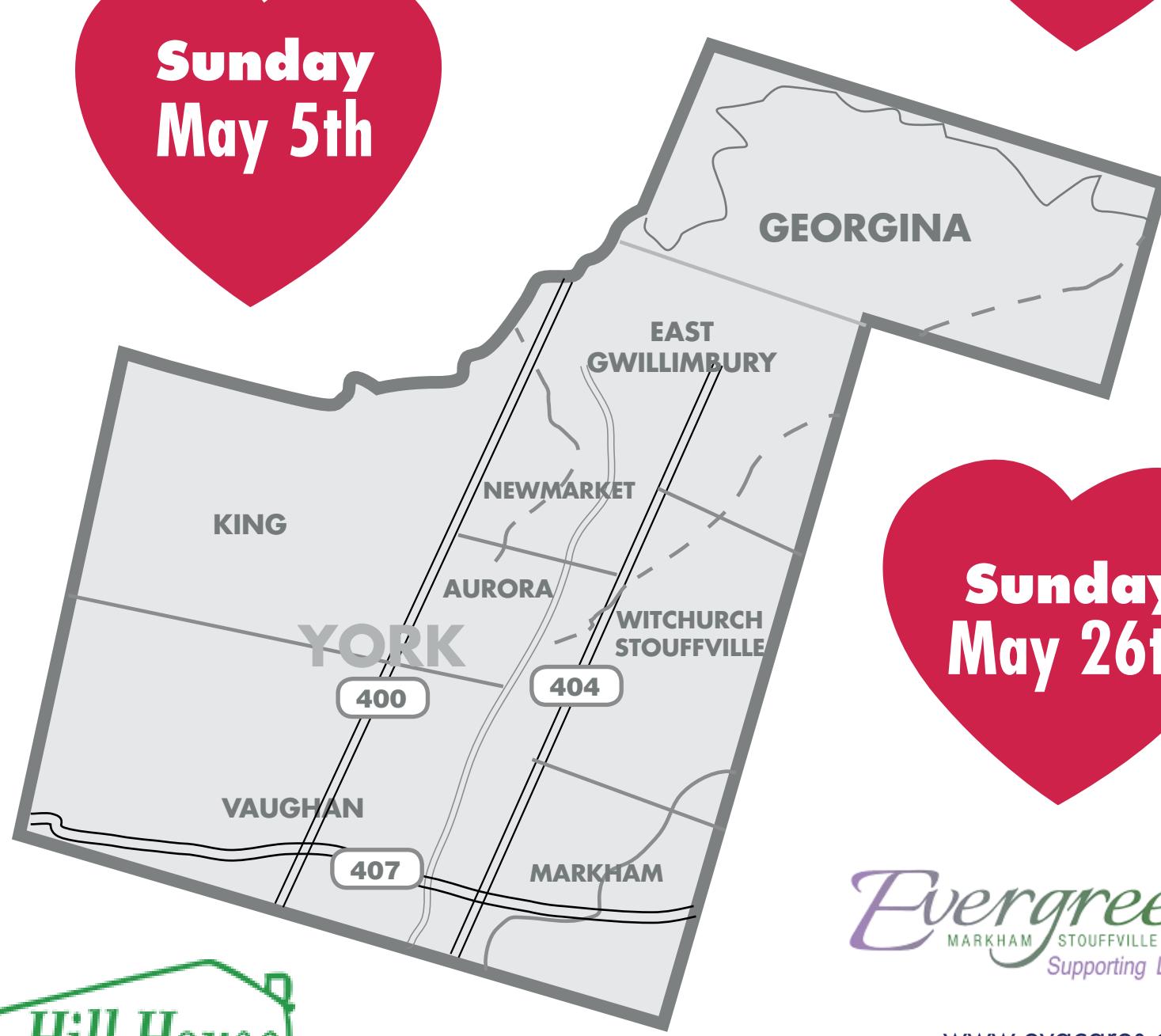
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# Initial work on plan carried out by Sport Aurora

## FROM PAGE 1

for sport in Aurora among various stakeholders. Additional emphasis will be placed on volunteer recruitment and training for many organizations within Aurora, as well as training staff and volunteers in "working with culturally diverse groups to understand their sport needs and be able to respond to the changing demographics in Aurora."

Conversely, the new blueprint will give lower priority to developing a sport tourism policy for the Town and assessing the current provision of sports as it relates to older adults.

"The capacity to host sport events is highly dependent on appropriate facilities," said Ms. Warth on the lower priority for Sport Tourism. "As the Town is currently investigating future facilities, it does not make sense to create a policy at this time. Additionally, the Economic Development strategy will include sports tourism and the results of that study need to be considered in an Aurora Sports Tourism policy.

"As part of the sports policy, a decision needs to be made about whether the needs of older adults is to be a focus on sports (physical activity and an opportunity for competition), or to focus on increasing physical activity alone. Additionally, Activate Aurora has done significant work in the area of physical activity for older adults. Town Staff have committed to sustaining the Older Adults Network created as part of Activate Aurora when the Activate Aurora project wraps up in June 2019."

By the time the recommendations reached the Committee level last Tuesday, Council members focused on both of these priority changes as well as the cost of creating a new position.

The starting salary for the Sport & Community Development Coordinator will be \$69,000 plus benefits, which would clock in at around \$83,000, said Robin McDougall, Director of Community Services for the Town. The entire amount allocated in the 2019 Operating Budget will not be used at this time as the position will not be filled until later this spring. Going forward, she added, staff would anticipate the full amount will be used in future years, including \$20,000 for the implementation costs of the Sports Plan.

One of the most vocal regarding the new hire was Councillor Harold Kim, who said he was "never a big proponent" of an internal hire for the role of Sports Coordinator, questioning how bringing the position in-house would make achieving goals within the plan more realistic and achievable.

Ms. McDougall responded that bringing the position in-house would level the playing field in that the person in the position would have access to all the resources and information at Town Hall.

"This process of working towards a Sports Plan, gathering volunteers [for] the sports communities, reminds me of

another project [for] Cultural Partners [and we] hired an external consultant to spearhead that," Councillor Kim continued. "My understanding is that that is going well and it seems to mirror what we're trying to do here in a certain respect."

While Ms. McDougall conceded there were "parallels" in the situation, she also noted "there are opportunities here where we see benefit in having in-house staff being readily available."

From other parts of the table, Councillors raised issue with sports tourism being placed on a lower rung than it had previously.

The first to sound the alarm was Councillor Michael Thompson who said he still saw tourism as one of the "key principles" in the plan.

"Council has talked about it from an economic development perspective," he said. "Yes, I understand there is a bit of an overlap there with what is currently underway with the Economic Development Board and the Economic Development Strategy, and tourism as well. I don't necessarily want to see sport tourism pushed too far to the side. I still think it is very much a prominent issue for this Council. We talked about it at length with the Hallmark lands and whether it would be one and one or two baseball fields, we continue to talk about it with regards to multipurpose fields and that vision. While I understand that not all of the amenities or facilities are in place to really make a drive today, I still just want to make sure it is somewhere near the forefront in terms of our priority settings for sport tourism."

Mayor Tom Mrakas had a similar concern, saying "we don't want to lose that (sport tourism) and put that aside."

"With the new Economic Development Corporation in place, that is one of the examples of where Ms. McDougall mentioned that hiring an in-house staff member for the position [would allow them to] have access more closely with the corporation and look at furthering that sport tourism aspect, the total tourism picture for the Town," he said. "I think that is a great way for us to move forward on that piece."

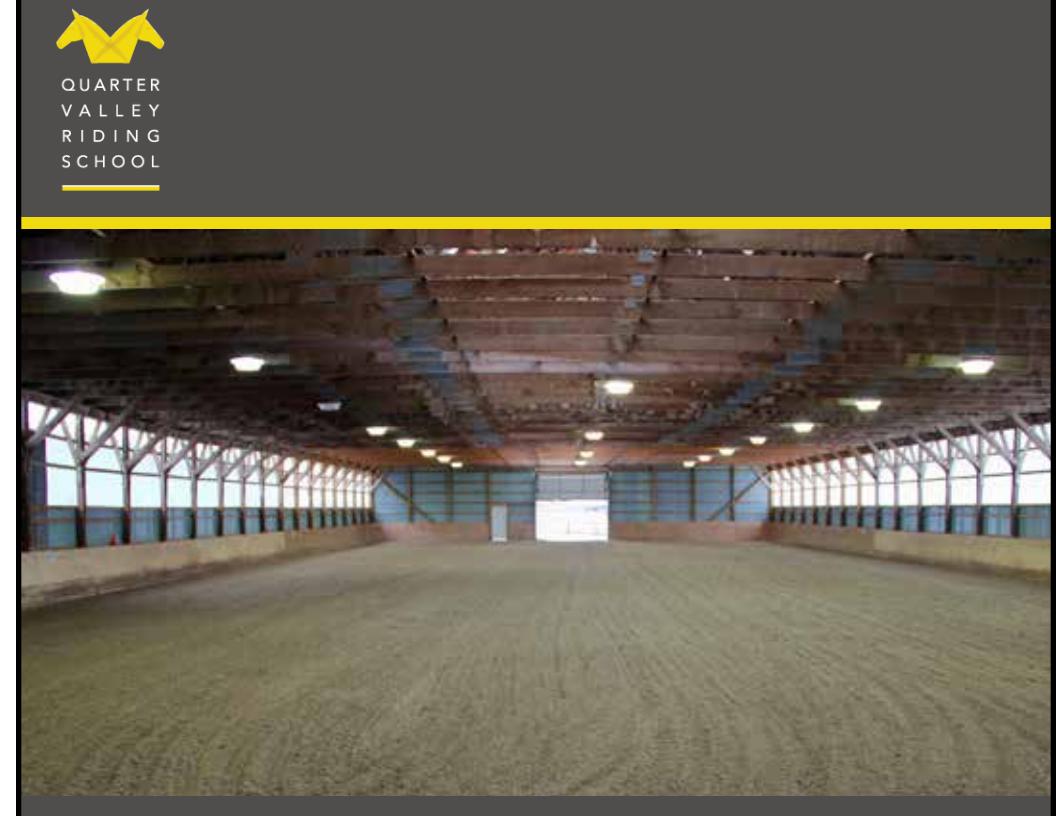
Councillor Wendy Gaertner's concerns lay in a lower prioritization for the sports needs of older adults.

"There is a significant amount of work that is already being done and being looked after through the efforts and work of Activate Aurora that initiated the program along with our staff," said Ms. McDougall. "Our staff are planning to continue on with that work with the Older Adult Network and it is literally a network of resources, a local volunteer group of individuals who have expertise in the area, whether it is through health, whether it is through medical, or whether it is through just general interest in seeing healthy, active adults."

"There are a lot of resources on that committee that see initiatives that

we can run forward with. It doesn't necessarily have to be defined by sports, but it can be defined by physical activity and so from a priority perspective, we feel that some of that is already being achieved."

Responded Councillor Gaertner, "I would rather look at keeping seniors active and healthy as opposed to promoting competitive sports. I think that the Seniors' Centre does some of that work right now."



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# Easter Bunny takes Aurora by storm





Mother Nature may not have cooperated with sunny weather on Saturday morning, but there was a lot of fun to be had at the Town of Aurora's annual Easter Egg Hunt. Held at the Aurora Seniors' Centre and Aurora Community Arboretum, thousands of kids, parents, grandparents and guardians lined up early for a chance to find some eggs, meet the Easter Bunny and take part in Easter-themed games. (Opposite Page, Top Row) Emma and Cadence fan out through the Arboretum. As did this father-son team – both named Rafael. (Opposite, Second Row) Mayor Tom Mrakas has an audience with the Easter Bunny inside Petch House. Outside, Nick and Ethan continued their search for eggs. (Opposite, Third Row) Outdoor games were enjoyed by Reeve, Vanessa, and Alex & Teo. (Opposite, Bottom) Quinn, Mech and Jenson, along with Emily and Sarah made the Egg Hunt family affairs. (This Page, Top Row) Brenda and Kim of the Optimist Club of Aurora helped dish up a pancake breakfast inside the Seniors' Centre. Lancelot tries his hand at Bynny Bowling. Jacob gets up close and personal with some baby chicks. (This Page, Second Row) Shelly wrangles the chicks. (Bottom Row) Mike and Claudia enjoy their pancakes.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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# Local art teacher explores “surreal” life at Library gallery

By Brock Weir

As an instructor, Kim Steffen is inspired every time she walks into the classroom.

Ms. Steffen, who teaches art at Aurora Montessori School on Industrial Parkway North, drives home the fact that in her classroom mistakes are allowed and flights of fancy are encouraged.

It opens up new doors to students, she says, and the work they produce has opened up new doors to her as well.

Ms. Steffen explores these whimsical flights of fancy in her new exhibition Surrealist Landscapes, on now through May 5, at the Aurora Public Library's Colleen Abbott Gallery.

She has always had a passion for art. She grew up in a household with an artist for a mother and a father, a printer by trade, also in the arts.

Following her passion, she studied art at Mount Allison and received her Masters degree from the Pratt Institute of Art and Design in New York City.

“That really opened my mind up to different ways of doing art,” she says.

While her work can range from abstracts to realism, here she focuses on whimsy with paintings some have said display a touch of Dali, as well as vibrant works in plasticine.

“I get inspired by the kids,” she says. “I love how children are just open to new things, to their imaginations. The number one thing I say to the kids is it is okay to make mistakes in art



Art teacher Kim Steffen's surrealistic work is now on display at the Colleen Abbott Gallery.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

— and now kids will say the same thing to themselves. These pieces are inspired by the kids and their imaginations. In the past and how artwork doesn't have to be right or wrong.

“This exhibit gives me the opportunity to show my work. I used to show in galleries when I was in New York and I showed at the Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibit, but being a teacher and a fulltime parent just slowed my process in showing my art. Art has come second, so it is nice to be able to [exhibit] in a public space. It's great too because a lot of the kids I teach come to the Library and parents can see what I do.”

Indeed, this might be the very first time students have the chance to see their teacher in action, following her passion. When they see her paintings on the wall, she says she hopes the kids — her students and those in the community at large — will see that it is okay to “be free with your imagination.”

“I do very tight work, very realistic, and technically I am able to draw well, but I hope these pieces convey a sense of freedom to just do what you want in art,” she says. “Art is the best subject to be teaching, period. It trumps every other subject. I am lucky I get to go into the classroom every day and when the kids see me they are so excited because they just know they are going to be doing art. It is just magical and special. Everybody has a little bit off the artist in them.”

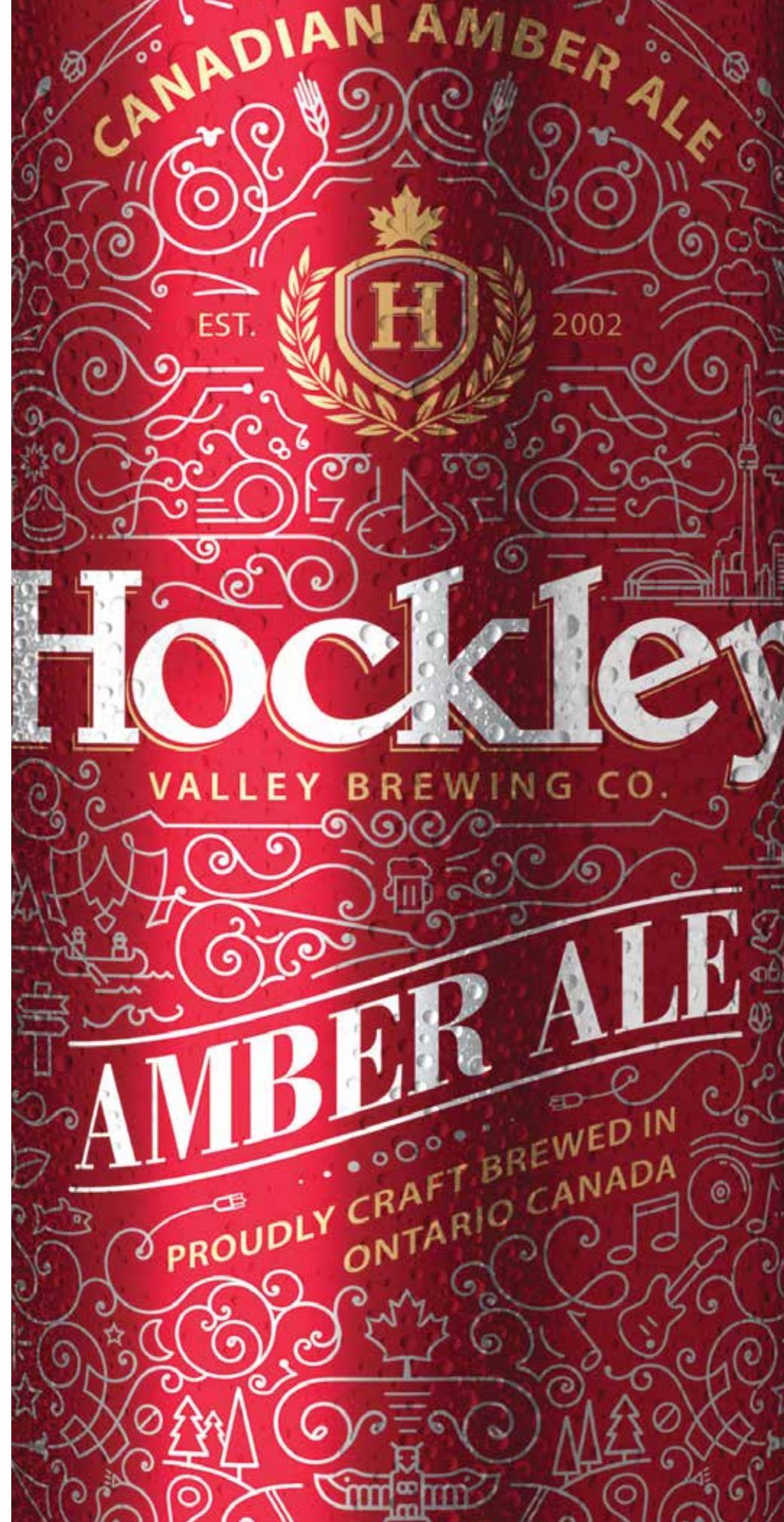




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## Getting Things Done

Mayor  
Tom Mrakas

This week's column is a slight departure from my regular weekly columns.

It is a shameless appeal for support.

This weekend on Sunday is the Annual Run for Southlake and once again Team Aurora will be well represented!

As residents, business owners and community organizations already know, Aurora is a highly sought-after community for businesses and residential home buyers. We're known for our small town charm and big city amenities. One of the most important amenities we can offer our residents is the compassion and care that our regional hospital offers.

Southlake Regional Health Centre is a world-class medical facility that delivers leading edge care to the citizens of Aurora.

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The hospital is growing, as are the needs of our community.

Southlake is here for Aurorans when we need it and we want to ensure

that it has the tools and technologies to care for our residents well into the future. That's why I'm asking for your support in sponsoring me for the Run for Southlake.

The 5K Run for Southlake takes place on Sunday, April 28, and funds raised support the most urgently needed tools and equipment – things the hospital's team of experts rely on to save lives and provide our community with the care it deserves.

By sponsoring me, you're helping to support Team Aurora, as well as the current and future residents of our community - and your hospital.

To make a donation, simply visit [srhc.convio.net/goto/mayormrakas](http://srhc.convio.net/goto/mayormrakas) to help support this worthwhile cause.

Thank you in advance for your support.

That is 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](mailto:tmrakas@aurora.ca).

If you would like to sign up for more newsletters and council updates then please visit [mrakas.ca/contact](http://mrakas.ca/contact) to join the growing list of Aurorans that are staying informed.

## Aurora Bungalow on Premium Lot



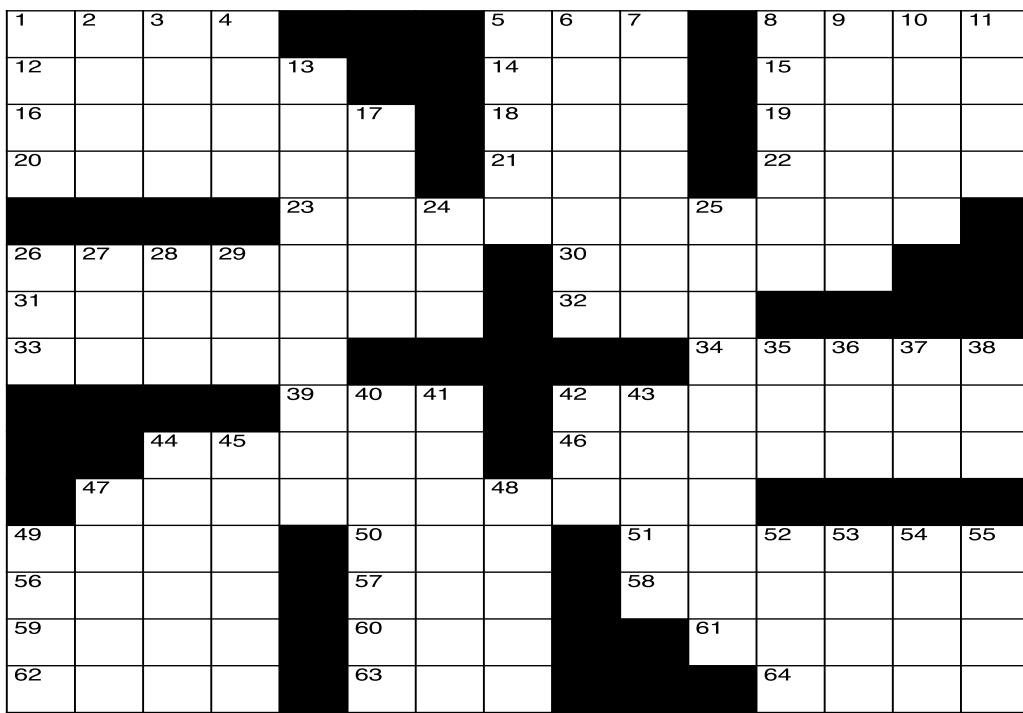
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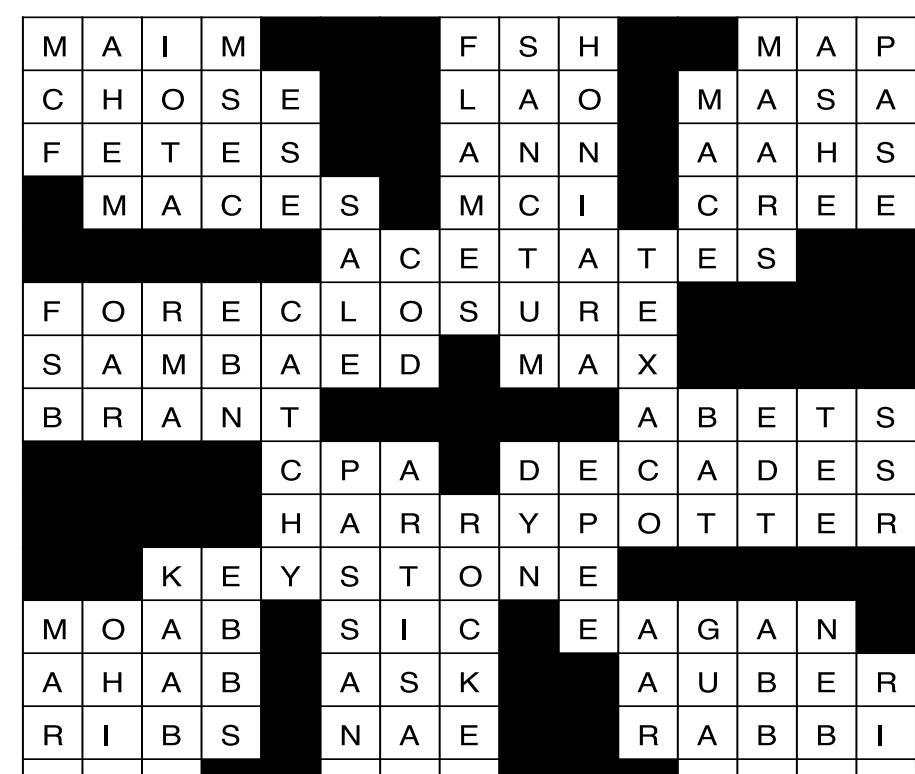
### CLUES ACROSS

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Tenor                        | 59. English broadcaster                |
| 5. Panthers' signal caller      | 42. Car signal                         |
| 8. Systems, doctrines, theories | 44. Grass part                         |
| 12. Rulers                      | 46. Trivially                          |
| 14. Indonesian coastal town     | 47. Serve as a warning                 |
| 15. Type of cuisine             | 49. Centers of activity                |
| 16. Kids                        | 50. An electrically charged atom       |
| 18. Single Lens Reflex          | 51. Small swelling of cells            |
| 19. Extra seed-covering         | 56. Irritates                          |
| 20. Force out                   | 57. "___ your i's, cross your t's"     |
| 21. Feline                      | 58. Removed                            |
| 22. ___ & Stitch                | 59. "Death in the Family" author       |
| 23. Semantic relations          | 60. When you hope to arrive            |
| 26. A larval frog or toad       | 61. German district                    |
| 30. Sport for speedsters        | 62. Turner and Kennedy                 |
| 31. One who is learning         | 63. Midway between south and southeast |
| 32. Request                     | 64. Emerald Isle                       |
| 33. Famed WWII conference       |  |
| 34. Relieved                    |  |

### CLUES DOWN

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Mathematical optimization search method | 29. Area near the concert stage                |
| 2. Country along the Arabian peninsula     | 35. Social insect living in organized colonies |
| 3. Pointed parts of pens                   | 36. Winter activity                            |
| 4. Lake ___, one of the Great              | 37. Snakelike fish                             |
| 5. Peruvian region                         | 38. Not wet                                    |
| 6. State capital of Georgia                | 40. In addition to                             |
| 7. Those killed for their beliefs          | 41. In league                                  |
| 8. Typeface                                | 42. Barrels per day (abbr.)                    |
| 9. Shrill cry                              | 43. Monetary unit                              |
| 10. Sends via the Postal Service           | 44. Marked                                     |
| 11. Holds grain                            | 45. Emerges                                    |
| 13. Occurring at a fitting time            | 47. Shape by heating                           |
| 17. Vogue                                  | 48. Early Slavic society                       |
| 24. Born of                                | 49. Italian automaker                          |
| 25. Get the job done                       | 52. Racing legend Earnhardt                    |
| 26. Teletype (Computers)                   | 53. A type of name                             |
| 27. Small southern constellation           | 54. ___ Strauss, jeans maker                   |
| 28. Decaliters                             | 55. Famed garden                               |

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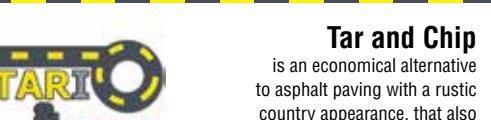


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# York 9 FC set to kick off inaugural season this weekend

By Jake Courtepatte

For fans of the green and black, the day is finally here.

York 9 FC is scheduled to face Hamilton's Forge FC this Saturday, kicking off the inaugural season for both the club and the Canadian Premier League.

Temperatures are expected to hang around the ten-degree Celsius range at Hamilton's Tim Hortons Field on opening day, an unwelcome change of conditions for the fully-rostered York 9 club, who returned from a conditioning stint in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic last weekend.

"It's nice to get some sun on the face for the players," said York 9 coach Jimmy Brennan. "It does kind of rejuvenate you a bit after being indoors for so long."

It's been a whirlwind April for the club, who unveiled their official kits on April 5, sporting the nine bright green stripes across the abdominals, representing the nine municipalities of York Region.

Last week also saw the league strike a deal with CBC Sports to live

broadcast ten of the CPL regular season games, including Saturday's opener.

CBC Sports' Scott Russell and Andi Petrillo will host CBC's coverage of the broadcast games. Commentary will be provided by longtime soccer broadcaster Gareth Wheeler, and former Canadian international player Terry Dunfield.

Yet, for the York club, they return to Canada focused solely on what is happening on the field.

"You're in an intimate setting where every day you're working with your teammates," said Brennan. "You start creating bonds where you really get to understand one another."

Midfielder Joseph Di Chiara added that the goal was "to maximize as much field time as we can," after spending time earlier in the preseason at Vaughan's Ontario Soccer Centre.

"When you're training at home, it's not the same as spending 24 hours for ten days straight where you're eating together...you do everything together."

The Forge FC squad followed suit in heading to the Dominican to get in

some exhibition games against local clubs, where Di Chiara said he got a chance to check out his upcoming competition.

"You try to improve every day. Then eventually, when that day comes, you're in full flight. If you look at the big picture and think, 'wow,' you may be get a little overwhelmed."

Brennan said he now has his club focused solely on Saturday's match since returning home.

As for the rest of the roster, Brennan and his team have finally put to paper the twenty names that will represent this Nine Stripes this season, including eighteen Canadians. Those who have been

following League1 Ontario play since its inaugural year a few years back will recognize some friendly faces, including former Aurora FC players Morey Doner and Simon Adjei, as well as former Vaughan Azzurri teammates Austin Ricci and Colm Vance.

Over 23,000 are expected at Tim Hortons Field when the green and black take to the pitch on Saturday, a sell-out collaboration between the stadium and the league for the historic day.

The York club will see its first home action on May 22, when they take on AS Blainsville at York Lions Stadium.

## AURORAN CLASSIFIEDS

### HELP WANTED

## Freelance Reporter for Local Community Newspaper

Come join a dynamic, fast paced, growing entrepreneurial company looking for an energetic Freelance Reporter with a passion for community news.

The ideal candidate will have a distinct willingness to cover local community events and issues.

### DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Would allow the Minister to avoid consulting or even notifying the public if they decide to suspend regulations within the Act;
- Would suspend the protections for locally threatened species as long as the species is "healthy" outside of Ontario. This would lead to extirpation and further jeopardize local ecosystems;
- New additions to the Species at Risk list would take longer to get protection (from 3 months to a proposed 12 months). At a Minister's request the committee that adds new species may be asked to re-evaluate the listing, which would only lengthen the time that the species and their habitat would be vulnerable to development and other damaging activities;
- Would no longer issue stop work order permits on damaging activities for newly listed species or their habitat for up to one year of listing. This means that damaging activities, such as mining, excavation etc., would be allowed to continue, unfettered, as the new species' habitat and species protections are reviewed by committee
- Would allow industry, municipalities, and developers to bypass rules and regulations within the Act for a price;
- Would allow the Minister to avoid consulting with experts for species at risk, even if the suspension of the regulations would, "likely jeopardize the survival of the species in Ontario";

Margaret Prophet  
Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition

## THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24

The Aurora Historical Society's Speaker Series continues tonight with Barbara Trends and "Survival: My Father's War as an Air Force Gunner and P.O.W." - 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 "masterpiece" 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 Benji Pask & Justin Paul, this show will delight audiences of all ages! For tickets and further information, visit [www.cds.on.ca](http://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&from\\_id=192345](http://www.sac.on.ca/page/event-detail?pk=11056607&from_id=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](http://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!

SATURDAY, MAY 11

David and Dierdre Tomlinson invite you to visit their English flower garden, Merlin's Hollow, at 181 Centre Crescent which is open rain or shine today from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This month's opening will feature the fragrant garden, thyme lawn, iris and peonies. Merlin's Hollow was designed by David, a landscape architect, to create a series of gardens within a garden. Enclosed by high cedar hedges, each garden has its own distinct character and a series of arches invite visitors from one garden to the next. For further information, call 905-727-8979. The next open day is Sunday, July 14.

### QUALIFICATIONS:

- Diploma in journalism preferred
- Candidates should have experience working on the editorial side of the newspaper industry
- Excellent writing, editing and photography skills
- Valid driver's license and a reliable vehicle
- Reporting experience an asset
- An interest in local issues is a necessity, as the majority of the writing for this role will be local



## Let's Talk.

Interested and qualified candidates should forward their cover letter and resume to [brock@auroran.com](mailto:brock@auroran.com)

### O F F I C E A D M I N I S T R A T O R

(Full-Time). King City, Ontario. Position start date - immediately. Must have the following: Advanced Excel knowledge, ability to multi-task and prioritize, communication skills. Please email all resumes to [HR@rbsomerville.com](mailto:HR@rbsomerville.com)

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Condo? Freehold? Townhomes?  
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Down payment amount?  
Cost of a mortgage? Affordability?  
Good Area? Poor area?  
Amenities? Schools?

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